

PUBLIC SCHOOL CHOICE

The National PTA advocates for all children and for the improvement of public education. It believes that any changes in school structure or funding should be measured by the likely outcomes for all children in accord with the obligation to prepare all children to become effective, productive adult citizens.

The National PTA believes that no one educational program is best for all children. Public school personnel and parents must address the different ways that children learn and how public school systems can provide the best education for all children.

Public school choice means an offering of educational programs from a range of possible options within public schools. Choice plans may include:

- special programs within a school (schools within a school)
- choice of public school within the same district (intradistrict choice)
- choice of a school in another district (interdistrict choice)
- magnet schools (separate programs which specialize in particular disciplines like the arts or science)
- regional schools (involving students of more than one school district where supporting districts pay “tuition” for their students)

The 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. In addition, the National PTA believes public school choice programs should adhere to the following principles:

- schools must provide adequate, objective, and language-appropriate information to parents so they can make informed decisions
- students must have access to free transportation to ensure equity
- schools must offer a fair and open selection process
- curriculum, personnel, and student performance standards must be non-discriminatory and assure equal educational opportunities
- public funds must be used for public schools only

The National PTA opposes any private school choice proposal and/or voucher system that diverts public funds to private or sectarian schools. Public dollars carry the responsibility for providing public access, governance, and accountability. The National PTA believes that public

support of any school must not be allowed to detract or divert money from the continued operation of a viable system of public education.

Adopted: by the 1997 Board of Directors