

Juvenile Justice

- Encourage collaboration between law enforcement, the judicial system, and child welfare agencies.
- Promote alternative dispute resolution techniques that provide a range of possible sanctions. Data clearly shows that the use of civil citations increases public safety, saves taxpayer money, and improves youth outcomes, therefore we encourage the use of civil citations.
- Prohibit youth who are charged with a serious crime from being tried in the adult court system unless there has been an opportunity for a judicial hearing and appeal.
- Prevent the incarceration of youth in adult facilities.
- Support assisting youth leaving the juvenile justice system with programs that prevent recidivism.

Gun Safety Education

Every day, across the US 7 children and teens (ages 0 to 19) die from gun violence. Experts estimate that currently about one-third of guns are acquired through transactions exempt from background checks, including gun show and internet purchases. Eighteen states have already passed legislation requiring background checks at least for handgun purchases at gun shows. A majority of gun owners and NRA members support background checks as consistent with their Second Amendment rights.

- For the safety of all children, Florida should close the “gun show loophole” and implement universal background checks. It should provide all relevant records to the FBI’s National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS)
- Florida should outlaw military style semi-automatic weapons and require knowledge of appropriate firearms use and safety practices.

Funding

The Florida PTA urges the Legislature to place priority on education programs and ensure that the Florida Education Finance Program (FEFP) be adequately funded to guarantee an equal educational opportunity for all children to include:

- High quality VPK programs
- High quality K-12 public education
- Post secondary education
- Career Vocational Training (CTE)



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Florida PTA®

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2017 Legislative Priorities



Advocating for all Kids!

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Wellbeing of Children

Recess

- Include at least 20 minutes of daily recess for each elementary student every day.

Foster Care/Guardian ad Litem

- Protect the welfare and safety of all children.
- Improve oversight into placements and accountability of foster families.
- Support the expansion of the program to ensure that every child in dependency court has a Guardian ad Litem.

Texting and Driving

- Support laws that restrict the use of any device that will distract from driving.
- Promote the education and awareness of the dangers of distracted driving.

Healthy Sleep

- Promote school policies and community education that support healthy sleep which research has proven to increase academic performance, health, safety and future earnings.

Anti-bullying

Every child deserves to go to school excited to learn in a safe and nurturing environment, without the fear of bullying violence or discrimination.

- We encourage decision makers to support legislation that specifically protects LGBT youth as well as encourage school districts to incorporate inclusive policies and practices that create and maintain safe learning environments for all students.

The overall purpose of PTA is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.



Early Childhood Education

- Support state incentives for quality child care and preschool programs that are accessible, affordable and ensure quality teacher training, health and safety standards.
- Promote effective early education development programs for children from birth to age five that are adequately funded, developmentally appropriate, and coordinate comprehensive services for young children and their families. Early childhood programs should include strong parent and family engagement components.
- Encourage early detection, interventions, and prevention programs for learning problems and mental health needs.

Supporting Student Success

ESSA

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Florida must review and revise its system of educational standards, assessments and accountability. Additional accountability is stipulated for homeless and foster children, and children in the juvenile justice system, and children of military families.

- Invite parents and other stakeholders to participate in the drafting and implementation of Florida's plan.
- Recommend parental engagement as the additional school grading component as such involvement is highly correlated to student success.

Equal Access, Accountability, & Transparency

All educational institutions receiving public dollars should be held to the same academic and accountability standards as public schools.

- Provide equal educational opportunities for all students regardless of race, gender, national origin, language, religion, age, disability, or sexual orientation.
- Require all schools receiving public dollars through any state funded voucher, grant, or scholarship programs to adhere to the same statewide mandated assessment, school performance grading system, student enrollment requirements, and involve parents in decision making processes.
- Ensure that all parents and community members have unrestricted access to information regarding curriculum, assessments, class size, student enrollment, teacher certifications, and financials, including schools that receive tax credit scholarship funding.

