

HIGH EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

- Whereas, More than half of all students with disabilities spend at least 80% of their school day in general education classes; there are students with disabilities in practically every classroom in America's public schools and the greatest in-school factor impacting student achievement is instruction quality; what happens between teachers and students in our nation's classrooms has significant impact on student learning and achievement; and
- Whereas, More than 80% of students who qualify for services under IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in the USA, have disabilities classified as mild to moderate disabilities such as, speech delays, learning disabilities, dyslexia and other impairments such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), sensory processing disorder or mental health conditions; students who receive Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) or have 504 plans are a widely varied group with a variety of needs; the individual strengths and weaknesses of each student should be considered when making educational decisions; and
- Whereas, There is a significant and persistent gap between the achievement of students with disabilities and students without disabilities; high expectations for all students helps develop an understanding that students with disabilities are first and foremost general education students; students with disabilities need quality general education instruction in addition to targeted interventions and accommodations, whereby access to assistive technology and accommodations significantly improves success in both special education and general education classrooms; furthermore time in general education settings often leads to fewer absences, less disruptive behavior, and better outcomes after high school as well as new learning opportunities for students without disabilities; and
- Whereas, As has been shown in numerous studies such as "General Education Teachers' Goals and Expectations for their Included Students with Mild and Severe Disabilities" (Cameron & Cook, 2013), there is a crucial relationship between teacher expectations of students with disabilities and higher levels of achievement amongst these students; across all variables, parental aspirations and expectations for their children's educational academic achievement have the strongest relationship with achievement; students' mindsets also play a key role in their motivation and achievement; and
- Whereas, Upholding high expectations for all students and promoting cooperative relationships between students of all abilities can reduce the high incidence of stigmatization and lack of disclosure among students with disabilities due to feelings of shame or fear of being bullied; students would benefit by forming positive relationships and friendships and learning how to be more at ease with a variety of people; now, therefore, be it
- Resolved, That National PTA and its constituent associations encourage all stakeholders in the educational system – teachers (both general and special education), parents, administrators, and members of the community – to have and maintain high expectations for all students, including students with disabilities, including the students holding high expectations of themselves; and be it further

- Resolved, That National PTA and its constituent associations collaborate with the entire school community to include children with disabilities and their families in all school activities to promote cooperative relationships between students of all abilities through experiences such as peer mentoring, collaborative problem solving, and cooperative working groups, as well as through more casual or unstructured interactions, and including having a relevant general educator present at IEP meetings; and be it further
- Resolved, That National PTA and its constituent associations support funding for ongoing pre-service training and professional development for all teachers regarding adapting instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom; accommodations that improve access to the general curriculum; and high expectations for all students with regards to both academics and behavior; and be it further
- Resolved, That National PTA and its constituent associations support schools in implementing best practices in meeting the needs of diverse students through such practices as inclusion, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Response to Intervention (RTI), and any other similar instructional practices to support instruction from a Core content expert, and access to accommodations including assistive technology for students with disabilities, that these students be enabled to go as far as possible toward achieving their full potential and living a meaningful, fulfilling life.