

2.9 Emergency Preparedness

Resolution passed 1992; amended 2009; amended 2019

Whereas, one of the purposes of Washington State PTA is to advocate for laws that further the education, physical and mental health, welfare, and safety of children and youth; and

Whereas, numerous public school districts throughout Washington State lack adequate infrastructure and preparation for emergency conditions that can result from natural disasters (e.g., earthquake, volcanic activity, lahar, flooding, wildfire, avalanche, drought, landslide, tsunami, and severe weather); human-made disasters (e.g., civil disturbance, terrorism, active shooter, bomb threat); and unintended disasters (e.g., dam failure, release of hazardous material, pipeline failure, and urban fires) any of which may expose children and youth to grave hazard; and

Whereas, many existing school structures, having been built before the development of the statewide building code (established in 1975), are especially at risk to seismic effects which, in the event of an earthquake, may render buildings structurally unsafe and too dangerous to occupy or result in collapse; and

Whereas, school buildings are public assets and may be required to support communities after disasters as temporary mass shelter facilities or resource centers during times of crisis; and

Whereas, large segments of the public remain uninformed about coping with emergency conditions; and

Whereas, first responder resources may be overwhelmed in a large-scale emergency, delaying aid to schools and school personnel may be called on to provide emergency assistance to students until traditional First Responders arrive, or students are reunited with their families; and


Whereas, schools need to have on-hand essential emergency supplies and equipment; and

Whereas, being prepared will reduce fear, anxiety, and losses during disasters; and

Whereas, preparedness drills and emergency response exercises help reinforce skills and knowledge needed during an actual emergency and can also enhance response effectiveness when schools work in collaboration with emergency response agencies, including fire, police, and trained community volunteers.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA its local PTAs and councils urge the legislature to strengthen laws, education and funding to fully implement comprehensive safe school and emergency preparedness plans and a means for verifying compliance with minimum standards at all public schools; and be it further



Resolved, that Washington State PTA shall promote and encourage cooperation and collaboration between all public schools, OSPI, regional school safety centers, and emergency management authorities in the development, implementation and regular updating of comprehensive safe school and emergency preparedness plans, which shall include provisions for emergency supplies and equipment, age-appropriate drills, and hands-on training for staff in accordance with best practices and guidelines from leading governmental and non-governmental organizations and healthcare providers; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA shall support legislation and funding for school building seismic hazard mitigation. This includes structural (i.e., buildings) and non-structural (i.e., falling objects) considerations for all public schools to reduce injuries/fatalities during earthquakes and to help ensure that buildings can serve as safe shelter areas after an event; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA shall encourage local PTAs and councils to promote public awareness about comprehensive safe school plans and emergency preparedness.