

18.35 Improving Outcomes in Special Education

Resolution passed 2018

Whereas, the U.S. Supreme Court in 2017 in a unanimous opinion (hereinafter “[Andrew F.](#)”) ruled the legal standard for measuring progress for students with disabilities must be “markedly more. . . than de minimis progress from year to year;” and

Whereas, the U.S. Supreme Court in [Andrew F.](#) stated federal law governing special education requires that “every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives;” and

Whereas, the U.S. Supreme Court in [Andrew F.](#) ruled that special education programs must be “reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances;” and

Whereas, significant and persistent gaps remain between the achievement of students with disabilities and students without disabilities; and

Whereas, when compared to other states, Washington state’s rates of inclusion and high school graduation rates across categories and/or groupings of disabilities (i.e., mild to moderate to severe) rank near the bottom of the country; and

Whereas, students with disabilities in Washington state continue to experience uneven and inequitable access to enriching extracurricular activities and learning opportunities that are a necessary component of every child’s education; and

Whereas, people with disabilities have significantly lower rates of employment and educational attainment than their non-disabled peers, and, as a result, also experience higher rates of poverty; and

Whereas, there is a crucial relationship between teacher expectations of students with disabilities and higher levels of achievement; and

Whereas, upholding high expectations for all students and promoting cooperative relationships between students of all abilities can reduce the high incidence of stigmatization, and students, in turn, benefit by forming positive relationships and friendships and learning how to be more at ease with a variety of people.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA encourages all stakeholders in the educational system – teachers (both general and special education), paraeducators, staff, families, administrators, school board directors and members of the community – to have and maintain high expectations for students with disabilities; and be it further



Resolved, that Washington State PTA collaborates with the entire school community to include children with disabilities and their families in all school-based and school-directed activities to promote cooperative relationships between students of all abilities through experiences such as peer mentoring, collaborative problem solving, and cooperative working groups, as well as through more casual or unstructured interactions; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils support funding for ongoing pre-service training and professional development for all teachers regarding adapting instruction to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom as well as accommodations that improve access to the general curriculum and high expectations for all students with regards to academics, extracurricular activities and overall school behavior; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington PTA and its local PTAs and councils support development of a comprehensive statewide technical assistance system and implementing best practices in meeting the needs of diverse learners through such practices as inclusion, Universal Design for Learning (UDL), Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), Response to Intervention (RTI), and any other similar instructional practices to support Core Content instruction, as well as access to accommodations including assistive technology for students with disabilities, so that they may reach their highest potential.