



everychild.onevoice.®

Legislation Platform and Explanation – 2017-2018

**PURPOSES AND CHARTER RULES
STATEMENTS OF POSITION
STATEMENTS OF POLICY
CONTINUING POSITIONS
RECOMMENDATIONS ON JUVENILE JUSTICE**

**This publication has been prepared to give our membership information and assistance in understanding our Illinois PTA positions and current State of Illinois practices, and as an aid in carrying out the third purpose of the PTA:
“to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.”**

Illinois Legislation Platform and Explanation 2017 - 2018

Table of Contents

| Title | Page |
|--|---------|
| PTA Purposes and Charter Rules..... | 3 |
| Statements of Position..... | 4 - 5 |
| Statements of Policy | 5 - 8 |
| Continuing Positions | 8 - 10 |
| Ten Years of Progress: | 11 - 13 |
| A Report on the Care And Placement of Children in Substitute Care and the Juvenile Justice System | |
| Legislation Platform In Brief | 14 - 16 |
| Explanation of Legislation Platform | 17 - 39 |
| 1. State Constitution | 17 |
| 2. Taxation..... | 17 - 20 |
| 3. Funding of Education | 20 - 23 |
| 4. Rights and Responsibilities | 23 - 25 |
| 5. School Governance..... | 26 - 28 |
| 6. Educational Quality Programs..... | 28 - 29 |
| 7. Protection of Children and Youth..... | 29 - 32 |
| 8. Services for Children and Youth | 32 - 33 |
| 9. Environment | 33 - 34 |
| 10. Health | 34 - 35 |
| 11. Juvenile Justice..... | 35 - 38 |
| 12. Safety..... | 38 - 39 |
| Legislation Terminology..... | 40 - 41 |
| Adoption, Amendment and Implementation of the Legislation Platform of the Illinois PTA (Bylaws of the Illinois PTA) | 42 |

Purposes of the PTA

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship.
- To raise the standards of home life.
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.
- To develop between educators 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.

Illinois PTA Charter Rules

1. To carry on constructive work for better parenthood, better homes, better schools, and better communities.
2. To refrain from all partisan and factional political activities.
3. To refuse consideration by the association of personal grievances.
4. To participate in the decision-making process establishing school policy, recognizing that the legal responsibilities to make decisions have been delegated by the people to boards of education.
5. To cooperate with the superintendent, principal, and teachers in promoting the best interest of the school community.

Acceptance of a charter binds an association to observance of these rules.

Positions Established by the National PTA

The Basic Policies, Statements of PTA Principles, and National PTA Legislative Program can be found in the National PTA publications.

The Bylaws of the Illinois PTA obligate it to share the responsibility for the implementation of the Objects/Purposes and Basic Policies of the National PTA

Illinois Parent Teacher Association (Illinois PTA)

P.O. Box 907

Springfield, IL 62705-0907

Phone: 1-800-877-9617

Email: info@illinoispta.org

Fax: 217-528-9490

website: www.illinoispta.org

For more information contact the Illinois PTA Office for a referral to the appropriate PTA representative.

Illinois PTA Statements of Position

Statements of Position clarify the Illinois PTA stand on certain timely and important issues. These positions are adopted from time to time at the state convention.

Academic Freedom

We believe that freedom to study, to learn, and to teach is essential to education in a democratic society. This freedom carries with it the responsibility to exercise judgment in its usage. Freedom does not imply license to impose social or political doctrines or personal and professional judgments regarding controversial issues on a student body.

We believe that while selection of instructional personnel and instructional materials is the responsibility of school boards and competent professional staff, parents should participate in the decision-making process. We further believe that every child has the right to all pertinent facts which are suitable to his level, through parents, teachers, textbooks, libraries and other educational media on every subject, including recognized scientific theory and unbiased political science, history, current international relations and current local issues.

The PTA believes that public education best serves a democratic society because public education is intended for all children and youth regardless of culture, of religion, of class and of educational goals.

Child Abuse

The Illinois PTA is concerned with all children and youth and their right to grow and develop in a healthy, safe environment. **ALL CHILDREN and YOUTH** are entitled to protection against all forms of abuse and neglect, cruelty, and exploitation.

Fund Raising

The PTA, as an organization, has the responsibility of assuring that it has adequate funds through dues or fund raising projects to meet its needs. Funds raised by PTAs should be raised by the members of a PTA unit for the purposes defined in the budget

The National PTA has a long-standing position of disapproval of any project that involves children and youth in the collecting of money. Recognizing that local PTA units have fund raising projects, **the Illinois PTA believes that children and youth should not be used in fund raising projects in any manner that would cause them to solicit funds or sell items, including candy and food items, door to door or to persons unknown to them.** Fundraisers that can properly involve children and youth might include recreational activities (fun fairs, roller skating parties, cultural outings); in-school events (hot dog days, book fairs); or providing appropriate items for sale (tee shirts, jackets, school items imprinted with school name).

PTAs must remember that children and youth should never be involved in any activity that might place them in an unsafe situation.

Parental Responsibility

We believe that parental responsibility includes the responsibility to:

1. Love, accept and respect their children,
2. Provide an adequate and safe home environment,
3. Provide a morally healthy community environment,
4. Provide an adequate school system,
5. Supervise the reading and recreational activities of their children,
6. Encourage an appreciation of cultural arts,
7. Teach good citizenship by example.

We believe that through an expansion of parent education in all divisions of PTA, parents would become more knowledgeable of their children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual needs. In accepting these responsibilities parents build healthy personalities in their children.

Protests

We believe that verbal protests, petitions, and peaceful assemblies not designed to interfere with the operation of public institutions are in the best tradition and may be used to call attention to inequities and injustices.

We further believe that an adequate process must exist or be developed whereby students, teachers, administrators, parents, policy making boards, and other citizens may communicate freely so that constructive thinking of all parties may be expressed and considered.

Since nothing is more important than that the education of children and youth continue without interruption and without disruptive conflict, we believe that no unauthorized individual or group has the right to cause the closing of schools or jeopardize the safety of students, teachers, or school property.

We believe that during work stoppage or strikes by educational personnel, the PTA should act as a source of information, maintain its position as advocates for children and youth, and urge educational personnel to return to work assignments while continuing negotiations.

Teacher Training

We believe continued recruitment of teachers for the public schools is necessary. We encourage high school counselors to give positive advice to students who have expressed interest in the teaching profession.

We urge the Illinois Board of Higher Education, the State Board of Education, the Superintendent of Education for the state, and institutions of higher education to continue and improve teacher-training programs, relying on counseling and the operation of the free market to guide students into careers where their services are most needed.

Illinois PTA Statements of Policy

The following Statements of Policy direct the actions of the State PTA. These statements are adopted by the State Board of Directors.

Local PTA Responsibility

It is the responsibility of each local unit to uphold and support the bylaws, objects, and basic policies of the National PTA and Illinois PTA as contained in the double starred (**) and number signed (#) items of each local unit's bylaws.

Illinois PTA Statements of Position, Statements of Policy, the Legislation Platform, Continuing Positions, Resolutions, Recommendations on Care and Placement of Children in Substitute Care and the Juvenile Justice System, and legislative positions, have been established by the delegates at Illinois PTA conventions, and by the state board of directors, to provide guidance for state officers and board members as well as local units, when speaking in behalf of children and youth.

PTA local units and individual PTA members, through local units are urged to bring their concerns to the attention of other members of the PTA by offering additions, amendments, or deletions to the National PTA Legislative Program, Illinois PTA Statements of Position or Legislation Platform, or by forwarding Resolutions for consideration by the Illinois PTA Convention, and/or the National PTA Convention.

Nonpartisan Policy as it Relates to School Boards

The state board of directors of the Illinois PTA recognizes the importance of having the best-qualified people as members of school boards. Local units should keep in mind the potential of the PTA for important, long range, constructive contributions to public education and not allow themselves to be drawn into support of individual candidates.

Any group activity in support of a specific candidate, or group of candidates, on the part of the local unit, council, district, or state branch is a violation of the nonpartisan policy of the National PTA. (Editor's note; It would also violate US Internal Revenue Service rules and regulations.)

There is no contradiction between the nonpartisan policy of the National PTA and privileges and responsibilities of its members as citizens in a democracy. The Illinois PTA encourages each member as an individual to accept his privileges as a citizen and to discharge the accompanying responsibilities. Citizenship offers individual choice.

When questions arise concerning caucuses, each shall be treated individually, and requests for help be put in writing and addressed to the Illinois PTA executive committee, accompanied by the bylaws of the caucus group.

Each local unit PTA should and must respect the members of their individual organization, and other levels of the PTA, by complying with each of the items listed below, which then allows the association to call itself a **"PTA Local Unit in Good Standing."**

PTA Local Unit in Good Standing

- √ Adhere to the purposes and basic policies of the PTA;
- √ Observe the Illinois PTA Charter Rules;
- √ Register the local unit each year using the appropriate registration forms. Failure to complete and return forms will prevent the local unit from receiving membership cards and any other state or National PAT mailings, until the form is received;
- √ Remit the following to the state office: first dues payment prior to October 1st; a copy of the prior year's audit; a copy of the prior year's tax form, or receipt if filed electronically;
- √ A local unit that fails to remit a dues payment before June 30th shall discontinue use of the PTA name for all activities, including fundraising, Illinois PTA tax exemption letter, and Federal Employer Identification Number;
- √ Failure to remit a dues payment by 12/31 will result in the unit being: declared delinquent; removed from the Illinois PTA and National PTA mailing lists; ineligible to participate in the PTA insurance programs, Reflections program and convention delegate status; and removed from Illinois PTA group exemption status with the Internal Revenue Service and the State of Illinois Sales Tax Exempt Status;
- √ Secure liability insurance or submit a waiver form;
- √ Audit financial records at least annually and comply with the Internal Revenue Service requirements for nonprofit organizations including filing necessary forms;
- √ Use Illinois PTA procedures and materials to keep accurate and detailed financial records, to adopt an annual budget and fundraise only to fulfill budget requirements;

- √ Have bylaws reviewed at least every two years under the direction of the district director or appropriate member of the state board of directors
- √ Send all local unit elected officers to the required Illinois PTA leadership courses within time frames prescribed in their local unit bylaws, and attend leadership development programs; also invites general membership to do the same; and
- √ Attend council, district, and/or region meetings and conferences, and send delegates to the Illinois PTA State Convention and National PTA in accordance with local bylaws.

School Tax Referenda

The Illinois PTA Legislation Platform states that the Illinois PTA supports “Adequate, equitable, and sustainable sources of revenue for schools.” Further, it states support for “New sources of state revenue, including consideration of a state tax on services,” and “Necessary increases or modifications on present taxes, such as the income tax, with the exception of an increase in state sales tax on basic items such as food and medicine.”

Both of these positions make it very clear that PTAs must recognize that they have a clear responsibility to work to assure that our schools are adequately and equitably funded.

One of the major sources of monies for our schools is the local real estate (property) tax. The School Code authorizes certain maximum tax rates for school districts for real estate taxes in several funds. If a district feels it needs more local tax dollars than are allowed by the Code, it may ask the voters in their district for an increase in a tax rate for a specific fund through a school tax referendum.

Once a PTA has decided a request for a local real estate tax rate increase is necessary, it is absolutely appropriate for that PTA to enthusiastically support and actively work for a school tax referendum authorizing such an increase.

Supporting a school tax referendum is not a partisan political activity. Partisan political activity involves supporting a specific candidate, something PTAs cannot do. Supporting a school tax referendum is supporting an issue, and is a proper function of a PTA.

Unit Organization

The Illinois PTA believes that each group of parents and teachers should have the type of PTA organization that best serves the needs of themselves, their children, and their community in keeping with the Purposes of the National PTA.

As a general rule, PTA units should be organized around a single school building with a corresponding autonomy. Coordination and cohesion of PTA activities in a school district are best brought about by means of a council of separate units. It is recognized that in some small communities a combined PTA may be best. However in many growing communities the combined PTA should move toward reorganization into separate units to give more effective help to parents, teachers, children and youth.

A COMBINED UNIT is any association, which includes membership from elementary through high school and/or membership from more than one building at the same grade level, but with single meetings and no sub-organization by building.

To meet the needs of a variety of individuals and to allow them to participate in the benefits of PTA, the following local units not affiliated with a single school building may be organized: early childhood, corporate, community or any other approved by the state board of directors.

A VILLAGE PLAN UNIT is any association serving two or more school buildings in a community operating under a single charter but subdivided into subgroups holding separate meetings with their own sub-officers and/or sub-chairmen.

The district directors shall not permit the organization of village plan PTAs and in the future, no charter shall be issued to such units. It shall be the duty of field service representatives, district directors, and other state board members to implement the reorganization of those in existence.

It shall be the policy of the Illinois PTA that all materials shall be distributed on the basis of a chartered unit only with no additional distribution for combined or village plan organization except as such materials are available for purchase by all units.

Continuing Positions

Continuing positions are active and current positions of the Illinois PTA. They are established to preserve positions taken in Resolutions that are more than three years old and according to our bylaws would otherwise be dropped. See Article XXI - Sections 3 and 4.

Environment Concerns

We will support legislation banning mass releases (launches) of latex and/or Mylar balloons. (1990)

We will support legislation that would protect children and youth from the detrimental effects of electromagnetic fields. (1991)

We will support legislation to enforce more stringent standards for protection from indoor air contaminants as research continues to reveal sources and for improved ventilation standards and building codes for schools (1998)

Financing Public Schools

We will actively support appropriating funds to permit school districts to employ teachers in a sufficient number to maintain a desirable pupil-teacher ratio, which should not preclude the utilization in appropriate situations of very large or very small groups. (1978)

We support enforcement of the State Mandates Act's intent that no legislation proposing new mandates for local school districts may be imposed without a provision for state funding (1982)

We will seek the appropriation of sufficient funds for elementary and secondary schools so that the state does provide the primary cost of public education statewide, and so that school districts can have adequate funding to provide quality teachers and curricula while maintaining maximum control by local school boards. (1983)

We support changes in Tax Increment Financing (TIF) to give Illinois school districts the option of having its property tax revenue excluded from TIF funding or which requires municipalities and school districts to agree to an equitable share of the benefits rendered from the TIF district from its beginning. (2009)

Health Issues

We support including age appropriate information on eating disorders, healthy weight and risks of inadequate nutrition in health class curricula and teacher in-service opportunities. (2000)

We support the requirement of vision examination before entering kindergarten. (2005)

Believing that the rise in childhood obesity has many documented negative effects on children and youth, the Illinois PTA will continue to work with cooperating agencies and health professionals on the best practices in identifying and treating childhood obesity, and disseminating timely information to our constituent organizations. (2005)

We support School Wellness Policies that include identifying the dangers of food allergies to students, including anaphylaxis, and possible solutions including, *but not limited to*, educating parents and staff members, and further support full implementation of statutes regarding those policies. (2008)

We support legislation that addresses the negative effects of energy drinks on children and youth, including accurate labeling and limiting their availability, as well as the continued dissemination of information concerning their dangers. (2013)

Juvenile Justice

We will work for legislation and funding to provide community programs to intervene with children who come into contact with the police as a result of childish wrong doings before the child's activities escalate into criminal acts demanding incarceration. (2001)

We urge PTA units to work within their county to improve its juvenile justice system, including pre-trial detention policies, and seek alternatives to pre-trial detention policies, and seek alternatives to pre-trial secure detention. PTAs are urged to join or form coalitions to address juvenile justice issues. (2001)

We strongly support adequate state funding for counties to provide alternative programs and services for the treatment of juvenile offenders to reduce the need for confinement in a Department of Juvenile Justice facility. (2003)

We will continue to urge the Department of Juvenile Justice to work toward the treatment and rehabilitation of juveniles sentenced to confinement that is modeled after the State of Missouri's humane and effective system. (2006)

Multi-Media

We support television networks moderating the level of violence in programming and movies, and to help parents exercise parental discretion in supervising their children's listening and viewing habits; we support cautionary labeling of recorded music and other media which may exceed the emotional maturity level of some children and youth, M for mature and A for Adult for videos; and we support media outlets keeping NC-17 and R-rated materials in a separate area not open to children. (1987) Editorial revision (2015).

We will disseminate ever-evolving information to our constituent bodies on programs and resources on Internet safety, especially potential dangers and consequences to children and youth of blogs and personal web pages. (2006)

We will disseminate information to our constituent bodies on evolving trends in the dangers of inappropriate use of electronic communications by children and youth, and support related legislation concerning such activity that aligns with our platform and positions in protecting children and youth. (2010)

Non-Public Schools and Parental Choice

We strongly oppose the use of public funds for non-public schools and will continue to work against any such appropriation of funds. We will participate in court actions instituted to challenge any laws, which would provide such aid. (1970)

We oppose requiring school boards to bus non-public students beyond district boundaries. (1980)

While we continue to oppose the use of public funds in private schools, we will actively seek and support legislation that would require that non-public schools now receiving public funds or assistance meet all requirements demanded of public schools. (1985)

We reaffirm the position to oppose Parental Choice legislation that would negatively impact local school funding or could result in inequitable educational opportunities for all children and youth. (1989)

Safety Issues

We support legislation to classify BB and pellet guns as Dangerous Weapons, Category II, with appropriate punishment for assaults. (1999)

We support legislation for a Child Access Prevention (CAP) law in Illinois that requires adults to keep guns safely and securely away from children and youth, or be held criminally liable. (1999)

We support legislation requiring all riders of all-terrain vehicles, mopeds, scooters, mini-bikes and motorcycles, under the age of 16, to wear helmets approved by the Department of Transportation and/or Snell Memorial Foundation, and support a mandatory penalty for the adult operator of a motorcycle who allows a child to ride without an appropriate helmet. (2000)

We will provide information and resources to constituent bodies on the prevention of bullying, encouraging them to share this information with parents, to assist parent involvement in development and implementation of student discipline policy and we will encourage the Illinois State Board of Education and Illinois Association of School Boards to provide resources and training to teachers in conflict resolution and the prevention of social conflicts and bullying (2002)

We urge local units to disseminate information regarding backpack safety and to work with school staff to eliminate hazards associated with backpacks. (2003)

We believe that in the interest of keeping kids safe, schools should not be in session if they are used as polling locations unless the school can be secured; and we urge local units/councils to work with local school boards to adopt such policies. (2005)

We support strong safety measures for school buses, including the use of lap and shoulder systems as deemed appropriate by the National Transportation Safety Board, National Highway Transportation Safety Administration, and the American Academy of Pediatrics. (2007)

We support actions that reduce youth participation in asphyxiation “games” (“The Choking Game”), including continuing to work with like-minded organizations and through support of the inclusion of preventative information in the schools and community concerning its dangers. (2013)

Schools and Education

We support modifying the state mandate for physical education to allow more flexibility in meeting the educational, physical fitness and extracurricular needs of students. (1982)

We will support legislation that does not mandate state and local holidays as non-attendance school days, but gives each local school board the option to choose its own non-attendance school holidays. (1986)

We support legislation and/or regulations that would protect students from exploitation by prohibiting business from bringing into the school any program that would require a student to view advertising or to study specific instructional programs as a condition of the school receiving a donation of money or the donation or loan of equipment. (1989)

We support legislation and funding that would provide school nursing services and staff to render professional health care services on a daily basis in the public schools of Illinois. (1991)

We support legislation to insure adequate representation on the Illinois State Board of Education from all geographic regions of Illinois. (2000)

We support the use of a growth-based accountability model when reporting student assessment and the measurement of school success as required by federal mandate and in conjunction with state mandated assessments. (2007)

We support the inclusion of arts instruction in a comprehensive curriculum and compliance with the Illinois learning Standards assessment. (2007)

We support the inclusion of Social & Emotional Learning (SEL) content, skills, evaluation and assessment standards within school curricula as has been developed by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE). (2009)

We will continue to advocate for adequate statutes, rules, regulations, teacher training, and funding to support special education for students who qualify for those services, and we will continue to disseminate information to our local units and councils on special education issues. (2016)

School Labor Issues

During any negotiation process we urge teachers to refrain from attempting to influence the thinking of students by discussing pending or resolved issues unless appropriate to the subject area being taught. (1973)

We oppose laws, which require school boards to dismiss tenured teachers in order of seniority. (1980)

We reaffirm the position that the principal is the educational leader for the school, provides supervising school staff and students, and oversees the management of the school’s physical plant. (1998)

Ten Years of Progress

On the Placement and Care of Children In Substitute Care and The Juvenile Justice System

In 1997, a local PTA shared the following information with the Illinois PTA in the form of a Resolution to the Illinois PTA Annual Convention:

“RESOLVED: That the Illinois PTA form a task force to study the procedures used by the state for placement of children in substitute care, group homes, permanent adoptions, and Department of Corrections.”

A task force was appointed that began an investigation of child placement and care of children in the juvenile court system and a written report with recommendations was presented at the 1999 Convention.

The following are the recommendations the Illinois PTA now makes as a result of revisiting its 1999 report. This new report includes some recommendations from the original report, which are indicated at the end with (1999) and some new recommendations, which are indicated at the end with (new). The report, in its entirety, can be found on the Illinois PTA Web site: <http://www.illinoispta.org>.

— General Recommendations —

1. Support a maximum effort to eliminate the pervasive effects of the use of alcohol and illegal drugs by both adults and children. Increased prevention and treatment programs must be made available, particularly for parents and young people. The legislature must provide adequate funds for these prevention and intervention programs so as to assure services are available to all who need them. (1999)
2. Support a maximum effort to assure that all children in Illinois complete their high school education. (1999)

— Substitute Care Recommendations — Legal Protection for Foster Children

3. Assure that the Guardian ad Litem assigned to every child under the jurisdiction of the court is trained to provide a continuing presence and support for the child, and assure that the best interests of the child are presented before the court regarding decisions such as placement. (1999)
4. Provide that children's attorneys shall not serve as their Guardians ad Litem, so as to avoid a conflict of interest. (1999)
5. Encourage the expansion of programs such as CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocates), which provide volunteers who investigate the situations of children coming before the court, and provide information and recommendations to the court. (1999)

Permanency Provisions

6. Provide a strong family reunification program, where it is in the best interest of the children, that includes continuing support for the children and family. (2016)
7. Encourage adoption of foster children where it is in the best interest of the children, along with continuing support for the children and family where that is necessary. (2016)

Services for Foster Children

8. Require that all children be provided with a continuity of services, including any foster care or residential services, as close to the child's home community as possible, preferably within the same county. (1999)

9. Provide increased attention and services for older children in the system, providing better preparation for teenagers for independent living. (1999)

Support the Education of Foster Children

10. Provide additional financial support to public schools for enrolled foster children, who are in the care of DCFS and the juvenile courts, so as to assure that the schools can provide an appropriate educational program for these children as well as necessary psychological and social services. (1999)
11. Require that DCFS assure that school and medical records accompany the placement of children to substitute care and school settings. (1999)

Support for Foster Parents and Foster Homes

12. Provide required training for foster parents, both traditional (not related to the child) and non-traditional (related to the child), including specialized training on handling children who are medically fragile (including meth, fetal alcohol syndrome, HIV, and crack), abused, neglected or who have emotional or behavioral problems. (1999)
13. Give foster parents adequate background information on the children entrusted to them so that they can better understand the children and more effectively meet their needs. (1999)
14. Provide on-going support for foster parents, including help for handling the specific needs of a child, and assistance such as respite care. (1999)
15. Assure appropriate monitoring of foster homes to better protect the welfare of children placed in them, including a statewide placement database. (1999)

Training for Social Service Employees

16. Require proper training and certification/licensure of caseworkers, social workers and staff working with children in the child welfare system, along with competitive salaries to match these qualifications. (1999)
17. Require that caseworkers, social workers and staff maintain their certification with a program of continuing education. (1999)

Support and Supervision of Residential Facilities

18. Provide adequate residential facilities in Illinois so that the state's children do not need to be placed out of state. (1999)
19. Require that the period of placement of children in residential facilities is of sufficient length to assure that the children receive all of the services they need to prepare them for future placement. (1999)
20. Require a continual process of evaluation of the programs offered by residential facilities, including follow-up on children who have completed such programs, so as to ascertain the programs' effectiveness and enable adjustments that will improve their success. (1999)

Federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act

21. Support the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act, and adequate appropriations for its provisions, which provide financial support to states for programs that relate to juvenile justice. (1999)

Juvenile Court System

22. Raise the jurisdiction of the juvenile court to all youth under the age of 18. (1999)
23. Support without exception that the jurisdiction of the juvenile court must be based on age, and not on the alleged crime. The determination to transfer a minor to the criminal court for trial must be made by the juvenile court, not by automatic transfer statutes. (1999)
24. Provide alleged juvenile offenders with adequate legal counsel at all stages in their contact with the justice system.
25. Provide judges and juvenile court staff with appropriate child development training, including the development of the adolescent brain, to be well prepared to handle juvenile youth. (1999)
26. Support provisions to reduce disproportionate representation of minorities in the juvenile justice system. (2016)
27. Support expungement of juvenile records, and court discretion in sex offender registration of juveniles. (2016)
28. Study the elimination of the sentencing of juveniles to Life Without Parole. (2016)

Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice

29. Support the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and its mission devoted to the rehabilitation of juvenile offenders. (2016)
30. Provide sufficient community-based alternatives and adequate intervention programs of graduated sanctions to avoid detaining youth in secure detention unless absolutely necessary for the safety of the youth or the community. (2016)
31. Support Redeploy Illinois and the expansion to all Illinois counties of this program that gives counties financial support to provide comprehensive services in their home counties to youth who might otherwise have been sent to a juvenile corrections center. (2016)
32. Support the reform of the conditions of confinement for all youth in juvenile detention or correction facilities, including providing appropriate and adequate rehabilitation, as well as education and social services. (1999)

On April 21, 1899, the Illinois Juvenile Court Act was adopted, which set for the rules to be followed by a county court when it was considering children's cases, and stated it could be called the Juvenile Court Act for convenience. The original act was to "regulate the treatment and control of dependent and delinquent children." In the same year, the Chicago Juvenile Court was established--the first separate juvenile court anywhere. The Illinois PTA continues to work toward the goals of the Juvenile Court Act, and recognizes that while progress has been made, the children and youth who come into contact with the Illinois child welfare and juvenile court systems are still children at risk. They face special challenges and obstacles on the path to becoming productive, responsible citizens of our society.

We urge you to work toward implementing the recommendations of the original report and the ten-year review to strengthen the system charged with caring for these children so they can reach their full potential and achieve success as contributing adults in our state and nation.

Legislation Platform of the Illinois PTA

(In brief)

Preamble

The Illinois PTA promotes and supports legislation designed to protect all children and youth, and to meet their education and other welfare needs, in order that they may be better prepared to assume intelligently, the increasing responsibilities of citizenship. Legislative action of the Illinois PTA is determined at all times by this platform and other policies, positions, and resolutions previously adopted, as authorized by the Illinois PTA bylaws.

The Illinois PTA has a continuing responsibility for all laws that it has supported, and a continuing duty to express opposition to laws contrary to its policies. It opposes any curtailment of existing educational opportunities or public health services, and any further limitations on total tax rates levied against property, unless other adequate sources of revenue are provided.

The Illinois PTA supports the adopted positions of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Legislation Policies

The Illinois PTA promotes and supports:

1. State Constitution

Constitutional revision that will promote directly the welfare of children and youth.

2. Taxation

- a. Revision of the Revenue Article.
- b. Adequate, equitable, and sustainable sources of revenue for schools.
- c. Necessary legislation for improvements of assessment and taxation processes.
- d. New sources of state revenue, including consideration of a state tax on services.
- e. Necessary increases or modifications in present taxes, such as the income tax, with the exception of an increase in state sales tax on basic items such as food and medicine.
- f. Designation and appropriation of all state taxes in a manner that best serves the needs of the citizens of the state.
- g. Removal of unjust tax rate limitations on unit districts.
- h. Removal of present limitations on bonding power of school districts, to allow such districts to decide by local referendum the bonding power necessary to meet their individual needs.

3. Funding of Education

- a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for operation, maintenance, and construction of tax supported schools, and opposes the direct or indirect use of public funds for non-public schools.
- b. Increase in the state distributive funds for public schools until the amount contributed by the state to supplement local support shall fully guarantee an adequate and realistic foundation program.
- c. Support of full funding of all mandated educational and special programs.
- d. Support of distribution of state funds to local school districts affected by impactation as a result of state, county, or city agencies.
- e. State support for safe public school building construction.
- f. Removal of existing inequities in distribution of state aid to local school districts.
- g. Adequate appropriations for education of all children and youth.
- h. Provision for reimbursement for the continuance and expansion of an accredited summer school program.
- i. State aid for the school breakfast and lunch programs, with separation of the breakfast and lunch funds from the educational fund.

4. Rights and Responsibilities

- a. Support of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States in its present form, and opposition to amendments to it, which seek to establish governmental authority in religious observance in schools supported by public funds.
- b. Support the implementation of the United States Supreme Court decision on desegregation of the public schools and support of adequate funds for school districts to provide for additional cost for school desegregation.
- c. Support legislation, which promotes National pride and patriotism and preserves our National Heritage.
- d. Equal job and educational opportunities for all people.
- e. Adequate housing on a non-discriminatory basis to raise the standards of home life.
- f. Opposition to legalization and decriminalization of all types of illegal and dangerous drugs.
- g. Strengthening and enforcing existing legislation to control sales, distribution, possession of firearms, and the sale of handgun ammunition.
- h. Support of legislation designed to increase dissemination of information and services for voluntary family planning, which would include the dissemination of information pertaining to venereal disease and prevention of teenage pregnancies.
- i. Extension and support of library services, without censorship of library materials under protection of the U.S. Constitution, First Amendment.

5. School Governance

- a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for the efficient administration of public schools.
- b. Adequate legislation, including implementing rules and regulations, to insure maximum local control within each school district.
- c. School district reorganization with increased support for public transportation.
- d. Non-partisan state board of education.
- e. Opposition to state censorship of textbooks, teaching materials, and library materials, since these problems lie within the jurisdiction and responsibility of locally appointed or elected school boards.
- f. Improved standards for certification and continuous review of principals and teachers, with supportive services to help them keep abreast of today's problems and techniques, in order to insure the highest standards of teaching in every school district.
- g. To maintain a high professional scale of salaries for teachers.
- h. Enactment of legislation by the General Assembly, which will provide specific collective bargaining procedures for conducting school board- teacher negotiations and resolving impasse, excluding mandatory binding arbitration.

6. Educational Quality Programs

- a. Support of legislation which would improve the quality of education.
- b. Retention and extension of the kindergarten, the junior colleges, state colleges, and universities, as integral parts of the public school program.
- c. Support the development of school library and media programs.
- d. Support monitoring the use of instructional materials, which require students to view and/or read commercial advertisements.
- e. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for career and vocational education.

7. Protection of Children and Youth

- a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for the protection, health, and welfare of children and youth.
- b. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for improvement of the protection, health, and welfare of children and youth in substitute care.
- c. Support of adoption laws and procedures designed to protect the welfare of children.

- d. Improvement and enforcement of child labor laws and opposition to lowering the age limit in the present Child Labor Law.
- e. Strengthening of existing laws and enforcement procedures designed to deter sales and distribution of narcotics, hallucinatory agents, alcohol, and dangerous drugs to children and youth.
- f. Support of state legislation, which provides proper laws in regard to sexual crimes against children and youth.
- g. Support of laws and adequate programs to prevent child abuse and abduction, and to protect the welfare of the abused, missing, and exploited children and youth.
- h. Support of programs and services to prevent and treat psychological and emotional exploitation of children and youth.

8. Services for Children and Youth

- a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for health, welfare, recreation, and cultural arts services for children and youth.
- b. Support of school-community cultural arts activities.
- c. Adequate consideration of the physical abilities of all children and youth in the use of, and availability to, public places.

9. Environment

- a. Improved legislation that will set and enforce standards and appropriate funds that are adequate to control air, water, and noise pollution, and other environmental deterioration within the state.
- b. Protection, retention, and extension of National and State parks and conservation areas.

10. Health

- a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support to improve the health of children and youth.
- b. Enforcement of immunization laws for all Illinois school children and youth.
- c. Extension of clinical facilities and services (medical, public health, psychological, and guidance) staffed with qualified personnel.
- d. Support of an increase in the dissemination of information and services pertaining to HIV/AIDS.
- e. Support of laws establishing adequate treatment and research facilities for narcotics addiction, and the use of hallucinatory agents, alcohol, and dangerous drugs among children and youth.

11. Juvenile Justice

- a. Adequate programs both on the state and local levels, for the prevention of juvenile delinquency.
- b. Adequate programs and services for early intervention for juvenile offenders.
- c. Adequate treatment and separation of dependent and delinquent children and youth, at both state and local levels, in institutions and in Juvenile Court.
- d. Original and exclusive jurisdiction over children and youth under age 18, to be in the juvenile court.
- e. Support of laws and regulations in our justice system that address the differing needs of youth as they continue to mature from age 18 through and including age 24.

12. Safety

- a. Improvement and enforcement of safety laws, and of highway and traffic laws, to protect children and youth.
- b. Support of comprehensive fire safety and burn injury program.
- c. Support of laws, services and adequate programs designed to protect the safety and welfare of children and youth in the school buildings and on school grounds.
- d. Support of laws and procedures designed to protect the safety and welfare of children and youth in public amusement places.

Explanation of the Legislation Platform

(See Terminology on pages 40-41)

The figures used in this explanation are accurate only for the time at which they are written.

The Illinois PTA promotes and supports:

1. State Constitution

Item 1-a. Constitutional revision that will promote directly the welfare of children and youth

The most recent Illinois Constitution was adopted in December 1970. From time to time, there are amendments offered to this constitution. It is imperative that the Illinois PTA remains watchful and responsive to the effects that proposed amendments to the state constitution would have on the children and youth of Illinois.

We continue to support legislative provisions providing adequate time for the members of the general assembly and the public to be aware of and respond to any pending legislation.

The Illinois PTA supports a graduated income tax. This would require an amendment to the Constitution.

2. Taxation

Item 2-a. Revision of the Revenue Article

The Illinois PTA will support changes to the Revenue Article that improve the status of children and youth.

The General Assembly has the power to place taxpayers or objects of taxation into groups for taxing purposes; the power to make allowances and exemptions, such as removing sales tax from food, medicines, etc., thus making a less regressive sales tax possible; and the power to provide credits against one form of tax from taxes paid in other forms. The Constitution prohibits a graduated income tax; provides that the corporation income tax must never exceed individual income tax by more than the present ratio of 8 to 5; allows classification of real estate property in counties over 200,000 in population, permitting industrial and commercial property to be assessed at a higher rate than residential; and prohibits taxing any personal property. Legislation enacted by the General Assembly replaced the revenue lost by local government units and school districts through elimination of the ad valorem and personal property tax, with an additional income tax on corporations, partnerships and voluntary trusts. The legislature adjusts tax rates and enacts various taxes as it sees fit.

Item 2-b. Adequate, equitable and sustainable sources of revenue for schools.

The Illinois PTA believes the State must take seriously its responsibility as stated in Article X of the Illinois Constitution that, "The State has primary responsibility for financing the system of public education." This has been interpreted by many to mean that over 50% of the funding for the cost of education should come from the State; however, the courts have not put a percentage level of funding on the statement. The Illinois PTA has long sought a combination of state and local property taxes to support education that will best create a stable source of income when the economy fluctuates. Presently the heavy dependence on local property taxes to fund education contributes to inequitable funding of schools between districts because of varying property values.

The Illinois PTA believes that regardless of where a local school district's funds come from, great care must be taken to assure that local control of those schools is protected.

The Illinois PTA supported an income tax increase, in conjunction with an expansion of the sales tax base to certain services, to be used to provide an increase in funds for public schools, property tax relief and to address the state budget deficit.

At the close of the 96th General Assembly, the legislature adopted a short-term revenue reform bill, supported by the Illinois PTA, that increased the income tax rates for individuals from 3% to 5% and corporations from 4.8% to 7%; and was to sunset in 2015 with individual income tax rates at 3.75% and corporate income tax rates at 5.25%. A minimal amount of the retained increase, .25%, would be directed to education and human service in 2015.

This action was to begin to address the state budget deficit, but did not provide an increase in funds

for public schools, property tax relief or protection to the working poor.

The Illinois PTA has supported making the income tax increase permanent, but as of September of 2014, there has been no action by the legislature to make this temporary tax permanent, or to address the shortfall in state income should the tax be allowed to sunset as provided by the law.

The Illinois PTA continues to support legislative action that is designed to provide *long-term, sustainable funding* which fosters equity, respects local control, encourages improved teaching and learning, provides property tax relief, and addresses both the structural deficit and the under-funded pension issues. State funding for education has seen a continuous decline as a percentage of funding provided by the state.

Like many other states, Illinois is watching the changes in federal statutes and funding to determine how federal dollars for education will be distributed.

Item 2-c. Necessary legislation for improvements of assessment and taxation processes.

The Illinois PTA will work for legislation, which would guarantee uniform tax assessments throughout the state. Legally all property should be assessed at a fair cash value, but this is far from the usual practice. Local support of schools is directly dependent upon the assessment of property. Assessment levels also affect the amount of equalization aid paid to local districts by the state.

The quality of local assessing is one of the most important factors in the equitable distribution of state aid to schools. Local PTAs are urged to maintain a serious interest in assessment practices in their own areas.

The legislature has authorized counties to impose tax caps in their jurisdictions, which limit tax resources available to schools, libraries, and park districts through the Property Tax Extension Limitation Act (PTELL). Tax caps significantly impact the budgets of the schools in those counties where they have been enacted, by limiting the increase in property tax extension to 5% or the percentage increase in the Consumer Price Index (CPI), whichever is less. School districts can increase above the 5% limit *only* by approval of the voters through a referendum. Under the caps, school districts are limited to 5% or less even if insurance costs rise, utilities increase, and teachers demand a salary increase. Furthermore, there is no provision for school districts with increasing enrollment, even though there may be a need for additional staff or facilities.

The caps also limit the ability of school districts to levy for life-safety work in schools. As schools are unable to do the regular maintenance and repairs, school buildings are deteriorating. In response to concerns about the safety of minimally maintained buildings, the legislature reinstated previous bonding (borrowing) power to some districts. This is a more costly way to operate schools, since borrowed money (bonds) must be repaid with interest. Interest payments further deplete funds available for educations.

In December 1997, PA90-548 created the Education Funding Advisory Board (EFAB) tasked with making recommendations to the General Assembly for the foundation level, and for the supplemental general state aid grant level for districts with high concentrations of children from poverty. The recommended foundation level to be determined based on a methodology which incorporates the basic education expenditures of low-spending schools exhibiting high academic performance.”

From the inception of EFAB, recommendations regarding the foundation level of General State Aid (GSA) and supplemental GSA have been largely ignored by the legislature.

In the spring of 2009, the Governor reconstituted EFAB. EFAB has stated that the Foundation Level represents the minimum level of per pupil financial support that should be available from state and local resources to provide for the basic education of each pupil. In addition to the foundation level, supplemental GSA is provided to districts with concentrated levels of children from low-income households.” GSA is the largest state funding provided to the 862 (as of the EFAB report of January 2013) school districts statewide. The EFAB foundation level recommendation for FY2014 was \$8,672, while the actual budgeted amount for that year as well as FY2015, remained at \$6,119, and that amount has been pro-rated at 89% for FY 2015*

Additional recommendations of EFAB include: to increase the Poverty Grant Payment range, and to continue to study the GSA formulas and consider other models for determining adequate education funding levels, as well as to provide ISBE with adequate resources.

* *The complete EFAB report of January 2013 and the current SBE budget may be found at the Illinois State Board of Education website, <http://www.isbe.net>*

Item 2-d. New sources of state revenue, including consideration of a state tax on services.

The Illinois PTA continually studies the problems inherent in our present system of assessment and taxation. It will assist other advocates in their efforts to improve our present system of supporting public education and other programs and services important to us, including looking for new sources of revenue.

The Illinois PTA supported a proposal for a “Fair Tax” which would be a graduated income tax. This would require an amendment to the Illinois Constitution which many groups are supporting.

The PTA will look at all proposals for new sources of income mindful of the need to be fair and not to unduly burden any one segment of our society, and doing our best to treat all taxpayers as fairly as possible.

Another source of income that is gaining considerable support among some groups is a tax on services. This category of “services” might include such services as cleaning services, hair care and other personal services, dry cleaning, consumer goods rental, marinas, travel services, business services, including copy work, amusement parks and arcades, golf courses and country clubs, interior design services.

Two additional income sources, lottery profits and casino/ riverboat gambling, have created considerable debate among Illinois residents. While a portion of the Lottery profits are directed to the Common School Fund to support elementary and secondary education, it really has no direct effect on the amount of money available for schools as it is only part of the total revenue appropriated to education and continues to cause citizen misunderstanding of the actual amount of Lottery profits dedicated to schools. Many citizens are still under the misguided assumption that the lottery profits represent “extra” revenue for Illinois schools. Casino and riverboat gambling are, at best, not reliable sources of revenue and continue to be debated regarding both appropriateness and sustainability.

The PTA and the education community should be careful to analyze any proposals for increasing the funding for education and other services, and not be lured by promises into acceptance of otherwise unpalatable revenue-providing proposals.

Item 2-e. Necessary increases or modifications in present taxes, such as the income tax, with the exception of an increase in state sales tax on basic items such as food and medicine.

The Illinois PTA, as an organization of responsible citizens, is aware that continuous requests for additional financial support for the schools impose an obligation to be willing to pay additional taxes. Therefore, while indicating our preference for a state income tax over other kinds of taxes, and while expressing our disapproval of any increase in sales taxes on food or medicine, since this sales tax is a regressive tax in that it falls most heavily on families with smaller incomes who spend a larger percentage of their income on taxable necessities, we acknowledge that increases in taxes will be needed if additional revenue is to be forthcoming.

In January 2011, the Legislature enacted a temporary income tax increase, with a rate of 5% for individuals and 7% on corporations, with exemptions for each family member on the individual tax and one single exemption on the corporate tax. This tax is due to be sunsetted in 2015. (*See Item 2 c.*)

The PTA has also supported a proposal to make the income tax more progressive, with higher rates for those earning higher salaries. We believe that progressive tax policies, such as a graduated income tax rather than a flat rate income tax, provide protection for low to moderate-income families as well as the working poor. Such a proposal would require an amendment to the Illinois State Constitution. (*See Item 2 d.*)

Item 2-f. Designation and appropriation of all state taxes in a manner that best serves the need of the citizens of the state.

The Illinois PTA believes that revenue, which is available to the state from whatever source, should be appropriated according to the need and merit of the various state programs. The Illinois PTA changed its long-held position opposing earmarking (designating a specific tax for a specific program) because legislators and the general public had lost faith that additional revenues collected in response to an increased need for funds by the public elementary and secondary schools would *actually* result in an increased appropriation for education unless it was earmarked. The lottery “shell game” is one basis of this distrust. The Illinois PTA still believes the best method of funding programs, including education, would be accomplished without earmarking, nevertheless, in the political climate that exists, it is necessary for this organization to become more flexible on this issue.

Item 2-g. Removal of unjust tax rate limitations on unit districts.

The legislature determines the maximum tax rates school districts may levy, one rate without referendum and a higher rate by referendum only. The combined permissible tax of the elementary district

and the high school district in any area is more than the tax permitted a unit district in the same area, meaning that a unit district in the same area with the same number of students to education would have less revenue with which to accomplish the same task. While there have been some incentives created by the legislature to encourage consolidation into unit districts, often districts feel that this loss of revenue is not tolerable and this has discouraged the creation of unit districts.

In 2012-13, the last year for which data is available, there were a total of 863 school districts of which 375 were elementary, 99 were high school and 389 were unit districts. The number of low-income students increased to 49.9% of the student population.

For the same time period the “foundation” level was \$6,119. The General State Aid (GSA) formula calculation rates are 3.00% for unit districts, 2.30% for elementary districts and 1.05% for high school districts. These rates are used for formula calculation purposes only. Districts that have available local resources per pupil less than 93% of the foundation level qualify for the “foundation” formula, while the Flat Grant formula is \$218.00 per student.

Item 2-h. Removal of present limitations on bonding power of school districts, to allow such districts to decide by local referendum the bonding power necessary to meet their individual needs.

The Illinois PTA believes that taxpayers in local school districts should be permitted to determine how much they are willing to pay in order to have quality education. The General Assembly presently controls bonding limits.

3. Funding of Education

Item 3-a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for the operation, maintenance, and construction of tax-supported schools, and opposes the direct or indirect use of public funds for non-public schools.

The Illinois PTA believes that there should be equal educational opportunities for all children and youth in the state irrespective of the wealth of the school district in which they live. The wealth of a school district is determined by the amount of assessed valuation of property that supports the local funding available to each child in that district. At the present time, because of an over-reliance on the property tax, Illinois has a huge gap between what school districts spend on education, even though low property value districts often have the highest property tax rates.

The Illinois PTA supports providing an automatic annual adjustment in the formula for general state aid (GSA) that reflects, at a minimum, the current rate of inflation (this is commonly known as a continuing appropriation); appropriating funds in advance of the school year to allow for more efficient fiscal management; and exempting public school districts from municipal and state taxes on utilities.

In Illinois public education is supported mainly by local taxes through the property tax; however, in districts with very limited funds from local property taxes the major percentage of revenue is from general state aid. The state provides monies through the appropriation process at each session of the legislature from the Common School Fund and the General Revenue Fund. The federal government also provides some monies for education, mostly earmarked for specific programs. In the total education resources for FY13, the state provided only 26.1%, while the federal government provided 8.1% and local dollars made up the additional 65.1.

Charter Schools which are public schools, publicly funded, that do not have to follow all the requirements of the Illinois School Code, can be authorized by a local school district or a Commission at the State level. The PTA will support charters that do not cause any negative effect on local public schools. A new statute, (PA98-739) Provides that waivers may not be requested from laws, rules, and regulations pertaining to educator licensure, and includes several other provisions affecting Charter schools.

The Illinois PTA opposes the appropriation of any public funds for any schools which are not public schools controlled by and subject to the Illinois School Code.

Although there have been numerous decisions by the Supreme Court ruling against the use of public funds for non-public schools, the United States Supreme Court has declared constitutional a Minnesota law that allows tax deductions for educational expenses for both private and public schools, and has required Title I services and special education services to be provided in private and parochial schools under certain circumstances. There is legislation introduced in almost every session of the Illinois General Assembly providing for aid to non-public schools. The Illinois General Assembly provided for increased transportation

services for non-public (and public) students by providing grants for transportation costs for qualified students. Many services are provided to non-public school students by the state, including transportation costs and monies from a free textbook fund. Both the transportation and textbook loan line item of the State Board of Education budget are items that come and go depending on the whim of the General Assembly.

During the 96th General Assembly, SB2494 was introduced to create a School Choice pilot program in Chicago Public Schools which would allow students from “low performing” and “over crowded” public schools to attend private/parochial schools with a voucher paid to the parent/guardian of that student. This bill was soundly defeated in the House and died in the Senate with the end of the session. However, the Illinois PTA continues to oppose any voucher program as it would take money away from our already under-funded public schools.

Illinois provides tax credits for qualified educational expenses for tuition, book fees, and lab fees, for full time enrollment in a public or non-public elementary or secondary school. We must continue to work against public dollars being expended on private education and against expansion of the present statute. Many school districts have buildings that are inadequate, poorly maintained and in need of significant rehabilitation. In addition new schools are needed where community growth has occurred or school buildings are simply too old to be repaired. (*See item 3 e.*)

Item 3-b. Increase in the state distributive funds for public schools until the amount contributed by the state to supplement local support shall fully guarantee an adequate and realistic foundation program.

The effort to secure an adequate appropriation for the public schools each year is one of the continuous concerns of the Illinois PTA. The Illinois PTA will continue to seek legislative reform of the education funding process that is both long-term and sustainable, that will respect local control, provide some property tax relief and create an adequate and equitable funding formula that aligns with the EFAB recommendations. Again in 2014, the General Assembly failed to take action that would address the needed reform in education funding.

The inadequacy of the current system of funding is complicated by dramatically varying assessed valuations in property, which make it nearly impossible for some property poor communities to generate enough revenue to support local schools regardless of the tax rates. The continuation of tax caps in many counties prevents schools from increasing revenues to sufficient levels as well. (*See Item 2 a. through h.*) While the education and economic status of the parents of the children served by the school district may have significant impact on the educational services needed by the students that need alone does not dictate the amount of funds available.

The variations in the value of property in this state and assessment practices largely explain why local education funds vary so greatly; however, the resulting tremendous variation in funds available for districts re-emphasizes the need for the state funding formula to assure adequate funding for every school district.

Illinois has one of the greatest discrepancies in average per pupil instructional expenditures in the entire nation!

Item 3-c. Support of full funding of all mandated educational and special programs.

The Illinois PTA believes that whenever the state or federal governments impose programs or requirements on local school districts, beyond the commonly accepted core curriculum, they should provide the resources to fund such requirements.

Examples of such mandates, often thought of as categorical programs, include driver, bilingual, and special education. Other examples might be new course or administrative requirements or changes in required services or taxing procedures. As course requirements for graduation have increased, so have the costs associated with meeting those requirements.

The state and federal government have often imposed changes without adequately funding them, causing local school districts to have to cut elsewhere or raise local taxes. The Illinois legislature enacted the State Mandates Act to require the state to pay at least a specific portion of the expense of new laws that would affect local costs, but in practice they often simply exempt new legislative requirements from the provisions of the Mandates Act. Tax cap legislation is an “exempted” unfunded mandate for example. We support enforcement of the Mandate Act’s intent.

In 2012 the rules for school districts seeking relief from a mandate were modified, with the limits, requirements and processes for seeking mandates available on the Illinois State Board of Education website.

Item 3-d. Support of distribution of state funds to local school districts affected by impactation as a result of state, county, or city agencies.

The major source of income in most school districts is the property tax. Impactation occurs in a school district when a large percentage of pupils attending the schools come from families whose presence in the community is related to the existence of a large tax-exempt institution such as a university, state hospital, or military base, which do not pay local property taxes.

The Illinois PTA believes that impact aid should be provided to school districts equal to the difference between the amount of state aid per pupil and the per capita cost of education in the district for such pupils.

Item 3-e. State support for safe public school building construction.

There is a continuing need for a commitment to a school construction program. In many cases, this need includes basic new freestanding construction and renovation, rehabilitation, and additions to existing facilities. The need often depends on whether enrollments are growing or declining in a particular district. As buildings continue to age and deteriorate there is a definite need for replacement and/or renovation.

The Capital Development Board works with the Illinois State Board of Education to administer grants for school construction and renovation to local elementary and secondary school districts through the School Construction Program.

To date, the School Construction Grant Program has benefited school districts in every region of the state, and has provided billions in state funds for building and renovating local public schools. Numerous school districts statewide have received a total of \$1.5 billion in *Illinois Jobs Now!* Funding to construct new buildings or expand existing ones in order to improve educational opportunities in many communities.

Item 3-f. Removal of existing inequities in distribution of state aid to local school districts.

The Illinois PTA believes that the system of distributing state educational aid in Illinois should be so structured that all children and youth will receive a quality education without any school district being penalized due to its lack of local wealth. This position would require a change in the current system of funding schools in Illinois.

Item 3-g. Adequate appropriations for education of all children and youth.

The Illinois PTA believes that all children and youth, regardless of their physical, mental, or emotional differences are entitled to an education that will develop their capacities and potentialities to as near their maximum as is possible. Legislation is required at the state level to provide standards and financial assistance necessary for the accomplishments of this objective. Local school funds alone are not adequate to provide special education because the per capita costs of educating exceptional children are considerably higher than they are for the average child.

Ten years after the report of a task force appointed by the Illinois PTA to study the placement and care of children and youth in substitute care and the juvenile court system demonstrated that often children and youth under of the care of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the juvenile courts require psychological and social services in order to function more effectively in the classroom, our concerns are largely unchanged: the needs of foster children and youth create increased costs for local schools as these students often arrive without previous school records or medical records; school districts with temporary foster care homes and/or shelters frequently see large numbers of transient students in relatively short periods of time; and transient students must still be tested, placed counseled and served.

The Illinois PTA believes these children and youth also deserve a high quality education and does not want to see communities fighting the placement of such homes and shelters within their boundaries as a result of this financial burden.

Illinois legislation now requires that every child in DCFS receive necessary behavioral health services, including mental health, trauma, substance abuse and developmental disability services.

We continue our support of education programs and services, funded by both the state and federal governments, designed to offset the special needs of students from low income as beneficial in preparing these students to become successful both in school and in society. We believe that the vicious cycle of generation after generation of dependent citizens must be broken, and we further believe that education programs offer some hope that this can be accomplished by the public schools.

We support transitional bilingual education where that program is possible. We also support other

methods, funded through the use of bilingual funds, (like English as a Second Language or English Language Learners) which some districts have found to be effective in helping children and youth achieve English proficiency.

We support gifted education, and urge the state to provide funding. In *some* years the state does appropriate funds for program. The state has established and funds a residential math/science academy for gifted students.

The Illinois PTA will continue to work for adequate appropriations so that every school district in Illinois can fulfill its legal and moral obligation to the special children and youth in its district. Reimbursements to local school districts for certified special education and non-certified personnel has been increased but still is not equal with the actual per pupil costs.

With the passage of the Education of All Handicapped Children Act, the U. S. Congress mandated a free appropriate public education for all children ages 3 – 21. Illinois has extended that requirement to include private schools. These measures provide both new requirements and new opportunities for all children and youth with disabilities

Implementation and administration of the law imposes a particular financial burden on the local school district because: the federal government has never come close to providing the full funding levels it has promised; the state often fails to meet its goals for funding special education programs; and those goals do not provide an adequate level of funding to meet the costs of the programs.

The Illinois State Board of Education partners with school districts to provide programs and services for students with specialized educational needs. Special Education Services assures that these programs and services meet state and federal requirements. This involves both compliance and technical assistance functions. Compliance functions include monitoring least restrictive environment compliance, administering due process system, providing mediation services, conducting compliant investigations, approving policies and procedures, conducting focused and comprehensive reviews and approving nonpublic special education facilities.

Item 3-h. Provision for reimbursement for the continuance and expansion of an accredited summer school program.

The Illinois PTA supports all measures designed to improve and strengthen the educational opportunities of students including summer school. The Illinois PTA believes that all children and youth should be able to attend summer school if it would benefit their educational program. Summer schools have been maintained by many local school districts for years, and some separate funding is now provided for programs for children and youth receiving special services. In some years there has been a separate appropriation for regular summer school.

Some districts are working to create an extended school year, or a balanced calendar, which would restructure the school calendar to have students out of school for shorter periods of time.

Item 3-i. State aid for the school breakfast and lunch programs, with separation of the breakfast and lunch funds from the education fund.

The school breakfast and lunch programs have long been supported by the PTA as important to the health, welfare and education of children and youth. Their growth has been due to a partnership between the federal government, the state government, and the parents. The National PTA was a leader in advocating for healthy school meals, and for providing breakfast and lunch to every child who, because of low family income, is in need of a free or reduced cost lunch. Studies clearly demonstrate that good nutrition contributes to the ability of children and youth to achieve in school, and maintain a healthy body, and for many children and youth a school breakfast and lunch are critical to meeting that goal.

The Illinois PTA supports the concept that the school breakfast and lunch fund should be separated from the education fund to insure no curtailment of the education program and no difficulty in maintaining the school breakfast and lunch programs.

4. Rights and Responsibilities

Item 4-a. Support of the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States in its present form, and opposition to amendments to it which seek to establish governmental authority in religious observance in schools supported by public funds.

There are ongoing attempts to amend the Constitution or pass legislation to permit prayers in public schools. The Supreme Court has ruled against a school prayer statute. The Illinois General Assembly passed

a statute *requiring* a moment of silence at the beginning of each school day with the participation of all pupils assembled. This controversial issue was determined by the courts to be constitutional, with the principal being given discretion in determining the length of the time required to meet the requirement.

No school may endorse religious activity or doctrine, nor may they coerce participation in religious activity. The U.S. Supreme court has held that the Establishment Clause does not prohibit purely private religious speech by students. Students, therefore, have the same right to engage in individual or group prayer and religious discussion during the school day as they do to engage in other comparable activity.

The Equal Access Act is designed to ensure that, consistent with the First Amendment, in secondary schools, which receive federal financial assistance, student religious activities are accorded the same access to public school facilities, as are student secular activities. A secondary school receiving Federal funds that allows one or more student non-curriculum-related clubs to meet on its premises during non-instructional time may not refuse access to student-initiated religious groups. The school retains the right to maintain order and discipline and may establish a policy that does not allow any non-curricular group of any kind to meet.

Item 4-b. Support of implementation of the United States Supreme Court decision on desegregation of public schools. Support adequate funds for school districts to provide for additional costs for school desegregation.

The Illinois PTA believes that all children and youth regardless of color, race, or creed, sex, national origin, or handicapping conditions should have equal educational opportunities to develop to the limit of their capacities.

The Illinois Supreme Court ruled that the State Board of Education does not have the authority to adopt rules for compliance with the Armstrong Act. (This act is that section of the Illinois School Code that deals with desegregation). Rather local school districts are charged with the responsibility of enforcing the Act. Recent actions by various federal courts have begun to change the requirements of school districts with regard to previously court mandated desegregation programs.

Diversity is now an integral part of our society, and the Illinois PTA recognizes and supports diversity within our schools that develops competency. In relatively recent actions, some school districts have created "single gender schools" in an attempt to improve competency among some students.

Item 4-c. Support legislation, which promotes National pride and patriotism, and preserves our National heritage.

The education of young people should include an appreciation of their country's heritage, including its growth towards recognizing the equal rights of all peoples, the celebration of historical events, observation of the laws of the land, and preservation of natural resources. Instilling a sense of pride and patriotism through the study of United States history should be a joint responsibility of parents and schools.

Item 4-d. Equal job and educational opportunities for all people.

It is believed that in order for all children and youth to have equal opportunity, irrespective of race, color, creed, or sex, it is necessary that parents be able to seek and find employment based on qualifications and irrespective of race, creed, color, or sex.

Item 4-e. Adequate housing on a non-discriminatory basis to raise the standards of home life.

The second object of the PTA states that one of the purposes of our organization is "To raise the standards of home life." Security is one of the primary needs of children and youth, the lack of which can cause some serious behavior problems. Since adequate housing aids greatly in bringing this needed security to children, the Illinois PTA endorses better building codes, sanitation measures, and other services that will raise the standards of home life.

The Illinois PTA will continue to work for better housing for all children on a non-discriminatory basis, and local PTAs are urged to study the housing needs of their own communities, and work for good homes for all of their children.

Item 4-f. Opposition to legalization and decriminalization of all types of illegal dangerous drugs.

The Illinois PTA recognizes that the threat of illegal dangerous drugs is a continuing menace. We are particularly concerned that popularity and increasing use of certain drugs could create a movement to legalize

them. Decriminalization is considered by some to be a first step in that direction and a softening of opposition to the use of certain drugs.

Across the nation, recognition of the medical benefits of some previously illegal drugs has dramatically increased, i. e. medical marijuana. The State of Illinois has approved the legalization of the growing, sale, and use of marijuana for medicinal purposes.

The Illinois PTA continues to support programs to help addicts stop the use of illegal drugs; we strongly support education programs to help our youth avoid the use of any illegal drugs.

Item 4 g. Strengthening and enforcing existing legislation to control sales, distribution, possession of firearms, and the sale of handgun ammunition.

The Illinois PTA supports legislation that will restrict the manufacture of handguns and handgun ammunition. Police continue to support such restrictions. We continue to oppose proposals that seek to weaken gun control laws. The law requires the registration of guns and prohibits gun ownership by juveniles, convicted criminals, and/or persons who have a record of mental illness.

We support legislation, which provides increased safety measures such as trigger locks or requiring parents to keep firearms in lock boxes. We support legislation to classify BB and pellet guns as Dangerous Weapons, Category II, with appropriate punishment for assaults.

Recently the courts have required Illinois to allow persons to carry concealed weapons, following certain rules and restrictions.

Item 4-h. Support of legislation designed to increase dissemination of information and services for voluntary family planning, which would include the dissemination of information pertaining to venereal disease (ed. Note, more commonly known as “sexually transmitted diseases/infections”) and prevention of teenage pregnancies.

The Illinois PTA has concern for maternal and child health, family stability and responsible parenthood. It believes that encouragement of voluntary family planning and the wide dissemination of birth control information will help maintain all of these at optimum levels.

The PTA is concerned that young people should receive medically accurate and age appropriate information to be able to properly care for themselves especially in their teen years, to prevent pregnancy and sexually transmitted (venereal) diseases. This requirement is now law, although parents can opt their children out of sex education classes if they wish to do so.

It is very important for young people to receive information early enough to understand the risk of early pregnancy and possibility of sexually transmitted disease resulting from sexual relations. The PTA supports abstinence *first*, programs, while objecting to abstinence *only* programs, which fail to provide information on birth control and the prevention of sexually transmitted disease should the young person be sexually active.

Some school-based health clinics provide family planning services and dispense contraceptives. The Illinois PTA supports the right of local districts, in consultation with their parents and community, to provide such services for those students whose parents give them permission to receive them.

The PTA supports educating students, school personnel and parents about Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS).

Item 4-i. Extension and support of library services, without censorship of library materials under protection of the U.S. Constitution, First Amendment.

The importance of library services, the maintenance of free public libraries, bookmobiles, and operation of these services continue to be of prime importance to all parents and have always been stressed by the Illinois PTA. It is the goal of the Illinois PTA that adequate public library services be made available to citizens of all communities.

Local PTA units should be informed about the adequacy of public library facilities in their own communities and should take an active part in creating public awareness of the value of good public libraries. The responsibility for selection of library books and materials rests with the elected library board. There is a process to be used by the general public to voice their concerns about the selection of library books and material.

5. School Governance

Item 5-a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for the efficient administration of public schools.

The Illinois PTA supports legislation that promotes the efficient administration of schools. An efficient administration should be able to provide a better delivery of educational services to children and youth and more importantly an efficient administration should be less costly, thereby making more dollars available for the instructional program of the students.

The Illinois PTA supports regular events, which train administrators in providing instructional leadership, establishing productive parent-school relationships, and establishing a high quality school climate. Administrators must be relicensed regularly based on Illinois standards for administrators, and criteria specified in the Illinois School Code.

Item 5-b. Adequate legislation, including implementing rules and regulations, to insure maximum local control within each school district.

PTA believes, that regardless of the state's contribution to the financing of local schools, the control and responsibility for the schools should remain primarily with local school boards. The boards in turn will remain accountable to the local electorate. *Our position on more financial support from state sources in no way conflicts with our position on local control.* We oppose eroding the authority of locally elected school boards.

School districts in Illinois are controlled by their respective local school boards, most of which are elected by the people of the school district. Local school boards are responsible for the quality of education in their district. Every district has problems unique to itself. With local control, the problems and needs of children and youth within a community can be met more adequately and in less time. Certainly the Illinois PTA supports having the assistance of the Illinois State Board of Education available to local school districts when needed, or the local board is failing in its duties.

The state and federal education statutes place new requirements on the state to provide test results of students to schools, parents and the public, and place schools not meeting certain levels of standards in categories, which eventually could result in state oversight or takeover.

The Illinois PTA urges its local units to become aware of their school's test results and status.

Item 5-c. School district reorganization with increased support for pupil transportation.

Where local school districts wish to reorganize, the Illinois PTA believes they should be able to do so should the citizens of those school districts choose to do so. Districts should be able to tax for transportation at a sufficiently high rate to cover the cost of this service.

To insure an efficient system of high quality public educational institutions and services, it is apparent that some school reorganization should take place. Authorities have felt that there are appropriate size parameters for administration, attendance and support of schools, which would improve the educational opportunities for Illinois children and youth, but these standards sometimes have changed. Over the years, some reorganization has taken place. In 2014, there were 863 school districts in Illinois.

Personal attachments and relationships with schools are sometimes affected when economy and efficiency measures cause schools to close or consolidate because of declining enrollment or become very large because of increasing enrollment. A wide difference in financial ability between adjoining districts is often an important factor in creating a resistance on the part of wealthy districts to combine with poorer districts. These issues need to be factored in to any decision regarding consolidation.

The General Assembly has passed bills that affect districts that want to reorganize. They provide supplementary state aid payments to reflect changes in salary schedules and facility needs; provide supplemental state aid for payment of deficits; provide that boundaries of a consolidated district may not be changed if the change would create a district of less equalized assessed valuation and population than required for the creation of such a district; and provide that effects of proposed boundary changes must be submitted to the regional board.

Statutes dealing with the reorganization and/or consolidation of school districts must address improved educational opportunities for all students.

Item 5-d. Non-partisan state board of education.

The Illinois PTA worked for 35 years to achieve the creation of a State Board of Education. The 1970

Illinois Constitution mandated the State Board of Education, with its members with its members selected by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. .

We believe that this board should continue to be composed of lay citizens who are vitally interested in education and in adequately financed public schools. We support legislation to ensure adequate representation on the board from all geographic regions of the state. We support the board choosing the its own chairman as well as the State Superintendent of Education

From 1973 through 1996, the board consisted of 17 members who elected their own chairman. In 1996 legislation, opposed by the Illinois PTA, reduced the size of the board, leaving numerous high-population areas under-represented. Now composed of 9 members, the board is selected by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate. The board chairman is also selected by the Governor. Amendments to the statutes regarding the board make member terms coterminous with the Governor's. The State Superintendent's contract is now also coterminous with the term of the Governor, so that the newly elected or reelected governor has direct input into the choice of the State Superintendent although the State Board of Education has the constitutional power to select the State Superintendent. It should be noted that the Illinois PTA strongly opposed this new process.

The Illinois P-20 Council was created to study and make recommendations concerning education at all levels to avoid fragmentation of policies, promote improved teaching and learning, strong accountability and efficiency.

Item 5-e. Opposition to state censorship of textbooks, teaching materials, and library materials, since these problems lie within the jurisdiction and responsibility of locally appointed or elected school boards.

The Illinois PTA continues its opposition to state censorship of textbooks, teaching materials and library materials. It is the position of the Illinois PTA that this responsibility should remain with the local school board. However, local school boards should adopt a policy for challenged materials that provides a process to review any materials or textbooks of questionable use. Further, we believe local PTA units should work cooperatively with their local boards of education to establish advisory textbook selection and review committees, which should include parents, classroom teachers and administrators.

Item 5-f. Improved standards for certification and continuous review of principals and teachers, with supportive services to help keep them keep abreast of today's problems and techniques, in order to insure the highest standards of teaching in every school district.

The Illinois PTA continues to support legislation for improved standards of certification. We believe that certification of principals and teachers who have inadequate training lowers the quality of teaching in the public schools.

All Illinois educators are subject to new legislation (PA98-6100) which has changed some of the requirements for renewing the Professional Educator License endorsed in a teaching field or in a school support personnel or administrative area. Instead of certification, all will seek a license through the License Renewal System. All the details are available of the Illinois State Board of Education web site.

We support in-service training of teachers and administrators in the early detection, diagnosis and remediation of students with learning disabilities as well as best practices to encourage ongoing parental involvement.

Federal law currently requires that school districts provide "qualified" teachers in all of their classrooms. Qualified teachers are defined as those prepared and certified (now licensed) by the state to teach the subjects that they are in fact teaching. Each state provides avenues for teachers to become qualified in content areas and/or grade levels.

Item 5-g. To maintain a high professional scale of salaries for teachers.

We believe that high standards and adequate compensation will make the teaching profession more attractive to competent young people and will produce better teachers in the long run.

We believe that all children and youth should have access to high quality teachers. At the present, the wide range of financial wealth of school districts, and inadequate and inequitable state funding, often makes this difficult.

Item 5-h. Enactment of legislation by the General Assembly which will provide specific collective bargaining procedures for conducting school board-teacher negotiations and resolving impasse, excluding mandatory binding arbitration.

School board-teacher negotiations directly affect the welfare of children and youth – the primary concern of the Illinois PTA.

Although the Illinois PTA believes there should be procedures for negotiations, we do not support legislation that has taken away some of the power of local school boards to administer the public schools.

We support collective bargaining legislation that safeguards a school board's responsibility to govern its educational activities; prohibits provisions for closed agency, union shops, or maintenance of membership; and which limits the scope of negotiations to salary, fringe benefits and working conditions that most directly affect teachers' or other board employees' employment.

We urge that negotiations be held at a time that would insure an uninterrupted school year and reduce the threat of a strike.

The Illinois collective bargaining law covers all educational personnel. It provides that all employees have the right to organize. It provides procedures for bargaining, allows strikes after certain procedures have been followed, and allows a fair share fee requirement for nonunion members. Mandatory arbitration is not required.

In 2011, a comprehensive statute governing, among other issues, strike provisions was enacted. (PA97-0008) The intent of this statute is to encourage settlement of issues while preventing strikes.

6. Educational Quality Programs

Item 6-a. Support of legislation, which would improve the quality of education.

The Illinois PTA supports a public school system that meets its responsibility of assuring every child an education relevant to his/her needs.

The Illinois PTA supports alternative programs that are varied in their use of instructional modes or techniques to serve students who do not respond in the traditional school setting. It has been demonstrated that different students succeed in different programs.

The Illinois PTA supports a provision to raise the compulsory attendance age to 18 or graduation from high school, since programs have now been designed to provide alternative programs for students unable to succeed in the regular classroom. Adequate education is necessary to allow for success in the work force as adults.

If there has been a commitment lacking on the part of our school systems, our state government, and our society to the concept that every child CAN learn, it is past time that the necessary resources be provided to make this possibility a reality.

In 2010, the Illinois State Board of Education adopted the Common Core State Standards for Math and English Language to complement the Illinois Learning Standards as part of an ongoing movement to establish high expectations for all students.

As this revision of the Platform Explanation is being revised, the new testing system for Illinois Public school students is being enacted. Changes are in process, and it is recommended that citizens seek clarity from their school district. The new state assessments (PA98-972) shall be aligned with the new Illinois Learning Standards.

The Illinois PTA has opposed the lack of testing in all of the standards, since parents can no longer evaluate their students based on all the areas of learning, and PTA has especially supported the testing of the arts.

The Illinois PTA has a position favoring the state being allowed to use the "growth model" of testing, which tracks the progress of each student on the yearly test over time, rather than comparing one grade, for example 3rd with the next year's 3rd grade.

Item 6-b. Retention and extension of the kindergarten, the junior colleges, state colleges, and universities, as integral parts of the public school program.

The Illinois PTA strongly supports excellent kindergarten programs as well as higher education programs for post secondary students. We continue our support of early childhood (birth to 5) and full-day kindergarten programs, particularly for at-risk children, so that they may begin first grade ready to achieve at grade level.

Every school district is required to operate a kindergarten program. While Illinois law does not

mandate enrollment in kindergarten, participation in a kindergarten program has important educational advantages, which are available to all children. Full-day kindergarten may be offered and is funded at the same rate as first grade, for districts that wish such a program. However, half-day kindergarten must also be available. The entrance age is five by September 1. Under some circumstances, younger children may be admitted upon testing to assure readiness.

Beginning with the 2014-2015 school year, the age at which children are mandated to attend school has been changed from 7 years of age to 6 years of age by September 1st.

Illinois has a state system of junior colleges, administered by a state Junior College Board. The law provides for the establishment of junior colleges in all areas of the state, with state reimbursement for capital investment and operating costs. The junior college districts are required to have separate boards and a separate tax rate. Every school district is required to be included in a new or existing community college district.

The State Board of Education regularly works with the Higher Education Board, and increasingly the educational system is viewed as an integrated one of K – 16, and even Pre-K – 20 with a view that all of the educational system should be viewed as one continuum. The 95th General Assembly established an Illinois P-20 Council to study and make recommendations concerning education at all levels and creating a longitudinal data system.

Item 6-c. Support of the development of school library and media programs.

The Illinois PTA believes that school libraries and media programs should be developed in every public elementary and secondary school district in the state. We support legislation that would provide the needed financial aid for such facilities and programs.

Illinois has a provision for Virtual Schools allowing students with access to semester-long courses, including AP review courses. PA96-684 established remote educational programs designed to meet specific needs of students.

Item 6-d. Support monitoring the use of instructional materials, which require students to view and/or read commercial advertisements.

We support private sector/public school relationships and technology, which improve the instructional programs of our schools. We oppose any use of instructional materials that require children to read or watch commercial advertising as a condition for receiving those instructional aids.

Item 6-e. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for career and vocational education.

The Illinois PTA continues to press for adequate appropriations for increased technical and vocational (trade and career) programs. The PTA encourages all schools to provide adequate curricula, counseling, /and presentations by career and trade representatives in order to help students plan their futures. Social scientists, who are concerned with such problems as school dropouts, have emphasized the need for expanded programs of vocational education. Some federal assistance comes to Illinois in the field of vocational education.

The ISBE budget includes monies for Career and Technical Education and Agricultural Education.

7. Protection of Children and Youth

Item 7-a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for the protection, health and welfare of children and youth.

The Illinois PTA believes that the citizens of Illinois, through their state and local governments, must provide adequate laws and/or financial support in all areas needed to assure the protection, health and welfare of the children and youth of this state, so that they will be protected from any harm, and so that they can grow and learn in a safe and secure environment, with their health safeguarded, and their welfare carefully considered in all necessary ways.

The legislature created the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) to assure the protection, health and welfare of all children and youth that are particularly “at risk” and in need.

The Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) is working closely with DCFS and Department of Human Services (DHS). This should allow for better social services to be available for youth in DJJ. The Illinois PTA adopted an updated report on the care and treatment of children and youth, and those recommendations

are printed in the front of this publication. “Ten Years of Progress” updates, and in some cases changes, our recommendations for continuing to improve how our State handles children and youth in the “system.”

The Illinois PTA works continually to support those statutes that would be beneficial for our children and youth, and to oppose those statutes that would be harmful. While the General Assembly regularly passes legislation intended to improve and expand DCFS services especially in the area of abused children and youth services, lack of adequate funds continues to hamper proper services to those who need them. *(More information about the Department of Juvenile Justice can be found in Item 11.)*

Item 7-b. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for improvement of the protection, health and welfare of children and youth in substitute care.

The Illinois PTA is actively working to assure that the care of the abused, neglected and/or abandoned children and youth who enter our child welfare system receive the finest care that can be provided. They enter the system under the supervision of the Juvenile Court in each county and then come under the care of the Department of Children and Family Services. The Illinois PTA is as concerned about the educational and other services provided for these children and youth, as it is for those living in traditional family situations.

The number of children and youth in the care of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) continues to decline, however those that remain in the system, and those who are entering it now, often have serious problems and social needs which are expensive to treat. Mental health services for abused and neglected children and youth continue to be inadequate.

Most children and youth in substitute care are in foster care, either with a family member (non-traditional) or unrelated foster family (traditional). Severely troubled children and youths may be placed in an institutional care setting for treatment, at least until they can be placed in a foster family, or returned home.

The 96th General Assembly (PA 96-600) provides that there shall be an attempt to reconnect older foster children (13 and up) with parents whose rights have previously been terminated. Statutes continue to be adopted to increase the information foster parents and adopting parent receive regarding children, so that they are better prepared to handle the children. To further protect the children the law requires every prospective foster or adoptive parent to undergo a criminal background check, including fingerprint check at the federal level.

Most foster children and youth are educated in the public schools. The Illinois PTA recognizes that these children and youth often need special services within the school setting, and we continue to work to secure funds for public schools to help with the cost of these services.

Item 7-c. Support of adoption laws and procedures designed to protect the welfare of children and youth.

Adoption is an important part of the social process. Legislation dealing with adoption and guardianship of minors should be carefully monitored. These laws should provide protection for the child from unnecessary separation from parents, from adoption by unfit persons, and from interference when placed in adoptive homes. Recent legislation makes it clear that the interests of the child should be primary in custody decisions, and prospective adoptive parents must pass a criminal background check. Many families adopting children and youth continue to receive financial help as well as medical, mental health and social services.

Item 7-d. Improvement and enforcement of child labor laws, and opposition to lowering the age limit in the present Child Labor Law.

The Illinois PTA constantly guards the present child labor laws, which were obtained after years of effort. The laws protect children and youth by prohibiting the employment of children and youth under the age of 16 during school hours. Children 14 and 15 years old may be employed during vacation and outside of school hours, but they are prohibited from working in any of the hazardous occupations specified in the law. Employment of children and youth in agriculture, domestic work, and in the sale and distribution of magazines and newspapers is permitted.

The Illinois PTA will continue to support and strengthen the present federal laws, and will oppose any attempt to weaken the protection now afforded children and youth by federal and state laws.

Item 7-e. Strengthening of existing laws and enforcement procedures, designed to deter sales and distribution of narcotics, hallucinatory agents, alcohol, and dangerous drugs to children and youth.

The Illinois PTA will support any effective legislation, which recognizes the criminal intent of those persons who deliberately impose addiction upon young people for their own profit. While there is no substitute for community concern for enforcement of laws regarding the sale of drug paraphernalia, narcotics and other drugs to young people, the Illinois PTA believes the peddling or “pushing” of narcotics, LSD and other drugs in the vicinity of schools is a serious concern. The legislature has responded by increasing the penalties for dealing drugs in or near schools. Look-alike drugs and drug paraphernalia are illegal in Illinois.

The PTA believes that effective education to prevent use of drugs is a strong deterrent. The PTA continues to work actively to assure that young drug offenders receive treatment, intervention and rehabilitation services rather than inappropriate confinement or conviction in a court. The PTA strongly supports retaining all minors charged with drug offenses in the Juvenile Court so they may receive treatment to prevent any continued involvement with drugs.

The Narcotics Profit Forfeiture Act mandates the forfeiture of money and other assets generated by narcotics racketeering activities. Not only are the profits from such illegal activity thus taken away, but the monies will be available for enforcement and the cost of prosecution of narcotics law violators.

Recent General Assemblies have strengthened laws by: forbidding sale of “designer” drugs and providing criminal penalties for renting hotel rooms to or for minors who consume alcohol in them. Through diligent long-term efforts of the Illinois PTA, in coalition with other advocacy organizations, we worked with the Secretary of State to lower the blood alcohol content (BAC) limit for all drivers to .08 from .10 for the purpose of designating DUI in Illinois for all ages. The Zero Tolerance Law allows suspension of a minor’s driver’s license for driving under the influence of any level of alcohol.

The General Assembly has continued strengthening statutes that increase the penalties for adults who fail to control access to liquor for minors, including permitting their residence to be used to provide access to liquor, making that a Class 4 felony.

Item 7-f. Support of state legislation, which provides proper laws in regard to sexual crimes against children and youth.

The Illinois PTA believes children and youth must be absolutely protected against sexual abuse, use, and actions classified as sexual crimes. The Illinois PTA has taken a leadership role in having legislation introduced and passed, which implements this position.

The General Assembly has been very responsive to the problem of sexual abuse of children and youth, with the passage of bills amending the Criminal Code that are intended to protect children and youth from the offense of obscenity through severe penalties; the offense of indecent liberties including soliciting, permitting or photographing sexual acts involving a child under 16; providing any person having care or custody of a child commits indecent liberties with a child if he or she knowingly allows or arranges for a child to participate in those indecencies; and a definition of obscene, harmful material, and sexual conduct to include permitting any minor to attend any play, dance, or performance that is harmful, with standards for evaluating whether a material or a performance is harmful.

The law requires a sexual assault examination (by a physician) of any child 12 or under suspected of carrying a sexually transmitted disease, with all diagnosed cases to be reported immediately via a hotline to DCFS. These laws have been enacted with the specific intent of further protecting abused children. Strengthened laws against sexual exploitation of children and youth include that: newly hired teachers and child care workers must have a criminal background check to assure no sex/drug crime convictions; the statute of limitations for sex crimes has been extended; it is illegal to lure a child into a vehicle; repeated sex offenders must register with the police; the list of persons required to report suspected child abuse has been extended; court personnel are being trained to reduce trauma to child witnesses; child testimony can be videotaped in order to make it easier for children and youth to testify; legislation was passed requiring the registration, upon their release from prison, of convicted child molesters and sexual predators with local police officials; and that those names and locations be provided to all schools and day care centers in the community, and made available to all members of the community upon request. Legislation supported by the Illinois PTA, was passed prohibiting convicted child sex offenders from approaching children in public parks or buildings.

The Illinois General Assembly provides that a sex offender, who is a parent, may be in a school or on its grounds for a conference regarding their children, but may not enter the school to vote. They may vote

early or by absentee ballot.

In a related issue, the legislature has enacted a statute (PA 96-1987) on “sexting” which provides that a minor who is caught sending pictures of parts of his/her (or another person’s) anatomy to others via their cell phone or other electronic device, may be adjudged a minor in need of supervision and be required to obtain counseling or other supportive services. Parents need talk to their children about the danger of sending or receiving inappropriate pictures which transmitted by an adult would cause conviction of the crime of disseminating pornography – a felony that would include being placed on a public list of sex offenders.

Item 7-g. Support of laws and adequate programs to prevent child abuse and abduction, and to protect the welfare of the abused, missing, and exploited child.

The Illinois PTA believes that all children and youth are entitled to be protected against all forms of neglect, cruelty, exploitation or harm. We support all programs which will protect the children and youth of Illinois from child abuse in any form whether physical, mental, emotional or sexual, either by persons within their family or unknown to them.

The General Assembly adopted a statute providing that reports of suspected child abuse or neglect made to the toll-free number shall be immediately transmitted to the appropriate law enforcement agency. It also provided that a delinquent minor under 15, rather than 13, may be placed in the guardianship of DCFS when abuse or neglect exists. (PA 95-642).

The General Assembly has continued to expand the list of persons required to make reports under the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act.

The DCFS, by law, works to treat child sexual abuse and exploitation and provide intervention services. DCFS provides funds for shelters administrated by non-profit corporations, community based organizations or units of local government. DCFS maintains a Statewide Citizens Committee on Child Abuse and Neglect.

The General Assembly passed legislation requiring schools to teach children and youth how to avoid abduction, requiring schools to inform parents if their child is absent from school, and laws designed to de-traumatize courtrooms for child abuse victims.

In order to attempt to quickly find missing children and youth before further harm can come to them, I-SEARCH coordinates missing children and youth, including distributing pictures to schools and the general public. Illinois has an AMBER system, which immediately advises the public and law officials when a child is abducted or is missing, since it has been shown that the first few hours after a child has gone missing are the most crucial in achieving his/her return. The law allows a child victim to present an impact statement at the hearing of a defendant when prosecuting a kidnapper.

The law provides protection for unborn and newborn babies of addicted mothers.

Any mother of a newborn may give them up at a hospital, local fire or police station including those on college or university campuses, within 30 days after their birth without facing criminal charges.

Item 7-h. Support of programs and services to prevent and treat psychological and emotional exploitation of children and youth.

Children and youth are exposed to many forms of mental pressure from forces that may not be in their best interests. Being in the position of having been told to respect authority, a lack of maturity may make it difficult for some youth to recognize and reject improper and dangerous influences.

One form of exploitation may be cult membership. The rise of many cults resulted in some youth being recruited into membership by cult members using forms of mind control. Cults often cause the alienation of youth from their families, resulting in deep emotional scars for all involved.

PTAs/PTSAs are encouraged to hold educational programs to inform families and youth about methods of recruitment and techniques used to exercise control over member’s thoughts and actions by cults.

Programs that strengthen the skills children and youth need to handle their problems, that prevent bullying and teach how to handle being bullied, will help children and youth gain self-confidence and avoid exploitation of any kind. The General Assembly adopted statutes to require every school district to develop a policy on bullying, (PA98-669. See the explanation to Item 12c.

8. Services for Children and Youth

Item 8-a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support for health, welfare, recreation, and cultural arts services for children and youth.

The Illinois PTA believes that adequate public health services and public health educational opportunities should be provided for all children and youth. Assistance should especially be given to those communities that are less able to provide these services.

We are concerned for the welfare of all children and youth. We support all legislation that protects children and youth from any harm or inappropriate activities. We have special concern for children and youth whose parents/guardians are unable or unfit to care for them. Many dependent children and youth are the responsibility of the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and/or are wards of the Juvenile Court. These children and youth are often in great need of mental health and other social services.

We support adequate community recreation services provided with public support. We urge that all local taxing agencies dealing with recreation and child services cooperate in the building and use local facilities such as schools no longer in use so as to secure the maximum benefit of the local tax dollars. We continue to work to support cultural activities that will enable children and youth to appreciate and participate in fine arts.

The success of all public programs for children and youth depends on adequate well-trained personnel and sufficient funds. The best way to sabotage a program is to cut the appropriations for those services. It is a major concern of the Illinois PTA to make sure those budgets are adequate.

The Critical Health Problems and Comprehensive Health Education Acts require health education for all public school students. These Acts continue to lack full implementation due, in part, to inadequately prepared teachers (20 hours of health education course credit needed) and lack of funds.

Item 8-b. Support of school-community cultural arts activities.

The Illinois PTA recognizes the importance of cultural arts as a part of a child's total education. Cultural arts are involved in and enhance communication between generations, cultures, and economic levels. They are tools that the PTA continually encourages in the classroom, in the home and in the community.

PTAs can assist the school in seeking out community facilities, such as cultural and art centers, historical societies, and other community resources that could partner with the school to encourage cultural arts activities.

Item 8-c. Adequate consideration of the physical abilities of all children and youth in the use of, and availability to, public places.

The law mandates that public buildings be accessible for the handicapped persons. Federal law, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) strengthens the requirements to make all public buildings accessible, and every effort should be made to assure that all activities that include children with physical handicaps accommodate their abilities.

9. Environment

Item 9-a. Improved legislation that will set and enforce standards and appropriate funds that are adequate to control air, water and noise pollution, and other environmental deterioration within the state.

Public officials and citizens are concerned about the rising levels of air and water pollution, lead in our drinking water, as well as the presence of radon gas in our schools and the hazards to the health and safety of children, youth and adults that are created by this pollution.

We are concerned about the serious effects of second-hand smoke on the health of children and youth, including in passenger vehicles.

Loud noise is disturbing, and there are grants provided to schools to insulate them from aircraft noise pollution.

The General Assembly passed the Structural Pest Control Act to provide for educational programs on the use of pesticides and to study pesticide use. We support Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programs.

The General Assembly has created the Green Cleaning Schools Act that requires the Illinois Green Government Coordinating Council to establish guidelines and specifications for environmentally sensitive cleaning and maintenance products for use in school facilities where that is economically feasible.

Item 9-b. Protection, retention, and extension of National and State parks and conservation areas.

The Illinois PTA is concerned with physical, social, and spiritual values. Recreation and outdoor activities contribute to such values. The Illinois PTA, therefore, believes that parks and conservation areas should be protected, retained and extended.

10. Health

Item 10-a. Adequate legislative and/or financial support to improve the health of children and youth.

Every school district is required to establish and implement a policy to care for students with life-threatening food allergies, including regular training for staff.

Dental examinations are now also required for students entering school as well as before 6th grades, final report cards *may* be withheld until proof of examination is presented. Certain exceptions apply. An eye examination is required for all children before entering kindergarten that includes a test for glaucoma and visual acuity.

Recognizing the critical time factor in handling allergies, school districts are required to maintain a supply of epinephrine auto injectors. A school district, public school, or nonpublic school may authorize the provision of an epinephrine auto-injector to a student that meets the student's prescription on file. (PA98-795).

The Critical Health Problems and Comprehensive Health Education Act has been amended (PA98-632) to provide that training students on how to properly administer cardiopulmonary resuscitation and how to use an automated external defibrillator shall be included as a basis for health education curricula in all secondary schools in this State.

Item 10-b. Enforcement of immunization laws for all Illinois school children.

The Illinois PTA believes all children and youth should be properly immunized to protect their health and the health of others.

The law, which applies to all public, private or parochial school students, requires that each child present proof of having immunizations and health examinations in accordance with the law and rules and regulations of the Department of Public Health in each of the following situations: upon entering nursery school; within one year prior to entering kindergarten or first grade; upon entering 5th and 9th grades; and upon transferring to another school, irrespective of grade. Increasingly, there are parents seeking exemption to immunization of their children, and concerns are that this can result in outbreaks of dangerous communicable diseases. Additional health examinations of students may be required when deemed necessary by school authorities. The Illinois PTA also supports mandatory testing for tuberculosis.

There is an ongoing discussion regarding girls receiving the HPV (papillomavirus) vaccination, to prevent cervical cancer later in life.

Item 10-c. Extension of clinical facilities and services (medical, public health, psychological, and guidance) staffed with qualified personnel.

The PTA will continue to work for additional adequately staffed, easily available mental health facilities throughout the state. Only the best-qualified persons should be entrusted with the care and treatment of children and youth, where specialized training is essential. Strong bodies, healthy moral attitudes, and emotional stability are equally important to the welfare of the child and society.

Child guidance clinics are now available at some sites. A mental health team consisting of a psychiatrist, a clinical psychologist, and a psychiatric social worker offers services in the school. This type of service should be extended to every school in the state. Such a program would help parents and teachers understand the child, his problems and his potentialities. Difficulties could be remedied before they become problems.

The legislature continues to work to expand and improve services for children and youth through the Department of Children and Family Services, the Department of Human Services, the State Board of Education and the Department of Juvenile Justice. Limited fiscal resources continue to keep adequate services from being provided.

Item 10-d. Support of an increase in the dissemination of information and services pertaining to HIV/AIDS.

The PTA supports educating students, school personnel, and parents about Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), and further we urge school boards, in consultation with parents, to review their AIDS policy.

The PTA is concerned that sexually active young people receive adequate and proper information to be able to properly care for themselves to prevent this disease in their teen years. It is very important for young people to receive medically accurate and age appropriate information early enough to understand the risk and prevent HIV/AIDS resulting from sexual relations or sharing intravenous needles.

PTA positions urge that young people be taught that: 1) the only sure defenses against AIDS are to avoid sexual relations until they are ready to establish a mutually monogamous relationship within the context of marriage, and to refrain from using or injecting illicit drugs; and 2) youth also need to know the facts and the risks of alternative choices. The PTA supports abstinence first, programs, while objecting to abstinence only programs, which fail to provide information on birth control and the prevention of sexually transmitted disease should the young person be sexually active.

Item 10-e. Support of laws establishing adequate treatment and research facilities for narcotics addiction, and the use of hallucinatory agents, alcohol and dangerous drugs among children and youth.

The rapidly increasing incidence of drug addiction and the social and physiological effects of use of cocaine, crack cocaine, and heroin, as well as, LSD, barbiturates, and other drugs by young people have created great concern among PTA members. We believe it is essential that narcotics addiction, especially among young people, be treated as a curable disease rather than a crime.

Many Illinois students have alcohol/drug related problems; they consume millions of dollars worth of alcohol. Drinking teens are involved in many fatal motor vehicle accidents, and the use of alcohol among elementary students is a growing problem. The State Board of Education funds alcohol/drug abuse programs, which help local districts, plan alcohol/drug education for their students.

Alcohol was added to the definition of "addicted minor," allowing the court to order treatment for alcohol abuse; made it an offense to serve alcohol to a non-family minor under 18 in your residence (the penalties for this have been increased by the General Assembly to a Class 4 felony); and provided that monies from the Forfeiture Act be used for juvenile drug abuse treatment.

The General Assembly has reaffirmed its intention to help curb drug and substance abuse with additional mandates for educational programs including driving privilege revocation for minors consuming alcohol of any amount.

11. Juvenile Justice

Item 11. Adequate programs, on both state and local levels, for the prevention of juvenile delinquency. *(Also, refer to recommendations found in the front of this booklet, "Ten Years of Progress".)*

The Illinois PTA is concerned with obtaining the highest advantage for all children and youth and will support all measures, legislative and otherwise, to establish the principle that delinquency prevention is an important function of youth serving agencies, including schools.

Youth workers, social workers, and welfare workers agree that it is better by far to attack the conditions, which breed delinquency, to identify children and youth who are delinquency prone and institute preventive measures, than to attempt to correct or punish delinquency after it occurs. The benefits of delinquency prevention, not only to the child but also to society as a whole are unquestionable, financially as well as socially. As expensive as prevention may seem to be, it is cheaper than correction.

Parents should be educated to accept their responsibility to eliminate community conditions contributing to the delinquency of children and youth.

Many laws have been passed to affect youth services in order to consolidate youth services funding and provide for a system of more comprehensive and integrated community-based youth services. DCFS, DHS and DJJ provide research, standard setting, monitoring, technical assistance, and grant administration to local boards, service systems and voluntary organizations working to prevent juvenile delinquency

The General Assembly passed PA 95-337 that causes an adjudicated juvenile convicted of gang activity to be denied driving privileges.

DCFS is required to help coordinate activities with police, probation and parole workers to combat

gang crime. “Safe zones” have been created in and around schools providing that crimes relating to gang recruitment or gun possession shall be a felony if committed therein.

Recognizing that truancy can lead to delinquency monies have been appropriated to the State Board of Education to prevent truancy and dropouts and to provide programs to enable dropouts to return to school. These programs suffer from a lack of funding.

Every city and town in Illinois needs men and women police officers who have had some training in the problems of children and youth, since more of their cases are decided by the police than the Juvenile Court. A child’s first “contact with the law” may be a tragic experience or one that will prevent delinquent conduct.

Item 11-b. Adequate programs and services for early intervention for juvenile offenders.

The Illinois PTA continually works for legislation and funding to provide community programs to intervene with children and youth who come into contact with the police as a result of childish wrongdoing before the child’s activities escalate into criminal acts demanding incarceration. In addition, we continue to work to seek programs and funding which will intervene with and treat children and youths who break the law, so as to decrease the need for placing them in secure detention or in correctional facilities.

Juvenile offenders too often suffer no consequences at all for a first offense and frequently not even for second or third offenses. Juvenile Court judges complained that these children are “let go” by the police without counseling or any form of remediation in hope they will quit doing wrong. Progressive remediation and intervention, which does *not* include incarceration, *must* be required for early offenses, to discourage youth offenders from committing subsequent and possibly more serious offenses. Early intervention for misdemeanors is preferable to later incarceration for more serious offenses.

The General Assembly has created the Department of Juvenile Justice, (DJJ) that separated juvenile incarceration from the adult department of corrections, a giant step toward handling youth who must face the consequences of inappropriate actions or serious violations of the law. This Department operates closely with DCFS in cases where wards of DCFS are in DJJ facilities. Agency cooperation should foster a movement away from punishment to one of providing education and needed social services for youth in Department of Juvenile Justice.

Most effective, and money saving, is the program Redeploy Illinois which diverts non-violent juveniles from incarceration into community services and treatment in their own communities. This program costs much less than incarceration and its recidivism rate is much better than for those youth who have been incarcerated.

A new statute (PA98-1032) creates an Independent Juvenile Ombudsman in the Department of Juvenile Justice. The Ombudsman shall function independently within the Department of Juvenile Justice with respect to the operations of the Office in performance of his or her duties and shall report to the Governor, and shall provide the General Assembly and Governor, by January 1 of each year, a summary of activities done in furtherance of the purpose of the Office for the prior fiscal year.

Item 11-c. Adequate treatment and separation of dependent and delinquent children, at both local and state levels, in institutions and in Juvenile Court.

Ensuring that children coming into the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Court are receiving the best possible care is a continuing concern of the Illinois PTA. Again please refer to the recommendations from “Ten Years of Progress” found in the front of this publication.

There are two sections in the Juvenile Court, one that handles cases of abuse and neglect, and one that handles youth who are accused of breaking the law. We support keeping the children and youth in these two areas apart from each other in all situations, as their needs are very different.

Good Juvenile Courts need judges with sympathetic understanding of children and their problems, probation officers trained in social case work, sufficient numbers of well-qualified foster homes, and well-staffed, properly equipped institutions. Support of treatment programs is costly, but much less costly than incarceration.

In the General Assembly progress has been made in recognizing the value of handling juveniles in the juvenile court, rather than sending juveniles charged with more serious crimes “automatically” to adult court.

The General Assembly has passed an amendment to the Sex Offender Registration Act that provides changes in the requirements of certain juveniles to register as sex offenders. Continued changes to juvenile law allows for better treatment of youth, and more possibilities for diverting them from criminal activities.

The action of the General Assembly to create a separate Department of Juvenile Justice has fostered a

new movement to treat juveniles in a manner that recognizes that youth in the juvenile corrections system need to continue their education, and are able in general to be rehabilitated and returned successfully to society as productive citizens. The new Department is moving toward the “Missouri Model” that sees youth as needing treatment and education in facilities that are more like dormitories or group homes, with personnel trained in social services, and where youth are continually “treated” rather than simply confined and punished for their infractions/crimes.

A process for encouraging counties to use alternative services for non-violent offenders (Redeploy Illinois) is proving successful in reducing recidivism, and saving counties money. In this system counties are provided with funding for the services that divert youth from the juvenile incarceration system. Because Redeploy Illinois is so successful, it is being expanded to other counties of the State. In addition to saving money, the reduction of youth being incarcerated has allowed for two juvenile prisons to be closed, which along with the reduction of the numbers of youth who are incarcerated, has saved the State millions of dollars.

In a new statute,(98-637) the Department of State Police shall automatically expunge, on or before January 1 of each year, a person's law enforcement records relating to incidents occurring before his or her 18th birthday in the Department's possession or control which pertain to the person when arrested as a minor if: (1) the minor was arrested for an eligible offense and no petition for delinquency was filed with the clerk of the circuit court; there are several other provisions to this statute.

Listed here are some of the definitions included in the amended Juvenile Court Act:

Abused child — Any child whose parent, family member, or any person responsible for the child's welfare inflicts or creates a substantial risk of physical or mental injury; or commits or allows to be committed any sex offense or torture against such child; or inflicts excessive corporal punishment.

Adjudicated delinquent — Anyone prior to their 17th birthday that has been found by the Juvenile Court to have violated or attempted to violate any federal or state law, or county or municipal ordinance.

Chronic (habitual) truant — A minor subject to compulsory school attendance who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 10 percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days (more than 18 unexcused absences.)

Delinquent minors — Minors who, prior to their 17th birthday (or 18th in the case of a misdemeanor) have violated or attempted to violate any federal or state law, or municipal ordinance.

Neglected child — any child who is not receiving the care, support, or education required by law.

Non-offenders — Juveniles who are subject to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court, usually under abuse, dependency, or neglect statutes, for reasons other than legally prohibited conduct of the juvenile.

Minor requiring authoritative intervention (MRAI) — a subcategory of “offense” status that refers to minors less than 18 years who are absent from home without consent of a guardian, or are beyond control of a guardian in circumstances which constitute a substantial or immediate danger to the minor's physical safety. Additionally, the minor has to have been in limited custody for a statutory period of time.

Truant — A minor who is subject to compulsory school attendance from age 7-17 and is absent without valid cause.

Truant minor in need of supervision (TMINS) — A minor who is reported by a regional superintendent of schools or in cities over 500,000 inhabitants, by the office of Chronic Truant Adjudication, as a chronic truant shall be adjudged a truant minor in need of supervision.

Item 11-d. Original exclusive jurisdiction over children and youth under age 18 to be in the Juvenile Court.

The juvenile court movement was considered the beginning of an era in the cooperation of law, science, and social work in the field of child welfare.

Illinois law has been amended to change the age of a juvenile to under the age of 18, (from the previous age of under 17) to be considered a juvenile. This is a major victory for those, including the Illinois PTA who strongly supported this position, and worked tirelessly to make the change.

The PTA believes only a Juvenile Court judge should decide that a juvenile's action is so heinous that he/she should be tried in adult court. In past years the legislature eroded the practice of trying juveniles in Juvenile Court by constantly expanding the crimes for which juveniles were automatically transferred to Criminal Court to be tried as adults. This practice eliminated these juveniles from the rehabilitative concept upon which the Juvenile Court is based and resulted in denying them any of the social services available in the juvenile system.

Recently, the legislature has reversed this trend, especially in regards to drug laws, fostering treatment for youth, and diverting them from simply being incarcerated under adult statutes, actions strongly supported by the Illinois PTA.

Another movement is underway to make it easier for expungement of crimes committed by juveniles, so that they are not encumbered by a criminal record as adults.

The PTA has long supported emphasizing retraining and rehabilitation in an effort to help children and youth mature into responsible adults. The PTA has always also supported keeping juveniles total separate from adults in locked facilities, even when there is sight and sound separation, including for short periods of time in county jails.

Item 11-e. Support of laws and regulations in our justice system that address the differing needs of youth as they continue to mature from age 18 through and including age 24.

Youth/young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 are sometimes referred to as “emerging” adults. There seem to be two commonly identified divisions in the age group: 18 through 21 and 22 to 25. The research and studies in relation to the brain maturity of emerging adults between the ages of 18 to 25, indicate the brain continues to mature during these years. The features of the brain such a malleability, responsibility, susceptibility to peer influence, and the ability to control impulses and keep responses in check, continue to mature during these years. Fully mature reasoning capacities are not developed until the mid-twenties.

The Illinois PTA understands that these emerging youth from the age of 18 to 25 have a different maturity level from that of adults over that age, and recognizes that should affect their treatment within the justice system. Therefore, the Illinois PTA will take positions on legislation as it is introduced to address this age cohort, based on a study of their needs and our report, “Young Adults Involved in the Justice System,” adopted in 2017.

12. Safety

Item 12-a. Improvement and enforcement of safety laws, and of highway and traffic laws, to protect children and youth.

The Illinois PTA is strongly in favor of the Driver Education Program in every high school. Driver Education since its beginning has stressed the need for the development of proper attitudes, habits and practices in drivers. Since eight out of ten high school students want to drive, it seems a good investment in human life to teach them to drive properly. The General Assembly has adopted much stronger laws related to youth under 19 who are seeking a driver’s license and/or who seek to maintain that license.

As an example, a student must spend 9 months (instead of 3) driving with a parent or other adult licensed driver, and have at least 50 hours of driving with a licensed adult. Without completion of an approved driver’s education course, drivers must wait until the age of 18 years to receive a driver’s license. School districts are allowed to charge a fee for the driving portion of a driver’s training to students who can afford to pay. No one can use a phone while driving unless it is hands-free, and of course no texting is legal by anyone of any age.

The Illinois PTA supports strong safety measures for school buses including special identification and equipment, student restraints to include appropriate lap and shoulder systems, safety inspection procedures for buses, retirement of all buses without up-to-date safety features, and stringent requirements for drivers. The law requires 28” seat backs on school buses, with the state picking up the additional costs, and school bus crossing control arms.

The General Assembly adopted a statute to require that school districts shall have a policy to ensure the school bus driver is the last person leaving every school bus, inspecting the interior so that no passenger is left behind.

To encourage good behavior for students on school buses, the General Assembly has approve the use of audio recorders in addition to video cameras on school buses to record any inappropriate actions or comments of students.

The Illinois PTA continues to support the requirement that young children and youth be secured in approved restraint systems whenever they are riding in a car. There are provisions related to seat belt usage by children and youth to the age of 16.

We also recognize the need for uniform, adequate training for school crossing guards. Legislation has been passed that permits local communities to lower limits to 20 miles per hour in school zones, provided the zones are so posted. Also, the law provides that all traffic following or approaching a

school bus must stop while a school bus is loading or unloading children and youth.

We supported the law that now provides requirements for keeping a dangerous dog, and penalties if the dog causes harm to a person. The 95th General Assembly has expanded related parts of the Animal Control Act.

Item 12-b. Support of comprehensive fire safety and burn injury programs.

We encourage schools and communities to develop programs for children and youth that will teach them burn injury prevention and emergency treatment, and skills for survival. We encourage programs for fire safety training such as a Survive Alive House, as well as other programs that encompass a variety of fire safety skills.

Item 12-c. Support of laws, services and adequate programs designed to promote the safety and welfare of children and youth in the school buildings and on school grounds.

It is imperative that children and youth be safe in the public place where they are most often in attendance - schools. Laws addressing in-school violence have predominantly focused on punishment of offenders. Preventive measures better serve children and youth than punitive measures after an incident has occurred.

The Illinois PTA supports and encourages legislation and funding to provide and support prevention programs, equipment, and procedures, including special programs to prevent bullying.

The 98th General Assembly (PA98-669) details what a policy on bullying is, explicitly prohibits it, describes in detail how an incident of alleged bullying is to be reported, how parents are to be informed, how the incident is to be investigated, and what disciplinary actions and restorative measures might be taken. Other provisions prohibit retaliation. (PA98-801) prohibits a student from being subjected to bullying through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a nonschool-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device.

For schools that are utilized as polling places, districts are encouraged to close the school or hold a teacher institute day on the day of the election. (PA98-773).

We continue to support the strengthening of the provisions, enforcement, and funding of the Health Life Safety provisions of the School Code that provide monies to improve the safety of school buildings and grounds.

Item 12-d. Support of laws and procedures designed to protect the safety and welfare of children and youth in public amusement places.

The Illinois PTA supports those laws and procedures that will protect our youth as they avail themselves of the many kinds of public amusement places open to them. All types of amusement places, such as arcades, carnivals, water parks, and video game parlors, and go-cart tracks, attract children and youth of all ages. Adults should be aware of those attractions and be sure they are well run, with proper regard for safety and adequate supervision. We seek to require minors who use paintball guns to wear safety equipment.

While strictly speaking, computer games, Internet Blogs and personal web pages are not public amusement places in the sense of geography, they are certainly public places in cyberspace. The Illinois strongly supports programs to disseminate information to adults and youth on Internet safety with special attention to the potential dangers and consequences, particularly to children and youth of blogs and personal web pages.

We will redouble our efforts to disseminate information to our constituent bodies on evolving trends in the dangers of inappropriate use of electronic communications by children and youth, and support related legislation concerning such activity.

The General Assembly has continued to adopt statutes allowing schools to adopt age- appropriate curriculum for Internet safety instruction in all grades with particular attention to preventing bullying, and intervening in bullying situations using social media. (*See Item 12c.*)

The law prohibits persons from selling or renting, at retail, video movies which do not have a Motion Picture Association of America rating clearly displayed on them. Parents should review computer games before their children are allowed to play them.

Legislation Terminology

The terms defined here are words and expressions used in the Illinois PTA legislation program. These definitions have been prepared to help PTA members better understand the terms and acronyms education professionals use when discussing school finance, organization and laws regulating public schools.

ADA: Average Daily Attendance. The average daily student attendance for the best three months of the school year used to determine the number of pupils in a school district for computing state aid claims.

Appropriation: A sum of money authorized by the general assembly for a specific purpose.

Assessed Valuation: Official estimate of real estate property valuation for tax purposes.

AYP – Adequate Yearly Progress: In the federal No Child Left Behind statute, the necessary level of proficiency on the state test students must meet to show that the school is on-track to teach all students what they need to know in each school year.

Bond Issue: Issue of interest-bearing certificates by a school district to secure funds for school buildings or other capital improvements.

Categorical Aid: Money from the State or Federal Government that is allocated to local school districts for special children and youth or special programs.

Common School Fund-: A depository for certain legally designated monies used to fund a portion of the state education budget. There are other revenue sources that support the education budget including the general revenue fund and lottery proceeds.

Construction Grant: A grant of state funds to a district for the purpose of acquisition, development, construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, improvement, architectural planning and installation of capital facilities consisting of buildings, structures, durable equipment and land for educational purposes.

Debt Service Grant: A grant of state funds made to a district to assist the district in making the annual principal and interest payments required to be made on bonds issued by the school district.

Deficiency Appropriation-Supplemental Appropriation: An additional appropriation made by the legislature when the original appropriation proves to be insufficient. This may be done by a special session or at the beginning of a regular session.

Dual District: Separate elementary and high school districts, each with its own board of education, tax rate and staff, in the same overlapping territory.

Education Funding Advisory Board (EFAB): The legislatively created advisory board that is to advise on the appropriate foundation level for school funding. The recommendation for FY 2014 is \$8,672.

Elementary School District: A school district which contains only schools through grade 8.

Elementary/Secondary Education Act: The Federal statute governing education, known over the past decade as No Child Left Behind.

Entitlement: A formal approval by the State Board of Education of an application for a grant. Construction Entitlements generally are issued in priority order for funding.

Equalized Assessed Valuation: The total value of real property of a district determined by assessment and application of multipliers, which are calculated and assigned by the county board of review and the Illinois Department of Revenue. Theoretically, this system equalizes property assessments throughout the state at 33 1/3 % of fair market value of the property, with the exception with farm property.

Fiscal Year: The State of Illinois fiscal year begins July 1, and ends June 30.

Foundation Level: A dollar level of financial support per student representing the combined total of State and Local resources available to a school district as a result of the State Aid formula. The foundation level was set at \$6,119 per pupil for the 2014-2015 school year, FY15. It is expected this will be pro-rated to 89%.

Legislation Terminology (continued)

Growth-Based Accountability Model- A system of annual testing that is based on the test results of each individual student's progress from year to year. The present accountability system for deciding if a school has met AYP measures last year's students in a grade with the students in that grade this year.

High School District: A school district covering grades 9 through 12.

Impaction: The word impaction, when used with reference to education refers to a situation in a school district in which a large number of children and youth in the district are the result of the existence in the district of any large tax-exempt institution or facility.

Multiplier: The state department of revenue is required to assure that assessment levels for property throughout the state are pegged at 33 1/3% of the fair market value of that property. To achieve that end, the department is empowered to issue to each county in Illinois a multiplier figure that causes blanket assessment charges necessary to achieve the 33 1/3% target.

NCLB No Child Left Behind: The federal statute governing federal requirements for public schools as of June 2011 (also known as Elementary/Secondary Education Act). Failure of states to agree to implement the law would cause the loss of all federal funds for education in that state.

Operating Tax Rate: A school district's total tax rate less the tax rate for bond and interest, rent, vocational education construction, summer school and capital improvement, except that districts may include tax rates extended for payment of bonds for Fire Prevention, Safety, Environmental, and Energy, and working cash at rate of .05% for each purpose of actual tax rate, whichever is less.

Property Tax: The tax that is paid by owners of real estate property to local governments, including school districts.

Qualifying Rate: The minimum operating tax rate, which must be levied by a local school district in order to qualify for equalization aid in the school aid formula.

Referendum: The principle or practice of referring measures proposed or passed by a legislative body to the vote of the electorate for approval or rejection. For example, a school board decides that a new building is needed, the proposition is then put before the voters in the school district during a regularly scheduled election.

School District: An area, containing one or more schools, served by a single board of education.

State Aid Formula: The mathematical rule, which contains the factors for computing claims against the common school fund, e.g., Resource Equalizer, Alternate Method, and Flat Grant.

Tax Base: The total assessed valuation of all real property in a given taxing district, such as a school district.

Tax Rate: The percentage figure that is used to determine the amount of tax due from an owner of real property.

Unit District: A school district in which there is a single board, administration, and local tax rate for grades 1 to 12.

Yield, or Tax Yield: The total amount of taxes which are collected by the application of a given tax rate to a given tax base.

Adoption, Amendment, and Implementation of the Legislation Platform of the Illinois PTA

Bylaws of the Illinois PTA ARTICLE XXI - LEGISLATION

LEGISLATION ACTION

Section 1.

The Illinois PTA promotes and supports legislation designed to protect all children and youth, and to meet their educational and other welfare needs, in order that they may be better prepared to assume intelligently the increasing responsibilities of citizenship.

The Illinois PTA has continuing responsibility for all laws, which it has supported and a continuing duty to express opposition to laws contrary to its policies.

Legislation action of the Illinois PTA is determined at all times by previously adopted legislation policies as outlined in the Legislation Platform of the Illinois PTA and the legislative program of the National PTA.

LEGISLATION PLATFORM

Section 2.

The legislation platform shall consist of such preamble, items and sub-items of the legislation policies of the Illinois PTA as have been approved by action of convention delegates.

Proposed amendments to the legislation platform must be received ninety (90) days prior to the annual convention for consideration at the convention. Any portion not opened by prior notice may be opened at the convention by a two-thirds (2/3rds) majority vote of the delegates.

RESOLUTIONS

Section 3.

Proposed resolutions shall be published and distributed to the convention body in accordance with prescribed procedures of the state board of directors.

All previously adopted resolutions shall be reviewed annually in accordance with the prescribed procedures of the state board of directors.

Adopted resolutions shall remain active after adoption:

- a. unless within three (3) years the provisions have been met;
- b. for a period of three (3) years at which time they shall be dropped; or
- c. unless designated continuing positions of the Illinois PTA.

CONTINUING POSITIONS

Section 4.

Continuing positions as have been established in accordance with the prescribed procedures of the state board of directors shall be reviewed annually, and shall remain in effect unless dropped by board action.