

ASSESSMENT & TESTING

Assessments should identify how instruction and learning can be improved by helping parents and teachers determine student academic needs.

- Florida PTA opposes the use of state or nationally mandated standardized tests as the sole criterion for measuring student or school progress.
- English Language Learner students face unique challenges with mandated testing processes. Additional funding should be allocated that would accommodate testing of English Language Learner students in their native language.
- There is significant impact of learning loss from extended time away from instruction (i.e. pandemic, natural disaster, etc.). Decision-makers at all levels should create policies and legislation that support and fund learning programs to supplement time lost from the inability to be in the classroom, with emphasis on reading and math for disadvantaged youth, as well as encourage partnerships that provide children and youth with supplemental learning activities and enrichment.

SCHOOL CHOICE

Private school choice programs have detrimental effects on public school systems. Public dollars must remain in public schools for the benefit of all students and the future of our nation. Florida PTA opposes vouchers in all forms and urges the Legislature to impose strict eligibility requirements on private institutions and non-public K-12 schools receiving public dollars. At a minimum, all educational institutions receiving public dollars, whether directly or indirectly, should be held to the same academic and accountability standards as public schools.

FUNDING

The state has a paramount duty to make adequate provision for the education of all children residing within its borders. Florida PTA urges the Legislature to fully fund strategies and programs that ensure the health, safety, and education of the children of Florida.

DYSLEXIA & OTHER SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITIES (SLDs)

Florida PTA recognizes that SLDs have significant educational implications and encourages local and state education agencies and institutions of higher education to require pre-service and ongoing - training on:

- dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia and other SLDs
- the warning signs of dyslexia
- appropriate instructional approaches
- the use of early screening for dyslexia
- successful approaches to communicating with families

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2022 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



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JUVENILE JUSTICE

Florida PTA promotes programs that prevent youth from entering or remaining in the juvenile justice system, including:

- alternative dispute resolution techniques that provide a range of possible sanctions
- collaboration between law enforcement, the judicial system and child welfare agencies
- prevention of the incarceration of youth in adult facilities
- programs that prevent recidivism when youth leave the justice system

A disproportionate number of students of color, students with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ students are routed into the juvenile justice system, creating a harmful school-to-prison pipeline. To address this, Florida PTA supports:

- training and regular professional development for school staff that addresses cultural competence, bias, and trauma-informed policies
- the recruitment of a diverse school workforce
- the adoption of racially and culturally diverse non-discriminatory instructional materials
- fully sustainable state and federal funding to support alternatives to exclusionary disciplinary measures
- effective research-based programs and policies that support equitable access to education and career opportunities.

GUN SAFETY

Florida PTA supports federal, state and local efforts to protect children and youth from gun violence by:

- restricting access to guns from persons who may endanger public safety.
- closing the "gun show loophole"
- implementing universal background checks
- providing all relevant records to the FBI's National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS)
- outlawing military style semi-automatic weapons.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Florida PTA urges the Legislature to support and fully fund high-quality childcare and preschool programs that are affordable and accessible, coordinated at all levels, and characterized by high standards for teaching, training, health, and safety.

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

Florida PTA supports legislation and programs that increase post-secondary participation by:

- assisting with secondary school completion and post-secondary enrollment through academic (including fine arts) services, family and student counseling, and college preparatory services—particularly programs that assist students with different learning styles, low income and who are disadvantaged.
- fostering an economically, culturally, and ethnically diverse student population by increasing federal grants and other forms of financial aid, simplifying the financial aid application process, and increasing access to information on financial assistance
- expanding access to in-state tuition levels

Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs provide a career pathway through education for students at all levels of academic achievement. Florida PTA supports the following assistance for these programs:

- increased funding, including registered apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs
- appropriate market-driven compensation for CTE instructors
- flexibility in the expansion of career education pathways.

PTA's MISSION:

to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to **advocate for all children.**

HOUSING & FOOD SECURITY

Florida PTA urges policy makers to promote the well-being of students by:

- implementing and fully funding the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and ESEA provisions, which provide comprehensive services necessary to guarantee equal education opportunities to homeless students.
- serving good nutritious meals year-round.
- providing nutrition education.
- serving culturally diverse meals.

SCHOOL & STUDENT SAFETY

All students and educators have a right to attend schools that are safe and conducive to learning and achievement. Florida PTA supports legislation that creates a safe, supportive and accepting environment in schools, which includes:

- training for educators and other school-related professionals to support all students
- updated health education standards that address sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, and recognition of LGBTQ individuals as a protected class
- legislation that recognizes LGBTQ as a protected group and addresses discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity and expression

Florida PTA supports the strengthening of Title IX and other federal, state and local laws that identify, address the effects of, and prohibit sexual harassment and sexual violence impacting students. Awareness and prevention programs should include training on the responsibilities and rights of victims under Title IX and other similar laws and regulations.

Students, parents and families should be involved in the development, implementation and evaluation of all school safety plans, including emergency preparedness, crisis response, and threat assessment protocols, as well as school discipline policies and health and wellness support services. Laws should be monitored to assure adequate safety regulations for the protection of children and youth. Teachers and administrators should receive ongoing training to improve the understanding of child emotional and mental health needs that includes regular and timely communication with families about safety policies and procedures, encompassing school evacuation plans and reunification protocols.

MENTAL HEALTH

Florida PTA calls on state and local policymakers and school districts to employ evidence-based best practice ratios of school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, and school nurses who are most qualified to provide school-based mental health services. Necessary resources and supports should be provided to ensure students have access to proactive mental health services that incorporate a strong family engagement component.