



Washington State PTA Issue Guide 2010



Prepared for the 2010 WSPTA Legislative Assembly



Welcome to the 2010 Washington State PTA Legislative Issues Guide

Thank you for your interest and participation in the Washington State PTA Legislative and Public Policy Advocacy Program. Each year PTA members work with educators, administrators, policymakers, and government officials to promote effective legislative and public policy changes that benefit our children.

This year will mark our 32nd Legislative Assembly event, thanks to the continued participation of our active and passionate membership. The coming 2011 Legislative session is a 105 day or regular session (as opposed to the 60 day short session in even-numbered years). Washington State PTA has re-aligned our legislative platform cycle to better align with the state legislature's two year bill cycle. Just as legislators must reintroduce all new bills next session, our members have submitted a brand new set of issues. Once the issues that are voted on and prioritized by you at the Legislative Assembly, they will become our legislative platform for the next two years. The two year cycle enables us to focus longer on our priorities, to provide more time to accomplish the goals set by you, the membership.

At the Legislative Assembly, we will continue to provide education sessions on the issues, have caucus sessions (both for and against) for planning and preparing for debate of each issue and have classes on advocacy with advanced and novice options. We will also provide information and updates on education reform, the November ballot initiatives, the Common Core State Standards Initiative and other topics concerning the education and welfare of children.

We will also review and reconfirm our Legislative Principles, or overarching themes, previously known as our long term platform.

Resolutions, our longer term association positions, may be presented at both Convention and Legislative Assembly. We have one resolution for our members to debate and vote on at Legislative Assembly this year. Information about this proposed resolution information is also in this guide.

The changes to Legislative Assembly are a direct result of our membership feedback, and process improvement efforts led by our Legislation and Resolution Committees. We hope that you will take advantage of this unique and exciting opportunity to begin or to continue advocating on behalf of the children of Washington State.

Our focus is Every Child, One Voice – Our membership brings passion, and heart to this effort every year. It is centered around something we all care a great deal about, our children. This is what makes our organization stand apart from others and you are what makes this organization great!

On behalf of the WSPTA Legislation and Resolution Committees, Thank you!

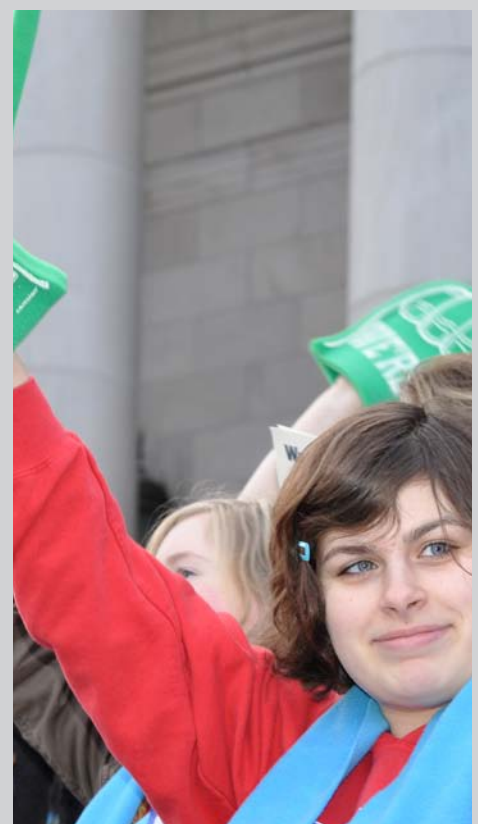
Jeanette Muck,
WSPTA Legislative Director

Save the Date...

Focus Day in Olympia

February 21, 2011 (President's Day)

We need you again this year to help shape 2011 legislative priorities in **what will again be a very difficult economic climate. Bring your kids!**



Join us for Focus Day as we rally on the Capitol steps and meet with legislators and staff, leave notes, receive updates from policy-makers on key issues and network with other PTA advocates. PTA volunteer advocates can make a difference when they come to the Capitol in large numbers.

Look for additional information on the WSPTA website: www.wastatepta.org

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<i>(This proposal was submitted to the 2010 Washington State PTA Convention. It has been included here for reference purposes only. For more information, see the staff comments printed at the bottom of page 18.)</i>	

Category I: Public Education Policies and Funding

Issue 1: Following up on Education Reform Efforts (**HB 2261, HB 2776, and SB 6696**)

Issue Statement:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate or and/or support legislative or policies that advance implementation of and/or provide funding for the realization of the basic education reform bills passed in 2009 and 2010, which describe our state's plan for developing and phasing in system improvements to meet the educational needs of students in the 21st century.

Issue Submitted by:

John Stokes, Alfred Frates

Staff Explanation Statement:

Why is education reform and additional funding needed? Approximately 30% of our students drop out of school before completing high school. In addition, too many kids leave the K-12 system without the preparation they need to succeed at the community college level. In 2008-09, 48% of those attending a community or technical colleges had to take a remedial math class for which they received no credit. The “gap” between the achievement of high income and low income students, as well as those from many ethnic minority groups remains persistent. Washington’s education funding levels are consistently low in comparison with other states and have declined in comparison to the national average over time. In 2009 we ranked 44th in per pupil spending, 46th in student-teacher ratios and 40th in student-counselor ratios. The conclusion of multiple studies and a recent funding lawsuit point to the need for both increased funding and reform.

This broadly written issue speaks to the need to follow up on education funding and reform bills that were passed beginning in 2009. The bills formed work groups, to develop specific proposals to address issues such as teacher evaluation and compensation, local levy system reform, accountability for low performing schools, and data governance. As the work groups report back, the Quality Education Council reviews the reports and then makes recommendations to the legislature. The legislature is expected to continue to write new legislation in order to move implementation of education reform forward. This issue speaks to the need to support the follow-up legislation.

Staff Analysis

Advocating for the education reform and funding necessary to provide all children in our state with the opportunity for a quality education have been top priority issues for our association for many years. Having an issue like this on our platform is important so that we can continue to speak to the new, more 2010 Issues Guide

specific bills that will be introduced as more information becomes available, to implement the broad reform bills that were passed beginning in 2009.

Statement for Adoption of Proposed Issue Provided by Issue Submitter(s):

The WSPTA, with other advocates, worked very hard to get ESHB 2261 enacted in 2009 to redefine and provide a framework for the full funding of Basic Education as required by the State Constitution and court orders. The implementation schedule extends to 2018. The Quality Education Council and pertinent committees have been working since last year to put substance on the framework of this landmark legislation. SHB 2776 is one example. There is still much to be done this coming biennium to put other significant pieces of 2261 into law to move the implementation forward, including the work of finding the revenue and other financial resources to make the dream of 2261 become a reality.

This is a long range project with distinct deliverables that will occur in the next two year cycle. It is also the time period when interest and passion for the completion of reform and fully funding Basic Education to fulfill the Constitutional mandate and the Court ordered compliance can falter. WSPTA has championed this education reform and funding change for over two decades. With fulfillment of those long held goals in the balance we cannot let down and shift our number one focus to matters of lesser importance to the children and the future of this State. This issue statement is designed to be a broad mandate for the WSPTA to work assiduously to drive implementation of 2261 so that it does not become one more lost dream for the kids of Washington State.

Legislative Committee and Board Review:

Board and Committee Review: The Board and Legislative Committee voted to include this issue on the 2010 Legislative Assembly agenda for consideration and discussion by member delegates with a “do pass” recommendation.

Category I: Public Education Policies and Funding

Issue 2: Fund Education First

Issue Statement:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that fund education first. In order to implement Article IX of our state constitution which says “It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders”, education funding would be considered first in any budget process undertaken in the state legislature.

Issue Submitted by:

Alison Meryweather, Nancy Hartnell, Heidi Bennett

Staff Explanation Statement:

This issue arises out of the concern that our state, which has strong constitutional language stating that it is the paramount duty to amply fund basic education, is falling short and is, in fact, significantly underfunding basic education. Research done by groups such as the Basic Education Finance task force, which issued its final report to the legislature in 2009, confirm this. The decision in favor of the plaintiffs in the NEWS education funding lawsuit against the state also clearly stated this. Contributing to our state education funding deficit, this past session the state effectively shifted some of the burden for education funding to local communities by authorizing a temporary levy lid increase of 4%, while also cutting state funding levels. The issue proposes that the state legislature change its budgeting process to complete the education budget before considering the budgets for other state programs and services.

Staff Analysis

WSPTA has for many years supported issues that would increase funding for education. We are a member of NEWS, the group that brought the education funding lawsuit against the state and is currently working through the appeals process. However, agreement with the problem does not automatically translate into agreement with a proposed remedy. Last year this issue was brought to Legislative Assembly for the first time, where it generated heated debate. The vote was close, but in the end members did not approve the issue. The main concern was that this proposal is counter to our mission to support both the education and welfare of children. Meeting the state’s paramount duty to fund education is not inconsistent with providing for the other services that children need to become healthy, successful adults. Also, even where there is a separate budget, such as with state transportation funding, the Legislature works on it in parallel with other budgets, and it is unlikely that the Legislature would consider changing its internal processes.

Statement for Adoption of Proposed Issue Provided by Issue Submitter(s):

Washington State must make basic education funding its top legislative priority. Article IX of the constitution states “It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders” therefore education funding is the State’s first and highest priority before any other State program or operations. Would the legislature prioritize education at the expense of other worthy causes and services, such as health care, nutrition services, and transportation needs? According to the judge’s ruling in the NEWS lawsuit, it is not the prerogative of the legislature to make that decision- that decision has been mandated by our State Constitution. Washington has the strongest constitutional mandate to provide for education, no other state in the union has this language. The constitutional mandate is not just a statement of moral principal but rather sets forth a mandatory and judicially enforceable affirmative duty according to Judge John Erlick. The State continues to violate its own constitution. It is time that we hold our legislators and governor accountable to the children and require that they adhere to the constitution. A well educated population is the foundation of our democracy, our economy and the American Dream.

Legislative Committee and Board Review:

The Board and Legislative Committee voted to include this issue on the 2010 Legislative Assembly agenda for consideration and discussion by member delegates with a “do not pass” recommendation.

Rationale for “do not pass” recommendation:

The committee discussed this issue at length, before reaching the decision to move it forward for consideration and debate by member delegates with a “do not pass” recommendation. The main concern was that advocating for this issue does not fit with the WSPTA mission to advocate for both the education and the well-being of every child. Although our state constitution says

that it is the state's paramount duty to make ample provision for the education of all Washington's children, there is no language in the constitution or in the NEWS lawsuit ruling that connects the paramount duty with the budgeting technique to fund education first before considering other budget priorities, as

proposed by this issue. Phase in of full funding of the implementation of education reform as the detailed proposals are developed, will need to be accompanied by plans to ensure adequate levels of funding for all programs and services that support the well-being of children.

Save the Date!

Washington State PTA Convention

Seattle Airport Doubletree Hotel

April 29-May 1, 2011

Inspiring Keynote Speakers

Leadership Training Classes

New Ideas for Fundraisers

Time to Bond as a Team

New Ideas for Your PTA

Early Bird Registration is \$150 (3 days) and late registration is \$190.
Fee includes all materials. Fee does not include meals or housing.

Washington State
PTA[®]
everychild.onevoice.

Join us for leadership training and to build your local unit leadership team for the upcoming year! On-line registration available in late winter on the **WSPTA** website.

Category I: Public Education Policies and Funding

Issue 3: New Model for Teacher Compensation

Issue Statement:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that lead to a new research-based state teacher compensation model that emphasizes rewarding teacher effectiveness in improving student learning.

Issue Submitted by:

Leslie Warrick, Alison Meryweather, Trina Davis, Chad Magendez

Staff Explanation Statement:

This issue was prompted by the idea that in order to improve teacher effectiveness, it makes sense to provide incentives in the teacher compensation system that are linked to student outcomes. The current state salary schedule provides pay increases for years of service and additional academic credits and degrees. There is no research indicating that these input measures are significant measures of teacher effectiveness, nor is there research supporting any particular alternative compensation system. As we have moved to an outcome based approach to teaching and learning, it makes sense to consider including outcome measures as a part of the compensation model. At this point more questions than answers remain as to how to create a new compensation system based on these ideas. There is broad agreement that multiple measures of teacher effectiveness will be necessary. There is little agreement right now as to what these measures should be for each teacher, in all subjects, and across all grade levels. Some of the issues that will need to be addressed include the following: 1. Which measures of student growth will be chosen? 2. How will these measures be weighted in relation to other evaluation criteria? 3. For compensation purposes, should these measures be used at the school level, teaching team, or the individual teacher level? This very complex work is in an early phase; however it is a good time to begin having the discussion about the issue amongst PTA members.

Staff Analysis

This issue is new for PTA, but it is also a logical follow-up to the Quality Teaching issue that has been one of the top priority issues on our platform for the past two years. It has purposely been written in a very broad manner, as a conversation starter, recognizing that the actual work group which will address the development of the new compensation system will not begin to meet until July, 2011. As an important precursor to this work, the state is currently engaged in work to develop a new teacher evaluation system, based on eight new criteria which were passed by the

2010 Legislature. Eight districts and one consortium of small districts have been selected to do the development and piloting work. Initial results from the developmental stage will be presented to legislative committees in July, 2011. At that time the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction will make a recommendation to the legislature as to whether there should be one statewide model or multiple models. In the 2011-2012 school year, districts will pilot their models. Results from the piloting phase of the new evaluation system will be provided in July, 2012. At this time recommendations will be made by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction as to how to implement the new system in every district beginning in 2013-14. The Compensation Work group will form after the initial report, in July, 2011, with their final report due in June, 2012. It is certainly not too early to begin having conversations about this work.

Statement for Adoption of Proposed Issue Provided by Issue Submitter(s):

Research has clearly proven that when a child has a positive and effective early elementary experience, there is a ripple effect throughout his/her education years. It is critically important to focus upon teacher quality and place less emphasis on merit pay based upon seniority and postgraduate studies. Graduate school credits have long been a key factor in determining levels for teacher compensation. Yet, studies (such as those conducted per the NCTQ) have revealed that graduate work has virtually no impact upon teacher quality in the classroom setting. Although we are in the early stages of devising a new teacher compensation model, this issue is a critical part of the follow up to the 2009 landmark Basic Education Reform Bill (HB 2261).

Legislative Committee and Board Review:

The Board and Legislative Committee voted to include this issue on the 2010 Legislative Assembly agenda for consideration and discussion by member delegates with a "do pass" recommendation.

Category I: Public Education Policies and Funding

Issue 4: Teacher “Reduction in Force” Policies

Issue Statement:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that expand school district teacher “reduction in force” policies to include factors other than seniority, such as teacher effectiveness and the cohesiveness of school teams.

Issue Submitted by:

Alison Meryweather, Heidi Bennett, Kimberly Montague,
Issaquah PTSA Council

Staff Explanation Statement:

Concern that staff reductions due to budget shortfalls over the past few years have not been handled in ways that are in the best interest of students led to this issue proposal. Typically, when school districts eliminate teaching position, seniority, or the number of years that a teacher has taught, without regard to teacher effectiveness, determines who is let go first, and also who may be hired back first if additional moneys become available. The effect of this practice, which can allow for the retention of some less effective teachers at the expense of others, exacerbates the larger class sizes that result from the layoffs. This issue advocates for policies that would better serve students and in some cases teaching teams, by including criteria which are more closely related to teacher effectiveness than seniority, when making these decisions.

Staff Analysis

This is a new issue for PTA this year. It is an issue which has come to light as a statewide issue due to the very difficult economic times in which we live. It is also an outgrowth of the movement towards evaluating teachers based on outcome measures. Currently, layoff decisions and many other issues like this are negotiated district by district with local teachers’ unions; this is only a statewide issue in the sense that this issue impacts many districts across the state. There have been no state-level conversations to date that we are aware of that would involve the legislature passing a bill to support a statewide remedy. Certainly members could advocate for this policy within individual districts. When there is a statewide evalua-

tion system that measures teacher effectiveness, this issue could become part of a statewide legislative agenda; in this scenario it most likely would be part of a larger package that would shift negotiation of some issues to the state.

Statement for Adoption of Proposed Issue Provided by Issue Submitter(s):

The current retention policy based on longevity serves to protect the teachers and does not factor in the impact to the students. The policy is quality-blind and actually creates a greater loss of jobs for the teachers by only dismissing those from the lowest pay scales. Even teachers support the notion that other factors should be considered in layoff decisions, not just length of experience. Seniority only layoffs require that new, lower paid teachers be laid off and therefore require a greater number to be fired to attain the same cost savings than a seniority-neutral policy. Perhaps the greatest negative impact to the students is that the policy creates a quality-blind outcome. There is no protection for the best, most effective teachers and it also forces the district to retain ineffective teachers at the expense of the students. The youngest teachers tend to be assigned in the high poverty, high minority schools so this creates a lack of continuity and stability for these students. We need a system that protects the teachers from arbitrary layoff policies and values the needs of the students as much as the teachers.

Legislative Committee and Board Review:

The Board and Legislative Committee voted to include this issue on the 2010 Legislative Assembly agenda for consideration and discussion by member delegates with a “do pass” recommendation.



Every Member Matters...

For ideas for your PTA's Membership Campaign go to: http://www.wastatepta.org/leadership/membership/mem_index.html
("PTAmember" log-on name, password "leader")

Category 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Issue 5: Literacy Instruction

Issue Statement:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that support the state-wide adoption of early phonological awareness screening, and the state-wide implementation of research-based, direct, explicit, and systematic literacy instruction in every classroom.

Issue Submitted by:

Laurie Reed, Lynn Gilliland

Staff Explanation Statement:

Although substantial gains have been made in reading achievement across all populations, as measured by WASL scores in the last ten years, we are still leaving far too many students behind. The results of state wide fourth grade reading tests showed that 46% of African-American, 55% of Hispanic, 40% of American Indian, and 24% of White students tested at Below Basic in Reading Achievement. Research indicates that by paying attention to research about how students learn to read, we should be able to reach many more students. It is estimated that for about 60% of students, learning to read is challenging and their success is tied to the efficacy of instruction. Of those 20-30% will find reading remarkably difficult. Studies suggest that the common trait of children with reading disorders, including dyslexia, is a primary weakness in phonological and phonemic awareness, or difficulty in hearing and differentiating the components of sound that distinguish one word from another. Identifying them early and teaching them using research based curriculum that emphasizes phonological awareness and phonics instruction, will provide them with the foundation necessary for success during middle and high school. Several choices of curricula recommended by literacy experts are currently available.

Staff Analysis

This proposal is new for WSPTA. It contributes to the ongoing discussion about how to address the achievement gap and dropout rates, as we strive to prepare all children for success in school and life. Many Washington State leaders are already aware of the effectiveness of this approach. A successful pilot was conducted in nine schools in 2009. This led to passage of Senate Bill 6016 in 2009. This bill provided a first step towards addressing this issue, by mandating training for Educational Service Districts and providing funding for the creation of a dyslexia handbook. Strengthening the bill to mandate phonological awareness screening and a research based literacy curriculum will be much more difficult to achieve due to the cost involved and issues of local control. However, if we are serious about addressing the achievement gap and dropout rates, the arguments

certainly support movement in this direction.

Statement for Adoption of Proposed Issue Provided by Issue Submitter(s):

Literacy is the foundation of all learning. Statewide adoption of early phonological awareness screening and research based direct, explicit and systematic literacy instruction will improve the literacy levels of all students regardless of their socio-economic, racial, ethnic or linguistic background; and have a powerful effect on the future of children as learners and productive citizens. Studies have demonstrated that deficient basic skills are a key factor in student dropout rates. In addition, 85% of all juvenile offenders are either functionally or marginally illiterate, 70% of prisoners in State and Federal Systems can be classified as illiterate, and 43% of those with the lowest literacy skills live in poverty. Yet, we know that 95% of all students can learn to read using effective research-based curriculum.

The potential for cost savings is enormous. According to OSPI's Washington State Report Card for 2008-09, 131,693 students are enrolled in special education in Washington State with a total annual expenditure of well over a billion dollars. 85% of students identified as having a learning disability have a "primary learning disability" in reading and language processing. Many of these students would succeed in a general education classroom using effective research-based curriculum. The scientific research regarding how children best learn to read and write is conclusive. Early phonological screening and research-based, direct, explicit, and systematic literacy instruction should be implemented in every classroom so that all children can reach their full potential.

Legislative Committee and Board Review:

The Board and Legislative Committee voted to include this issue on the 2010 Legislative Assembly agenda for consideration and discussion by member delegates with a "do pass" recommendation.

Category 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Issue 6: Math and Science Education

Issue Statement:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that strengthen math and science education to include but not be limited to: improving teacher pre-service training and recruitment, developing an Elementary Mathematics Specialty endorsement, increasing teacher professional development and supporting implementation of math and science standards.

Issue Submitted by:

John Stokes

Staff Explanation Statement:

We know that we have a problem with math and science achievement in our state, based on persistently low state achievement test scores. The percentage of 10th grade students passing the math WASL has only increased from 33% to 45% over the past 10 years. Results for many ethnic minority and low income students are much worse; although passage levels have trended upward for each of these groups, they remain below 30%. Science results paint an even bleaker picture, with overall passage rates at 38% for all 10th graders, and subgroups trailing by an additional 10% or more. Given the importance of math and science to current and future job success, we must do a better job preparing our students in these core subjects. We know that doing one thing alone will not solve math and science achievement issues; a multi-pronged approach including, but not limited to the components listed above will be necessary in order to address the scope of this problem.

Staff Analysis

A math and science issue has been one of the top priority issues on our platform for the past several years. There is also general recognition amongst legislators about the need to address this issue. Most of the emphasis to date has been on developing standards and testing in math and science. Some funding has been provided for math coaches and professional development, but there has been no consistency in funding and the programs have certainly not been universal. Professional development has also one of the first areas cut by both the state and districts as state funding levels have declined. Funding for appropriate curriculum and materials to support learning are also sorely needed. OSPI presented a comprehensive report to the State Board of Education in March, with detailed recommendations to address this issue. It really can't be said that there is no plan, but the legislature does need to find a way to fund and implement it.

Statement for Adoption of Proposed Issue Provided by Issue Submitter(s):

WSPTA has supported higher standards and stronger focus on math and science as a part of redefining Basic Education and better preparing our children for success in the work place and the economy for a number of years. All the indicators are that the state needs more graduates who are highly educated in both math and science and that our standards in these areas should be aligned with those in countries and states that routinely excel in testing and other forms of measurement and which turn out more qualified mathematicians and scientists than Washington, even to fill good jobs within the state at Microsoft and other leading companies.

In a complex and increasingly technologically sophisticated economy, it is imperative that we provide the best opportunities possible for all of our students to a high quality education in math and the sciences. Without a continued focus on these areas of education, our recent efforts for improvement through the education reforms embodied in ESHB 2261 and other elements will stall and our children will end up even farther behind compared with other states and nations. We need to have an issue as a priority that sends a signal to our legislators that these areas remain an important focus for continuing education reform and increased funding to make sure Washington State kids can compete with the best of the world.

Legislative Committee and Board Review:

The Board and Legislative Committee voted to include this issue on the 2010 Legislative Assembly agenda for consideration and discussion by member delegates with a "do pass" recommendation.

Category 2: Curriculum and Instruction

Issue 7: Physical Education and Health

Issue Statement:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that strengthen physical education and health to include but not be limited to 1) designating physical education and health as a core subject in the state of Washington and 2) adding physical education and health to the list of core subjects in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act- formally known as No Child Left Behind.

Issue Submitted by:

Greg Bert

Staff Explanation Statement:

Increases in childhood obesity levels, which began to rise significantly starting in 1978, have been widely documented. In the May, 2010 White House Task Force Report to the President noted that one in every three children ages 2-19 is overweight or obese. School-based PE programs are viewed as one tool to combat this trend. Studies show that daily PE is associated with an increased likelihood of participating regularly in vigorous physical activity. Less known are the links that recent research has found between PE and learning. For example, research in Illinois showed that test scores in math and reading improved dramatically when PE is held immediately before a math, reading or English class.

Current PE requirements in the Washington Administrative Code say that grades students in grades 1-8 shall receive an average of at least 100 minutes per week. Although exact data for the number of minutes being provided is not available, anecdotal evidence indicates that many districts are not meeting this requirement. For grades 9-12, students are required to earn two health and physical fitness credits.

PE increases the opportunity for students to engage in physical activity, which we know is important to building healthy bodies and minds. Designating PE/health as a core academic subject both in Washington State and in No Child Left behind would increase the status of this subject. It would also require that the state set requirements for a highly qualified PE instructor; highly qualified instructors are required for all core academic subjects under No Child Left Behind.

Staff Analysis

This is a new issue for WSPTA. Our legislative principles speak to our support for the health and well-being of children, specifically citing physical fitness, as an example.

The primary benefit of adding physical education as a core subject to No Child Left Behind would be that the state would need to determine what would constitute a highly qualified teacher for physical education. Currently, there are no specific degree requirements for PE teachers. Perhaps this designation would also elevate the status of PE and encourage districts to implement the minimum number of required minutes in grades K-8.

What has Washington done regarding health and PE up to now? Health and fitness are included in the Washington State Learning Standards which were created in 1993. Standards and grade level expectations for health and fitness were developed for grades K-8 and for the two high school credits. Classroom based assessments were also developed. While use of these is not mandatory, they were meant to help teachers assess whether or not their student were meeting state standards.

Rep. Pat Sullivan was a sponsor of a bill which partially addresses this issue, House Joint Memorial 4002, for the past two years. Although our state legislature has no federal authority, they can pass a joint memorial requesting action at the federal level. The bill asks President Obama to petition Congress for inclusion of physical education and health as core subjects in No Child Left Behind. The bill passed out of policy committees in both 2009 and 2010, but stalled in the Rules Committee; it never came to the floor for a final vote. WSPTA support for this effort could help the bill move through the legislative process next session.

Statement for Adoption of Proposed Issue Provided by Issue Submitter(s):

Now is the time for PTA to get involved with physical education and structured physical activity. As mentioned before, there is new and exciting research linking physical education and activity with improved executive cognitive function and increased test scores. Many schools are structuring their day with more physical education and physical activity by using the physical education teacher as a resource to help students reach

their academic goals and physical activity goals. The answer to low test scores and high drop-out rates has been right in front of us!—the physical education teacher. PTA needs to demand more from physical educators and ask that they come to the forefront of serving as both teacher and resource to other teachers at their sites on how to use the latest research that correlates higher test scores with increased physical activity.

PTA can begin this quest by getting behind bills such as HJM 4002, which simply asks President Obama to include physical education and health education into NCLB. This “bill” has been twice passed by the education executive committee and come up

to a 97-0 vote in favor of adoption...only to be stalled in the rules committee before going on to the senate. PTA can also endorse legislation that makes physical education a Core subject in the state of Washington.

Legislative Committee and Board Review:

The Board and Legislative Committee voted to include this issue on the 2010 Legislative Assembly agenda for consideration and discussion by member delegates with a “do pass” recommendation.



Be on the Front Line of Child Advocacy Sign Up For WSPTA Communication Tools

The WSPTA is the largest grassroots child advocacy organization in Washington State. We strongly encourage and request your participation in the valuable advocacy work the WSPTA does to enhance the lives of children.

Sign up for one or more of our Legislative Listserv's and get connect with your WSPTA colleagues and the latest legislative news.

<http://www.wastatepta.org/advocacy/>

Category 3: Health and Safety

Issue 8: Safe Storage and Disposal of Prescription Drugs

Issue Statement:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that address the problems created by the ease of youth access to prescription drugs by 1) increasing public education about the importance of safe storage and disposal of prescription drugs in home and community and 2) requiring producers of prescription and over-the-counter medicines sold in Washington State to provide and pay for a statewide medicine return program in Washington encompassing safe collection, transportation and disposal of narcotic and non-narcotic prescription drugs.

Issue Submitted by:

Paula Matthyse

Staff Explanation Statement:

Startling statistics about teen access to drugs make a strong case for this issue. In Washington, prescriptions for pain relievers (opiates) almost tripled between 1997 and 2006. In 2008 for the first time, more teens reported that prescription drugs were easier to purchase without a prescription (19%) than beer (15%). According to the latest Washington's Healthy Youth Survey, over 4% of 8th graders, almost 10% of 10th graders and 12% of 12th graders used prescription drugs to "to get high" in the past 30 days. The problem is that there are currently few good options for disposal of left-over or expired medications. Unwanted medicine often sits in home cabinets where minors have easy access. Disposal in the garbage or by flushing down the toilet can harm the environment. What is needed is a secure medicine return program, funded by pharmaceutical companies to handle safe disposal of unused medicine.

Staff Analysis

This is a new issue for WSPTA. House Bill 1165 was introduced in 2009 to address it. The list of supporters include typical allies such as the Children's Alliance and School Nurses, along with many other groups involved with health and medicine, law enforcement, the environment, civic and faith organizations and local government associations. The bill passed out of committees, but was stalled in the Rules committee in both 2009 and 2010. It never was pulled to the floor for a vote. There are plans to reintroduce the bill in 2011. WSPTA would be providing additional support to an existing coalition.

Statement for Adoption of Proposed Issue Provided by Issue Submitter(s):

The WA State PTA members are needed to step up to name the silent killer of our times. Prescription narcotic medication abuse

is an epidemic and we have the power and ability to change the environmental factors at hand to insure that pharmacies educate customers about safe storage and disposal at the time of dispensing, homes must have lock boxes for storage, and communities must have secure drop boxes to collect narcotic medications and pharmacy take back programs for non-narcotic medications. Producer funded programs are the only sustainable way to insure the success of these programs because the pharmaceutical companies have the resources and they created the product which is hazardous to children and youth, and also toxic to the environment when thrown away.

Legislative Committee and Board Review:

The Board and Legislative Committee voted to include this issue on the 2010 Legislative Assembly agenda for consideration and discussion by member delegates with a "do pass" recommendation.

PTA Resources



WSPTA Leadership Resources Available Online on the "Resources" section of the Washington State PTA website you will find resources available exclusively to PTA members. This page contains PTA & the Law Resources, Leadership Packet materials, Money Matters, and a variety of resources for PTA officers and members. To access the members only site, your logon is PTAmember and password is leader.

Category 3: Health and Safety

Issue 9: School Breakfast and Lunch Programs

Issue Statement:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that improve the quality and nutritional content of school breakfast and lunch programs.

Issue Submitted by:

Kelly Rogers Flynt, Jeannine Glista

Staff Explanation Statement:

Concern about the quality of food that is being offered to children who participate in school breakfast and lunch programs drives this issue proposal. Low income children who face more academically challenges for a variety of reasons, are also disproportionate participants in school breakfast and lunch programs. In the 2010 White House Task Force Report to the President on Childhood Obesity, it was noted regarding the school meal program that “93%-94% of meals failed to meet all nutritional standards, primarily due to not meeting standards for fat, saturated fat, or calories.” The report goes on to say that “Schools offered few whole grain foods in the school year 2004-05, and french fries and other similar potato products accounted for a disproportionate amount of the vegetable options on school lunch menus.” Studies show a link between adequate nutrition and learning; if we are concerned about the achievement gap, it makes sense to be concerned about the nutritional value of food served in schools.

Staff Analysis

Concern about child nutrition is a longstanding issue for both National PTA and Washington State PTA. A resolution passed in 2007 called “School Nutrition” supports this issue. WSPTA has been a member of the Obesity Coalition, which has been led by the Children’s Alliance for several years. This group has recently applied for grant funding which would assist with state policy efforts in the area of school nutrition. Federal efforts are also underway, with bills currently being considered in both the House and the Senate as part of the reauthorization of the Child Nutrition Act. This issue has not recently been brought to Legislative Assembly as a short term issue. Strong support for this issue would encourage staff to devote more time to it.

Statement for Adoption of Proposed Issue Provided by Issue Submitter(s):

The slippery slopes of efficiency and economy have led to a substandard level in school food. We attempt to teach our children about nutrition and health, the importance of lean proteins and vitamins then offer them a frozen waffle covered in syrup and whipped cream for lunch. The disconnect between what they read in health and what they see in the lunchroom grows every year. It is time for a complete overhaul of the school food program from menu, to preparation, to dining experience. We can no longer allow the fiscal limitations of reimbursement from the federal government for free and reduced lunches to be the driving factor for what our children eat. It is time to forge new paths, create new relationships with local farmers and create a new attitude in our children in their view of food. Saturated fats, processed meats, canned fruit and high fructose corn syrup should not dominate our children’s food. Healthy food in the lunchroom promotes healthy, attentive children in the classroom. While the issues of school food are many and varied, we will never see progress if we turn the blind eye of indifference. We can do better for our children and all the children of Washington state, and we should start today.

Legislative Committee and Board Review:

The Board and Legislative Committee voted to include this issue on the 2010 Legislative Assembly agenda for consideration and discussion by member delegates with a “do pass” recommendation.

Category 3: Health and Safety

Issue 10: Standardized School Zone Signage

Issue Statement:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that mandate the establishment of posted speed zones on roadways adjacent and in proximity to schools and require counties and incorporated cities/towns to post warning signs utilizing the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) school icon.

Issue Submitted by:

Puyallup Council, Karin Catey, Susannah Youngquist, Christina Allen and Julie Curran

Staff Explanation Statement:

This issue arises out of concern for child safety due to both inadequate school zone designations, as well as the inconsistency in the wording on signs, both within a single district and from district to district across the state. Having clear and consistent guidelines for school zone designation and for sign wording, would help protect children, by enabling motorists to more safely navigate schools zones.

Staff Analysis

This issue was on our platform for the past two years as a supported issue. When we support an issue we typically do not actively initiate policy work, but will provide support to others who are taking the lead. So far, this group has not been able to generate much interest at the state level. This is not at all surprising; it is extremely difficult to introduce a new issue that would involve increased spending to the legislature, when they most of their energy has been concentrated on ways to cut costs. In order for this issue to gain traction, a much larger coalition will need to be built. As is the case with many issues, it may take many years to see progress.

Statement for Adoption of Proposed Issue Provided by Issue Submitter(s):

School safety is a concern of every parent, educator, and community. Safer school zones benefit everyone around the school: Students, parents, employees and neighbors. Weak laws in Washington State mean every municipality has an unnecessary authority to make the final decision regarding speed limits and school zone signage in their jurisdictions, and they can change established school zones at any time. This so called "local control" is a disaster waiting to happen. Speed kills. Statistics show that pedestrians are 8 times more likely to be killed if struck by a vehicle traveling 30mph versus 20mph. Too many of our

schools are located on streets and roads where the speed limit is always 30mph or higher. Uniform school signage and a consistent application of a 20mph speed limit will help enhance safety at our schools and can save lives.

A stronger law that requires a minimum level of uniform safety measures and low speed limits at our schools must be adopted. While WSPTA continues to champion ongoing education reform efforts that will take years to complete, members need to take decisive action during the next legislative session to help our schools become safer.

Legislative Committee and Board Review:

The Board and Legislative Committee voted to include this issue on the 2010 Legislative Assembly agenda for consideration and discussion by member delegates with a "do pass" recommendation.

WSPTA's Parent Involvement Magazine



The Child Advocate
January 2010
Issue 5, Volume 18
Washington State
PTA
for child and voice

Making A Difference For Our Kids

"The Child Advocate" is available on the Washington State PTA website from September through May.

As always, feel free to cut and paste articles or portions of articles from "The Child Advocate" into handouts at PTA events or in school newsletters.

Look for each informative new issue!

Category 4: Local Decision-Making

Issue 11: School Board Decision-Making

Issue Statement:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that strengthen public meeting requirements regarding proposed changes in the attendance areas within school districts to include the following:

- 1) Change proposal to be introduced during at least one public meeting, which includes a public hearing, prior to final decision-making
- 2) Change proposal to be on the agenda during at least one public board meeting prior to final decision-making
- 3) A public, recorded vote of the school board regarding proposed changes

Issue Submitted by:

Laura Meyers-Heine, Kim Malcolm, Vadim Starikov, Ariel Sobelman

Staff Explanation Statement:

Concerns about lack of parent/community involvement and notification during initial district discussions and prior to final decision-making, regarding internal district boundary shifts, prompted this proposal. Parents/community members want to be involved in these deliberations early on, so that their input has the potential for meaningful impact when it is time for the final decisions to be made. Boundary revisions can lead to significant consequences that may not be well known or understood by school district personnel, including impacting neighborhood cohesiveness in ways that can erode parent/community support for healthy schools. Including stakeholders early on in the process will help provide communities with information about the challenges that districts face and will also allow for meaningful participation in the development of solutions that have parent/community support.

Staff Analysis

While this issue is new to WSPTA, the idea certainly is not; advocating for increased parent/community involvement in decisions that affect children is one of the core functions of PTA. Strong support for this issue would lead to conversations with the Washington State School Directors Association, which provides guidelines to local school boards about their decision-making processes.

Statement for Adoption of Proposed Issue Provided by Issue Submitter(s):

Adoption of this proposal as a submission for proposed legislation would send a strong signal to state school board superintendents and school boards that these types of decisions should be made with full public disclosure to impacted schools and families and in full compliance with Washington state public records laws.

This could help to clarify a possible loophole in state open meetings and open records laws that govern school boards, along with decisions that are not made in full disclosure and that directly impact district families and students.

Legislative Committee and Board Review:

The Board and Legislative Committee voted to include this issue on the 2010 Legislative Assembly agenda for consideration and discussion by member delegates with a “do pass” recommendation.

At first the committee wrestled with whether or not this was a statewide issue. After some research they determined that there is a problem with guidelines being provided at the state level. Current policy guidelines for making boundary change decisions offered by the Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA) lack provisions for parent notification and involvement in the decision-making process, recommending notification only after the decision has been made. This proposal would support advocating for new WSSDA guidelines that would include stronger public notice and meeting requirements prior to decision-making.

Proposed Resolution

Increasing Revenue to Support our Legislative Principles

Whereas, Our legislative principles state that “The Washington State PTA shall identify and initiate education and action on public policy affecting tax policies that are fair, equitable, and provide stable, adequate revenues for public education and for programs that benefit children and youth”; and,

Whereas, The Washington State PTA has long had redefinition of and fully funding basic education for all students as a top legislative and policy priority, and worked to help win approval of the basic education reform legislation and enhanced funding formulas embodied in ESHB 2261 and SHB 2776, in addition to a substantial history of support for health and welfare legislation and policy for our children and youth; and,

Whereas, The implementation of education reforms approved through ESHB 2261 and SHB 2776 will require substantial additional funding for K-12 education from Washington State; and,

Whereas, In the 2009 education funding lawsuit *Mc Cleary vs. the State of Washington*, Superior Court Judge Erlick ruled in favor of the plaintiff, noting that there has been substantial underfunding of public education over many years; and,

Whereas, Despite the Superior Court ruling calling for additional funding, recent revenue shortfalls have caused Washington State to reduce the K-12 education budget; and,

Whereas, Realizing efficiencies in state spending by reducing waste and reprioritizing funding toward education may be possible and desirable, but will not alone be sufficient to avoid cuts and pay for education reform; and,

Whereas, Instead of having fair and equitable tax practices, Washington State is recognized as having one of the most regressive tax systems in the US; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Washington State PTA will encourage reprioritization and efficiency in state spending to increase funds available for education, when these spending changes are consistent with our Legislative Principles, which include protecting and promoting the health, safety and welfare of children and youth; and be it further

Resolved, That the Washington State PTA will consider taking public positions in support of fair, equitable and ample revenue increases as a necessary component of fully funding education and meeting other needs of children and youth; and be it further

Resolved, That the Washington State PTA will consider all major legislation and initiatives that impact education funding as they emerge and take action consistent with our goal of achieving and maintaining ample education funding, and our Legislative Principles pertaining to protecting and promoting the health, safety and welfare of children and youth.

WSPTA Board “Do Pass” Recommendation

Staff Comment: A resolution to address revenue for education funding was brought to the 2010 Convention in May for consideration by the membership. This resolution had a “do not pass” recommendation from the board. During the debate, the delegates voted to send the issue back to committee for revision. This new substantially revised issue wording is the result. The main difference is that language has been softened regarding board consideration of funding proposals. For example instead of saying that the board “will support” funding proposals, it says that the board “will consider” funding proposals. This revised proposal was given a “Do Pass” recommendation by the Board of Directors.

See next page for a version that was presented to delegates at the 2010 WSPTA State Convention

A Resolution Supporting Efforts to Increase state Revenue to Fund Schools

(A 2010 Washington State PTA Convention Proposal provided for reference purposes only.)

Whereas, the implementation of reforms approved through HB 2261 will require substantial additional funding for K-12 education from Washington State; and

Whereas, revenue shortfalls have caused Washington State to reduce the budget for K-12 education despite the legislature's commitment to more (rather than less) funding via HB2261; and

Whereas, the K-12 education system in Washington State has been under funded for over 20 years; and

Whereas, realizing efficiencies in state spending by reducing waste has taken place and further savings won't be sufficient to bridge the education funding gap; and

Whereas, the current tax system in Washington State fails in three ways to adequately allocate money for K-12 education:

- Ample Revenue – the current system fails to bring in enough money for the state to meet its constitutional obligations to education.
- Reliable Funding – the over reliance on sales taxes fails to collect sufficient taxes to fund education during economic hard times.
- Fair tax burden – the over reliance on sales taxes means the poorest citizens pay a greater percentage of their income in taxes than any other state. This regressive tax structure discourages Legislators from asking for adequate taxation for education, and increases the likelihood of opposition and reversal of any reform; therefore be it

Resolved, that WSPTA will support legislation and initiatives which will increase state taxes to fund K-12 education. Measures to support will be determined by WSPTA leadership; and be it further

Resolved, that WSPTA calls for improved reliability and progressivism in the state tax system, and supports education taxes that are ample, reliable and fair; and be it further

Resolved, that WSPTA believes that an increase in tax revenue allocated to K-12 education is needed, and at least fifty percent of the state's budget should be spent on its paramount duty: education.

Washington State PTA
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