

114TH CONGRESS, SECOND SESSION



NATIONAL PTA®

2016 Public Policy — Agenda —



ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law on December 10, 2015 reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)—the primary law governing the federal role in K-12 public education. National PTA advocacy efforts will focus on the implementation of the new law to ensure every child has the opportunity to reach his/her full potential.

- Encourage school districts to invest more in evidence-based family engagement activities to support students, families and schools
- Include proven family engagement strategies and practices in ESEA/ESSA guidance and regulations where appropriate
- Ensure all students receive quality instruction from well-prepared teachers and have access to well-rounded and rigorous curriculum that facilitate student learning and growth



SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)—the main federal program authorizing state and local aid for special education and related services for children with disabilities—must include family engagement as a fundamental principle of special education.

- Incorporate PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships as a best practice model for family engagement in special education
- Protect the rights of all children with special needs and their parents, and ensure all students with a disability have the resources and support they need for a high-quality education
- Increase coordination in the implementation of ESEA/ESSA and IDEA, ensuring that all students graduate college and career ready



FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN EDUCATION

Federal education spending accounts for about 3% of the entire federal budget. However, since 2010, discretionary funding for education programs has been cut by nearly \$4 billion, eliminating important resources for children, families and educators.

- Increase investments in the foundational formula programs such as Title I and IDEA
- Provide adequate appropriations for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECS)
- Support greater financial investment in our nation's children in programs that support family engagement and early learning, provide well-rounded educational opportunities, and improve student safety and health



EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

As a nation, we must educate our children long before they enter kindergarten and provide families with the resources necessary to engage in their child's education and create a pathway to long-term education and career achievement.

- Ensure family engagement initiatives begin at birth, at home and in other early learning environments to guarantee coordinated family engagement throughout childhood
- Increase access to high-quality, public pre-kindergarten for all students to prepare them for successful kindergarten entry
- Encourage local school districts to use ESEA/ESSA Title I resources to support high-quality early childhood education programs for eligible children ages zero to five





CHILD HEALTH AND SAFETY

Families play a key role in developing and supporting a healthy and safe lifestyle for their children and federal policies must support health, wellness and safety for children and their families.

- Strengthen and improve child nutrition programs, provide resources and technical assistance to schools, and engage families in implementing healthy and nutritious meals in schools
- Enact policies to address all types of bullying and implement bullying prevention strategies at school and outside of the classroom to provide a safe and nurturing environment for teaching and learning
- Support programs that provide for a child's health and wellness—including mental health—as they progress through each stage of development into adulthood and help families monitor their child's well-being



GUN SAFETY AND VIOLENCE PREVENTION

As a nation, we must make every attempt to prevent and reduce violence—especially incidents involving firearms—and federal efforts must protect children, youth and families from gun and other forms of violence.

- Advocate for providing significant resources and incentives for states and local jurisdictions to create connected communities and positive school climates that are trauma-sensitive to keep students healthy and in school
- Promote education initiatives that raise public awareness of firearm safety and gun violence prevention strategies including safe gun storage programs
- Support legislation requiring a waiting period and comprehensive background check prior to purchasing a firearm from licensed and unlicensed dealers



JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION

Federal policies, such as the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), must seek to prevent children and youth from entering the juvenile justice system, protect those currently in the system and support successful youth reentry into their communities.

- Encourage states and communities to include evidence-based family engagement strategies in juvenile justice and delinquency prevention programs
- Pass legislation that incentivizes community, school and family-focused interventions for status offenses—such as breaking curfew—and ensures that detained youth are kept separate from adults
- Support federal programs that continue a child's education while detained and allows for a smooth transition back to the classroom and their community



EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY AND STUDENT DATA PRIVACY

Technology provides exciting opportunities for students to personalize their learning and for families to be more involved in their child's education. However, federal laws, such as the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) must be updated to protect the privacy of student data.

- Promote policies that increase access to digital devices and broadband to promote personalized learning
- Modernize federal laws to better protect students' educational records and the collection of information gathered online
- Ensure families are informed on the use of technology in schools and know their rights under federal law to protect their child's personal and educational information





POSTSECONDARY ACCESS AND OPPORTUNITY

Every student has the right of access to a high-quality education to ensure college and career readiness and enable them to compete in the global economy.

- Support legislation that assists students' secondary school completion and postsecondary enrollment
- Promote policies to improve college affordability, simplify the application process for all forms of financial aid and expand access to in-state tuition
- Ensure that families are well-equipped to navigate the postsecondary education landscape, including understanding the various postsecondary options available

For additional information about National PTA's Public Policy Agenda, contact the National PTA Office of Government Affairs.

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About National PTA

National PTA® comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.



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