



## MEMO

**To:** National PTA Officers, Board of Directors, State Presidents, State President-Elects, All Governance, All Staff, Legislation Committee and Federal Legislative Chairs

**From:** National PTA's Government Affairs Department

**Date:** November 21, 2024

**Re:** Presidential Transition and the 119th Congress

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### Introduction

National PTA remains steadfast in our longstanding tradition and commitment to being a nonpartisan association that advocates to improve the education, health and well-being of all children. Our legislative priorities, outreach and engagement with a new Administration and Congress remain the same, regardless of the party in power.

As this transition of power occurs, it is imperative that we as an association continue to proudly express and model PTA's values of collaboration, commitment, diversity, respect and accountability. We look forward to collaborating with President-elect Donald Trump, his Administration and the 119th Congress wherever we can to fulfill PTA's mission—to ensure every child can reach their full potential. For over a century, PTA members have worked with all members of Congress and every Administration to implement our public policy priorities and invest in our nation's future. This memorandum provides an overview of National PTA's strategy during the transition process and what PTA Leaders can expect during the next few months.

### Presidential Transition Process

Historically, the president-elect creates a transition team of advisors and staff to develop transition plans, formulate policy agendas, create detailed proposals, and appoint fifteen cabinet secretaries and fill thousands of jobs within each federal agency and the White House. President-elect Trump recently appointed Howard Lutnick, Chairman and CEO of Cantor Fitzgerald and BGC Partners and Linda McMahon, former Small Business Administrator, and Board Chair of America First Policy Institute to oversee his transition team, culminating in his inauguration on January 20, 2025.

In the past, all agencies in the U.S. government have a specific number of career staff that will remain at each agency to run the federal programs and the day-to-day operations so that the federal government continues to function through the transition. Each agency also has a specific number of political appointees that the presidential-elect's transition team will select, and those individuals will work at the will of the president.

National PTA’s Government Affairs team has cultivated relationships with many career staff members at the U.S. Department of Education (ED) and other federal agencies that will continue to serve through the remainder of the Biden Administration and into the next Trump Administration.

On November 19, 2024, President-elect Trump [announced](#) he would be nominating Linda McMahon as U.S. Secretary of Education for his Administration. Linda McMahon is currently co-leading the presidential transition team and serves as [Chair of the Board](#) and Chair of the Center for the American Worker at the America First Policy Institute. The Institute is a 501(c)(3) think tank that uplifts conservative policy expertise and perspectives, including on educational issues through their [Center for Education Opportunity](#), [K-12 resources](#), and [America First Parents](#) initiative. Her previous experience includes running the Small Business Administration during President Trump’s first term in office and briefly serving on the Connecticut Board of Education. She is also known for co-founding and running the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) and is currently subject to a [lawsuit](#) alleging child sexual abuse during her time as CEO of WWE. Most members of an incoming president’s cabinet, including the U.S. Secretary of Education, must be confirmed by a vote in the U.S. Senate by a simple majority (51 Senators). Linda McMahon will likely receive a confirmation hearing in the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions early in 2025 followed by a confirmation vote in the full Senate.

### **Education Policy Under President-Elect Trump**

President-elect Trump has not announced his complete education [policy agenda](#) yet but has provided some insight into possible education policy proposals that his administration may pursue upon taking office. For example, his campaign has released [“Ten Principles For Great Schools Leading To Great Jobs”](#) and a [“Plan to Save American Education and Give Power Back to Parents”](#) emphasizing the central role of parents in his education plan. We can also anticipate that the Trump Administration would adopt some of the education-focused proposals within the [2024 Republican Platform](#) (See Chapter 7).

In particular, President-elect Trump has supported creating more opportunities for “school choice” and voucher proposals. On his campaign website, he explains that he supports universal school choice “so that parents can send their children to the public, private or religious school that best suits their needs, their goals and their values.” On this issue, National PTA has [a long-standing position](#) opposing any voucher system or private school choice proposal that diverts public funds away from public schools to private or sectarian schools. Our association is committed to engaging around this issue with the Administration to protect important investments in public schools and the children and families served by them.

President-elect Trump has also indicated interest in “sending all education and education work and needs back to the states” and eliminating the U.S. Department of Education, a proposal

reflected in the official Republican Platform. Historically, this proposal has been a hallmark campaign promise of Republican administrations since the U.S. Department of Education was established in 1979, including under President Reagan. In reality, it would be [extremely difficult](#) for a president to deliver on this promise, as the move would require congressional approval by a margin of 60 votes in the Senate, a filibuster-proof supermajority. Moreover, many states rely upon federal programs run by the U.S. Department of Education and dismantling them without a replacement would likely be politically unpopular. National PTA has [aggressively advocated for](#) several of these programs run by the U.S. Department of Education, including advocating for grant programs like IDEA Part B, Title I, Title IV-A, and the Statewide Family Engagement Centers Program that provide funding directly to states and local educational agencies to reflect community needs.

On [his campaign website](#), President-elect Trump has also emphasized a new direction for gender and racial equity policy at the federal level, including expressing opposition to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) programming in schools, history curricula that includes Critical Race Theory, “radical gender ideology,” and the participation of transgender students in school athletics. We can anticipate, for example, that his administration would rescind the updated Title IX regulations adopted by the Biden Administration and redirect the Office of Civil Rights under the U.S. Department of Education. As an association, National PTA represents parents, caregivers, educators and communities of all children, and our members have [adopted several positions](#) that would underscore our work with the incoming Administration on these issues.

As an association, we can also anticipate several areas of alignment with the incoming Administration. For example, President-elect Trump has expressed strong support for strengthening career and technical education and fostering alternative pathways, reflecting our association’s position statement and resolution on career and technical education. President-elect Trump has also routinely centered parents in his justification for his education proposals, indicating an interest and openness to uplifting the family voice in decisions of his Administration and in our education system more broadly and alignment with our work around family engagement (see [Position Statement on Family Engagement in Education](#)). In particular, President-elect Trump has emphasized transparency for parents, calling for “the right of parents to know what their children are being taught in the classroom, to be able to openly communicate any of their concerns with teachers and principals, to protect the privacy of their children, to be made aware of changing academic standards, to be updated on any acts of violence occurring at school” and more. National PTA will work diligently to ensure that the incoming Administration serves the needs of *all* children and *all* families in our nation and hears the diverse perspectives, experiences, and voices of parents and families across the country. We will also utilize our previous experiences in playing a significant role in the “parents’ rights” debate federally to advocate for or against legislation as necessary to ensure any forthcoming proposals closely aligns with National PTA positions, to the greatest extent possible.

National PTA is well poised to uplift the voice of our members with the incoming Administration and offer our latest research and evidence-based practices of family engagement strategies to ensure they are being considered during the crafting of any policy proposals put forward by the Administration. We look forward working with President-elect Trump's transition team to include PTA's priorities and perspective within his education agenda over the next four years.

### **How National PTA Will Engage With President-Elect Trump and His Administration**

- Send transition memorandums to President-elect Trump that outline the importance of meaningful and inclusive family-school partnerships and other PTA policy priorities
- Request to meet with key advisors within President-elect Trump's transition team to discuss National PTA's public policy priorities and positions on issues impacting children, families, and schools
- Schedule introductory meetings with political appointees in the White House Domestic Policy Council, U.S. Department of Education, and other agencies
- Invite Trump Administration officials and newly appointed congressional leadership to participate in National PTA's Virtual Legislative Conference in March
- Distribute National PTA's Public Policy Priorities for 2025-2027, once finalized, to key figures in the Trump Administration
- Schedule a meeting with the new U.S. Secretary of Education once confirmed
- Collaborate with national policy coalitions to advance our public policy priorities and assist in furthering advocacy efforts on federal policy and issues

### **119th Congress**

After many close congressional races in the House and Senate, the Republican Party will maintain control of the House and gain control of the Senate for the 119th Congress which convenes January 2025 and adjourns in December 2026. House races are still being counted, while the Senate will consist of 53 Republicans and 47 Democrats.

The 119th Congress will begin the first week of January 2025 and all legislation not signed into law by the president before the start of the 119th Congress must begin the legislative process again with the new Congress. Additionally, at the beginning of the 119th Congress, party leaders in the House and Senate will assign new members of Congress to sit on certain committees and appoint more senior members of Congress to take leadership roles on committees.

Representative Mike Johnson (R-LA) will remain Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives in the 119th Congress with Representative Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY) remaining the Democratic Leader. Senator John Thune (R-SD) will become Majority Leader in the U.S. Senate with Democratic Senate leadership elections still to come.

National PTA has and will continue to work closely with these party leaders and the following committees in the 119th Congress to improve the education, health and well-being of every child through our public policy priorities:

- [Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions \(HELP\)](#)
- [Senate Appropriations Committee](#), including [the Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies \(L-HHS-ED\)](#)
- [Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, & Transportation](#)
- [Senate Committee on the Judiciary](#)
- [House Committee on Education and the Workforce](#)
- [House Appropriations Committee](#), including the [Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies \(L-HHS-ED\)](#)
- [House Committee on Energy & Commerce](#)

While the membership of these committees is expected to stay fairly consistent from the 118th into the 119th Congress, we can anticipate new members serving in the leadership roles of these committees. For example, the current Chair of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce, Representative Virginia Foxx (R-NC-05), has decided not to seek this position in the 119th Congress and several members of Congress have expressed their ambition to serve in the role, including [Representative Burgess Owens \(R-UT-04\)](#) and [Representative Tim Walberg \(R-MI-05\)](#). [Senator Bill Cassidy \(R-LA\)](#) has been selected as the Chair of Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP). Further announcements of committee leadership and members are expected over the next several weeks. National PTA has built strong relationships with the leaders and members of each committee over the years which will continue to facilitate PTA advocacy and legislative priorities in the 119th Congress.

National PTA will continue to build upon our work and the progress our association made with the 118th Congress, including continuing to be a strong voice for all children and families and strong advocate for safe, supportive, inclusive, and welcoming schools. We will continue to serve as a leader in strengthening [school and community safety](#), and our recently released [Blueprint for Parent Leaders to Take Action on Gun Violence Prevention](#) will remain a critical resource fortifying our efforts at the national level and the work of our state and local leaders. Our association will continue to defend and advocate for the needs of *all* children and families, including the needs of our immigrant families, students with disabilities, and under-invested and under-resourced communities, to ensure that *all* children can reach their full potential in this nation.

### **How National PTA Will Engage With the 119th Congress**

- Send a welcome letter to all members of the 119th Congress
- Schedule meetings with selected new members of Congress to discuss National PTA's policy priorities

- Meet with the new chair of the House Committee on Education and the Workforce and new chair of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP)
- Continue to engage with members and staff of education and appropriations committees, and other key federal legislators to reiterate National PTA's federal policy priorities
- Share National PTA's legislative priorities with all members of the 119th Congress
- Collaborate with national policy coalitions to advance our public policy priorities and assist in furthering advocacy efforts on legislation
- Ensure PTA advocates conduct outreach and meet with their members of Congress, paying specific attention to members of key committees that have jurisdiction over National PTA legislative priorities
- Facilitate the Hill Day as part of National PTA's Legislative Conference to connect PTA advocates with their federal representatives to advocate on National PTA's public policy priorities

**National PTA Resources for Advocates to Stay Informed and Engage With Policymakers:**

- 1) [PTA Takes Action Center](#): National PTA's Takes Action Center contains the following sections to keep PTA members informed of federal policy activities:
  - [Action Alerts](#)
  - [Letters to Policymakers from National PTA](#)
  - [National PTA's Public Policy Priorities](#)
  - [Key Federal Legislation](#)
- 2) [Advocacy Toolkit](#): National PTA's Advocacy Toolkit provides members effective ways to advocate for every child including information on:
  - [How a Bill Becomes a Law](#)
  - [Corresponding with Members of Congress](#)
  - [Conducting Visits with Members of Congress](#)
- 3) [Resolutions & Position Statements](#): PTA position statements and resolutions are official documents outlining the opinion, will or intent of the association to address national problems, situations or concerns that affect children and youth and require national action to seek resolution on the issue. The documents serve an important purpose in formalizing and focusing the positions of the association on various important and relevant issues. National PTA makes available online a selection of position statements and resolutions that are most topical, and others are available upon inquiry and request through contacting the Department of Government Affairs at [govtaffairs@pta.org](mailto:govtaffairs@pta.org).
  - [Position Statements](#)
  - [Resolutions](#)
- 4) Participate in upcoming webinars and other online advocacy trainings, including new courses on our [THRIVE platform](#), and attend the [2025 Virtual Legislative Conference](#) (March 4-6, 2025).

- 5) Stay connected with National PTA advocacy efforts through our [Advocacy Insider newsletter](#) and our social media platforms. National PTA also periodically issues [press releases](#) featuring the latest initiatives from the association.

## **Conclusion**

Our entire association is ready to work together to continue serving as a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education – from our Government Affairs Department to National PTA’s Board of Directors, Officers, and Legislation Committee – to our state and local leaders across the country. For over a century, National PTA has worked with school communities and decision makers to solve the toughest problems in our nation’s history. The staff at National PTA is ready to engage with the incoming Trump Administration and the 119th Congress to promote and advocate on behalf of PTA’s public policy priorities, and National PTA will continue to provide resources and materials to empower PTA advocates across the country to work with their elected officials at all levels of government to ensure all children can reach their full potential.

The Leadership team and staff of National PTA look forward to building on PTA’s historic and strong legacy of collaboration, respect and equality to further enhance the lives of our nation’s children. We are committed that with your powerful voice, we will work with the Trump Administration and 119th Congress to continue to make progress in our mission to make every child’s potential a reality.