

Proposed Legislative Issues and Resolutions

During the annual Washington State PTA (WSPTA) Legislative Assembly, delegates decide the public policy positions that guide state and local advocacy work for WSPTA and its associated local PTAs and councils.

The legislative assembly will take place on October 15-16, 2022. There are no new or amended legislative principles for consideration. Delegates will vote on 13 new legislative issues, one new resolution, and three existing resolutions with proposed amendments. Only the parts in shaded boxes are open for amendment and debate. Changes are shown as a ~~strike through~~ for deletions and as **underlined bold font** for additions. Legislative issues will also be ranked by delegates to determine a Top 5 for the 2023 and 2024 legislative sessions.

[Issue #1](#)

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LEGISLATIVE ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

There are 13 new proposed legislative issues for consideration. Only the title and description statements (in the shaded boxes) can be amended.

Proposed New Legislative Issue #1 (Member Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that build a socially, economically, and environmentally resilient world for children and youth by:

- Providing education, funding, planning and implementation resources to schools and communities to promote sustainability and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Equitably mitigating adverse climate change impacts.
- Declaring climate change a public health crisis in order to implement policies and solutions that strengthen public health and health care infrastructure, direct funding and raise awareness about the health impacts of climate change.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

Actions we take now will determine our children's health, security, and livelihoods. A warmer atmosphere due to greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) is linked to more extreme weather events, wildfires, droughts, flooding, and sea-level rise. Warmer conditions also increase harmful pathogens, allergens, and ozone, leading to worsening health impacts. The economic and health costs of inaction continue to rise, along with climate anxiety. Children and underprivileged communities are particularly vulnerable to climate effects, as well as to the direct harm caused by related toxic air and water pollutants. Without immediate, system-wide improvements, our children will see increasing illness, disparity, displacement, conflict, and death over their lifetimes.

Have hope! We can be part of the solution! In 2020-22, Washington State PTA advocated to mitigate the adverse impacts of climate change due to the extensive threats posed to children and youth. Our goal is clear: to minimize worsening effects, GHGs must be halved by 2030 and reach zero by 2050.

Washingtonians have made progress, but we must do more. Let's keep the momentum going! All jurisdictions can focus on equitable pathways to reduce GHGs and adapt to our warming world. We can declare climate change a health crisis that disproportionately impacts children and youth. We can implement green building standards; move to clean energy and zero-exhaust transportation options; replace aging HVACs; and adopt efficient, sustainable practices. Students can learn about, innovate, and participate in climate solutions too. Together, we can create resilient, sustainable schools and communities, and a livable future for all children!

Proposed New Legislative Issue #2 (WSPTA Advocacy Committee Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Increasing Education Equity by Closing the Digital Divide

Washington State PTA shall support legislation, policies, and funding that ensure equitable digital inclusion and access for all students, families, and staff through the implementation of a statewide digital equity plan, including adoption of best practices and strategies for use of technology to improve student education and behavioral outcomes.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

The Washington State legislature has made many investments to close the digital divide and improve equitable access to Internet and broadband across the state. School districts have provided computers and other developmentally appropriate technology to support student learning through virtual approaches. Still, many students and families remain either trapped in Internet deserts or unable to afford the robust speeds needed in a post-pandemic society.

Household income is one of the largest divides in access, with 28 percent of households with less than \$20,000 income having no internet access. The poverty level for a family of two in Washington State is \$17,240. For the 2021-2022 school year, 47.6 percent of students enrolled in Washington State were low income. Furthermore, there is extreme disparity in broadband access by county. For example, Lincoln County has zero percent 100 Mbps (megabits per second) coverage, while Columbia County has 100 percent coverage. The Cascade Range is a clear dividing factor in access to speed. Every county west of the Cascades has access to 1 Gigabits speeds, with Pacific being the lowest at 36.9 percent of

households having access. East of the Cascades is a very different picture. In 16 of the counties, less than 10 percent of households have access to 1 Gig speeds, with households in six counties having zero percent access. Without the education framework and technological infrastructure to improve education and behavioral outcomes, students will be at a disadvantage today and in the future.

Proposed New Legislative Issue #3 (WSPTA FACE Committee Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Increasing Support for Equitable Family Engagement

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that:

- Require adoption and implementation of the Washington State Family Engagement Framework, with funding and technical assistance for school district implementation.
- Expand the ratio of family engagement coordinators in middle and high schools.
- Reduce barriers for caregivers to participate on workgroups, committees, or other engagement opportunities.
- Fund family engagement professional learning for all educators.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

Family Engagement is a critical component for student success at all ages. Research tells us that effective family engagement can increase student academic achievement, increase family and community connections, and provide support for struggling learners. The proposed framework from the OSPI Family Engagement Workgroup defines equitable family engagement as a concept that recognizes that families are unique in their strengths and challenges and that not all families come to education with the same understanding of how to support their student(s). When we provide equity in family engagement, all families can be advocates for their student(s), regardless of family status, cultural beliefs, the presence of disabilities, language, and other barriers. WSPTA must advocate for the resources necessary to ensure that families in all schools have access to a family engagement coordinator who can connect them with services, support, and opportunities to learn how best to support their students. Furthermore, we should advocate for the full adoption and implementation of the framework to ensure families in our state have the support needed to help all students be successful.

Proposed New Legislative Issue #4 (WSPTA Advocacy Committee Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Preventing and Reducing Gun Violence and Suicide

Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that prevent and reduce gun violence and suicide including:

- Addressing the disproportionate impact on BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth.
- Funding community-based prevention and intervention programs.
- Promoting safe storage of medication and firearms.
- Prohibiting the sale or transfer of military-style assault weapons.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

Firearms are now the leading cause of death for American children, killing nearly 5 a day. In Washington we lose a child or young person to firearm or suicide every other day. This is a public health problem that disproportionately impacts communities of color. Black people comprise 4% of Washington’s population but 20% of the homicide victims. Similar disproportions exist for Indigenous and Latinx communities. Indigenous youths have triple the suicide risk of whites. LGBTQ youth have four times the risk of their peers.

We speak for all youth in Washington State when we say “enough”! We want our legislators to take meaningful action towards reducing gun violence in our state. This means funding evidence-based community-based prevention and intervention. Promoting safe storage of firearms and medications. And implementing commonsense restrictions for assault-type weapons which have been used in the most deadly shootings. We must do all of this work with the intention of addressing the disproportionate impact that suicide and gun violence have on BIPOC and LGBTQ+ youth. One more lost child, one more school shooting, is too many. All students deserve the right to live their lives without fear of gun violence.

Proposed New Legislative Issue #5 (Member Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors’ recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Improving Equitable Identification and Access for Highly Capable Students

Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that:

- Achieve equity for traditionally under-represented and under-served student populations through universal screening and access to high quality Highly Capable (HiCap) services.
- Require OSPI to publish HiCap demographic data by district.
- Ensure educators and staff serving HiCap students receive effective professional development in the academic, social, and emotional needs of HiCap students.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

Highly Capable (HiCap) students continue to be under-identified, under-served, and demographically disproportional to their district populations. Effective, equitable identification practices, high-quality programs, and highly qualified HiCap education professionals are needed to ensure HiCap students don’t fall through the cracks.

Districts using OSPI recommended practices like universal screening are improving equitable representation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color; students with disabilities; multi-lingual learners; and low-socioeconomic status students in their programs. It is crucial that these tools replace biased, outdated identification practices such as reliance on parent or educator referrals, the use of single data points (such as CoGAT screeners), and inequitably scheduled testing.

The stakes for HiCap students are profound. HiCap programs are vital “Whole Child” interventions and Washington has considered them “basic education” since 2011.

The neurodiversity that makes advanced learning a normal HiCap experience is also visible in their unique challenges: social development, emotional regulation, delayed development of executive function, and frequent co-diagnosis of disabilities and learning differences.

Appropriate academic challenge provides all students opportunities to develop important skills: how to problem solve, persist through struggle, learn from mistakes, seek support when needed, and relate to peers. When classes are too “easy” for them, HiCap students miss out on this essential learning. As a result, underachievement, behavior challenges, mental health challenges, and social dysfunction are common outcomes for HiCap students.

We have an urgent moral imperative to do everything possible to identify and serve all HiCap students in Washington state, particularly our most vulnerable and chronically overlooked children.

Proposed New Legislative Issue #6 (WSPTA Advocacy Committee Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors’ recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Supporting a Meaningful High School Diploma

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that prepare students for college or career including:

- Graduation requirements that support a meaningful diploma.
- Opportunities to attain credits through evidence of content mastery and dual credit course options.
- Innovative and student-centered class offerings using culturally responsive curricula and teaching practices.
- Equitable access to, and family engagement about, relevant graduation pathways, high school and beyond plans, and college and career counseling.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

The State Board of Education (SBE) has created a “Profile of a Graduate” that defines a graduate as someone who:

- cultivates personal growth/knowledge
- solves problems
- communicates effectively
- sustains wellness
- embraces differences/diversity
- masters life skills/self-agency

Current graduation requirements, pathways, and class offerings will need to be aligned with these goals, and families and students must be part of the process. The SBE has heard from students wanting more options that embrace ethnic and cultural differences, and to be relevant, graduation pathways and class offerings need to align with a student’s High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP).

Today’s learning environment is expanding to include not only testing and seat time, but also evidence of content mastery and relevance to post-secondary plans. The state legislature is working with the SBE

and OSPI to craft mastery-based learning standards that students can use to earn credit in a meaningful way. Content mastery is already used to award credit for foreign language proficiency and expanding to other subjects will allow students more flexibility to attain credits and satisfy graduation pathways.

For students to leave high school prepared for college or career, our students and families need to understand and have access to relevant graduation pathways, have a clear understanding of HSBPs that are consistent across the state, and have access to quality college and career counseling. Family and student engagement is critical to student success during and after high school and makes it important for this issue to be on WSPTA's platform. Please vote yes!

Proposed New Legislative Issue #7 (WSPTA Advocacy Committee Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Harnessing the Benefits of Mastery-based Learning

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that harness the benefits of mastery-based learning to ensure students experience learning through a positive progression of demonstrated mastery that increases learning outcomes through inclusivity, communicated performance indicators, and timely feedback and supports to reach learning goals.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

WSPTA understands that there is not a one-size fits all approach to learning. Each student possesses their own unique skills, values, and style of learning when they enter school.

What Mastery-based Learning (MBL) has the potential to do is help students develop skill mastery with personal resiliency, creativity, self-agency, inclusivity, and a growth mindset. Through the MBL approach, we can elevate the knowledge and skills students already have, connect with students through their diverse cultures and communities, and as stated in the Mastery-based Learning Work Group Report issued by the State Board of Education, "support [them] through authentic relationships with educators to experience rigorous and personally relevant coursework."

Washington state is just beginning to develop a framework for MBL in K-12 education. While this is not a new concept, the benefits for all students are significant. The Mastery-based Learning Work Group Report also states that in some schools they have already seen "...this kind of education tackling barriers to student success, closing the opportunity gap, and engaging students in learning that is relevant to them based on their passions, experiences, and cultures." It is vital that PTA be engaged during this process to represent the student and family voice.

Please adopt this issue for our 2023 platform. By having a seat at the table during this critical juncture where Washington is on the verge of altering how students learn, we can be a voice for all children and youth

Proposed New Legislative Issue #8 (WSPTA Advocacy Committee Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Addressing the Student Mental Health Crisis

Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that ensure all students have access to the behavioral and mental health resources they need to thrive, including funding for:

- Reduced ratios of students to mental health professionals.
- Programs and incentives to recruit, train, and retain mental health professionals.
- Resources to assist families.
- Training and support for educators and administrators.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

Children and young people in our country are experiencing a mental health crisis. Meeting this crisis will require creating greater access and affordability for mental health supports, especially for those at highest risk such as highly mobile children. It will require caregivers, schools, and professionals to have the resources they need. School-based services can continue to play a critical part in meeting the needs of our children across the state. We have heard from legislators that more mental health professionals are needed to adequately staff the school-based solutions, so let's rise to that challenge and create programs to enhance and support the pipeline in these critical professions. Let's also provide ample funding for school-based supports to give our trained professionals the time they need to make a difference in the lives of the students they are supporting. We acknowledge that schools are only part of the solution, and we urge more support and resources for families and caregivers. When children or young people are experiencing behavioral health issues, it is frequently exhausting and overwhelmingly difficult for caregivers to navigate the various and siloed governmental, medical, and educational systems that will lead to the needed support. Let's create and fund programs like the parent portal to assist and empower families. This work is critical. Student mental health is a genuine emergency, and it is time we make this a definitive priority for our state.

Proposed New Legislative Issue #9 (Member Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Building and Maintaining Safer School Facilities

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that:

- Fund school safety changes, including emergency signs, improving indoor air quality and other environmental hazards, seismic upgrades, and an earthquake early warning system in all schools.
- Require safety plans to include persons with disabilities and all people in school buildings, and to conduct annual emergency reunification training.
- Increase the transparency of the condition of school facilities to allow public review.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

For the health and safety of everyone in our school buildings, districts need to provide healthy and safe building environments which include addressing seismic safety, improving indoor air quality, eliminating lead in drinking water and other environmental hazards, and proper emergency planning. School buildings, staff, students, families, and visitors must be properly prepared, supplied, and trained for emergencies.

Emergency plans are a critical part of building safety. To properly prepare for natural and man-made emergencies, schools need to ensure **all** people in school buildings are included in planning and drills. These emergency plans and practice drills must include students, staff, and visitors, especially those people with disabilities.

Earthquakes are a reality where we live and would be a huge challenge if proper steps are not taken in advance. There is an 83% chance of a magnitude 6.5 or larger quake in Washington state in the next 50 years. Washington state is ranked the second highest risk in the United States of these large and damaging earthquakes because of its geologic setting. Yet in a recent study, 93% of schools in a sample of 561 school buildings are likely to collapse during an earthquake leading to death, injury and entrapment of students and staff.

In addition, other environmental factors negatively impact school environments. During Covid, we learned that poor indoor air quality can have a detrimental effect on the health of students and staff and is a direct cause of illnesses, leading to student and staff absenteeism.

Please vote yes to add this to our platform so WSPTA can advocate for improvements to school environments.

Proposed New Legislative Issue #10 (WSPTA Advocacy Committee Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Expanding School Construction Funding Options

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that:

- Increase overall state funding and funding options for school construction projects and improvements.
- Provide equitable funding options so all school districts across the state can complete capital projects and improvements.
- Lower the 60 percent super-majority to pass bonds to no more than 55 percent with a strong preference for a simple majority of 50 percent.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

School construction funding is critical to pay for school construction projects, including the purchase of property, constructing new schools, modernizing, and expanding existing schools, and increasing safety measures. When the McCleary case on basic education funding was decided in 2012, it did not address school construction funding. This requires school districts to pass capital bonds or levies to construct

and maintain school facilities. The state provides minimal matching financial assistance to school districts through the School Construction Assistance Program.

Some school districts can pass capital bonds and levies while others cannot, resulting in inequitable learning environments for students. Many districts around the state are unable to support school construction bond or capital levy measures due to lower property values with a small commercial base, resulting in higher tax increases when compared to urban areas with larger commercial tax bases.

Washington is one of only eleven states that require more than 50% to pass school bonds. Between 2017 and 2020, 130 school bonds were run. Of these, 62 passed at 60%, while 15 failed to reach 50%. That means 53 districts met a simple majority for bonds threshold, but those students were denied new or renovated schools due to the outdated 60% threshold. WSPTA has a long-standing resolution to pass simple majority for bonds.

It is time for Washington state to share a higher responsibility for school construction projects as part of Washington's Paramount Duty to amply fund basic education. Please vote Yes!

Proposed New Legislative Issue #11 (WSPTA Advocacy Committee Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Addressing Critical Gaps in Education Funding

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that help resolve critical education funding gaps and inequities with predictable, progressive, and sustainable revenue sources including, but not limited to:

- Resources for students needing additional academic/physical/emotional supports.
- Services for students with disabilities.
- Categorical funding to support highly mobile students.
- Student transportation.
- Unfunded mandates to school districts.
- School construction.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

Both our K-12 education system and our students are still in recovery mode from the havoc wreaked by Covid-19. We must advocate for the resources required to provide all students needed academic, physical, and emotional supports, as well as to address critical funding gaps and inequities for our students with disabilities, students in highly mobile populations, and students furthest from educational justice.

In addition, school districts are not reimbursed for the actual cost of student transportation and are forced to use general funds and/or locally passed levies to make up for transportation funding gaps. School districts are regularly given unfunded mandates to execute, including the important HB 1153 related to language access. We must advocate to provide resources for all current and future unfunded mandates. Finally, school construction is not part of basic education, therefore, districts must pass capital bonds or levies and hope for matching funds from the School Construction Assistance Program

(SCAP), usually 10% or less of the project cost, to fund remodels, modernizations, new buildings, and other large capital projects.

If new state revenues are pursued, we support progressive initiatives and do not support regressive sales tax increases that hurt the very people who need financial assistance the most.

PTA members must stand together ensuring that students - all students - have the resources they need to meet their academic, physical, and emotional needs. We need the voice of Washington State PTA to support K-12 funding and vote this issue a **Top 5 Priority!**

Proposed New Legislative Issue #12 (Member Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Addressing Funding, Inclusion, and Supports in Special Education

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that support students with disabilities and their families by:

- Fully funding special education services with no caps on funding enrollment.
- Developing solutions to address a statewide special education staffing shortage.
- Promoting full inclusion in general education classrooms.
- Providing assistive technology and multi-tiered systems of support.
- Simplifying the safety net reimbursement process to school districts.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act to make a free public education available to children with disabilities has never been fully funded. The statewide cap on funded enrollment of 13.5% is limiting to students receiving special education services, who should not have to rely on tax levies to determine whether adequate funding is available, nor should districts be penalized if they exceed that cap.

Washington state is facing a dire shortage of teachers and paraeducators with special education endorsements to meet the growing needs of students with disabilities. Training should be provided to all staff for positive behavior and inclusion strategies that will result in better outcomes for all.

As much as possible, students with disabilities should be taught in general education classrooms to promote equity and inclusion. One way to promote inclusion is to implement Universal Design for Learning which allows greater flexibility in how students display mastery of learning. Students with disabilities should have access to assistive technology, devices and multitiered systems of support to reach their greatest potential.

Proposed New Legislative Issue #13 (Member Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: **Adopt** [\[back to top\]](#)

Creating a Diverse and Effective Educator Workforce

Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that ensure that every child has outstanding paraeducators, educators and administrators by expanding programs that grow, recruit and retain an effective and diverse workforce and provide equitable access to preparation or certificate programs.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

Having an effective classroom teacher has been shown to be the most important factor leading to better academic outcomes, regardless of student zip code or circumstance. There has been an ongoing shortage of educators, particularly in STEM fields, and for educators and paraeducators teaching English language learners or with endorsements in Special Education. Rural and high poverty schools have additional difficulty retaining educators. All of this was made worse by the pandemic. In some areas in Washington, emergency substitutes without formal content or classroom management training are providing the majority of instruction to students. This is not acceptable.

Further, studies demonstrate that all students, but especially students of color, benefit from having even one teacher of color. While 50% of students in Washington are students of color, the educator workforce is still over 90% white. This needs to change.

There are existing programs to increase the number and diversity of certificated educators, including classroom teachers, principals and paraeducators. These programs provide greater and more equitable access to education programs that lead to certification, and mentoring programs that increase retention. WSPTA must advocate for expansion of these certification programs to all areas of the state and mentoring programs to all schools. Please adopt this issue and make it a Top 5 so we can bring the voice of families into this crucial conversation, so every student can have an effective educator in every classroom.

RESOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

There are one new resolution and three existing resolutions with proposed amendments for consideration. **Only titles and resolved clauses that are in shaded boxes can be amended.** If a resolved clause of a resolution is amended, the resolutions committee shall edit the *whereas* clause(s) as necessary. The *whereas* clause(s) are not open for amendment. However, the resolutions committee has provided the *whereas* clauses as they would be amended to provide the delegates with additional information to inform their vote for the three amended resolutions.

Provisos are provided when the action of the delegates might cause another action to occur. For example, the adoption of a resolution may allow another resolution to be retired because those goals have been incorporated into the new resolution. All provisos are clearly marked throughout this guide.

Proposed New Resolution #1 (WSPTA FACE Committee Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: **Adopt** [\[back to top\]](#)

Equitable and Impactful Family Engagement in Education

Whereas, according to the OSPI Family Engagement Framework 2021 Report to the legislature, family engagement is a full and equitable partnership among families, educators, providers, and communities to support learners' development from birth through college and career; and

Whereas, it is a core value of National PTA, and therefore WSPTA, to commit to supporting strong family engagement by promoting an environment in which families are valued as primary influences in their children's lives and essential partners in their children's education and development; and

Whereas, families - particularly low-income and limited-English-proficient families - face multiple barriers to engagement, often lacking access to the social capital and understanding of the school system necessary to take effective action on behalf of their children; and

Whereas, equitable family engagement amplifies educational success for all learners by acknowledging the myriad of family types, including multi-generational, cultural, same-gender, single-parent, and linguistically diverse families; and

Whereas, unless there is intentional work to break down barriers to participation, low-income families, migrant families, families of color, families with students with disabilities, families with parents with disabilities, and non-traditional families can feel unwelcome and unprepared to play active roles in schools; and

Whereas, National PTA's Center for Family Engagement, which publishes standards for family engagement, asserts that "Developing an inclusive approach helps all families understand that their perspective matters. PTAs need to intentionally build trusting relationships with families in order to ensure they feel comfortable and welcome in the community."; and

Whereas, the National PTA School of Excellence recognition program opens the lines of communication and critical thinking within school communities to make data-driven decisions that yield positive, long-term results. School of Excellence is committed to supporting and recognizing partnerships between local PTAs and schools to enrich the educational experience and overall well-being for all students.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for the full adoption and implementation of the OSPI Family Engagement Framework and National PTA Standards for Family Engagement and work to support schools, PTAs, and families as these recommendations are implemented, including:

- Funding at least one family engagement coordinator at every school in our state
- Increasing the amount and availability of professional learning in family engagement for educators
- Participating in the development and implementation of new National PTA Family Engagement Standards
- Conducting an internal examination of our own policies and practices related to equitable family engagement to ensure alignment with state and national frameworks; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils increase local PTA participation in the National PTA Schools of Excellence program to ensure that families are engaged and supported consistent with the core beliefs and standards of our National PTA; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for models of site-based decision making which provide for equitable participation among families, students, community members, principals, teachers, and other staff and which promote an environment in which families are valued as essential partners in their children's education and development.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

The proposed framework from the OSPI Family Engagement Workgroup defines equitable family engagement as a concept that recognizes that families are unique in their strengths and challenges and that not all families come to education with the same understanding of how to support their student(s).

For example,

- Families of color need to be able to connect with each other and have shared power to make decisions on behalf of their students.
- Families with students with disabilities need to know that when they attend a meeting or event, they will be able to participate in ways that respect their particular needs.
- Families who are learning English need access to translations so that they can understand what is being said, decided, or expressed.
- Families within the LGBTQ community need to feel welcome at their schools and not subject to implicit or explicit bias in their ability to participate fully in their learner's educational success.

WSPTA should advocate for funding to allow for school staff with the capacity to provide outreach to families. We need to examine our own structures to ensure that we are not creating barriers to participation by implementing policies that shut families out. We need to advocate for quality professional development to help educators understand how to create partnerships with families. And we need to leverage programs and resources provided at the national level to help us in this work by more fully implementing National PTA's standards for family engagement.

PROVISO TO PROPOSED NEW RESOLUTION #1

*If delegates at legislative assembly adopt this new resolution, the following resolution would be retired:
[4.12 Family and Community Engagement in Education.](#)*

Proposed Amendment of Existing Resolution #2 (Member Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

2.23 Gun Violence Prevention and Safety – Students and School Staff

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, firearms are the second leading cause of death for American children and teens nationally, with nearly 1,600 children and teens dying by gun homicide every year; and over 950 children and teens

dying of suicide by gun every year; and the rate of firearm suicide is up by 61 percent in the past 10 years; and

Whereas, children exposed to gun violence, crime and abuse are more likely to abuse drugs and alcohol; suffer from depression, anxiety and posttraumatic stress disorder; fail or have difficulties in school and engage in criminal activity; and

Whereas, due to its tremendous impact on the health and wellbeing of our youth, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control has declared gun violence a public health problem which must be dealt with using many multidisciplinary strategies and approaches; and

Whereas, recent research strongly supports that safe storage of firearms reduces the risk of suicide, domestic violence homicide, and unintentional injury; and

Whereas, the lethality, and severity of injury to the wounded is greatly increased by the shooters' use of semi-automatic assault weapons, including both pistols and rifles; and

Whereas, possession of firearms on school premises is not permitted by law, except by persons engaged in military, law enforcement, or school district security activities under the direction of a school administrator; and some school districts employ commissioned law enforcement as school resource officers (SROs) or other armed school security personnel; and

Whereas, if a school district chooses to have an SRO program, the school district must confirm that every SRO has received specified training and engage in specific community outreach and accountability actions specified in RCW 28A.320.124.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA encourages its local PTAs, councils, and members, as well as its fellow state PTAs, to support and advocate for legislation and policies that aim to prevent gun violence and reduce youth suicide; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA advocates for legislation and policies that reduce dangerous gun access, including:

- enforce all existing gun violence prevention laws
- strictly regulate civilian ownership of firearms and non-sporting ammunition, including high capacity magazines holding more than 10 rounds
- restrict dangerous access to all firearms, especially by children and by people with a history of violence including, but not limited to, domestic abusers, violent criminals, and/or people with histories showing a pattern of threatening behavior
- require the best available background checks on all firearm sales
- mandate safety training for firearms ownership
- hold legally accountable those corporations, businesses, and individuals who facilitate dangerous access to firearms
- oppose the defensive arming of teachers and school staff, other than:
 - properly trained and uniformed school resource officers (SROs)

- properly trained persons performing school security activities under the direction of a school administrator with equivalent training and community accountability as SROs; **and be it further**

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for legislation and policies that aim to reduce the likelihood, lethality, and trauma of school shootings, including:

- **Prohibitions on the sale or transfer of military-style assault weapons**
- **Family engagement in, and regular communication about school safety policies and procedures**
- **Robust education programs to teach students, families, caregivers, and community members about gun safety and violence prevention.**

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

Gun violence has become a terrifying public health issue in our country, killing over 120 people daily, including 4 children. Firearms are now the second leading cause of death for American children. In Washington state, according to Department of Health data (as of July 11, 2022), in 2021, 168 children and young people (ages 0-24) died from firearms, nearly one every other day. We are all concerned about school shootings, and there is much that can be done to prevent such tragedies, including informing families and school communities about gun violence prevention and gun safety, and engaging our families in school safety policies and procedures. Assault weapons are used in the most-deadly mass shootings and result in the majority of the deaths; if we are serious about eliminating such tragedies, we should follow the guidance of our attorney general and restrict access to these most dangerous weapons. These approaches are part of the National PTA federal legislative platform, and in the absence of robust federal legislation, states must act to create safe school environments. The proposed amendments are commonsense approaches to reduce the likelihood, lethality, and trauma of school shootings.

Proposed Amendment of Existing Resolution #3 (Member Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

18.36 Equitable Access to Highly Capable Services

Whereas, Washington State PTA is a strong advocate for the social and emotional well-being and academic needs of all children, so that they may reach their highest potential; and

Whereas, the Washington state legislature has recognized highly capable education as part of basic education for grades K-12 in all Washington public schools since 2011; and

Whereas, highly capable students often have unique needs and vulnerabilities, including social and emotional challenges, delayed executive function, asynchronous intellectual, social, and motor development, different developmental timelines, and a need for accelerated academics; and

Whereas, successful student outcomes (positive self-image as well as academic achievement) are more likely when student needs have been met, and suffer when they have not been met; and

Whereas, students of color, English **multi**-language learners, low-income students, students with disabilities, and twice-exceptional (“2e”) students (**highly capable students with disabilities**) are 250% less likely to be identified and served in **and have access to highly capable programs education**; and

Whereas, best practices for equitable access and identification of highly capable students have been published by the Washington Highly Capable Program Technical Working Group (2010), as well as in national research; and

Whereas, pre-service teacher training programs rarely cover the characteristics and needs of highly capable students **and how disability impacts highly capable students. As a result, teachers are not always equipped to recognize when a student should be referred for timely evaluation of their cognitive ability and/or for evaluation of their suspected disability.**

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports removing **and its local PTAs and councils support using best practices to remove** barriers to the identification of highly capable students of all genders **ALL students who would benefit from highly capable services** in every demographic group, regardless of **gender or** prior academic achievement, including students of color, English **multi**-language learners, **students from** low-income students **families**, students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, migrant students, students with disabilities, and twice-exceptional (“2e”) students; **Best practices include, but are not limited to, the use of appropriate universal screening in early elementary grades, and again before secondary school, conducting all screenings and assessments during the regular school day, and other best practices known to improve equity of access**; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports **and its local PTAs and councils support** access to highly capable services for ALL students who qualify for highly capable programming **education** using expanded equity promoting criteria, and expressly objects to limiting access to highly capable programming **education** based on space constraints, logistical considerations, lack of transportation, waitlists, special education **disability-related educational** needs, holding appeals to a higher standard than **narrow** general identification criteria, or any form of quotas; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports using best practices to remove barriers to the identification of ALL students who would benefit from highly capable services, including the use of universal screening in early elementary grades, and again before secondary school, conducting all screenings and assessments during the regular school day, and other best practices known to improve equity of access; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA support **and its local PTAs and councils support** teachers, counselors, principals, and administrators receiving meaningful pre-service training and ongoing professional development about the unique characteristics and social, emotional, and academic needs of highly capable and twice-exceptional (“2e”) students; **and be it further**

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils support legislation and policies **that create systems of accountability for school districts that fail to equitably identify or serve highly capable students.**

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has an entire webpage dedicated to highly capable guidance and resources because it is codified into state law as part of basic education ([RCW 28A 185.020](#)). The legislature determined that, for highly capable students, access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction is access to basic education and shall be provided by each school district. Students with disabilities, and our twice-exceptional (“2e”) students deserve the same access to accelerated learning.

Despite the legislature specifically directing school districts to prioritize identification of students from low-income families in 2017, Washington state has made no improvement in identifying students from low-income families for highly capable education statewide. No increases in identification have been seen in other historically underrepresented groups either including Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC), multi-language learners, students with disabilities, or twice-exceptional learners (“2e”). This shows that our current laws are not sufficient and that districts need more accountability to make progress on these important equity issues.

There is still much work to be done in order for all districts in our state to properly identify and serve ALL students who would benefit from highly capable services. Please vote yes on these important changes to this existing resolution.

Proposed Amendment of Existing Resolution #4 (Member Submission)

WSPTA Board of Directors’ recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

18.40 Improving Access and Outcomes in Special Education Equitable Access and Improved Outcomes for Students with Disabilities

Whereas, the U.S. Supreme Court in 2017 in a unanimous opinion (hereinafter “Endrew 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 Endrew F. stated federal law governing special education requires that “every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives;” and 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, federal and state law governing the rights of students with disabilities promote inclusive educational settings. Specifically, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA ’04) states “having high expectations for such children and ensuring their access to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom to the maximum extent possible;” and

Whereas, significant and persistent gaps remain between the achievement of students with disabilities and students without disabilities, such as high school graduation rates and post K-12 access to secondary education, training, or job placement, which remain tragically low; 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 students with intellectual disabilities educated in general education settings have been found to score higher on literacy measures than students educated in segregated settings; and

Whereas, it is crucial for families to have the information they need to make fully informed decisions for their students and to be able to confirm that all educational team agreements are fulfilled. Washington’s all-party consent law for recording means all meeting participants must agree to be recorded, so in most cases, Individual Education Plan (IEP) and 504 meetings cannot be recorded as a resource for families to refer back to; 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.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils urge 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 with regards to academics, extracurricular activities, and overall school participation
- Create an environment that ensures families of students with disabilities are equal partners in education decision-making
- **Recognize the intersectionality of disability and other identities including, but not limited to race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, students of color, students of diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds, students of lower-income status, students of high mobility (e.g. homeless, foster care, migrant, incarcerated, and military families), and other historically marginalized identities**
- Provide families of students with disabilities information and opportunities for meaningful engagement and participation in their child’s education
- **Include students with disabilities in all school-based and school-directed activities**
- Publish consistent data on outcomes for students with disabilities that is accessible to all; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils will advocate with all communities at the federal, state, and district level to:

- **Ensure that school districts are funded for the full cost of providing educational services to all students with disabilities, as well as the cost of identifying disabilities**
- **Remove the 13.5% funding cap so that all students requiring services are funded**
- **Expand funding to districts to include both students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), as well as the cost to provide accommodations for students with 504 plans**
- Ensure students with disabilities are educated in the Least Restrictive Environment with appropriate supports alongside their typically developing peers
- ~~Include students with disabilities in all school-based and school-directed activities~~
- **Provide families and guardians access to the information they need to make fully informed decisions about their student's education and that they have the ability to record education-related meetings to accurately document their student's educational needs and educational team agreements**
- **Ensure families have access to state funded educational advocate services**
- 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
- Support expansion of school-to-work programs such as apprenticeships; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for preservice learning for teachers in training and ongoing professional development for all educators regarding adapting instruction and providing accommodations and modifications to meet the needs of students with disabilities in all settings; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate with all communities for the development of a comprehensive statewide technical assistance system and the implementation of 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.

Persuasive Statement from the Submitter

It is important we update the language in the title to “students with disabilities”, as “special education” needs to be retired in reference to students. “Special Education” is part of federal legislation that relates to the services and supports provided for students with disabilities to access their education - not the students themselves.

Currently, districts are capped at an arbitrary 13.5% of funded enrollment, regardless of the actual percentage of students receiving special education services. Districts are having to make this up with local levies. Putting this burden on local levies does not live up to the “paramount duty” of the state. We must remove this arbitrary cap and ensure districts are funded for the actual cost of providing services to students with disabilities and expand to include student accommodations provided in their 504 plans.

The importance of family engagement cannot be understated. We must give families all the information and resources they need in order to make the best decisions for their students. Individual Education Plan (IEP) and 504 meetings can be confusing, scary, and overwhelming. They are filled with jargon and acronyms and make it difficult for parents to advocate for their students, particularly for multi-lingual families. Being able to record these meetings to refer back to is important for many families who may need help with translation or may need to refer back to make sure promised educational team agreements are actually fulfilled.

PTA advocates for every child, so please vote yes for these important updates!

PROVISO TO PROPOSED AMENDMENT OF EXISTING RESOLUTION #4

If delegates at legislative assembly adopt this amended resolution, the following resolution would be retired: [18.22 Children with Special Needs](#).