2022 PTA CAPITOL HILL DAY ASK: YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Because all children deserve strong mental health support and services!

Congress must include in any mental health package this year language that:

- Ensures all students have access to mental health resources at school and in their community, including targeted support for underserved populations and children experiencing trauma
- Encourages schools to adopt practices that establish safe, supportive and inclusive learning environments for all students
- Promotes social and emotional learning, including resources for families to support this critical practice at home
- Extends the pipeline of school-based mental health professionals and allows for schools to be reimbursed for services through Medicaid
- Provides support services for whole families impacted by addiction.

Issue Overview

The trauma, disruption, stress and isolation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have acutely impacted the mental well-being of our nation’s youth. Over 140,000 U.S. children have lost a primary or secondary caregiver due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- 40% of children will experience a mental health concern by seventh grade, and one in five students experience a mental and behavioral health concern each year.
- Unfortunately, the vast majority of students do not receive the mental health care they need, and of those who do, most receive it at school.
- Schools play an integral role in promoting resiliency, wellness, school connectedness and in facilitating protective factors among students in collaboration with community partners.
- At the universal level, schools can work to create safe and supportive school climates so that all students have the chance to experience school success.

PTA’s Recommendations

As our nation shifts towards recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, Congress must act now to address the current youth mental health crisis, inclusive of coordinated, comprehensive, culturally competent and effective mental and behavioral health services in the school setting and invest in our nation’s future.
PTA urges members of Congress to co-sponsor the following bills:

- Increasing Access to Mental Health in Schools Act (S. 1811, H.R. 3572)
- Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Act (S. 3356, H.R. 6214)
- Safe Schools Improvement Act (S. 2410, H.R. 4402)
- RISE from Trauma Act (S. 2086)
- Family Support Services for Addiction Act (S. 485, H.R. 433)

Increasing Access to Mental Health in Schools Act (S. 181, H.R. 3572) would establish a grant program to increase the number of mental health professionals at low-income schools by supporting partnerships between institutions of higher education and local education agencies to support teaching, training and employment of school counselors, social workers and psychologists.

Elementary and Secondary School Counseling Act (S. 3356, H.R. 6214) would direct the Department of Education to award formula grants to state educational agencies and, through them, subgrants to local educational agencies to increase access to school-based, mental-health-services providers at high-need public elementary and secondary schools.

Safe Schools Improvement Act (S. 2410, H.R. 4402) would establish federal standards to protect every student from bullying and harassment in K-12 schools, regardless of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability and religion.

Resilience Investment, Support and Expansion (RISE) from Trauma Act (S. 2086) would increase funding for community-based efforts to prevent and mitigate the impact of trauma on children and youth as well as expand training and workforce development efforts to support health care, education, social service, first responders and community leaders to foster resilience and deliver services to heal the impact of trauma.

Family Support Services for Addiction Act (S. 485, H.R. 433) would award grants to family community organizations to enable such organizations to develop, expand and enhance community and statewide evidence-informed family support services to build resilience and a strengths-based approach to the prevention of, and living with, addiction in the family.

Questions? Email National PTA Director of Government Affairs Kate Clabaugh (kclabaugh@PTA.org).
2022 PTA CAPITOL HILL DAY ASK: CHILD NUTRITION REAUTHORIZATION

Because all children deserve quality, nutritious school meals!

Congress must pass a Child Nutrition Reauthorization package this year that:

- Ensures school meals are healthy and nutritious for growing children and teens, consistent with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans
- Enables schools to successfully transition after the pandemic back to following the evidenced-based meal patterns through higher reimbursement rates, administrative flexibilities and technical assistance around production, procurement and preparation
- Encourages schools to adopt student wellness policies with the input of families and provide adequate time for kids to eat and play

Issue Overview

Federal child nutrition programs were last reauthorized over a decade ago through the bipartisan Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010. We now urge Congress to strengthen and improve access to quality, nutritious school meals for all children with another historical reauthorization of these programs.

➔ Today, most schools in the U.S. (91%) participate in at least one of the federal child nutrition programs.
➔ Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, each school day, almost 30 million children participated in the National School Lunch Program and almost 15 million participated in the School Breakfast Program.
➔ For many of these children, breakfast and lunch provided at school may be their only source of nutrition for the day.
➔ On average, a child will consume about one-third to one-half of their daily calories during the school day.
➔ For children living in poverty, the risk of obesity declined substantially each year after implementation of the 2010 reauthorization, such that obesity prevalence would have been 47% higher in 2018 if the nutrition standards had not been updated.

PTA’s Recommendations

With increased rates of food insecurity and obesity experienced by children and families due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis, persistent workforce shortages, and supply chain issues facing our nation’s school nutrition departments, Congress must act now to ensure the administrative flexibilities that have been available since the onset of the crisis continue.
PTA urges members of Congress to co-sponsor the following bills:

- **Universal School Meals Program Act (S.1530, H.R. 3115)**
- **School Food Modernization Act (S. 876, H.R. 4379)**
- **Scratch Cooked Meals for Students Act (H.R. 6608)**
- **Improving Mental Health and Wellness in Schools Act (S.2930, H.R. 5526)**
- **Healthy Meal Time Act (H.R.6526)**

**Universal School Meals Program Act (S.1530, H.R. 3115)** would expand access to free meals in school such that any and all students at a school participating in federal meal programs would qualify for free meals (rather than only students from households at a certain income level).

**School Food Modernization Act (S. 876, H.R. 4379)** would establish a USDA grant program to support infrastructure improvements to school lunch facilities and to train school food service personnel to serve healthier meals and improve food safety.

**Scratch Cooked Meals for Students Act (H.R. 6608)** would award competitive grants of no more than $200,000 to school food authorities and LEAs to create the Scratch Cooking Pilot Program, providing school meals cooked from scratch using whole, fresh and/or minimally processed ingredients. *Ask of Senators: Champion and introduce a companion bill in the Senate.*

**Improving Mental Health and Wellness in Schools Act (S.2930, H.R. 5526)** would encourage nutrition and mental health to be included in local school wellness policies.

**Healthy Meal Time Act (H.R. 6526)** would direct the Department of Agriculture, in coordination with the Department of Education, to provide schools with best practices for scheduling lunch and recess and commission a study of current practices in schools. This would help ensure that students have adequate time to eat and reduce food waste. *Ask of Senators: Champion and introduce a companion bill in the Senate.*

*Questions? Email National PTA Director of Government Affairs Kate Clabaugh ([kclabaugh@PTA.org](mailto:kclabaugh@PTA.org)).*
2022 PTA CAPITOL HILL DAY ASK:
COMMUNITY SAFETY AND YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION
Because all children should feel safe and welcome at school and in their community!

Congress must pass legislation that:

- Invests in evidence-based community violence intervention strategies
- Requires a waiting period and a comprehensive background check for all individuals prior to purchasing a firearm
- Funds research on gun violence prevention and encourages reporting on school crime and safety
- Prevents discrimination and harmful disciplinary practices in schools
- Encourages gun safety education and the safe storage of firearms

Issue Overview
A person’s exposure to gun violence and other traumatic events in childhood significantly impacts their mental and physical health through adulthood, including being at increased likelihood of abusing drugs and alcohol, suffering from depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder, failing or having difficulties in school, and becoming involved in the justice system.

Violence, especially by firearm, not only directly impacts individual children, but whole families and whole school communities.

➔ An estimated 46 million American children will be affected by violence, crime, abuse, or psychological trauma in a given year.
➔ Firearms in particular are now the leading cause of death for American children and teens, and youth suicide by firearm has increased 59% over the last decade.
➔ Approximately 3 million American children witness gun violence every year, including the students and families affected by the 875 incidents of gunfire on school grounds that have been recorded in America since 2013.

PTA’s Recommendations
The time is long overdue for Congress to adopt measures that ensure our children are protected from harm and support schools in their efforts to create safe and welcoming spaces for every child to enhance development, growth and safety for all of our nation’s students.
PTA urges members of Congress to co-sponsor the following bills:

- **Break the Cycle of Violence Act (S. 2275, H.R. 4118)**
- **Bipartisan Background Checks Act (H.R. 8)**
- **Gun Violence Prevention Research Act (S. 281, H.R. 825)**
- **School Shooting Safety and Preparedness Act (H.R. 5428)**
- **Protecting Our Students in Schools Act (S. 2029, H.R. 3836)**
- **Keeping All Students Safe Act (S. 1858, H.R. 3474)**
- **Safe Gun Storage Act of 2021 (S.1825, H.R. 3509)**

**Break the Cycle of Violence Act (S. 2275, H.R. 4118)** would direct the Department of Health and Human Services to award grants for coordinated community violence intervention initiatives in communities disproportionately impacted by homicides and community violence, including job training and workforce programs for youth ages 16 to 24 in communities disproportionately affected by gun violence.

**Bipartisan Background Checks Act (H.R. 8)** would expand background checks to be required on all firearm sales, closing the gun show and online sales loopholes and has already passed the U.S. House of Representatives.

**Gun Violence Prevention Research Act (S.281, H.R.825)** would authorize the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct or support research on firearms safety or gun violence prevention.

**School Shooting Safety and Preparedness Act (H.R. 5428)** would be the first federal legislation to provide parents and families with an annual, comprehensive understanding of indicators of school crime and safety, including data on school shootings, across the nation.

**Protecting Our Students in Schools Act (S. 2029, H.R. 3836)** would ban the use of corporal punishment.

**Keeping All Students Safe Act (S. 1858, H.R. 3474)** would ban the use of seclusion in schools, ban dangerous restraint practices and prohibit schools from physically restraining children, except when necessary to protect students and staff.

**Safe Gun Storage Act of 2021 (S.1825, H.R. 3509)** would direct the Consumer Product Safety Commission to establish safety standards for firearm locks and safes to prevent unintentional discharge of firearms and unauthorized access.

Questions? Email National PTA Director of Government Affairs Kate Clabaugh (kclabaugh@PTA.org).
2022 PTA CAPITOL HILL DAY ASK:
FY2022 RECONCILIATION AND FY2023 APPROPRIATIONS

Issue Overview
The long-term success of our nation depends on quality federal investments in our education system. However, 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.

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 fullest potential.

PTA’s Recommendations for FY2022 Reconciliation
A process by which the American Rescue Plan was made possible in FY2021, we urge inclusion of the following provisions in any reconciliation package this fiscal year:

**INFRASTRUCTURE**
- $100 billion in direct grants and $30 billion in bonds for infrastructure improvements to K-12 public school facilities

**CHILD NUTRITION**
- Extend the waiver authority for the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) through SY22/23 to continue the appropriate school meal administrative and operational flexibilities that have been in place throughout the COVID-19 pandemic
- Give states the option to implement the Community Eligibility Provision statewide
- Allow all states to conduct Medicaid direct certification
- Extend Summer EBT nationwide for students who receive free or reduced-price school meals to close the summer meal gap
- Provide $500 million for School Kitchen Equipment Grants
- Provide $634 million for a Healthy School Meal Incentives demonstration project

**CHILDCARE**
- Invest in affordable, high-quality childcare for all families and—for the first time—federally fund universal preschool for three- and four-year-old children
PTA’s Recommendations for FY2023 Appropriations

**EDUCATION**

- $20 million for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFEC) grant program and $45 million for the Parent Information Centers program to foster meaningful parent and family engagement in their children’s education
- $16.2 billion for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Part B putting IDEA on a glidepath to full funding and support our nation’s students with disabilities
- $36.5 billion for Title I of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) to provide all students, especially those living in low-income households with the support needed to succeed
- $3 billion for the Supporting Effective Instruction State Grants program, Title II, Part A of ESSA to invest in retaining and recruiting teachers, principals, and other school leaders, as well as improving their practice
- $2 billion for the Student Support and Academic Enrichment grant program under Title IV-A of ESSA to provide all students with access to a well-rounded education

**COMMUNITY SAFETY & YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION**

- $375 million for a new Community Violence Intervention Initiative at the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
- $15 million for CDC’s National Center on Injury Prevention (NCIPC) to support research and prevention of childhood trauma
- $35 million for the CDC and $25 million for the National Institutes of Health to conduct public health research into firearm morbidity and mortality prevention
- $50 million to support research on firearms safety or gun violence prevention through the CDC, consistent with the Gun Violence Prevention Research Act (S.281, H.R.825)
- $30 million for the Department of Justice (DOJ)’s Children Exposed to Violence Initiative

**YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH**

- $1 billion for school-based mental health supports and services, including School Based Mental Health Services Professionals & School Based Mental Health Services programs
- Robust funding for the Project AWARE grant program, including $25 million for Section 7134 grants to provide mental health education and training to students and school personnel and prevent youth suicide and violence
- $8.3 million for the Interagency Task Force on Trauma-Informed Care through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

*Questions? Email National PTA Director of Government Affairs Kate Clabaugh (kclabaugh@PTA.org).*
PTA Calls on Congress and the Administration to Meaningfully Incorporate Policies that Promote Safe, Supportive and Inclusive Practices in Schools for All Students.

PTA firmly believes that all students—including students from historically marginalized populations—have the right to a quality, equitable education in a safe, supportive and inclusive school. PTA believes that the education system should engage in rigorous self-examination to identify and eliminate practices and policies which are systemically racist. PTA supports policies and legislation that ensure equity for every student, are grounded in social justice and support the whole child and family.

Policies and legislation must:

✓ Support every student’s mental health and provide and connect students with necessary behavioral and mental health resources at school and in their community.
✓ Encourage schools to use positive behavioral interventions and supports that are effective, fair and consistently implemented. Such practices may include restorative justice and trauma-informed care.
✓ Promote social emotional learning, including resources for families to support this critical practice at home.

PTA Calls on Congress and the Administration to Increase Federal Investment in Public Education.

The long-term success of our nation depends on quality federal investments in our education system. 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 fullest potential. The federal government plays a critical role in ensuring a high-quality public education for every student through meaningful investments which support states, districts and schools.

Policies and legislation must:

✓ Ensure that schools have adequate funding during the COVID-19 pandemic to address a myriad of immediate and pressing needs.
✓ Increase funding for the Statewide Family Engagement Centers (SFECs) by 50%.
✓ Fully fund the promised 40% of the extra cost for services provided under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
✓ Increase funding for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) including tripling funding for Title I and funding Title IV-A, the Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grants under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), at its authorized level of $1.6 billion.

PTA Calls on Congress and the Administration to Invest in School Infrastructure.

There are over 130,000 public K-12 school facilities serving our nation’s teachers and children across the country. PTA believes that every student—regardless of their family income—must have access to a safe, welcoming and high-quality public school. Given state budget shortfalls and the need for economic recovery, now is the time for the federal government to invest in school infrastructure.

Policies and legislation must:

✓ Address health hazards including poor air quality, substandard heating and cooling equipment, unsafe drinking water supply and lead contamination.
National PTA
PUBLIC POLICY PRIORITIES
for the 117th Congress

- Enhance digital infrastructure to ensure equity.
- Redesign schools to meet community needs such as school-based health clinics, after school and summer learning opportunities, and career technical education facilities for children and adults.
- Modernize schools, including making them green, so their energy consumption and carbon footprints are reduced.

PTA Calls on Congress to Address the Reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act.
Healthy children learn better and are more productive—both in and out of the classroom. Strong nutritional standards in our nation’s schools are essential to combating the concerning obesity rates among children. Providing our nation’s youth with healthy food options and nutrition education is key to their long-term health and success.

Policies and legislation must:
- Boost child health by including robust school meal requirements on milk, whole grains, fruits and vegetables, calorie limits, and limits on sugar and sodium.
- Require schools to make nutrition information more readily available and enhance opportunities for parents to participate in the development of local school wellness policies.
- Ensure all students have access to school meal programs.
- Deliver technical assistance and resources to schools that are not meeting the nutrition standards.
- Establish guidelines to provide adequate time during the school day for students to eat and to recreate.

PTA Calls on Congress to Support Sensible Solutions to Gun Violence.
No parent should have to fear for the safety of their child every time they leave home. Unfortunately, far too often, lives are lost or changed forever due to gun violence. PTA calls on Congress and the Administration to immediately address the many factors that contribute to the rampant gun violence in the United States.

Policies and legislation must:
- Fund 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 a comprehensive background check for all individuals prior to purchasing 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.