

WSPTA RESOLUTIONS

Pertaining to special education; for full list, see

<https://www.wastatepta.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Board-Positions-and-Resolutions-Oct-2017.pdf>

4.7 PUBLIC SCHOOL DROPOUT PREVENTION/RETRIEVAL

Resolution passed 1988; amended 2007 and 2013

Whereas, Washington State PTA has a purpose "To develop between education and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education"; and

Whereas, an unacceptable percentage of Washington State's students do not finish high school on schedule; and

Whereas, dropping out of school is one of the strongest predictors of decreased employment opportunities, lower lifetime earnings potential and increased chances of incarceration; and

Whereas, receiving a high school diploma is a vital connection to society and the economy, and it is a required credential for most jobs in America; and

Whereas, obstacles to successful dropout prevention/retrieval programs include budget constraints, overcrowded schools and classes, difficulties in the home, poor academic preparation, lack of coordination between schools and social services and the negative image that accompanies dropout programs.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA work with other members of the education community and social services to commit to effective dropout prevention; and be it further

Resolved, that local PTAs and councils be encouraged to work for and promote effective strategies to keep students in school such as: early referral, assessment and intervention with at-risk youth; techniques and incentives to increase motivation and achievement among at-risk youth; parent and social service involvement in planning and services; programs that improve academic performance; options to assure an appropriate learning environment; programs that help students and adults make connections, providing students with a community of support; programs that link schooling and the realities of work and employment skills; programs that emphasize goal setting and decision making as a key to future options.

18.19 CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Resolution passed 2007; amended in 2008 and 2013; Board position 1986

Whereas, the Washington State PTA works to ensure that the state and federal government maintains an education and funding commitment to children with special needs, including, but not limited to, students with disabilities, highly capable students, English language learner students, career technical education students and refugees and entrants (those offered sanctuary by the

United States government); and

Whereas, the program needs of these populations have never been fully funded; and

Whereas, it has become evident that as competition for education dollars at the state, district and local school has increased, existing programs for special needs students have been compromised, jeopardizing both their current and long-term educational opportunities; and

Whereas, the Washington State PTA recognizes that some of these children are the most vulnerable, with no voice as their families are overwhelmed by a plethora of circumstances, often lacking the time and knowledge needed to navigate the system.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA advocate on behalf of special needs students at the federal, state and district levels, requesting adequate funding for services needed to help all students achieve their potential; and be it further

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA advocate that the funding and expenditures be transparent not only to the governing bodies (legislature, state superintendent's office and school boards) but to the families involved, so that they can see that the monies, resources and services allocated by federal and state law are being spent on and delivered to their students. When it is apparent that there is a lack of funding or misappropriations of designated monies and resources, the Washington State PTA would weigh in on those occasions, requesting performance audits to ensure that monies and resources were expended where designated; and be it further

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA advocate that Washington school districts be funded for the full cost of providing educational services to all students who qualify for special education, with no cap applied to the number of students requiring special services whose education can be funded; and be it further

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA will advocate at the federal, state and district levels to ensure that parents have the information and opportunity for meaningful engagement and participation in their child's educational program in school, resulting in students receiving appropriate supports and services to be prepared for college, career and citizenship, to the maximum extent possible.

18.24 NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND AND THE 1%

Resolution passed 2010

Whereas, NCLB has determined that the 1 percent population are those children who display the "most significant cognitive disabilities", have the right to access the general education curriculum and should be assessed with these standards, and

Whereas, the Washington State PTA finds that children develop at vastly different rates and have different learning styles, exhibiting differing strengths and weaknesses, and yet the 1 percent are held to the same cognitive, grade based standards as every other child is in Washington State, and

Whereas, several well-respected education organizations including The American Educational Research Association urge that, "Decisions that affect individual students' life chances or

educational opportunities should not be made on the basis of test scores alone; other relevant information should be taken into account to enhance the overall validity of such decisions”, and

Whereas, policy makers at all levels of government need to understand that the students in the 1 percent are unique and do not meet any of the educational standards set forth in NCLB, and

Whereas, policy makers at the district, state and federal levels know that the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires an Individualized Education Program (IEP) for this Special Education population by law. The IEP Team includes the student, the parents and the professionals and teachers that know the student.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA will work to enact policies that create an appropriate Alternate Assessment system with high standards and multiple ways for students to demonstrate learning of appropriate skills to their educational needs; and be it further

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA will support the IEP Team’s right to use their professional judgment, and not the predetermined standards legislated in NCLB, to help students be successful, even if this means that the student is working toward different standards than reading, writing, and math, so they can be successful members of our community; and be it further

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA will support a more accurate data collection to better determine who the 1 percent is and how big a percent of the total they really are.

18.25 EQUITABLE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Board position January 2012; resolution passed May 2012; amended 2013

Whereas, nationally PTA advocates for equal opportunity to quality public education for all children, and yet Washington State has entrenched achievement disparities for all subjects tested, at all grades, especially related to race, income and special need; and

Whereas, the student populations most at risk are also the ones growing the most rapidly, and

Whereas, certain high-performing schools -- including some turnaround schools, innovative programs, drop-out prevention programs and charter schools -- have produced positive effects, and

Whereas, gaps in curriculum and instructional implementation disproportionately affect struggling learners, and students who are far below proficiency need adequate and sustained opportunity to accelerate their learning, and

Whereas, students benefit from high-quality learning opportunities in which their cultures and experiences are valued and used to guide their learning.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, the Washington State PTA believes great educational outcomes are possible for all students, including students of color, students of diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds, lower-income status and students with special needs; and be it further

Resolved, the Washington State PTA will promote expansion of choice by supporting high-performing schools -- including turnaround schools, innovative programs, drop-out prevention programs and charter schools -- where they are supported by the local community and when they reflect the positions and principles of National and Washington State PTA; and be it further

Resolved, the Washington State PTA will support innovative, engaging and rigorous instructional programs and work to spread awareness of the options available to communities; and be it further

Resolved, the Washington State PTA will promote equitable educational opportunities that provide research-based instructional support to students enrolled in the state's persistently lowest achieving schools and to students affected by the state's achievement gaps. These will include, but not be limited to, supporting:

- A tiered system of student-focused, academic supports, and identification of research-based interventions for targeted groups of students, and targeted professional development for academic intervention staff.
- The identification and sustained implementation of research-based core reading, writing, math, science and social emotional learning programs that are sequenced K-12.
- Consistently effective home-school communications and family engagement that assists in the instructional development of children; and be it further

Resolved, the Washington State PTA will work to implement a funding formula that ensures children with higher needs receive ongoing, adequate support to meet state learning standards.

18.26 ACCESS TO GENERAL EDUCATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Resolution passed October 2013

Whereas, the Washington State PTA has a mission to be a strong advocate for the education and well-being of all children; and with a particular focus on an inclusive and diverse educational environment; 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, best-practices for inclusive education of students with disabilities result in the primary aims of education, such as "tolerance for diversity, equity, equality, community integration, and achievement for all students." This means that "educators and researchers must focus on ways to ensure that inclusion continues to be fostered and that more effective integration strategies and techniques are developed"; and

Whereas, federal law governing the rights of students with disabilities (IDEA '04) demands inclusive approaches to educating them, specifically requiring that "each state must establish procedures to assure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities...are educated with children who are not disabled." Federal law views removal of students with disabilities from their general education setting as a last resort. This means that schools may remove students "only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily"; and

Whereas, in February 2012, the Washington State OSPI reported that only 50.05% of students

with disabilities were educated in the general education setting 80-100% of the time, and only 34.17% for 40- 79% of the time with no set targets to meet despite the fact that the US Department of Education has cited that WA is not educating enough students with disabilities in general education classrooms; and

Whereas, federal law governing the rights of students with disabilities (IDEA '04) strengthens the role and responsibility of parents in determining what constitutes an appropriate education for their child. The law aims to ensure knowledgeable, active, and meaningful parent engagement in their child's education program, school, and their classroom by providing accurate information and opportunities to participate in the decision-making process and development of educational plans; and

Whereas, parental involvement is vital to student success, and the State's goal for parental participation in special education is currently unmet (goal of 28%). Improving parent engagement is vital to improving and reaching educational goals for students with disabilities.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA will advocate for better accountability regarding programs, policies and procedures at the state, educational service district, individual school district, and school building levels that ensure that students with disabilities are educated in the Least Restrictive Environment having access to the general education classroom and curriculum with appropriate supports, and learning alongside their typically developing peers according to the true meaning of the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA '04); and be it further

Resolved, that the Washington State PTA will advocate at the Federal, State, District and School levels to create an environment that ensures that parents of children with disabilities are equal partners in education. Furthermore, that parents are provided the information and opportunities for meaningful engagement and participation in their child's educational program in school resulting in students receiving appropriate supports and services to be prepared for college, career and life.

18.32 DYSLEXIA, DYSGRAPHIA, DYSCALCULIA, DYSPRAXIA

Resolution passed 2016

Whereas, language based learning disorders including but not limited to dyslexia, dyspraxia, dyscalculia and dysgraphia, impacts 1 in 5 students, approximately 20% of the population or more than 200,000 students in Washington's public schools; and

Whereas, language based learning disorders have been defined to include a variety of neurological conditions that interfere with a person's ability to store, process or produce information which may interfere with learning. The Brain Balance Achievement Center provides specific definitions as follows:

- Dyslexia is a reading disorder characterized by difficulty recognizing letters, learning letter sounds, and identifying rhyming words.
- Dysgraphia is a learning disability characterized by distorted and incorrect handwriting as well as issues with fine motor skills.
- Dyscalculia is a disorder characterized by problems with learning fundamentals that include

one or more basic numerical skills.

- Dyspraxia, also called Apraxia, is a condition characterized by a significant difficulty in carrying out routine tasks involving balance, fine-motor control, and kinesthetic coordination. Verbal Dyspraxia describes a difficulty in the use of speech; and

Whereas, language processing disorders are currently addressed in state and federal law. The term dyslexia is included in the Revised Code of Washington under the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and in Federal law under the individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) within the broad eligibility category of a specific Learning Disability (SLD). IDEA states: specific learning disability means a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language, spoken or written, that may manifest itself in the imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or do mathematical calculation, including conditions such as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, and developmental aphasia. Despite these references in law, many public schools have historically avoided the term identification of these language based disabilities in evaluation, when determining special education eligibility, and in Individual Education Program (IEP) documents; and

Whereas, there is compelling scientific evidence that early identification and intervention using an evidence-based multisensory, direct, explicit, structured and sequential approach to instructing students with language processing disorders, known as multisensory structured language teaching, improves literacy outcomes for most students with symptoms of dyslexia; and

Whereas, in 2009 the Washington Legislature provided guidance and funding for pilot intervention programs and to develop a dyslexia handbook for educators along with a few additional resources for parents which have been available on the website of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, however funding has not been continued and was limited to only dyslexia; and

Whereas, most teacher preparation programs provide no training regarding language processing disorders, appropriate accommodations or evidence-based multisensory structured language teaching, leaving most teachers unprepared to adequately address the learning needs of students with language processing disorders.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its constituent bodies support early screening for signs and symptoms of language processing disorders including but not limited to dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, with parental notification; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its constituent bodies support legislation for funding to support training of parents, teachers and other school personnel in early identification of language processing disorders including but not limited to dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia, and use of evidence-based programs that provide explicit instruction including Multisensory Structured Language Teaching, with appropriate accommodations to provide students with equitable access to the general education curriculum.