

## Top 5 Legislative Priorities for 2020-2021

### **Increase Access to Nursing, Mental Health, and Social Emotional Learning Staff**

Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that:

- Support the medical and mental health of all students P-12 with innovative funding solutions for increased non-teaching staff including but not limited to nurses, counselors, psychologists, and social workers in schools, provided in-person or according to the best practices in telehealth access.

### **Support Students and Preserve Education Funding**

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that support students during and after COVID-19:

- Protect early learning, K-12, post-secondary, and child-related programs especially:
  - Resources for students needing additional supports (academic, physical, or emotional)
  - Local effort assistance funding.
- Authorize flexibility within transportation and categorical allocations to allow districts to meet students' needs, retroactive to March 1, 2020, through August 31, 2022.
- Address the state budget deficit without creating or increasing funding inequities:
  - With progressive, sufficient, sustainable, and equitable revenue sources
  - Avoid mid-year budget cuts and/or redistribution of existing education funds.
- Allocation of new state or federal funding to support:
  - Students who receive special education services or are furthest from educational justice
  - Meals for children and youth facing food insecurity
  - COVID-19-related childcare and school-age-student care needs
  - Social and emotional health of students and staff.

### **Increasing Educational Equity by Closing the Digital Divide**

Washington State PTA shall support legislation, policies, and funding that ensure equitable digital inclusion and access for all students, families, and staff, including:

- Appropriate technology:
  - Robust, up-to-date, universal broadband infrastructure
  - Affordable broadband internet service
  - Developmentally appropriate internet-enabled devices.
- Effective engagement in online learning:
  - District-wide consistency in learning platforms
  - Professional development for educational staff including social emotional learning, equity, and social justice in online environments
  - Leveraging community partnerships, especially those that serve marginalized communities
  - Training and technical support for families and caregivers, that are accessible and delivered in a culturally competent context
  - Consideration for personal privacy issues and adherence to data privacy laws

- Identification of and support for sharing of best practices among districts.

### **Supports and Funding for Students with Disabilities and Their Families**

Washington State PTA shall support legislation and policies that uphold the following for students with disabilities and their families:

- Make resources, program services, parent education, and training accessible including:
  - Local resource centers
  - Implementation of a statewide online portal.
- Ensure that a range of appropriate devices and assistive technology is available.
- Provide access to multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS).
- Remove barriers and increase flexibility within categorical funds to meet the greatest needs.
- Remove the 13.5% cap on funded enrollment for districts.
- Fully fund and implement the federal government's obligations under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

### **Prevent and Reduce Gun Violence and Suicide**

Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that prevent and reduce gun violence and suicide including:

- Identify, address, and mitigate the disproportionate impact on communities of color, LGBTQ+, and other affected groups.
- Fund community-based prevention strategies.
- Fund school mental health supports and a statewide anonymous reporting system.
- Encourage school districts to partner with gun safety experts to educate their communities and promote safe firearm storage.
- Prohibit the sale or transfer of military-style assault weapons.

## 2020-2021 WSPTA Supported Issues

### **Equitable Identification and Services for Highly Capable Students**

Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that:

- Achieve equitable representation in highly capable (HiCap) programs via universal screening, including students who are low-income, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC), highly mobile, ELL, and students with disabilities; and expand OSPI reporting to include all subgroups at the school district level.
- Expand the identification and services for students who qualify in one academic area (math/reading) to all districts.
- Ensure that HiCap curriculum and professional development (academic and SEL) are provided to all identified students and the staff that serves them.

### **Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change**

Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that build a socially, economically, and environmentally sustainable climate for our children that:

- Adopt and enforce legislation that mitigates the effects of climate change.
- Provide funding and technical assistance to jurisdictions to develop, and implement Strategic Climate Action Plans (SCAP) that reduce school district, community, and regional greenhouse gas emissions.
- Equitably address adverse impacts to communities disproportionately affected by climate change.
- Acknowledge that climate change is a health crisis that disproportionately and adversely impacts children and youth.

### **Safe School Plans and Emergency Preparedness**

Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that support emergency preparedness in schools through:

- Funding the regional school safety centers to provide training and technical assistance for the development, annual updating and implementation of comprehensive safe school planning including continued operations plans.
- Providing resources to districts for emergency supplies and equipment.
- Verifying compliance of emergency planning coordination between districts, local, and regional emergency management, including first responders and families.