

Top 5 Legislative Priorities (adopted October 2022)

<p>Addressing the Student Mental Health Crisis</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Addressing Critical Gaps in Education Funding</p>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Preventing and Reducing Gun Violence and Suicide</p>	<p>Washington State PTA shall support legislation or policies that prevent and reduce gun violence and suicide including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Addressing Funding, Inclusion, and Supports in Special Education</p>	<p>Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that support students with disabilities and their families by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Promoting high leverage teaching practices. • Assessing needs for and providing assistive technology and multi-tiered systems of support. • Simplifying the safety net reimbursement process to school districts. • Banning student isolation in schools.
<p>Building and Maintaining Safer School Facilities</p>	<p>Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

For a full description of the platform and Top 5 issues, please visit: <https://www.wastatepta.org/focus-areas/advocacy/>.

For more information, contact WSPTA Advocacy Director Lizzy Sebring at ptaadvocacydir@wastatepta.org or WSPTA Legislative Consultant Marie Sullivan at legconsultant@wastatepta.org.

Also Supported Positions (listed alphabetically by title of position)

WSPTA shall support legislation and/or policies that positively impact children and youth by:

Creating a Diverse and Effective Educator Workforce

Ensure that every child has outstanding paraeducators, educators and administrators by preparing all educators to support inclusionary practices, expanding programs that grow, recruit and retain an effective and diverse workforce, and providing equitable access to preparation or certificate programs.

Expanding School Construction Funding Options

Increase state funding and funding options for school construction projects and improvements so that school districts can provide equitable, safe and effective learning environments to their students regardless of ZIP code. We also encourage the Legislature to lower the 60 percent threshold to pass school bonds.

Harnessing the Benefits of Mastery-based Learning

Harness the benefits of mastery-based learning to ensure all 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.

Improving Equitable Identification and Access for Highly Capable Students

Require school districts to offer universal screening at least twice before six grade so that under-represented and under-served student populations have access to high-quality Highly Capable (HiCap) services. We encourage the Legislature to require OSPI to publish HiCap demographic data by district and ask that all educators receive relevant professional development in the academic, social and emotional needs of HiCap students.

Increasing Education Equity by Closing the Digital Divide

Ensure equitable digital inclusion and access for all students, families, and staff through adequate funding and 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.

Increasing Support for Equitable Family Engagement

Require adoption and implementation of the Washington State Family Engagement Framework, including funding and technical assistance for school district implementation. We encourage the Legislature to provide funding to expand the ratio of Family Engagement Coordinators in middle and high schools and offer professional development in effective family engagement to all district staff. Finally, we must reduce barriers for parents and caregivers to participate in engagement opportunities.

Mitigating the Adverse Impacts of Climate Change

Build a socially, economically, and environmentally resilient world for children and youth by promoting sustainability and greenhouse gas emission reduction through funding, planning and implementation resources to schools and communities. We encourage the Legislature to declare climate change is a public health crisis to raise awareness about the health impacts of climate change and to strengthen our public health and health care infrastructure.

Supporting a Meaningful High School Diploma

Prepare students for college or career by adopting graduation requirements that support a meaningful diploma, offer opportunities to students to attain credits through evidence of content mastery and dual credit courses options, and provide innovative and student-centered class offerings using culturally responsive curricula and teaching practices. We encourage the Legislature to provide equitable access to, and family engagement about, relevant graduation pathways, High School and Beyond Plans, and college and career counseling.
