Basic Policy 2026-2027

New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (NYS PTA) is a nonpartisan organization and is concerned with the equitable and inclusive education, care, and protection of all children and youth. Positions will conform to policies adopted by National PTA and NYS PTA and will provide the basis for PTA advocacy efforts. NYS PTA supports and advocates for increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts for all children, youth, and families. This policy represents resolutions as found in "Where We Stand" and other documents.

Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Substances

a) Encourage and support evidence-based prevention, education, and treatment programs that align with diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts regarding alcohol, cannabis, heroin, opioids, and other substance use.
b) Urge the availability of licensed detoxification services and substance use disorder treatment facilities for minors be in close proximity to their residency.
c) Encourage school districts to develop partnerships with prevention and detoxification agencies to create alternate methods of addressing substance use, and support alternative methods of substance use testing in schools (while opposing urinalysis for all students).
d) Support measures to eliminate access and use among all children and youth of herbal smoking products, tobacco, e-cigarettes, e-liquid, and nicotine.
e) Advocate for the elimination of flavored tobacco, vaping, and e-cigarette products, and banning their marketing to all children and youth.
f) Support Tobacco 21 educational initiatives.
g) Urge the enforcement of laws and regulations regarding cannabis (marijuana).
h) Educate all children, youth, parents/guardians, families, educators, and communities regarding the harmful effects of cannabis (marijuana) use.
i) Urge the FDA to establish regulations for the manufacturing and labeling of CBD and related products. Support passage of legislation to enforce the regulation of CBD and related products.
j) Encourage the education of all children and youth, parents/guardians, families, educators, community members, and the medical community regarding possible benefits and risks of usage of CBD and related products.
k) Encourage and support legislation to adopt statewide social host laws, and educate students, families, and communities on this issue.

Citizenship and Equality of Opportunity

a) Encourage respect for all children, families, community members, and their property, and urge school districts and the juvenile justice system to provide preventive and educational measures on vandalism.
b) Encourage fair housing policies with regard to all children and their families.
c) Guarantee that all children and youth receive diverse, equitable, inclusive, and affirming access to educational programs, services, and opportunities.
d) Promote the availability of resources to ensure safe and inclusive school and community environments for all children and families.

e) Encourage units and school districts to support the participation of secondary school students in regular civic engagement dialog.
f) Encourage the development and support of the Community Schools Program and promote continued allocation of the necessary resources.

Cooperative Role of Parents/Guardians/Families and Educational Professionals

a) Inform all parents/guardians and families of opportunities to engage in decision-making processes at all levels, and encourage their participation.
b) Support the inclusion of family engagement provisions in federal and state legislation, policies, and regulations with dedicated funding.
c) Ensure the adoption of comprehensive, equitable, affirming, inclusive, and collaborative family engagement policies at the school district and building level.
d) Promote family engagement best practices based on current National Standards for Family School Partnerships (last updated 2022).
e) Develop and foster initiatives and programs that encourage the cooperative role of parents/guardians/families, youth, and educational professionals and that support NYS PTA's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.
f) Support communication and parent/family engagement in the special education regulations and development of plans.
g) Notify persons in parental relationships of all school-aged children of absences, especially chronic absenteeism.

Cultural Arts

a) Advocate for and promote diverse, inclusive, and affirming arts education programs.
b) Support and encourage the integration of arts in school curricula that are diverse, accessible, inclusive, affirming, and promote the life-long value of the arts.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

a) Engage and encourage a diverse range of voices and lived experiences and seek to meet individuals and communities where they are, especially those currently and/or historically underrepresented and/or marginalized.
b) Actively attract, recruit, and elect leaders who represent the diversity of the communities served.
c) Share information, tools, resources, and leadership opportunities among association members, partners, stakeholders, and communities to increase the impact of our collective work.
d) Support, engage, and mentor units, councils, regions, and leaders from less represented or resourced areas, backgrounds, and perspectives.
e) Prioritize and advocate for innovative, sustainable efforts that serve a diverse range of children and families, especially those underrepresented and/or marginalized in our communities.
f) Recognize and address bias, privilege, and intersectionality, and work to identify and dismantle systemic inequities and racism, providing a safe and affirming environment for all.

Education Emphasis

a) Guarantee all children and youth equitable, inclusive, and varied opportunities to develop to their fullest potential in a safe and affirming environment.
b) Promote the implementation of developmentally-appropriate learning standards and assessments.
c) Ensure students' equitable access to academic and career and technical education (CTE) programs through the post-secondary level.
d) Encourage school districts to develop supportive and academically rigorous in school suspension programs, when necessary.
e) Ensure the identification and appropriate education of all students (including but not limited to students with disabilities, gifted and talented students, English Language Learners, and diverse student populations), with appropriate notification to parents and/or guardians.
f) Advocate for full access to education for unaccompanied minors, migrant children, children in the foster care system, and children and youth experiencing homelessness.
g) Ensure the New York State Education Department and Board of Regents offers multiple and meaningful pathways to graduation.
h) Encourage state policymakers to support adequate, consistent, and appropriate teacher and staff professional development.
i) Support adequate ratios for certified school counselors in every NYS school building.
j) Support at least 20 minutes of recess for all students.
k) Advocate for timely screening, evidence-based interventions, and structured literacy instruction for students with dyslexia and dysgraphia, including equitable, adequate, and sustainable funding for ongoing teacher/staff training.

Environment

a) Insist that all school property be environmentally safe and provide a healthy learning environment.
b) Insist that all members of the school community have a "right to know" about environmental health issues and hazards in their school environment.
c) Encourage schools and communities to model environmentally responsible behavior.
d) Support legislation and regulations that require labeling of foods that have been genetically altered.
e) Promote awareness of the impact of potentially hazardous and toxic substances.
f) Encourage equitable state and federal funding of environmentally responsible programs.
g) Support legislation that sets standards to protect groundwater supplies and limit air, water, and soil contaminants.
h) Seek and support the establishment of regulations to set a healthy maximum room temperature in school buildings. Educate families, teachers, other school personnel, and community members regarding the signs and symptoms of all heat-related illnesses.
i) Advocate for initiatives and programs that ensure inclusive, affirming, and safe environments that support the growth and development of all children and youth.
j) Urge schools to reduce and phase out unhealthy products (PVS, toxic art supplies, and polystyrene).

Financial Support for Public Education

a) Ensure that federal, state, and local funds designated for elementary and secondary education are used only for public schools.
b) Support adequate, equitable, predictable, and understandable funding for public education that is budgeted on time and distributed to ensure long-term stability for the orderly operation of schools, especially in high-need school districts.
c) Support and encourage that predictably consistent state aid be provided to school districts at a minimum of 50% of total educational costs, exclusive of federal or other sources of aid.
d) Support and encourage the establishment of a new equitable foundation aid formula.
e) Develop and foster programs and initiatives that achieve equitable financial support for public education, and support NYS PTA's diversity, equity, and inclusion goals.
f) Support meaningful investments in public schools, and reject education vouchers and the Education Choice for Children Act

Health & Nutrition

a) Support health, wellness, safety, and inclusive and affirming comprehensive sexuality health education.
b) Promote equitable access to comprehensive physical and mental health, and social emotional services in schools and communities.
c) Promote and collaborate on wellness and healthy lifestyle initiatives for students within the school and community.
d) Seek diverse and inclusive parent/guardian representation on school/district-based health, wellness, and safety committees.
e) Encourage accurate and transparent labeling of consumer goods.
f) Promote quality age-appropriate nutrition programs and standards reliant on research-based scientific evidence.
g) Urge that the food supply be grown and produced free of harmful substances or genetic modifications, and without the overuse or misuse of harmful or toxic chemicals, drugs, and other substances.
h) Promote education on Health Care Privacy laws for youth and young adults.
i) Promote and foster equitable and inclusive health initiatives and programs.
j) Support the attendance of school nurses and certified athletic trainers during school events.
k) Support a state tracking system for student head injuries, and encourage student, parent, and community education on concussion management and prevention.

Juvenile Protection

a) Support full funding and implementation of Raise the Age laws and regulations.
b) Promote the improvement of trauma-informed practices in all educational conditions, behavioral health services, and training of personnel within juvenile systems that deal with all youth, especially at-risk youth, including justice-involved, neglected, and abused children.
c) Support additional sustainable funding for services and programs that provide equitable access and assistance to all families in stress/crisis situations.
d) Seek and support the provision of safe and affirming care and equitable

educational opportunities for all children in all environments.
e) Seek and support the protection of all children from threats and negative influences.
f) Advocate for stronger measures to prevent the incidence of missing, abused, and exploited children.
g) Protect and support transgender and non-conforming students.
h) Educate students, parents, families, and the school community on digital and internet safety.
i) Support and encourage funding, training, and programs on youth suicide prevention.

Youth Gambling Prevention

a) Support the classification and regulation of loot boxes as a form of gambling.
b) Urge video game companies to assign higher age limits and include gambling content descriptors and parental controls for spending on any game, app, or online platform.
c) Encourage the education of youth, parents, families, educators, school staff, and community members about the impacts of gambling-like monetization features in video games.
d) Urge the NYS Education Department to issue evidence-based guidance regarding the dangers of youth gambling and gambling addiction and local school boards to adopt and implement evidence-based, age- and developmentally-appropriate curriculum.
e) Encourage units and councils to educate school administrators, school staff, youth, parents/guardians, families and community members on the harmful effects of gambling on youth.

Libraries, Media and Technology

a) Encourage the establishment of equitable school district policies formulated with family, school, and community members for the selection and/or review of multimedia materials and develop procedures to deal with challenges to educational materials.
b) Encourage broadcasters to air appropriate, diverse, inclusive, and affirming programming for all children and youth.
c) Encourage understanding and awareness of media literacy and what is available/accessible to children and youth through technology.
d) Support and encourage equitable funding for libraries, media, and technology to facilitate the implementation of learning standards, curriculum, and foster student growth and development.
e) Educate students, parents, guardians, families, educators, school districts, and community members regarding digital and technology safety and ensure that appropriate laws, policies, and regulations are in place to protect all children and youth.

Family Life

a) Encourage a supportive, nurturing, engaged, safe, and affirming family environment at home and in the community.
b) Promote inclusive educational programs for all parents/guardians and families.
c) Provide all parents, guardians, and families with the necessary resources to act as

advocates for their children.
d) Support and advocate for youth in poverty.
e) Support increases to child care subsidies, equitable child care services, and enforcement of provisions requiring registration of providers.

Pre-School and Early Childhood Education

a) Promote and support equitable access to high-quality, inclusive, and developmentally-appropriate preschool and kindergarten programs.
b) Continue to support the ban of the administration of standardized tests for preschool through grade 2 children.
c) Encourage the use of developmentally-appropriate (non-standardized) alternative assessment methods for preschool through grade 2 children.
d) Develop and foster Early Childhood Education initiatives and programs that support NYS PTA diversity, equity, engagement, and inclusion goals.

PTA Organizational Decisions

a) Ensure that PTA funds are used to advance the mission, purpose, and goals of PTA and not to fill gaps in school budgets.
b) Encourage and support the training of all PTA members, including fiduciary responsibilities.
c) Advocate for diversity, equity, and inclusion in all NYS PTA organizational decisions.

Religious Expression in Public Schools

a) Ensure that the public-school approach to religion is consistent with the first amendment of the U.S. Constitution and related Supreme Court decisions, relevant case law, and precedent addressing the separation of church and state.

Safety

a) Support and advocate for the safety of all children in the home, school, and community.
b) Advocate for and share resources about safe infrastructure, modes of transportation, and safe routes to and from school.
c) Promote awareness and advocate for the elimination of hazards and risks in both physical and digital environments, ensuring that every child and youth is treated with dignity, respect, and has the opportunity to learn in a safe and supportive environment.
d) Advocate for the equitable implementation of collaborative school safety and security plans, processes, and measures for every school district and school building.
e) Encourage appropriate, accessible, and inclusive communication of safety plans and procedures with parents, guardians, and families.
f) Support programs to raise awareness of school bus safety, including traffic and seat belt safety, and encourage school boards to support adult supervision on buses.
g) Support legislation that promotes gun safety, and encourage units to promote educational programs on the increased awareness of gun safety.