

EDUCATION EMPHASIS

National PTA believes that every child must be provided with a well-rounded, high-quality education, which will ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive members of society. Access to a free public education is the most effective method of securing this opportunity, and should not be denied to any child.

National PTA especially recognizes the special needs of underserved populations including children with disabilities, limited English proficient children, homeless children, migrant children, gifted and talented children, and undocumented children in our nation's schools.

To develop a stronger and more accountable system of education, schools must place priority on student performance and achievement. Schools must focus on what children know and are able to do and be held accountable for ensuring that all children succeed.

Challenging and precise standards must be developed which objectively measure achievement in academic areas to enable students to achieve at the highest levels possible.

National PTA and its constituent bodies promote the establishment of, and support for existing educational programs, policies and procedures that:

- Provide equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, gender, national origin, language, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Place an increased emphasis on the teaching of science, mathematics, and technology to assure that all youth acquire the knowledge and skills needed to succeed in a global economy.
- Reduce the dropout rate.

Assessment and Testing

- National PTA believes that neither one test, nor a single data point should ever be the sole determinant of a student's academic or work future, such as graduation, admission, retention or tracking.
- National PTA believes that high-quality assessments provide valuable information to parents, teachers and school leaders about the growth and achievement of their students.
- National PTA supports annual state assessments for students in math and reading for grades 3-8, once in high school, as well as grade span testing in science.
- National PTA supports state development of strategic assessment systems that

eliminate redundant testing and reduce the incidence of over-testing.

- National PTA supports a state assessment system that is appropriately aligned with each state's academic standards. A sound and comprehensive assessment system should include multiple measures of student growth and achievement that reflect the depth and breadth of knowledge and skills that students are expected to acquire, as well as their capacity to perform critical competencies.

School Choice

- National PTA supports educational choices within public schools and believes that parents should be involved in the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of public school choice plans.
- National PTA opposes any private school choice proposal and/or voucher system that diverts public funds to private or sectarian schools.
- National PTA believes home schools and other nonpublic schools should meet the same educational standards as public schools.

School Report Cards

- School report cards should be a part of a school system's overall plan for comprehensive school reform and accountability and should contain information that is clear and provided in languages understandable to all parents.
- Data from school report cards must be put in context with other factors that can affect student performance and should evaluate a school's performance on more than just student achievement, including factors such as teacher qualifications, class size, school safety, and dropout rates.

Educational Programs

National PTA believes that no one educational program is best for all children and that schools and parents should work together to address the different ways in which children learn.

- National PTA supports efforts at the federal, state, and local levels to reduce class size in the early grades for the purpose of improving children's academic achievement.
- National PTA supports private-sector relationships and use of technology donated to schools, which improve instructional programs free from any product promotion or requirements that children view commercials as a condition of their instruction.

Early Childhood Education and Development

- National PTA supports effective early education development programs for children

from birth to age five that are adequately funded, developmentally appropriate, and coordinate comprehensive services for young children and their families. Early childhood programs should include strong parent and family engagement components.

- National PTA supports federal and state incentives for quality child care and preschool programs that are affordable and accessible, coordinated at all levels (federal, state and local) and ensure quality in teacher training, health and safety standards.

Adopted: by the 2004 Board of Directors