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**PRESS RELEASE**

**Hochul's State of the State Welcomed**

**Reflects Strong Support for Students, Families, Schools and Educators**

January 5, 2022 (Albany) –The NYS Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (NYS PTA) is honored to represent the families of our 2.6 million school children and our nearly 250,000 members. It is our mission to Shine a Light on Every Child with One Voice.

“Governor Hochul’s first State of the State speech was fully welcomed,” offered Dana Platin, NYS PTA President, and a kindergarten school-related professional. “We are excited about the many policy initiatives, including support for our teaching workforce, help with teacher and staff shortages, and most importantly – a keen focus on student mental health.”

“To see the words ‘fully funding foundation aid’ while expected, is amazing,” added Kyle Belokopitsky, NYS PTA Executive Director. “To see so many positive initiatives in the State of the State, we realize that Governor Hochul firmly supports our families, our schools, and our students.”

Priority focuses of NYS PTA included in the State of State include:

- fully funding foundation aid
- meaningful support for student mental health
- addressing teacher and staff shortages
- support for teacher professional development
- enhancing suicide prevention in schools
- positive school climate and equity initiatives
- support for school lunch programs and expansion of the SNAP program
- higher education initiatives including expansion of funding programs, expansion of TAP, expansion of access to college and career, and new supports for the SUNY/CUNY systems

- expansion of access to affordable childcare, increase wages for childcare workers, and provide childcare at all SUNY/CUNY schools
- funding for the arts
- expansion of broadband access for families
- support for our high-need students and families in (amongst other areas) education, housing, workforce, and food insecurity
- support for substance use prevention and treatments
- environmental policies including expansion of bans on toxic chemicals, access to environmental funding for schools, support for electric school busses, expansion of green energy solutions to schools, and improved air and water quality
- workforce development initiatives including access to apprenticeships, entry programs, tuition-free credential programs, and support for workers with disabilities
- supporting maternal care and improving prenatal and postnatal care
- expansion of supports for victims of domestic violence
- gun safety initiatives
- tax relief for families

As always, NYS PTA stands ready to work collaboratively to support ALL students, educators, schools, and families.

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