

## 1.8 Substance Use Disorder Education and Prevention

*Resolution passed 1990; amended 2019*

**Whereas**, Washington State PTA recognizes that substance use disorders will continue to be a significant threat to the well-being of families, children and youth, and that the use of multiple substances during adolescence increases the likelihood of substance use disorder and health risks in adulthood; and

**Whereas**, children and youth in homes with substance use disorders are commonly involved with child welfare and foster care systems, creating long-term challenges; and

**Whereas**, Healthy Youth Survey data continue to show that substance use can start in middle school and that up to 20% of high school seniors regularly use more than one substance (alcohol, marijuana, tobacco products, prescription or non-prescription drugs); and

**Whereas**, many teens believe prescription drugs are safe because they are prescribed by a doctor, yet 66% of individuals over the age of 12 who misuse prescription opioids get them from family or friends; and

**Whereas**, evidence-based substance use disorder education programs based in schools and communities have been successful at decreasing substance use in youth; and


**Whereas**, an American Psychological Association study on zero-tolerance school discipline policies concluded that zero-tolerance policies did not deter future substance use, but did have negative effects on child development, decreased student education outcomes and increased racial disparities and referrals into the juvenile justice system; and

**Whereas**, Washington State PTA supports alternatives to expulsion and suspension, including restorative justice and other programs that focus on prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

### **Therefore, be it**

**Resolved**, that Washington State PTA supports legislation and policies to increase funding for evidence-based education and abuse-prevention programs for students, families, caregivers, and community members regarding the methods, symptoms, effects and dangers of alcohol, tobacco/vaping, marijuana/edibles, and drug abuse, including “off-label” use of prescription and non-prescription drugs; and for school staff training for early identification, intervention, and follow-up care for students; and be it further

**Resolved**, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils work for increased awareness of existing regulations and laws that protect children and youth from these hazards to their health and well-being, including prohibitions on advertising, marketing or knowingly providing to minors any information that would be harmful, or selling materials to minors that are illegal, including, but not limited to alcohol, tobacco and vaping products, drugs and other substances; and be it further



**Resolved**, that Washington State PTA advocates for programs and projects that offer positive alternative activities to drug use and abuse for children and youth; for collaborative and holistic services that support families, children, and youth; for school districts to review their policies and procedures around disciplinary consequences of alcohol and substance use by students; and for expansion of alternatives to suspension, expulsion or incarceration, including alternative discipline and restorative justice programs, for students with substance use disorders; and be it further

**Resolved**, that Washington State PTA continues to work in cooperative relationships with school districts, state and local government agencies, child welfare organizations, education support organizations, professional medical and advocacy organizations and the general public to deliver the most current evidence-based research curriculum regarding substance use disorders, promote substance and drug use disorder education, outreach, prevention and treatment; and to expand programs that reduce access of children and youth to prescription drugs, such as safe storage and take-back programs, and restrictions on internet pharmacy sales of opiates and other addictive prescription drugs.