Family engagement has been at the heart of National PTA's mission since the association's founding in 1897. Through advocacy—most recently our successful campaign to include family engagement provisions such as the Statewide Family Engagement Centers program in the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)—as well as family and community education, National PTA has established programs and called for legislation that includes parents and families in every step of the decision-making process.

Parents and their children are the primary consumers of our nation's public education system, and over 40 years of data shows that family engagement in schools has a drastic impact on student achievement and school improvement. However, many states and school districts need to make more investments in family engagement and ensure parents should have a seat at the table when decisions are made and work with parents and families as partners throughout the school year.

**THE DATA**

According to a study conducted by Rice University, only 34% of parents were currently satisfied with family and community engagement in public schools.[1]

Each year parents took part in a family engagement program in Chicago, their child's chances of completing high school increased by 16% when parents were involved for the whole six years of the program, more than 80% of their children graduated from high school, compared with 38% of students whose parents did not participate.[2]

Students with engaged families attend school more regularly, earn better grades, enroll in advanced level programs and have higher graduation rates.[3]

Schools would need to increase spending by more than $1,000 per student to gain the same results as effective family engagement.[4]

**WE ADVOCATE TO**

- Ensure state and local education agencies and schools use federal funding to support evidence-based family engagement programs as required by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- Ensure effective implementation of the Statewide Family Education Centers (SFECs) program on both the federal and state levels.
- Provide ongoing training and professional development on effective family engagement practices for educators and school-based personnel.
- Include evidence-based family engagement strategies throughout the entire education continuum from early childhood through postsecondary exploration and career opportunities.
- Support meaningful engagement of parents and families at the state, district and school level, on an ongoing basis, in the creation of education policies, especially those that directly impact students and families.
VOICE FROM THE FIELD

When Heather Losneck got the news that she was selected as a National PTA Family Engagement Fellow, she immediately contacted the Board of Education President in her school district in Berea, Ohio to push forward a family engagement agenda. Initially working in a small committee, Losneck proposed that the Board of Education adopt a district-wide family engagement policy to raise awareness about the power of family engagement and cultivate family engagement through specific programs and practices.

As a result of Losneck’s decision to take action, the board created a Family Engagement Team comprised of parents, family members, teachers, school staff and administrators and board of education members. This team represents every school in the district, every grade level, and every city. The vision for this team is to create system-wide policies and practices that establish effective family-school partnerships to improve student achievement.

The team is also piloting a Parent Academy to empower parents and families to be strong advocates for public education and family engagement by learning more about the role of the school district and leadership, learning curriculums, assessments, school finances, funding and operations.

ABOUT STATEWIDE FAMILY ENGAGEMENT CENTERS

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which was signed into law by President Obama in December 2015, includes the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs) program. SFECs provide states and districts with the capacity to support effective family engagement policies and initiatives. They also provide training and guidance to help parents and families become equal partners with educators in improving their child’s academic achievement. Recently, the program received $10 million in funding, with eleven states receiving grants to start a Statewide Family Engagement Center. To learn more about SFEC program and recent grantees, visit https://innovation.ed.gov/statewide-family-engagement-centers-program/

The long-term success of our nation depends on quality federal investments in our education system. National PTA has long-advocated to ensure children have access to adequately funded public schools that improve their overall well-being and allow students to reach their full potential. From a lack of student support and mental health services to crumbling school infrastructure, there have been far too many children left with insufficient resources, which is why National PTA and its members advocate to ensure schools have the proper resources needed to help children learn, grow and succeed.

**WE ADVOCATE TO**

Increase funding for family engagement programs and activities, such as the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs) program and Parent Training and Information (PTI) Centers, to help all schools engage more families in their child’s education

Ensure programs that support low-income students and students with special needs, such as Title I and IDEA, receive substantial funding

Invest in programs that provide students with a well-rounded education and a safe learning environment, including programs that support access to arts, technology, vocational, advanced education opportunities, as well as violence prevention programs and psychological support services

Provide funding for qualified school-based health and wellness practitioners, such as school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists and school social workers

**THE DATA**

Federal funding for public education programs has remained at 2% of the federal budget for decades, despite the increase in public school enrollment and the rising cost of education resources and services [1]

In 2015, 29 states were still providing less total school funding per student than they were in 2008 [2]

According to a 2018 report [3], school districts with the highest rates of poverty receive about $1,000 less per student in state and local funding than those with the lowest rates of poverty

A 20% increase in per-pupil spending for low-income children can lead to an additional year of completed education, 25% higher earnings and a 20% reduction in the incidence of poverty in adulthood [3]
VOICE FROM THE FIELD

Colorado’s unique system of education funding makes it exceedingly difficult to generate revenue for public schools. When Evie Hudak saw a proposed ballot initiative to increase school funding by 20%, she knew she had to take action to get the initiative added to the ballot. Evie quickly organized her fellow Jeffco Council PTA members to educate families and community members statewide about the amendment and the serious lack of school funding that made it necessary.

As an incentive to get local PTA units involved, Evie worked with Colorado PTA to create the PTA Amendment 73 Star Award, which would be given to PTA units that mobilized the most PTA members to register to vote and advocate on behalf of the initiative. The signatures collected far exceeded minimum requirements, and Colorado PTA’s advocacy efforts helped secure Amendment 73 on the 2018 ballot. Colorado PTA continues to advocate for increased funding in education and works with local communities to raise awareness on the issue.

COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION FUNDING

The Committee for Education Funding (CEF) was founded in 1969 to help achieve adequate federal funding for our nation’s educational system. National PTA is one of CEF’s original 100+ member organizations which provides a strong and unified voice in support of increasing the federal investment in education. National PTA believes that funding for education should be a top priority of the federal government because it is an investment in the future of this nation. To learn more about CEF and its recent work, visit CEF.org.

Public education is our nation’s great equalizer—in our schools, our children have access to opportunities, experiences and knowledge regardless of their race, religion, ability or socioeconomic status. It is our public schools that will provide the educated, innovative and creative workforce of tomorrow—the entrepreneurs, engineers, scientists, artists and political leaders who will ensure that our nation will flourish in an increasingly competitive global economy. However, the public education system must be strengthened and supported with adequate funding. PTA advocates to invest more funds into our public schools so that all children—regardless of their race, religion, ability or socioeconomic status—can reach their full potential, rather than diverting funding into unaccountable private school voucher programs that can pick and choose who to educate.

### THE DATA

The federal government provided **$15 million** in funding for private school vouchers in Fiscal Year 2018 [1]

Math scores of students educated in private schools receiving federal funds were **10%** lower than the math scores of students educated in public schools [2]

Reading scores of students educated in private schools receiving federal funds were **3.8%** lower than the reading scores of students educated in public schools [2]

Students with disabilities who leave the public-school system to attend private schools forfeit many of their IDEA protections, including their IEP plan [3]

**83%** of students enrolled in specialized private school programs for students with disabilities were provided no information or inaccurate information about changes to their IDEA rights [4]

### WE ADVOCATE TO

- Guarantee public funds are not diverted to any private school choice proposal and/or voucher system, including tax credit scholarship programs
- Robustly fund public schools to ensure students have access to a well-rounded education and receive high-quality instruction from well-prepared teachers
- Ensure all public-school choice and public charter school programs are accountable to the public, open to all students, comply with federal health and safety and discrimination laws, and are supported by public funds that do not divert funding from non-charter public schools
VOICE FROM THE FIELD

While private school voucher schemes rarely gain any traction in the California State legislature, when Carol Kocivar saw that two bills that would divert public funds into private schools were introduced in the legislature she knew she needed to take action. Carol advised her state PTA to oppose these two bills that would divert public funds for public schools into a private school voucher scheme.

With the backing of California State PTA, Carol sent letters to the legislative committees that would be considering the bills, urging legislators to oppose both bills. Language from one of her letters was included in the official analysis of the bills that was provided to the legislators before their vote.

Carol also shared California State PTA’s opposition to these bills with other members of the Education Coalition, a statewide group that works to support funding for public schools in California. The coalition includes teachers, administrators, school boards and financial officers. By the end of the legislative session, both private school voucher-related bills were defeated.

COALITIONS FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION

National PTA is a founding member of the National Coalition for Public Education (NCPE). Founded in 1978, NCPE supports public schools and opposes the funneling of public money to private and religious schools through vouchers, tuition tax credits, education savings accounts and portability. NCPE now consists of over 50 education, civic, civil rights and religious organizations devoted to the support of public schools. To learn more about NCPE and the negative impact private school vouchers have on public schools, visit NCPECoalition.org.

Our association is also a proud founding member of Learning First Alliance (LFA), a partnership of leading education organizations representing more than 10 million members who support improved student learning in America’s public schools through leadership and advocacy. National PTA Executive Director Nathan Monell is LFA Board Chair for 2018-2019. To learn more, visit LearningFirst.org.
Every child deserves to learn in a safe and supportive environment and to have the opportunity to grow into a happy and healthy adult. There is no greater shared responsibility among school leaders, teachers, parents, public safety officials, community members and decisionmakers than keeping students safe at school. PTA recognizes that there must be a balance between the physical security of our schools and the physiological safety of our students, which is why we are dedicated to ensuring our schools have both the necessary physical security measures and the necessary student support services to keep our students safe.

**WE ADVOCATE TO**

- Provide and connect students with necessary behavioral and mental health resources at school and in their community
- Improve access to and funding for qualified school-based health and wellness practitioners, such as school counselors, school nurses, school psychologists and school social workers
- Encourage schools to refrain from arming educators and other school personnel
- Require all decisions related to physical security measures—including the use of School Resource Officers (SROs)—to be locally determined, collaborative and incorporate input from students, parents, families, educators, school leaders and the community
- Encourage schools to use positive school discipline policies and behavioral interventions and supports that are effective, fair and consistently implemented

**THE DATA**

- **34%** of parents feared for their child’s safety at school in 2018, a 22% increase from 2013
- **76%** of parents are more supportive of spending money on mental health services for students than spending money on armed guards in school
- **63%** of parents oppose allowing armed educators and staff in schools
- **1 in 5** schools do not have a school counselor

- African American students are **three** times more likely to be suspended or expelled than white students
- Students with disabilities are **twice** as likely to receive an out of school suspension than students without disabilities

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*We refer to the following sources for these statistics:

1. [1]
2. [2]
3. [3]
4. [4]
VOICE FROM THE FIELD

Marguerite Herman comes from a state where the school safety discussion tends to primarily focus on arming educators and “hardening” schools (adding physical security measures to school buildings, such as metal detectors). Marguerite passionately felt that the conversation around school safety in Wyoming—and across the country—was ignoring the deep need for mental health and student support services.

When Marguerite learned that the Federal Commission on School Safety was traveling to Wyoming to hear from the public about school safety, she was worried that the commission would only hear from those who support hardening schools. She knew she needed to take action, so she volunteered to testify before the commission on the importance of providing students with a positive school environment, behavioral and mental health services and ensuring parents are involved in all school safety-related decisions.

Marguerite’s testimony was heard by representatives of the U.S. Department of Education, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Department of Justice, as well as members of the public who watched the listening session on livestream.

THE FRAMEWORK FOR SAFE AND SUCCESSFUL SCHOOLS

National PTA has endorsed and contributed content to supplemental resources related to the Framework for Safe and Successful Schools, a comprehensive school safety resource.[5] It outlines evidence-based policies and practices for improving school safety and increasing access to mental health supports for children and youth. The framework encourages policymakers to design and implement a comprehensive, school-wide approach to school safety that addresses the school environment, safety and learning as interconnected issues. You can check out National PTA’s guides for parents on how to engage in school safety at PTA.org/SchoolSafety.

No parent should fear for the safety of their child every time they leave home. But all too often, young lives are destroyed or changed forever due to gun violence and other forms of violence in the places our children should be the most safe—their communities. More must be done immediately to protect our nation’s most vulnerable population. It’s up to all of us—community members, parents, educators and other child well-being advocates—to work together to prevent gun violence. That’s why PTA members advocate, year after year, for sensible gun safety and violence prevention policies that will help keep children safe and sound.

**THE DATA**

Since 2013, there have been at least 347 incidents of gunfire on school grounds in America [1]

Firearms are the second leading cause of death for American children and teens, with nearly 1,600 children and teens dying by gun homicide every year [2]

Approximately three million American children witness gun violence every year [2]

Children exposed to violence, crime and abuse are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol; suffer from depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder; fail or have difficulties in school and engage in criminal activity [1]

**WE ADVOCATE TO**

- Fund federally funded research on the causes and effects of gun violence on youth and communities, as well as evidence-based strategies to reduce gun violence
- Establish education programs to teach students, parents and community members about gun safety and violence prevention
- Require a waiting period and comprehensive background check for all individuals prior to buying a firearm
- Restrict internet gun sales, including kits that can be used to make and modify guns
- Ban access to military-style semi-automatic assault weapons
VOICE FROM THE FIELD

In 2018, tragedy struck the state of Florida when 17 students lost their lives in a senseless mass shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Broward County. In the aftermath of such a horrific event, even as vigils were being held and funerals were attended, Angie Gallo knew she needed to take action.

Florida PTA was already known as a fierce advocate on gun safety and violence prevention measures following the shooting at the Pulse nightclub in 2016. As a result of their exemplary advocacy work, Angie was invited to represent the parent voice on Governor Scott’s education working group, which was formed to develop a more comprehensive school safety policy. The Governor’s recommended school safety plan incorporated many of the proposals Angie discussed with her fellow members during the working group meeting. After this plan was released, the Florida Legislature drafted a bill that would end up putting $400 million dollars into schools for safety and mental health.

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

“We have all watched in horror as our country has experienced far too many gun-related tragedies. We need immediate change.

It is urgent that we work together to enact bipartisan policy solutions and make meaningful changes to keep our children safe. Every student deserves to learn and grow in a safe environment.”

-Statement from National PTA President, Jim Accomando

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is the primary federal law authorizing state and local aid for special education and related services for children with disabilities. IDEA requires states to provide a free and appropriate public education to children with disabilities in the least restrictive environment possible. National PTA is committed to ensuring students with special needs have access to opportunities that make them college and career-ready, and that parents are closely involved in the process. Every child deserves a high-quality education, and that’s why National PTA fights to ensure all children, including those with special needs, have access to an optimum learning environment.

THE DATA

1 in 16 students have Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for learning disabilities [1]

Only 18 states set the same long-term goals for students with disabilities as their non-disabled peers, which can negatively impact students with disabilities and ultimately widen the achievement gap between student subgroups [2]

Only 10 states have detailed descriptions in their state education plan of interventions to support students with disabilities [2]

Congress has committed to provide 40% of the cost to educate children with disabilities under IDEA, however federal funding has only covered 16% of that cost [3]

PTI Centers touched almost one million parents, students with disabilities, and professionals through trainings, one on one support and online resources [4]

WE ADVOCATE TO

Incorporate PTA’s National Standards for Family-School Partnerships as a model for family engagement in special education programs

Ensure students with special needs are college and career-ready by receiving quality instruction and support from teachers, school counselors and other specialized school support personnel that have completed the state licensure or certification process

Engage parents and families in the development and implementation of their child’s individualized education program (IEP) and 504 plan

Require schools to use positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS) as an alternative to exclusionary school discipline practices such as in and out-of-school suspensions

Increase funding for Parent Training and Information (PTI) Centers to teach families of children with different abilities how to support and advocate for their child
VOICE FROM THE FIELD

For years, Yvonne Johnson had grown increasingly concerned about the levels of funding the state of Delaware provided for special education students. Early diagnoses for children with special needs, specifically for learning disabilities, had risen steadily over the years, and while the state provided extra special education funding to local school districts for students in fourth through 12th grade, it did not provide additional funding for students in Kindergarten through third grade.

Yvonne decided to take action by working with local legislators to draft a bill to increase special education funding for these students. She worked with Delaware PTA to create an advocacy campaign to increase support for the bill, developing social media posts, writing letters, drafting action alerts and providing information to local PTAs about the need to support Delaware’s youngest learners.

In spring 2018, Yvonne and other Delaware PTA advocates hosted a rally on the steps of the state capitol and invited legislative leaders to join them to show their support. As a result of Yvonne and other advocates’ actions, the Delaware state legislature voted to include more funding for special education support services for students in Kindergarten through third grade in the state budget.

PARENT TRAINING INFORMATION CENTERS

Parent Training Information (PTI) Centers are a program created by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that provide training, information and support to parents who have a child with special needs. There is a PTI Center in each state and over 100 PTI Centers and Community Parent Resource Centers (CPRCs) nationwide. PTI Centers help parents navigate their child’s Individual Education Program (IEP), as well as provide support in obtaining appropriate information about the types and quality of programs, services and resources for children with disabilities both in school and at home.

Protecting the safety of children and their school records online, while ensuring access to high quality digital educational opportunities, is critical in the 21st century. Meaningful education data can provide positive benefits to students’ academic growth and can assist teachers and families in creating more personalized learning plans to meet the needs of every child. Despite the advantages of educational information and technology, parents are concerned about the protection of their child’s personal information. National PTA supports policies that ensure children’s identities are protected online, and families and students have reasonable control over the collection, storage and use of relevant personal education information.

National PTA also recognizes that much of learning today takes place online, and it is essential for every student to be able to continue their education at home. Unfortunately, there are still far too many children in the U.S. who lack access to adequate internet services when they leave school. According to a 2018 report from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES), nearly 39% of households in the U.S. with school-age children lack access to the internet. National PTA will continue to support policies that shrink the digital divide and expand student access to broadband services at home and outside of the school building.

THE DATA

93% of parents say they need more education data so they can help their children do their best.

Only 62% of parents say they understand how their child’s school collects and uses information about students.

As many as 7 out of 10 teachers assign homework online. However, not every student has access to broadband services at home.

91% of parents who do not have information about whether their child is on track to graduate wish they did.

WE ADVOCATE TO

Ensure parents and families have access to educational information and can interpret and use this data to support and improve their child’s education.

Provide teachers and school officials with the training they need to ensure data is meaningfully used for educational purposes while keeping it protected and secured.

Improve transparency on the use of student information—parents should know their rights under the law to protect their child’s personal and educational information.

Update current laws to improve protection of student educational records and the collection of information gathered online.

Strengthen students’ access to the high-capacity broadband services required for learning today.
VOICE FROM THE FIELD

When Virginia PTA President Sarah Gross learned about the new provisions under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) that would require states to report data about school environment, academic achievement and spending per student, she was determined to take action. Sarah knew that parents wanted and needed accurate information about their schools, but also knew that data had to be presented in a way that would be clear and useful to parents.

When the Virginia Department of Education started working on their state report card, they had over 2,000 data points to include on the report card. Sarah knew that parents would be overwhelmed if they saw that much data on the state report card, so she decided to survey Virginia PTA members to see what data parents actually wanted.

After the survey was complete, Sarah found that parents only really needed data on student growth, school funding and school-quality measures (such as school nurse and guidance counselor ratios and the level of access to rigorous courses).

Thanks to Sarah and Virginia PTA, the Virginia Department of Education and State Board of Education were able to use parent feedback to create a state report card that clearly communicated data that was important to parents and families.

STUDENT DATA PRIVACY LAWS

Student data privacy laws help maintain the confidentiality of sensitive data that students and families provide to educational institutions. The Family Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), passed in 1974, has provided students and parents with the right to review their educational records and exercise significant control over the disclosure of their information. In 1998, Congress passed the Children's Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA) to protect the privacy of children under age 13 when using commercial websites and online services. Current federal laws do not contemplate electronic records, online service provider rights and responsibilities or individual electronic student profiles. Therefore, federal laws such as FERPA and COPPA must be modernized to better protect student data.

Healthy children learn better and are more productive—both in and out of the classroom. Setting strong nutritional standards in our nation’s schools is essential to combating the concerning obesity rates among American children. Providing our nation’s youth with healthy food options and nutrition education is key to their long-term health and success, which is why National PTA supports policies that build healthy eating habits and ensure a brighter and healthier future for our children.

**THE DATA**

- From 1970-2000, child obesity rates nearly tripled, and the current percentage of obese youth remains high at approximately **19%** [1]

- Childhood obesity is a strong predictor of adult obesity, which has well-known health and economic consequences, both for the individual and society [2]

- Serving healthy meals at school has been shown to increase student test performance by **3-4%** [3]

- Approximately **6.5 million** children live in areas that are more than one mile away from a supermarket [4]

**WE ADVOCATE TO**

- Ensure students in need have access to federal nutrition programs, including the National School Lunch Program and School Breakfast Program

- Protect child well-being by maintaining nutrition standards in the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010

- Encourage healthier eating habits by promoting and increasing access to nutrition education and awareness programs for parents, youth and communities

- Empower parents and families to work with their schools to improve local school wellness policies that address student nutrition and physical activity
VOICE FROM THE FIELD

For years, Colorado PTA has made a strong commitment to addressing child health issues, including rising obesity rates and growing disparities in children's access to nutritious food. In spring 2016, former Colorado PTA State President Michelle Winzent decided to ramp up COPTA's advocacy on nutrition and take action.

Michelle helped Colorado PTA partner with Action for Healthy Kids and secure a grant for 40 Wellness Kits from the Colorado Health Foundation. The kits contained resources, materials and prizes for schools to host activities on health and nutrition education. To help schools and districts use the Wellness Kits, Colorado PTA launched an advocacy campaign to educate schools and parents on how to maximize information in the Wellness Kits to improve their child's health. The advocacy campaign included workshops, in-person meetings and webinar trainings for families, teachers and school leaders.

By June 2018, Colorado PTA had engaged over 40 schools in 19 school districts on the importance of healthy eating habits and well-being. Their trainings received positive feedback from parents, who noted how Colorado PTA's advocacy had improved their knowledge about nutrition.

HEALTHY HUNGER-FREE KIDS ACT

The Healthy Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 authorized funding and set policy for the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) core child nutrition programs: the National School Lunch Program, the School Breakfast Program, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), the Summer Food Service Program and the Child and Adult Care Food Program. The bill allows USDA to make reforms to the school lunch and breakfast programs by improving the critical nutrition and hunger safety net for millions of children.

Every child should have the opportunity to reach their full potential—even if they make a mistake while growing up. Second chances are important as children learn and grow into adulthood. However, for far too many youth, one mistake may drastically change their futures. This is why PTA has long advocated for family and community-based alternatives to children entering the juvenile justice system and is pleased that Congress reauthorized the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) in 2018.

**THE DATA**

Over **45,000** juvenile offenders were held in detention centers in 2016 according to the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention [1]

Low and medium-risk youth placed in detention centers are **twice** as likely to reoffend as those placed in restorative justice programs [2]

It costs an average of **$146,302** per year to hold one juvenile in confinement [3]

**WE ADVOCATE TO**

Keep children that commit minor offenses—such as skipping school—out of juvenile detention facilities by offering restorative justice alternatives, such as community, school or family-focused interventions.

Continue to engage parents and families in the delivery of treatment and services while their child is in the juvenile justice system.

Ensure states implement newly enacted policies to reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system.

Encourage schools to use positive school discipline policies that are effective, fair and consistently implemented to keep students in school and learning instead of relying on exclusionary practices such as in and out-of-school suspensions.
VOICE FROM THE FIELD

When Will Wiese heard that the Missouri state legislature had introduced a bill that would protect minors from being prosecuted as adults and serving time in adult facilities, he knew he had to take action to ensure the bill would be passed into law. Will knew that without this piece of legislation, a child as young as nine years old could be held in jail—with an adult offender in the same cell.

As a former Student Representative and current Advocacy Chair for Missouri PTA, Will knew the power of social media to create change in communities. Will created a social media campaign around the Raise the Age Missouri Act, using the hashtag #18in18 to build traction for the bill in Missouri.

The grassroots movement that began as a small online conversation quickly grew, and by the end of 2017, there were hundreds of #18in18 social media posts from school officials, parents and students. In May 2018, the Missouri state legislature passed SB 793 by a nearly unanimous vote and in June, the Raise the Age Missouri Act was signed into law by the Governor.

THE JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION ACT

The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDPA) is the nation’s main law governing the juvenile justice system and protections for youth in the system. The JJDPA requires states to comply with four core requirements, including requirements to remove children from adult jails and reduce racial and ethnic disparities in the juvenile justice system. The JJDPA was reauthorized by Congress in 2018.


A child’s first years are instrumental to their future development. Children with access to high-quality early education programming show increased graduation rates, higher education attainment and lower incarceration rates. This is why PTA has advocated for over a century to provide affordable, accessible and high-quality early education programs to all children, such as universal kindergarten and the United States Department of Health and Human Services’ Head Start program. It is critical to PTA’s mission to empower all families with the tools and practices they need to effectively engage in their child’s education and development, starting at the earliest stages.

**THE DATA**

71% of parents say that finding quality, affordable child care in their area is a serious concern[1]

In 2016, only 31% of eligible children ages three to five had access to the Head Start program due to lack of funding[2]

In 2016, only 7% of eligible children ages zero to three had access to the Early Head Start program[2]

**WE ADVOCATE TO**

Require family engagement policies in the development, implementation and evaluation of all early childhood programs, including home visiting programs

Ensure federal resources are provided to make early education programs affordable, available and accessible for low-income families

Establish professional standards and provide ongoing training and professional development for early learning and childcare providers

Enhance coordination between early childhood education programs and elementary schools to improve the transition for children entering kindergarten
VOICE FROM THE FIELD

Michelle Salzman, a parent of three children in Pensacola, Fla. and member of Escambia County Council of PTAs, knew that she needed to take action to improve the graduation rates in her school district. For years, her county ranked as one of the worst in the nation. She decided to partner with the Studer Community Institute to conduct research on graduation rates, and discovered a direct correlation between kindergarten readiness and high school graduation rates.

Michelle also worked with the Studer Community Institute and the Thirty Million Words Initiative to draft an appropriations bill to fund a better Kindergarten Readiness Assessment. She was successfully able to secure sponsorship for the bill and it was presented to the Florida state House of Representatives in 2017.

Michelle continues to share the critical message that early learning is the key to graduation, and most importantly that early learning does not require a large time or monetary investment. It simply requires interaction, engagement and being present for your child.

EARLY LEARNING AND CHILDHOOD EDUCATION PROGRAMS

There are three major federally funded early learning and childhood education programs:

1. Head Start, which provides preschool services to low-income families with children ages three to five.

2. Early Head Start, which provides early education services to low-income families with children under three.

3. The Child Care and Community Development Block Grant, which provides child care subsidies to increase the availability, affordability and quality of child care.
