



*"Making every child's potential a reality"*

# CONNECTICUT PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION 2021 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

*Connecticut PTA (Parent Teacher Association) will work with the Connecticut General Assembly and administration to advance policy in the following areas to ensure that all children reach their highest potential.*

## Education in the time of Covid-19

As school districts across the state struggle with the best method to safely educate our students during the Covid-19 crisis, CT PTA wishes to call attention to equity issues specific to technology that can make any remote method more difficult for some families. CT PTA encourages legislation that would create a study of the technology accessibility and limitations in the Connecticut school districts.

Perception may not be reality and hard data is needed to ascertain the needs of all of Connecticut's students.

## Advocating for Equity

The PTA must advocate at all levels to eradicate the negative impact of institutional racism.

Connecticut PTA urges state and local public officials to invest in educating students and teachers on the history and impact of institutional racism. Professional development and training must be provided for all school staff on implicit bias and culturally appropriate curriculum. School staff should also be provided professional development in mental health, trauma-informed care and restorative justice to provide a safe, inclusive environment for all students.

Local advocacy should focus on issues such as disparate discipline; equitable education for immigrant children; recruitment and retention of Black and Brown teachers; housing development policies; access to healthcare; juvenile and criminal justice; and other such issues which are relevant to local schools, communities and states. We will work to ensure more comprehensive guidelines and training are required on the use of force by school resource officers, other law enforcement officers, other law enforcement officers and security personnel.

## Social Emotional Intelligence

Connecticut PTA supports initiatives that promote social/emotional skills and resiliency in children to include a tiered model of evidence based practice that addresses prevention and response.

Connecticut PTA supports initiatives that promote healthy social emotional development from birth to adulthood recognizing that this teaches overall self-awareness to build positive social skills and self-regulation so children are ready and able to learn.

## Education Funding

Connecticut PTA supports providing access to a well-rounded curriculum and quality instruction for all students. The current education cost sharing formula in Connecticut fails to provide the resources that would procure that quality education.

Connecticut PTA believes that the State of Connecticut, needs to assume a reasonable share of the cost of education. The state of Connecticut mandates most of the standards governing education. Unfunded mandates place an unreasonable burden on boards of education, town budgets and taxpayers. Additionally, the state also authorizes the creation of alternative or additional education opportunities for students including magnet and charter schools. Funding for one must not be diverted to support another.

Connecticut PTA believes that all children in Connecticut deserve an opportunity for a quality public education regardless of where they live.

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## Lead Poisoning

Lead poisoning is an ongoing, chronic problem in our state and across the country. Because of the Covid-19 crisis children who may be at risk are missing valuable testing that happens at regular pediatric checkups. CT PTA supports the implementation of an information campaign to make all parents aware of the lead testing that occurs at the preschool age health checkups.

## Safe and Supportive Schools- Multi-faceted

A founding principle of Connecticut PTA is the promotion of the safety and well-being of all children and youth. School safety is one of the greatest shared responsibilities of all parents, educators, administrators, students and community members.

School safety is a multi faceted issue with no “one size fits all” solution. All efforts to address the various aspects of school safety must involve parents, students, families and all other stake holders to protect both the physical and the psychological safety of students.

Additionally, CT PTA believes that all children, no matter their immigration status, have the right to a quality education and such supports as are provided within the school and community environment.

## Family Engagement in Education

Connecticut PTA supports requirements that higher education institutions include coursework in parent and family involvement, as well as community engagement in education certification programs to increase the capacity for culturally competent family engagement practices and student achievement.

Connecticut PTA supports the expansion of family engagement initiatives that begin at birth, both in the home and in other early learning environments, to ensure coordinated family engagement throughout childhood.

## Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention

Connecticut PTA supports protecting the rights of children and youth involved in the justice system.

Connecticut PTA supports family and community-based alternatives to incarceration which are less expensive to taxpayers and more effective than detention, which frequently leads to the interruption of education, children failing to return to school after release and future delinquency.

## Special Education

Connecticut PTA advocates to ensure that all students graduate from high school being college and career ready and that the rights of children with disabilities and their parents are fully protected.

Connecticut PTA supports requirements that school staff know how to respond to behavior issues with positive behavioral interventions and supports (PBIS).

CT PTA advocates for schools to meet the unique needs of children in special education and their need for consistency and structure. As the Covid 19 crisis changes the way that children are educated it is even more important that accommodations be made to address the needs of children in special education.

## Other Initiatives

- Child Health and Nutrition
- Professional Development
- Opioid Abuse
- High School Reform
- Vaping

*The Connecticut Parent Teacher Association, with nearly 32,000 members, is the state's largest volunteer child advocacy organization. Connecticut PTA believes that every child must be provided with a well-rounded, high-quality public education which will ensure that all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential and become productive members of society. Access to a free public education is the most effective method of securing this opportunity and should not be denied to any child.*

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