



# **Resolutions and Position Papers**

Published, 2016

## **The Mission of the PTA is:**

To make every child's potential a reality  
by engaging and empowering families and communities  
to advocate for all children.

Therefore:

The Pennsylvania PTA, through its legislative program:

- Makes its voice effectively heard with respect to proposed and enacted laws and regulations that pertain to the **health, education, and welfare** of the children and youth of Pennsylvania.

## **Advocacy:**

Advocacy is an integral part of the PTA mission. PTA is active in public policy issues in our nation's capitol, as well as in our elementary, middle, and high schools, our school boards, our city councils, our state legislature, and everywhere in between. The lives of children and families are improved through PTA members' advocacy efforts at each level of public policy. Sometimes PTA advocacy occurs in very visible, groundbreaking ways—as in the passage of the federal School Lunch Program—and other times in very local and direct ways—as in participation in the selection of a new school principal.

For over 110 years, Pennsylvania PTA has been the state's pre-eminent volunteer child advocacy organization.

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# EDUCATION

## **CAREER EDUCATION**

WHEREAS, The goal of education as preparation for work has long been one of the basic goals of American education; and

WHEREAS, Significant changes in education-work relationships have taken place during the last 20 years that have caused this goal both to increase in importance and to change in meaning; and

WHEREAS, Career education has been demonstrated to be a viable and valuable vehicle for use in refocusing American education in ways that will bring about a more proper emphasis and meaning as one of the goals of education as preparation for work; and

WHEREAS, The career education concept calls for attaining this emphasis in ways that reinforce and supplement, rather than compete with or detract from, all other basic goals of American education; and

WHEREAS, Implementation of the career education concept calls for active involvement of the home/family structure as a collaborative partner with the formal education system and the broader community in helping youth solve education/work relationship problems; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA go on record as fully endorsing and supporting inclusion of career education awareness, in both the public school classrooms and teacher preparation programs, so as to refocus American education in needed and appropriate ways; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA pledge itself to assume an active leadership role in defining and in encouraging a proper role and function for parents in the inclusion of career education awareness in our schools.

ADOPTED, 1977  
REVIEWED, 1993  
REVIEWED, 1998  
REVIEWED, 2013

## COMMUNITY USE OF SCHOOL FACILITIES

- WHEREAS, The National PTA in its third object strives “to bring into closer relation the home, school and community...”, and
- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania PTA recognizes that good educational programs involving active participation and cooperation of the entire community can bring about that closer relationship; and
- WHEREAS, Considerable public funds are expended for school facilities, and these facilities can be utilized during out-of-school hours to strengthen the National PTA’s first object, that of promoting “the welfare of children and youth...” through educational, cultural and athletic programs; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA through its constituent bodies urge local boards of education to develop policies that will encourage the use of school facilities for the benefit of the entire community; and , be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA urge its constituent bodies to promote the use of school facilities free-of-charge by those groups that directly contribute to improving the community’s educational, cultural and recreational programs.

ADOPTED, 1991  
REVIEWED, 1997  
REVIEWED, 2003  
REVIEWED, 2013

## **COOPERATION WITH EDUCATION RELATED ORGANIZATIONS**

WHEREAS, One of the objects of the PTA is to develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education; and

WHEREAS, PTA's mission is to support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools and before government agencies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children; and

WHEREAS, A PTA priority is to encourage parent and community involvement in the public schools; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania PTA, Pennsylvania Associations of Elementary and Secondary School Principals, Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units, Pennsylvania Association of Rural and Small Schools, Pennsylvania Association of School Administrators, Pennsylvania Association of School Business Officials, Pennsylvania Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, Pennsylvania Federation of Teachers, Pennsylvania School Boards Association, Pennsylvania State Education Association, Vocational Administrators of Pennsylvania, and other education related associations share the above stated mutual concerns for education and educational issues affecting children; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA encourage open communication among education oriented associations to promote mutual exchange of information, assess our respective progress on issues, and develop more positive rapport; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA increase collaboration for unified action on issues affecting the quality of education for all children.

ADOPTED, 1989  
REVIEWED, 1995  
REVIEWED, 2001  
REVIEWED, 2013



## **THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION ON SCHOOL READINESS**

- WHEREAS, A child’s brain develops most rapidly before the age of 5; and
- WHEREAS, The percent of children attending full-day kindergarten in Pennsylvania is 54 percent and the national average is about 60 percent; and
- WHEREAS, The number of children attending pre-kindergarten in public schools in Pennsylvania is about 12,023; that number reflects a tiny fraction of the state’s 4-year-olds; and
- WHEREAS, The inclusion of funding for Head Start in the state budget now equals \$40 million helping nearly 70 percent of the children eligible for Head Start to receive services; and
- WHEREAS, Only 16.3 percent of students in pre-kindergarten through third grade are in classes of 17 or fewer students; and
- WHEREAS, Research shows that children who are in classes of 17 or fewer students in kindergarten through third grade score better on standardized achievement tests than their peers in higher classes; and
- WHEREAS, More than 65 percent of all parents work outside the home and the cost of child care for two children at a private facility in Pennsylvania costs more than \$16,000 per year, exceeding the annual salary of a parent earning the minimum wage; and
- WHEREAS, Only 40 of the 501 school districts in Pennsylvania have chosen to use the Pennsylvania Department of Education’s Accountability Block Grants to fund pre-kindergarten programs; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations encourage elected officials to propose continued increases for Accountability Block Grants, as well as funding for Head Start to support expanded pre-kindergarten, smaller class size and full-day kindergarten; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations ensure that elected officials provide the necessary resources for child care, Head Start and other early care and education programs designed to help prepare children to enter school active, curious, eager and ready to learn; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations educate parents, educators, local boards of education, law-makers and the community of the significance of early education and child care programs to ensure that young children encounter high-quality, early positive learning experiences so they develop skill necessary for school readiness before they enter kindergarten; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations assure that children have a strong educational experience in the critical foundation years from pre-kindergarten through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade.

ADOPTED, 2007  
REVIEWED, 2012

## ELEMENTARY WORLD LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION

- WHEREAS, The concern for excellence in education has resulted in a renewed interest in world language instruction at an elementary level; and
- WHEREAS, Studies show the early study of a world language at the elementary level results in cognitive benefits, academic achievement, increases in the skill and understanding of the English language, and positive attitudes toward diversity; and
- WHEREAS, The need for a person fluent in a world language is increasing in the fields of international trade and diplomacy; and
- WHEREAS, Studies indicate the earlier a child begins learning a second language the more likely that child is to attain proficiency; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, The Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent associations advocate for children to be given the opportunity to begin learning a second language in the elementary school; and be it further
- RESOLVED, The Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent associations encourage elementary schools to coordinate efforts with school districts to initiate before or after school world language instruction programs; and be it further
- RESOLVED, The Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent associations support legislation that promotes the instruction of world language at the elementary school level.

ADOPTED, 1991  
REVIEWED, 1997  
REVIEWED, 2003  
AMENDED, 2009  
AMENDED, 2014

## **FULL FUNDING FOR EDUCATION**

- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania schools are funded primarily through a combination of local and state funds, the major state funding sources being the Basic Education Subsidy; and
- WHEREAS, The percentage of state funding of the basic subsidy has been consistently declining while instructional costs are increasing; and
- WHEREAS, Under funding of the basic subsidy forces school districts to raise local taxes in order to compensate for inadequate state reimbursement; and
- WHEREAS, Many low-wealth school districts are unable to make up the difference at the local level and are forced to make cuts in programs and staff resulting in an increasingly inequitable system of public education; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA units and councils research and investigate the impact of underfunding in their local school districts and inform and educate members and taxpayers in the community of the consequences of declining state reimbursement; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA units and councils, in cooperation with other educational agencies, contact legislators and the governor to urge action that would lead to a more equitable distribution of state funds and a quality public education for every student in Pennsylvania through full funding of the basic subsidy.

ADOPTED, 1990  
AMENDED, 1996  
REVIEWED, 2003

## HOMEWORK

- WHEREAS, Homework is a critical part of the learning process, it is the link between school and home that shows what children are studying and parents play an important role in the process; and
- WHEREAS, Homework helps children do better in school when the assignments are meaningful, have a specific purpose, come with clear instructions, be fairly well matched to a child's abilities and help develop a child's knowledge and skills; and
- WHEREAS, When homework is turned in to the teacher, graded, returned with constructive comments from the teacher, and discussed with students, it improves students' grades and understanding of their schoolwork; and
- WHEREAS, Homework leads to desirable outcomes such as time management, study skill, self-discipline, responsibility, and independence that immediately affect students' achievement in subject areas; and
- WHEREAS, Homework is used by teachers to help students understand and review the work that has been covered in class, to see whether students understand the lesson, and to help students learn how to find and use more information on a subject; and
- WHEREAS, Children who spend time on regularly assigned, meaningful homework, on average, do better in school and score better on standardized tests, and that the academic benefits of homework increase as children move into the upper grades; secondary students those in grades 7 through 12; and
- WHEREAS, Elementary school students gain academic benefit from reading and basic skill practice homework; and
- WHEREAS, Overloading students at all levels with homework is counter-productive; and
- WHEREAS, For children in grades K-2, homework is more effective when it does not exceed 10-20 minutes each school day; older children, in grades 3-6, can handle 30-60 minutes a day; and
- WHEREAS, For junior and senior high school students, the amount of homework will vary by subject but there is no academic benefit after 2 hours a night for high school students and 1½ a night for middle schoolers; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations educate parents how to help their students get the most out of homework and recommend strategies to help children develop good homework habits; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations create greater understanding between families and teachers in regard to homework and provide opportunities for increased communication to keep families informed about what their children are learning and about the policies and programs of the teacher and school; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations encourage University-based teacher preparation programs and local school districts through professional development to train teachers on creating homework assignments that advance learning, and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations encourage local school districts to adopt homework policies in regard to prescribed amount of homework consistent with research evidence and in accordance to students' developmental levels.

ADOPTED, 2007  
REVIEWED, 2012

## **PARENTAL CHOICE**

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania PTA has historically been an advocate for all children, seeking to improve all schools, and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania PTA has established principles and positions which offer strong support for public schools, and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania PTA believes that options and alternatives with the public schools should ensure that:

- a viable public school system is sustained in every community
- parents have the opportunity for involvement in their child's schooling
- a fair and equitable selection process is provided for
- all children have access to equal educational opportunities
- appropriate and free transportation be provided for all students to ensure equity, and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania PTA believes that while parents have the right to choose non-public education for their children, public funds should not be used to subsidize that education, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA assume a leadership position in raising questions and exploring ideas that will help legislators, policy makers, and school districts make sound judgments on issues of parental choice, and be it further

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA opposes any choice plan which would use public funds for non-public school vouchers, and be it further

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA provide information and guidelines to local units and councils which would facilitate understanding and discussion and enable members to make informed decisions on issues of choice.

ADOPTED, 1991  
REVIEWED, 1997  
REVIEWED, 2003  
REVIEWED, 2008  
REVIEWED, 2013

## **PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION**

- WHEREAS, One of the objects of the PTA is to bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth; and
- WHEREAS, Research indicates a positive correlation between family-school collaboration and student achievement; and
- WHEREAS, Research also shows that the policies, programs, and practices of schools can determine whether parents will be involved, the extent of their involvement and in what capacity; be it therefore
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA urge the State Board of Education or General Assembly to develop a formal parent involvement statement requiring a comprehensive program of parent involvement at all grade levels in a variety of roles; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA urge local units and councils to encourage school boards to develop parent involvement policies which would support parents as decision makers and develop their leadership in governance, advisory and advocacy roles.

ADOPTED, 1991  
REVIEWED, 1997  
REVIEWED, 2003  
REVIEWED, 2007  
REVIEWED, 2012



## **PAY-TO-PLAY SCHOOL PROGRAMS**

WHEREAS, Nationally, pay-to-play school programs in which public schools charge participation fees to students to be on a interscholastic sports team and/or participate in other activities are on the rise; and

WHEREAS, Pay-to-play programs began in the 1970s and since then more and more local school boards of education have been implementing participation fees due to cuts in education funding; and

WHEREAS, Athletic programs receive a smaller portion of school budgets only 2-3% while, they are becoming more expensive to run; and

WHEREAS, Fees typically are \$50 to \$250 nationally but often can be even higher; and

WHEREAS, User fees are more often charged to sports but can be charged for clubs and activities and are found in city, suburban and rural districts; and

WHEREAS, Often parents who pay for their children to play believe that should guarantee playing time; and

WHEREAS, The implementation of pay-to-play leads to lower participation at a time when participation is rising in schools that don't charge to play sports and/or join clubs/activities; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations educate parents, local school boards and the community on pay-to-play programs and encourage them to devise a plan that will allow students to play sports and participate in school clubs/activities without user fees; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations encourage local school districts to deem student activities to be part of a district's education program and disallow pay-to-play programs; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations encourage the state legislature to deem a statute that privileges of the public schools shall be free; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA issue a statement to the general assembly encouraging full funding of sports and other activities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That although the Pennsylvania PTA does not support "Pay-to-Play," it does support activities for all children regardless of financial capability.

ADOPTED, 2007

## **PENNSYLVANIA VALUE-ADDED ASSESSMENT SYSTEM (PVAAS)**

WHEREAS, Value-added analysis is a statistical method tool used to measure the academic growth/progress rates of individual students and groups of students at the district, school/grade, and content level on existing standardized assessment data from year-to-year in grades 3 through 8; and

WHEREAS, Measuring a student's growth provides a clear view of his or her individual academic performance and ensures progress over their school career in each subject; and

WHEREAS, In 2002, the Pennsylvania State Board of Education passed a resolution stating the implementation of a "value-added approach across the Commonwealth"; and

WHEREAS, Beginning in October 2002 through fall 2005, approximately 100 pilot school districts provided a foundation of knowledge and experience for statewide implementation of PVAAS; and

WHEREAS, Fall 2007, Pennsylvania Department of Education (POE) will provide all school districts in Pennsylvania with comprehensive PVAAS reporting data to use for local decision-making on PSSA data as seen appropriate by the district and superintendent; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations inform parents and school districts of the benefits of PVAAS as a useful tool in tracking the academic progress of students, stimulating reflection, and improving instruction; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations urge superintendents and school districts to implement PVAAS with the analysis of PSSA data from grades 3 through 8 as another tool to measure students' rate of growth over time.

ADOPTED, 2006

## PRIVACY OF STUDENTS' RECORDS – MILITARY RECRUITERS

- WHEREAS, All Local educational agencies (LEAs) must provide to military recruiters or institutions of higher education, upon request access to secondary school students, and directory information on those students; and
- WHEREAS, The state military affairs law requires the release of directory information consisting of a list of secondary male and female students by name, home address, telephone number compiled by the first day of the academic year in which the senior students will graduate in accordance with section 9528 of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001, section 544 of the National Defense Authorization Act of Fiscal Year 2002 and Pennsylvania Law Act 10 of 1991; and
- WHEREAS, What constitutes “directory *information*” is determined by each school district, but may also include email address, photograph, date and place of birth, major field of study, participation in officially recognized activities and sports, weight and height of members of athletic teams, as well as degrees, honors, and awards received; and
- WHEREAS, Section 9528 of NCLB Act also requires LEAs to provide military recruiters the same access as post-secondary institutions or prospective employers and LEAs that fail to provide this information risk losing federal funds under NCLB Act; and
- WHEREAS, Under the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and section 9528 of NCLB Act, and LEA must provide a single notice to parents disseminated through a mailing, student handbook, or other method of the types of student information that it routinely releases to military recruiters and an explanation of a parent’s right to request that the information not be disclosed, without prior written consent and any applicable deadlines or referred to as “opt-out”; and
- WHEREAS, The Department of Defense (DOD) has created a massive database of information on more than 25 million children ages 16-18 over the past three years. This database is updated daily and distributed monthly to the Armed Services for recruitment purposes. It contains the child’s full name, address, email address, home and cell phone numbers, ethnicity, social security number, date of birth, gender, high school name, graduation date, Grade Point Average (GPA) code, subjects of study, college intent (if documented), military intent (if documented), field of study, current college attending, Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) test date, ASVAB Armed Forces Qualifying Test Category Score; and

- WHEREAS, Parents and students can “opt-out” of being included in this database, but the information is not deleted, rather it is moved to a “suppression file”, where the Pentagon will retain, but not release the information; and
- WHEREAS, The system gives the Pentagon the right, without notifying citizens, to share the data for numerous uses outside the military, including with law enforcement, state law authorities and Congress; and
- WHEREAS, The term “opt-out” refers to a parents or students’ ability to request their records and contact information are not disclosed and should not prevent the disclosure of directory information to other entities, but some schools may treat military recruiters opt-out requests as an opt-out of all directory information disclosures, including colleges and prospective employers; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA, through its constituent organizations, increase awareness and community sensitivity about the ramifications involved in the collection and dissemination of information by military recruiters regarding students; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA, through its constituent organizations, support legislation and policies that would change current law by providing for an “opt-out” policy where interested students and families can instead choose to request contact from military recruiters; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA, through its constituent organizations, work with administrators and schools to ensure the privacy of student records respecting the rights of parents and students that deserve to know who has their information and is mindful that parents should be involved in the important decision to enlist in military service.

ADOPTED, April 2006

## **REDUCED CLASS SIZE FOR PRIMARY GRADES**

- WHEREAS, Research has shown that students who are taught in small classes in the primary grades achieve greater academic success than students from larger classes and that the benefit continues beyond the primary grades; and
- WHEREAS, Noticeable benefit is achieved when class size in primary grades is reduced to below 20 students, however significant student achievement requires class size reduction to 15 students; and
- WHEREAS, Class size reductions are associated with achievement gains in reading and math for low-achievers in the primary grades as demonstrated by increased scores on both standardized and curriculum-based tests; and
- WHEREAS, Classroom atmosphere is more positive in smaller classes, as indicated by more attentive students, better behavior, more positive interaction between teachers and students, improved attendance and more time on task during the school day; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies encourage local school districts to implement a phase-in class size policy for primary grades; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies work with policy makers to mandate a maximum class size for primary and/or elementary grades, including appropriate funding for implementing the lower class size requirements; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies encourage school districts to provide staff development and technical assistance to teachers in making the transition from traditional large group format to more individualized and personal teaching.

ADOPTED, 1998  
REVIEWED, 2004  
REVIEWED, 2010  
REVIEWED, 2015

## **SCHOOL FUNDING AND THE NEGATIVE EFFECT OF REFERENDUM**

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is nationally recognized annually as having one of the most inequitable school finance systems in the country which results in large opportunity gaps for many students; and

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania over time has put into place several pieces of state policy which already place controls on local school district spending\*\*; but has continued to place requirements, regulations, and mandates on schools which often come with no state funding attached; and

WHEREAS, The Pennsylvania school finance system is one which has been unresponsive to the needs of schools needing major improvement under No Child Left Behind mandates and real programmatic needs of students with disabilities which will contribute to the struggle of school districts trying to meet these demands; and

WHEREAS, State government spending has equally increased in percentages compared to local school district spending during the last decade and disputes the argument that local school districts have “run-away” spending taking place, and

WHEREAS, Proposals brought forward to implement referendum on school budgets have had unrealistic time lines, limit predictability for local school district, and would restrict school district’s responsibility to help all students reach academic standards and proficiency under the No Child Left Behind Act; and

WHEREAS, The majority of a school district’s budget is locked into fixed costs that are not discretionary; and

WHEREAS, It is questionable to ask that public schools be the only program of state and local government whose operating budget is subject to referendum; and

WHEREAS, It is questionable to ask that public schools be the only program of state and local government whose operating budget is subject to referendum; and

WHEREAS, The General Assembly should focus its efforts on establishing a reliable school funding formula that distributes state funding to school districts in an equitable manner; and

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA, in conjunction with its councils and local units and with other educational organizations, contact state legislators and the Governor to advocate strongly against the use of referendum as a public school funding policy.

ADOPTED, 2004  
REVIEWED, 2010

## **SCHOOL TO WORK PROGRAMS**

WHEREAS, PTA believes that every child should be provided with a good general education that will prepare him or her to pursue a career or further academic training; and

WHEREAS, School to work programs enable today's students to be competitive in a changing global economy by providing a variety of work-based learning experiences including job shadowing, mentoring, intensive work-based learning, career exploration and career counseling; and

WHEREAS, School to work programs provide opportunities to a broad cross-section of students, integrating classroom instruction and real world work experiences to make learning relevant; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA provide information and education about the school to work concept to parents and the community; and be it further

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies encourage parental representation on committees and planning groups for local school to work programs which include participation in planning, goal-setting, review and evaluation of programs, and be it further

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies encourage written communication from the school to the students involved in school to work programs, and be it further

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies promote the school to work concept to business and industry and urge the collaboration and cooperation among business, industry and education within the education community.

ADOPTED, 1995  
REVIEWED, 2013

## **TECHNOLOGY EDUCATION**

WHEREAS, Our body of knowledge has grown rapidly in the last two decades and will continue to grow even more rapidly in the 21st century; and

WHEREAS, All of the technological knowledge we work with today will represent only a small percentage of the knowledge that will be available in the year 2050, and

WHEREAS, PTA believes that all students should have equal access to technology training as it will be an integral part of their future lives and careers; therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations foster public awareness of the importance of technology education and its future potential and provide opportunities for parents to understand the technology that their children are learning and using in the schools; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations encourage the inclusion of parents and the community in the development and implementation of long-range plans for technology education in their schools and school districts; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations urge administrators and school boards to increase use of technology in the classroom.

ADOPTED, 1995  
REVIEWED, 2001  
AMENDED, 2007



# ENVIRONMENT

## AIR QUALITY IN SCHOOL BUILDINGS

- WHEREAS, According to the EPA there is an increasing awareness of health problems arising from poor indoor air quality; and
- WHEREAS, Air pollution levels can be far greater indoors than outdoors due to improperly designed or maintained heating, ventilation and air-conditioning systems and pollutants from equipment, furniture and supplies in a building; and
- WHEREAS, The total effect of various pollutants such as biological agents (bacteria, viruses, fungi, pollen, dust mites and molds) as well as carbon monoxide and chemical and organic compounds found in furniture, paint, carpets, construction materials and supplies can result in unhealthy air and cause allergic reactions, headaches, lethargy, dizziness, nausea and other short and long-term health effects; and
- WHEREAS, Parents may diagnose and control air-quality problems in their own homes, their children may be exposed during the school day to pollutants in their school buildings; and
- WHEREAS, Workers in most federal, state and private buildings are ensured of a reduced risk of poor indoor air quality through mandatory enforcement policies to maintain, repair and adjust ventilation systems; children and parents must rely on school districts to voluntarily monitor and improve air quality, therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA through its constituent bodies provide awareness programs for parents and the community on the effects of poor indoor air quality and methods for improving indoor air quality in the home, school and community; and, be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA local units and councils urge their respective school districts to provide air quality monitoring equipment that would ensure a healthy school environment; and, be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies encourage school districts to conduct an annual air quality assessment; and, be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA encourage its constituent bodies to urge school districts to name an indoor Air Quality Coordinator; and, be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA seek and support legislation that would require mandatory guidelines for ventilation maintenance codes for school buildings that include provision for an enforcement program and funding to ensure compliance when an indoor air quality problem arises.

ADOPTED, 1996  
REVIEWED, 2003

## **ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD EXPOSURE**

WHEREAS, The Environmental Protection Agency and the National Institutes of Health are currently studying potential health risks associated with electromagnetic field (EMF) radiation exposure, and

WHEREAS, A documented dose-response relationship has been established between prolonged exposure to electromagnetic fields, at levels greater than 2.0 milligauss per day, and the incidence of childhood cancers, primarily childhood leukemia, and

WHEREAS, Current scientific knowledge clearly suggests a health hazard great enough to justify the reduction of EMF exposure, therefore be it

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA informs and educates its members about potential health risks associated with EMF exposure, and be it further

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA supports procedures to accurately measure EMF levels in schools, on school grounds and in day care centers currently located near high voltage power lines, as well as comprehensive epidemiologic studies in those facilities exhibiting EMFs above accepted levels, and be it further

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA opposes the construction of new schools or child care facilities on property exhibiting EMF radiation greater than 2.0 milligauss per day and/or within 200 yards of high voltage lines or microwave towers.

ADOPTED, 1994  
REVIEWED, 2013

## **RADON TESTING IN SCHOOLS**

WHEREAS, Radon-222 is a naturally occurring radioactive gas produced by the radioactive decay of radium-226 (half-life, 1,620 years) in soil and rocks, producing radioactive decay products which bind to particles in the air; and

WHEREAS, Radon gas trapped indoors constitutes a substantial health risk as a carcinogen and has been identified as the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States; and

WHEREAS, The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA):

- a. ranks radon among the most serious current environment hazards
- b. therefore, recommends that school nationwide be tested for radon;

and

WHEREAS, Children may be at a higher risk of future lung cancer from repeated exposure to radon because;

- a. they have similar lung volumes
- b. they have higher breathing rates
- c. the probability of specific radiation dosages inducing lung cancer may be age related; and

WHEREAS, Radon testing, diagnostic evaluation, and mitigation procedures are relatively inexpensive and feasible for most schools and homes; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA supports radon testing in all schools in Pennsylvania and other states, particularly in the Northeast United States where the highest concentrations of radon have been found; and be it further

RESOLVED, The Pennsylvania PTA recognizes radon exposure as a health risk to children and adults and encourages councils and local units to educate PTA members and the community about the dangers of radon and methods for radon testing and detection; and be it further

RESOLVED, The Pennsylvania PTA, through its constituent bodies, urge local school districts to conduct radon testing in each school and also urges local school boards to take immediate mitigating action in schools documented elevation above recommended levels of radon concentrations.

ADOPTED, 1993  
REVIEWED, 1999  
REVIEWED, 2005  
AMENDED, 2011  
REVIEWED, 2016

# HEALTH, SAFETY, AND NUTRITION

## **CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS**

- WHEREAS, An object of the PTA is to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth; and
- WHEREAS, Statistics show that the majority of interscholastic sports injuries occur in practice rather than competitive events (games); and
- WHEREAS, Research indicates school districts employing certified athletic trainers have fewer sport injuries and better levels of athletic health care; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA through its constituent bodies encourage school districts to employ certified athletic trainers and support a mandate to provide certified athletic trainers for interscholastic sports programs.

ADOPTED, 1991  
REVIEWED, 1997  
REVIEWED, 2003  
REVIEWED, 2013

## **DRINKING AND DRIVING**

- WHEREAS, Society's general acceptance of drinking and driving is one main obstacle to solving the drinking-driver problem; and
- WHEREAS, Alcohol is the most abused drug among adolescents; and
- WHEREAS, Driving under the influence was the cause of 618 deaths in our state in 2003 and accounted for 39% of all traffic deaths and 578 deaths in our state in 2008; and
- WHEREAS, The laws of the State of Pennsylvania are strict regarding both adult and adolescent offenders and many sentences are mandatory; and
- WHEREAS, A PTA priority is the protection and care of children and youth, therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA urge its constituent associations to inform parents and youth, through educational programs and materials of the danger of driving under the influence of alcohol; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA encourage its constituent associations to inform their communities of current laws about driving under the influence.

ADOPTED, 1993  
AMENDED, 1999  
AMENDED, 2005  
AMENDED, 2011

## **FIREARM INJURY PREVENTION**

WHEREAS, The proliferation and access to firearms have reached epidemic proportions in Pennsylvania and across the nation, and

WHEREAS, A child is killed with a loaded gun every two hours in this country, and

WHEREAS, The American Academy of Pediatrics has recognized the threat to children with the following studies:

- a. 90% of accidental shootings are linked to easy-to-find, loaded hand guns in the home;
- b. the risk of suicide is five times greater if a gun is kept in the home;
- c. the risk of domestic homicide is three times greater if a gun is kept in the home;
- d. a gun kept in the home is 43 times more likely to kill a family member or friend than a criminal intruder;
- e. more than one-third of all accidental shootings of children occur at home or in the homes of friends and relatives; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies provide firearm safety programs and information for families and encourage firearm safety education in our schools.

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies provide instruction for all parents in teaching their children the risks of firearm injury at home, in the homes of their friends and relatives, and in places where they visit and play.

ADOPTED, 1994



## **GANG AWARENESS**

WHEREAS, Gangs exist not only in major urban areas but in smaller cities, suburbs and rural areas; and

WHEREAS, Gang participation is associated with vandalism, drug trafficking, racial harassment and violent crimes including drive-by shootings; and

WHEREAS, Gang members usually adopt distinctive clothing, symbols and colors as a means to identify and solidify members of the same gang and to identify members of rival gangs; and

WHEREAS, Gangs attract youth with multiple personal and social problems who are alienated from family, school, place of worship, and community; and

WHEREAS, Pre-gang behaviors usually begin in elementary school and become solidified by middle school; and

WHEREAS, Gangs thrive in areas where there is no strong community support system and where there few positive social opportunities available for youths; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies urge school districts to adopt a policy designed to protect children and youth from the threats by gangs as well as a policy that bans the wearing of gang symbols, colors and other gang inspired clothing in the school; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies urge school districts to institute gang awareness information as a part of the school curriculum beginning in the elementary grades and to include problem solving and anger management skills at all level; and be it further

RESOLVED, That local PTA units and councils, urges schools, communities, local law enforcement, State Attorney General's Office and places of worship to cooperate in establishing supervised after-school programs for children and youth as an alternative to gang involvement and to establish a Gang Task Force; and be it further

RESOLVED, That local PTA units and councils sponsor workshops to educate parents, teachers, children and the community about gangs and violence prevention.

ADOPTED, 1993  
REVIEWED, 1999  
AMENDED, 2005  
AMENDED, 2011  
REVIEWED, 2016

## **HELMET USE AND BICYCLE SAFETY**

WHEREAS, Children die annually in the United States from bicycle injuries, head injuries being the most common cause, exceeding the death rate from accidental poisonings, falls, and firearm injuries in young children, and

WHEREAS, Bicyclists are treated in emergency rooms each year, having suffered head injuries, leaving many permanently disabled, and

WHEREAS, Research indicates that wearing bicycle helmets can reduce head injuries, and

WHEREAS, Surveys have shown that the main reason for low helmet use is general lack of awareness about the risks of bicycle injuries, and

WHEREAS, Bicycle accidents causing head injuries can occur on sidewalks, driveways, bike paths, parks, as well as the street; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies provide information to all parents, teachers, and students regarding helmet use and encourage them to conduct bicycle safety programs, and be it further

RESOLVED, That children be taught the importance of learning the "Rules of the Road" when they learn to drive their first vehicle, and the importance of wearing helmets to protect a bicyclist's head, and be it further

RESOLVED, That all PTA/PTSA units, councils, and districts encourage the use of bicycle helmets for all persons.

ADOPTED, 1997  
REVIEWED, 2013

## PENNSYLVANIA SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

- WHEREAS, Educators, realizing the important connection between learning and good nutrition, initiated the School Breakfast Program under the Child Nutrition Act of 1966 (*recently updated and entitled: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2013*) and made permanent by Congress in 1975 (*most recently on December 13, 2013*); and
- WHEREAS, Combined State and Federal reimbursements are designed to cover the full cost of a free breakfast for a low income child; and
- WHEREAS, Research has displayed many positive effects of school breakfast on the growth, health, and learning abilities of children; and
- WHEREAS, Pennsylvania PTA is an advocate of child nutrition; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA encourage local units and councils to support the adoption of breakfast programs in their school districts; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent associations educate and inform their communities regarding benefits of school breakfast programs.

ADOPTED, 1991  
REVIEWED, 1997  
AMENDED, 2003  
AMENDED, 2009  
AMENDED, 2014

## **PLAYGROUND INJURY PREVENTION**

WHEREAS, No statewide statistics exist, but national statistics indicate that hundreds of thousands of children under the age of fifteen require hospital emergency room treatment annually for injuries related to playground equipment; and

WHEREAS, A large percentage of playground related injuries occur at school; and

WHEREAS, The Consumer Federation of America and the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission have established guidelines for playground safety and injury prevention; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA urge its constituent bodies to become knowledgeable in recognizing the hazards of playgrounds in their communities; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA through its constituent bodies encourage the Pennsylvania Department of Education and all local school districts and municipalities to enact stringent guidelines for school playground safety; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA recognize Playground Safety Week that is scheduled in April every year, as a time to focus on playground safety and to advocate safety and injury prevention on our state's playgrounds.

ADOPTED, 1992  
REVIEWED, 1998  
AMENDED, 2004  
REVIEWED, 2010  
AMENDED, 2015

## **PRESCHOOL VISION SCREENING FOR AMBLYOPIA AND STRABISMUS**

- WHEREAS, The goal of preschool vision screening, as developed by the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind, is the prevention of serious vision impairments and possible blindness through early detection and referral for treatment of eye problems; and
- WHEREAS, Approximately one in six children is born with strabismus, a condition in which the eyes do not move properly in relation to each other, resulting from birth, injury, heredity, illness or improper development; and
- WHEREAS, Amblyopia, commonly called “lazy eye” and affecting one in 20 children, is defined as a functional disorder in which one eye sees less well than the other and that this can be corrected and full vision restored if detected early: and, if not detected, blindness in that eye may be permanent; and
- WHEREAS, Vision screening is a volunteer project in many communities through which trained, dedicated volunteers detect those preschool children with deviations from normal vision; and refer those with eye problems to the proper source for examination, diagnosis, and treatment; and
- WHEREAS, Vision problems may be a serious handicap to the child entering school; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA urge its constituent bodies to encourage the implementation of preschool vision screening by local school districts or by PTA and community volunteers in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Association for the Blind; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That where preschool vision screening is in place, Pennsylvania PTA encourage its constituent bodies to combine efforts with currently involved volunteers to prevent serious vision impairment through early detection and referral.

ADOPTED, 1992  
REVIEWED, 1998  
REVIEWED, 2004  
REVIEWED, 2010  
AMENDED, 2013

## **SCHOOL HEALTH COUNCILS**

WHEREAS, A healthy child is a teachable child and sickness, hunger, physical abuse, drug abuse, emotional, social, and physical problems are serious inhibitors to students' ability to learn; and

WHEREAS, The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has identified the major health problems that children face as: those caused by tobacco use, alcohol and other drug use, suicidal behaviors that contribute to unintentional pregnancy, STDs, HIV, unhealthy dietary habits, and physical inactivity; and

WHEREAS, The American Cancer Society (ACS) wants to prevent cancer , the number two leading cause of death in the United States, prevention efforts must be directed toward children and adolescents in school; and

WHEREAS, As our children's problems intensify, school personnel, parents, and the community, need to examine how well the critical health issues of their students are being addressed; and

WHEREAS, School Health Councils provide a setting for teachers, parent and community member to help students learn and practice life skills in a safe, healthy, and supportive environment; and

WHEREAS, School Health Councils enable schools, parents and community members to increase the chances that children will make healthy decisions about tobacco use, alcohol and drug abuse, physical activity, nutrition, and proper medical use; and

WHEREAS, School Health Councils address a Coordinated School Health Program (CSHP) which consists of the following eight components:

1. School environment
2. Comprehensive school health education
3. Health services
4. School meals and nutrition
5. Physical education
6. Counseling psychological, and mental health services
7. Staff health promotion
8. Family and community involvement in schools; and

WHEREAS, School Health Councils coordinate the activities of the CSHP and are accountable to parents, school administration, and community, for program quality and effectiveness; and

- WHEREAS, A School Health Council is an advisory body comprised of representatives of each component area of CSHP; be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies support the efforts to encourage schools and communities to develop a School Health Council in order to foster a connection between good health and learning in school children; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies support the efforts of school health education throughout the entire school, including discipline policies, cafeteria offerings, and physical education programs; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies collaborate with the many resources available, such as the PA Department of Health, PA Department of Education, Intermediate Units, American Cancer Society, Penn State University, and other organizations, to assist in the development of a School Health Council.

ADOPTED, 2003

## **SCHOOL NURSE SERVICES**

WHEREAS, A primary concern of PTA is the health and well-being of all children; and

WHEREAS, There is a significant increase in the number and complexity of health problems affecting children today; and

WHEREAS, As a certified professional, the school nurse is trained to recognize and deal with physical and emotional issues that may affect school achievement and readiness to learn and qualified to develop a comprehensive health education curriculum as well as provide instruction to students; and

WHEREAS, The current school nurse/student ration requires no less than one school nurse for every 1500 students which often means the school nurse serves several buildings within a school district and very few schools have a full-time health care provider available; therefore be it

RESOLVED That Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies support legislation that would maintain the status of certified school nurses as primary health care providers and reduce the current school nurse/student ratio.

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA local units and councils urge their local school boards to employ qualified full-time health care providers in all school buildings based on the students' individual needs.

ADOPTED, 1995  
REVIEWED, 2015



## **SPORTS AND SPORTSMANSHIP**

WHEREAS, The purpose of athletic programs whether high school or sandlot is to teach children the skills of the game, the fun of the sport, and provide a positive outlook towards life; and

WHEREAS, Sports programs provide a positive learning experience in areas of sportsmanship, teamwork, competition, and how to win and lose gracefully; and

WHEREAS, Athletics plays an important part in helping the individual develop a healthy self-concept as well as a healthy body; and

WHEREAS, Coaches and parents should serve as positive role models for children by exhibiting sportsmanlike behavior at games, practices, and at home; and

WHEREAS, The National PTA promotes sports and children stating that parents positively reinforce their children's activities and teach them good sportsmanship, by showing them that fun, recreation, and cooperation are more important than winning, and by helping children learn to lose gracefully, and by sharing their disappointments as well as their triumphs; and

WHEREAS, Leadership should be of the highest quality so as to exemplify to the participants that success is not measured by the won/loss record, but rather in the intangible personality factors that result from participation; and therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA provide information to local units and councils about programs available to help parents improve local youth sports programs; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its local units and councils encourage the hiring of coaches who exemplify the principles of fair play, honesty, and good sportsmanship in their own actions and promote these qualities before others; and be it further

RESOLVED, That the local units and councils be encouraged to educate and inform parents so as to help parents to be positively involved in all levels of athletic competition.

ADOPTED, 1989  
REVIEWED, 1995  
REVIEWED, 2015

## **SUN SAFETY: SKIN CANCER PREVENTION MEASURES AT SCHOOL**

- WHEREAS, Skin cancer is one of the most common cancers afflicting adults and the chief cause of skin cancer is exposure to ultraviolet (UV) radiation emitted from the sun; and
- WHEREAS, Sixty to eighty percent of a person's lifetime UV exposure occurs during childhood and adolescence; and
- WHEREAS, UV rays are most powerful between 10:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. when students are outdoors daily on campus for significant time periods during these hours; and
- WHEREAS, Solar radiation, including UV rays, is classified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services as a "known human carcinogen," or cancer-causing agent, as are asbestos, radon, and tobacco smoke; and
- WHEREAS, A person's chance of developing melanoma, the most deadly form of skin cancer, is often directly related to his or her exposure to the sun during the pre-adult years and research shows, that the risk of developing skin cancer is increased by experiencing two or more blistering sunburns as a child; and
- WHEREAS, Over-exposure to UV radiation can also result in painful sunburns, cataracts, a weakened immune system and premature aging, including wrinkles and blotches; and
- WHEREAS, Skin cancer is highly preventable when specific sun-safety behaviors, including the use of sunscreen, protective clothing, wide-brimmed hats and sunglasses with UV protective lenses are adopted and where these behaviors and supplemented by environmental guidelines and sun protection policies, such as the provision of shade structures are implemented; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations educate students, parents, school personnel and the community about the high incidence of skin cancer and the recommended strategies for reducing risk for this disease; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations encourage local school districts and child care settings to develop a comprehensive set of sun-safety guidelines within the structured school environment; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations collaborate with local school districts to ensure that sun-safety policies are practiced and implemented during school and non-school hours; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent organizations seek to promote the practice of sun-safety measures and actions to protect the health safety of all children.

ADOPTED, 2006

## **TUBERCULOSIS TESTING OF CHILDREN**

- WHEREAS, The first historical purpose of the PTA is “To promote the welfare of children and youth...,” and the third historical purpose is “To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth”, and
- WHEREAS, Tuberculosis (TB) is a contagious disease which attacks the lungs but can also affect other areas of the body such as brain, lymphatic system, kidneys, bone/joint or spine; and
- WHEREAS, The number of reported cases of TB has slightly dropped in recent years but is still prevalent among foreign-born, senior citizens, people who are HIV positive, people who are diagnosed with Diabetes, and because there is a generalized belief that TB is no longer a problem; and
- WHEREAS, Children are at greater risk because they are more susceptible, and because people who are in close spaces, such as a classroom, are at higher risk, as are minorities and the homeless; and
- WHEREAS, When TB is diagnosed early it can be controlled more easily and with less disability and morbidity; and
- WHEREAS, Routine testing of children by the Mantoux method is recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics and other experts; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies alert and educate parents about the risk of TB and the need to have their children tested, preferably by the most current and accurate method available, as part of their routine physical examinations.

ADOPTED, 1997  
REVIEWED, 2003  
AMENDED, 2009  
AMENDED, 2014

## **YOUTH SUICIDE AWARENESS & PREVENTION**

- Whereas, The current increase in youth suicide is affected by the lack of knowledge and resources available to those who need them; and
- Whereas, Over half of all youth suicides could have been prevented with proper suicide awareness training; and
- Whereas, Self-directed violent acts, fatal and non-fatal suicidal behavior, and non-suicidal intention of self-harm as in self-mutilation are all serious health issues; and
- Whereas, Children and youth are susceptible to high levels of stress, confusion, and a feeling of hopelessness related to various situations in their lives; therefore be it
- Resolved, The Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent associations support early screening and identification of suicidal behavior with input from mental health professionals; be it further
- Resolved, The Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent associations encourage the Pennsylvania Department of Education to require all faculty members and administrators of \*public school entities to complete at least four (4) hours of professional development training on suicide awareness every five (5) years; be it further
- Resolved, The Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent associations urge all public school entities to adopt model policies that deal with the prevention of suicide among youth, especially in grades 5 through 12; be it further
- Resolved, The Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent associations urge parents, community members, teachers and administrators to work together to develop a comprehensive school based suicide prevention program; and be it further
- Resolved, The Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent associations support legislation that will provide each public school entity with the needed resources (at no cost to the public school entity) such as online courses regarding youth suicide prevention, counseling, and awareness.

\* Public school entity is defined as a school district, joint school district, charter school, regional charter school, cyber charter school and intermediate or area vocational technical school.

# POSITION PAPERS

## **CYBERBULLYING/CYBER-HARASSMENT/CYBERSTALKING**

- The PENNSYLVANIA PTA believes the home, school, and community environment must be free of all forms of cyberbullying/cyber-harassment/cyberstalking which is defined as: "Cyberbullying" is when a child, preteen or teen is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another child, preteen or teen using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones. It has to have a minor on both sides, or at least have been instigated by a minor against another minor. Once adults become involved, it is plain and simple cyber-harassment or cyberstalking. Adult cyberharassment or cyberstalking is NEVER called cyberbullying. There are two kinds of cyberbullying, direct attacks (messages sent to your kids directly) and cyberbullying by proxy (using others to help cyberbully the victim, either with or without the accomplice's knowledge). Because cyberbullying by proxy often gets adults involved in the harassment, it is much more dangerous.
- The PENNSYLVANIA PTA recognizes that cyberbullying/cyberharassment/cyberstalking is not limited to students, but might include members of the home, school, and community.
- The PENNSYLVANIA PTA believes schools should recognize the impact of bullying in all forms. Schools should develop, implement and communicate educational programs designed to help the home, school, and community to recognize, oppose, prevent, and eliminate all forms of cyberbullying/cyber-harassment/cyberstalking.
- The PENNSYLVANIA PTA supports the schools' efforts to provide staff training and the resources needed to effectively eliminate schools of cyberbullying/cyberharassment/cyberstalking. The PENNSYLVANIA PTA also believes that parents must be included in each step of this planning process.
- The PENNSYLVANIA PTA encourages each school to develop an all-encompassing response according to their school-wide disciplinary plan of reports of cyberbullying/cyberharassment/cyberstalking that includes all those involved, appropriate staff, and the parents of each child involved.
- The PENNSYLVANIA PTA strongly believes law enforcement be alerted to any cases of cyberbullying/cyber-harassment/cyberstalking when warranted.
- The PENNSYLVANIA PTA supports legislation that would provide adequate resources and support for victims of cyberbullying/cyber-harassment/cyberstalking and their families and set mandated penalties for offenders.

January, 2010

## EXTRACTION OF NATURAL GAS (*FRACKING*)

*Fracking: Involves injecting millions of gallons of water, chemicals, and sand into shale rock formations at high pressures to break-open the rock, thus releasing natural gas. The chemicals used in this process are toxic and can leak into drinking water.*

Pennsylvania PTA places a high value on a safe environment for children and youth and is concerned with the ability to monitor the activity of “fracking” or any form of extracting natural gas. Prior to the extraction of natural gas, Pennsylvania PTA emphasizes the importance of notifying physicians and community members alike of any chemicals being used in this process, thus enabling our children and youth to be diagnosed and treated, if affected. All citizens of Pennsylvania have the right to clean air, pure water, and the preservation of a safe and healthy environment. Currently, Pennsylvania has the second largest reserve of natural gas in the country and therefore, the second largest state where “fracking” sites are not just a possibility, but a reality. Therefore, Pennsylvania PTA:

- Advocates for research for a safer, cleaner method of the extraction of natural gas
- Supports local associations in becoming actively involved in their areas by educating their members on the amount of local “fracking” sites and to increase their efforts in advocating for their right to know any and all chemicals being used on these sites
- Supports the efforts of the appropriate agencies to take remedial steps to ensure the protection of children and youth from the harmful effects of “fracking”
- Encourages all communities to hold town hall meetings to include members of the community, fire companies, physicians, nurses, school board members, parents, teachers, administrators, school business officials, police departments, etc. to be educated on the potential hazards of extracting natural gas by “fracking” and the disposal of waste

October, 2012

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Parent Teacher Association (PTA) is a strong advocate for the health and well-being of every child and continues to explore ways to combat problems such as obesity, asthma and other health related issues affecting our children today. The PTA resolution on Physical Education in Schools urges all members to support daily Physical Education (PE) programs as an integral part of childhood education. Thomas Jefferson taught us that, “A child who is not physically well cannot learn” and his words could not be more true today, as childhood obesity in the United States reaches epidemic proportions, jeopardizing not only the health of our kids, but also their academic development.

According to the Center for Disease Control, it is recommended that children participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity most days of the week, preferably daily, and the United States Surgeon General recommends at least 30 minutes of physical activity per child. The results of a trio of studies presented at the 2001 Society for Neuroscience Conference suggest that regular exercise can improve cognitive function and increase levels of substances in the brain responsible for maintaining the health of neurons.

Pennsylvania PTA supports:

- Local school districts providing quality, age- and developmentally-appropriate physical activities for the recommended minimum 30 minutes per day recommended by the United States Surgeon General, to be accomplished through either physical education classes or mandatory recess.
- Daily recess periods for elementary school students that allows time for unstructured but supervised active play, including physical activities other than or in addition to competitive sports.
- Secondary students given physical activity opportunities daily, such as organized intramural and extra mural sports teams, individual sports, and/or recreational activities such as walking, running, skating, bicycling, dancing, or swimming.
- Information offered to parents, teachers and students about the importance of physical activity to physical, emotional and mental development and to promote healthy lifestyles by encouraging outdoor play.

April, 2009



## **PUBLIC SCHOOL LIBRARY PROGRAMS**

Pennsylvania PTA realizes that effective school libraries should include a variety of instructional and educational programs designed to meet the needs of all students. Students and teachers need school library services and related educational resources in order to meet Pennsylvania academic standards for research and learning in all core academic subjects. All Pennsylvania's public schools should have a viable school library, including impoverished, rural and urban communities which service a larger number of at risk children. Pennsylvania Public School Code requires school libraries and staffing for private schools although there is no requirement for public schools to operate a school library or to have certified staffing.

- Therefore, Pennsylvania PTA advocates for policy and regulatory reform that sets standards for public school library programs.
- Pennsylvania PTA calls upon its constituent associations to build partnerships with other associations, agencies, policy makers, educators, and school board members to build a statewide network for public school library programs.
- The Pennsylvania PTA through on-line articles and *PTA in Pennsylvania* shall educate parents of school aged students in learning the value of public school library programs and the importance of professional librarians.
- Pennsylvania PTA is mindful that public school library programs contribute to student achievement.

JANUARY, 2011  
REVIEWED, 2016

**ACCOMPLISHED**

## **ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

WHEREAS, A quality education program must recognize the needs of every student so that no child is left behind and no child's talents wasted; and

WHEREAS, There are students who are not necessarily academically deficient but whose negative behaviors are disruptive and/or truant and therefore do not succeed in the normal classroom environment; and

WHEREAS, When these students are temporarily removed from the traditional classroom, the general school climate is improved and administrators and teachers are able to devote time formerly taken with discipline to the business of education; and

WHEREAS, Alternative education programs enable disruptive students to receive needed individual attention and increase their self-esteem and stress teamwork, social interaction, responsibility, participation and job and living skills with the objective of mainstreaming the students and allowing them to achieve success in school; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA urge units and councils to form committees of study groups to determine the feasibility of an alternative education program in their individual school districts and/or intermediate units, according to need; be it further

RESOLVED, That the units and councils encourage development and implementation of education programs, taught by specialist teachers, which can serve as alternatives for those students, who have been identified by a multi-disciplinary team as being disruptive, truant or displaying negative behavior not due to physical, emotional or learning disabilities, so as to ensure the right of every child to graduate and become a functional citizen of the community.

ADOPTED, 1987  
REVIEWED, 1993  
REVIEWED, 1998  
REVIEWED, 2004  
REVIEWED, 2010  
ACCOMPLISHED, 2015

## PARENTING EDUCATION

WHEREAS, Parents must have the necessary information, skills, knowledge, and personal development if they are to wisely guide their children's growth and development; not only is it important to provide education for those who are already parents, it is of paramount importance to provide such education for adolescents before they become parents; therefore be it

RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA encourage its local units and councils to strive to make parenting a part of the curriculum in their individual school district and education and be it further

RESOLVED, That Pennsylvania PTA encourages its local units and councils to include parenting education workshops as part of their parenting involvement training.

ADOPTED, 1978  
REVIEWED, 1993  
AMENDED, 1999  
AMENDED, 2005  
REVIEWED, 2011  
ACCOMPLISHED, 2016

## **SEAT BELT USE FOR ALL VEHICLE OCCUPANTS**

- WHEREAS, Seat belts are designed to prevent injuries and save lives; and
- WHEREAS, The accident rate is much greater on city streets than on turnpikes and freeways, and statistics show that three out of every four accidents occur within 25 miles of home and 30% of all accidents occur at speeds less than 40 mph; and
- WHEREAS, Seat belt usage has been proven to be effective in reducing automobile deaths by 50% and in reducing automobile injuries by 65%; and
- WHEREAS, More than 64% of children ages 5-14 who died as occupants in motor vehicle crashes in 2000 were not wearing seat belts; and
- WHEREAS, There have been 12,000 deaths since 1995 because states have failed to enact primary enforcement seat-belt laws; and
- WHEREAS, In Pennsylvania in 2003, the child fatalities rate was triple those who were unrestrained then those who were restrained; and
- WHEREAS, The probability of being involved in a crash during a 75-year lifetime is better than 85% and that car crashes kill and injury more children than any disease; therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA through its units and councils take an active role in informing students, parents, and all community residents of the importance of wearing a seat belt, the correct way to wear one, and the injuries that may be incurred when one is not worn; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies encourage all persons who ride in motor vehicles as occupants or drivers to wear safety belts every time they ride; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA and its constituent bodies urge lawmakers to approve legislation strengthening seat belt laws by requiring all occupants to buckle up, and change enforcement of seat belt usage to primary enforcement, thus allowing an officer to cite a driver or occupant for failing to buckle up.

ADOPTED, 1992  
REVIEWED, 1998  
AMENDED, 2004  
REVIEWED, 2010  
ACCOMPLISHED, 2016

## **STRENGTHEN CHILD ABUSE LAW**

- WHEREAS, The term "child abuse" includes the physical or mental injury, sexual abuse, negligent treatment, or maltreatment of a child under the age of 18 by a person who is responsible for the child's welfare; and
- WHEREAS, Many children who suffer from abuses need specialized treatment due to the trauma experienced; and
- WHEREAS, The families involved in child abuse offenses need specialized counseling and rehabilitation to reduce repeat offenses; and
- WHEREAS, Many children who are abused, sexually or otherwise, tend to become abusive themselves; and
- WHEREAS, Many more children will be helped when citizens become aware of existing agencies with programs for abused children and their parents; and
- WHEREAS, Despite the efforts of government, civic organizations, and other groups and individuals, the problem of "child abuse" continues to be a severe problem in our society; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA urges the Pennsylvania General Assembly to more effectively address the problem of child abuse in the state through legislation that supports counseling, treatment centers, and rehabilitation; and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Pennsylvania PTA urges and supports legislation that would strengthen child abuse laws by imposing maximum mandated penalties on those who are convicted and those individuals working in an official capacity who fail to act when preventive action is clearly indicated in child abuse cases.

ADOPTED, 1993  
AMENDED, 1999  
REVIEWED, 2011  
ACCOMPLISHED, 2016

# APPENDIX

## Guidelines and Forms

## PROCEDURES FOR UPDATING RESOLUTIONS

A Resolution is a formal statement that outlines action by a group of people. The original motion is submitted in writing because of its importance, length or complexity. It can include, but is not limited to copies of information such as education, safety, and welfare articles or updates; documented research; pertinent laws; government publications and regulations; and articles from professional publications (examples of non-verifiable documents include, personal letters, logs of phone calls, or e-mail printouts, which are not good documentation because they cannot be verified). It must include its primary source materials (examples of non-primary materials include newspaper articles, abstracts, editorials, and materials from other organizations intended for lobbying and advocacy purposes). Background information must reflect a statewide and/or nationwide scope. Material must be less than five (5) years old. It is then presented to the general membership to be adopted by a vote.

A Resolution is a concise statement about an issue. When research is done for a Resolution the following questions should be asked?

1. Is it in accordance with PTA objects and policies?
2. Is it already covered by a state or NPTA Resolution or position paper?
3. Does it already exist elsewhere in your state?
4. Is factual information for research available?
5. Are there other resources or organization with background information in community or online?

There are two parts to a Resolution:

1. **Whereas (Preamble)** – Statements which describe the issue and shows the reason for the resolution and gives information on the situation. These statements are used to ‘make the case’. There must be at least three (3) items of support per clause with sufficient background material and rationale. It must contain background materials that are factual and verifiable. When there is more than one clause, each is written as a separate paragraph. The final *whereas* clause should end with the phrase, “and therefore be it.”
2. **Resolved (The request for action)** – The main motion that states the action the PTA wants to be taken to help solve the problem. It must set forth clearly and completely what must be done. The next to the last *resolved* clause should be followed by an “and”, and the final clause should always end in a period.

All resolutions should be reviewed continually to see if the resolutions need to be amended by updating, are no longer relevant or if the **action has been** met. Action that can be taken is as follows:

- **Mark Accomplished:** all the resolved clauses have been accomplished so there is no more action to be taken. To mark accomplished you must have at least three (3) relevant sources that prove the action has been completed. The next step is to receive approval from the Board and then delegates. (The rationale would be the three (3) sources of information that



prove the Resolution has been accomplished.) The Resolution is then "marked accomplished" and placed in a PA PTA Resolutions Binder entitled "Accomplished Resolutions".

- **Update by amending the "whereas" clauses** which can only be done if the update in no way interferes with the original intent of the background information but updates the information. (The background information is not action and therefore, to amend would be an FYI to the Board and to the delegates, but because of its importance to the relevancy of the Resolution, also needs at least three (3) sources of information to amend.)
- **Amend by updating the "resolved" clauses**, which requires a vote by the board first and then a vote by the delegates because the resolved clauses are the action. This amending can in no way interfere with, or change in any way, the intent of the original resolution but again, can only enhance the original Resolution. Amending should be done if the resolved clauses currently include information which the committee knows to be false (but was true when the Resolution originally passed). (This also needs at least three (3) sources of information to back-up the amendment and also the wording of the rationale.)
- **Move to rescind** can only be done by action of the board and then the delegates and should only be moved if the Resolution is so outrageous that it embarrasses the association (not just the committee).
- **If no action needs to be taken and the Resolution still contains up to date information and is valid as written, three current sources would also be needed to verify that the information is accurate.**

## Criteria for Submitting a Resolution to Pennsylvania PTA

All resolutions must be **RECEIVED** in the State PTA office by October 1, prior to the year of convention in which the resolutions will be voted upon, if accepted. **NO FACSIMILIES (FAX) WILL BE ACCEPTED, ONLY HARD-COPY MAILED SUBMISSIONS.**

<b>STEP 1</b>	<p>Verified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In harmony with the purposes and basic policies of PTA</li> <li>• Addresses issue of statewide concern related to the education, health, safety, or welfare of children and youth, or parental education and involvement of parents</li> <li>• Not addressed in a position statement previously adopted by Pennsylvania or National PTA</li> <li>• Not addressed in a Resolution previously adopted by Pennsylvania or National PTA</li> </ul>
<b>STEP 2</b>	<p>Format:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Correct grammar and spelling throughout</li> <li>• Clear and concise language in all “Whereas” statements</li> <li>• Font size no smaller than 10 with 1 inch page margins</li> </ul>
<b>STEP 3</b>	<p>Organization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cover sheet completed and included with proper signatures (Page 1)</li> <li>• Table of Contents (Page 2)</li> <li>• Summary statement of the resolution, no more than 150 words, that captures the intent and scope of the full resolution (Page 3)</li> <li>• Rationale for resolution (Page 4)</li> <li>• Reference summary that substantiates each “Whereas” statement by referencing the page or pages that provides the documentation in the submitted background material (Page 5)</li> <li>• Background material:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Not more than 25 double- sided or 50 single- sided pages</li> <li>○ All pages numbered consecutively</li> <li>○ Each page with the author, title, publisher, and date for each source. Online sources should include the URL</li> <li>○ Resources from a variety of sources (must have three (3) per “Whereas” statement) that are factual and verifiable and published no more than six (6) years prior</li> <li>○ PTA documents not included as background support</li> <li>○ Articles included in their entirety</li> <li>○ Support for each “Whereas” statement shown in the background references with brackets and indication as to which “Whereas” statement it supports</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

**Please note that not following the above steps might jeopardize your resolution from moving forward!**

Mail your completed submission to:

Pennsylvania PTA  
 Attn: Resolutions Committee  
 4804 Derry Street  
 Harrisburg, PA 17111

## CHECKLIST FOR SUBMITTING RESOLUTIONS

<b>Format Requirements</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Be accompanied by the appropriate and properly completed cover sheet		
Have the cover sheet signed by the President of the submitted constituent organization		
Contain a summary statement of the resolution, no more than 150 words, that capture the intent and scope of the full resolution.		
Have correct grammar and spelling throughout.		
Include a table of contents.		
Include a reference sheet that substantiates each “whereas” statement by referencing the page or pages that provide(s) documentation in the submitted background material.		
Include not more than <b>25</b> double-sided or <b>50</b> single-sided pages, numbered consecutively, printed in type not smaller than 10 point, with 1” margins.		
Be received in the Pennsylvania PTA office October 1st. (In the event the 1 <sup>st</sup> falls on a weekend, the resolution will be accepted on the next business day). Resolutions not received by the deadline will not be considered until the following year.		
Not be submitted by facsimile (faxes) or electronic mail (email).		
<b>Background Requirements:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
Relate to the education, health, safety, or welfare of children and youth, or parental education and involvement of parents.		
Be in harmony with the purposes and basic policies of PTA, as stated in the bylaws of every constituent organization.		
Concern a matter that is national in scope, written in national language with a national focus, and requiring nationwide action for solution.		
Demonstrate with background information that the issue is statewide in scope.		
State a position or resolution <b>not</b> previously adopted by the Pennsylvania or National PTA.		
Include “whereas” statements that do not cite the Purposes or Position Statements of Pennsylvania or National PTA as they are already established and assumed, although Purposes or Position Statements can be included in the rationale.		
Provide three (3) background references from three (3) different sources for each “whereas” using clear and concise information that is factual and verifiable, which are required as proof.		
Use references that are bracketed and numbered in the background material, indicating which “whereas” statement they support.		
Not use PTA materials as documentation.		
Include date appropriate references (published no more than six (6) years ago).		
Include primary source materials.		
Contain clear and concise information.		
Include, on each page, the author, title, publisher, and date for each source. Online sources must include the URL.		

