

Every two years, Washington State PTA chooses a legislative priority platform. We continue to support all of our [legislative principles](#) as well as National PTA's [public policy agenda](#), but we focus on the priorities. In year two of this cycle (like this year) we consider adding priorities as "also supported" and we consider amendments. The following is our updated platform for this next legislative session.

Washington State PTA's 2011-12 legislative platform

1. Following up on reforms of 2009 and 2010 (Basic education finance/HB 2261 and education reform/SB 6696)
2. Math and science instruction
3. Literacy screening and instruction
4. Reduction in force/layoff policies
5. Fund education first in the state budget process
6. New, research-based model for teacher compensation that emphasizes rewarding teacher effectiveness in improving student learning.

ALSO SUPPORTED (listed alphabetically):

- Achievement gaps and educational opportunities*
- Charter schools*
- Early learning*
- Highly capable*
- Improve food quality in breakfast and lunch programs
- Juvenile justice*
- Make physical education/health a core subject
- School-zone signage*

*Adopted at 2011 legislative assembly

About our new priorities:

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ACHIEVEMENT GAPS AND EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Legislative principle: Public education policies and funding

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We believe great educational outcomes are possible for all students, including students of color, students of diverse cultural or linguistic backgrounds, lower income status and students with special needs. The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that eliminate the state's achievement gaps and create equitable opportunities for all students. Steps can include, but are not limited to, efforts to foster:

- Effective, culturally competent educators who have high expectations for every child
- Ongoing collaboration that helps teachers maximize instructional time, align materials and fill in gaps with challenging and engaging curricula for all students
- A positive school climate that factors in the needs of all learners
- Student-focused practices that encompass intervention and leadership strategies for each child and every classroom with positive academic and behavioral intervention systems
- Strong leadership at every school; transformational leadership at high-needs schools
- Widespread, statewide use of longitudinal data and formative assessments, such as WaKids, that inventory academic and social-emotional benchmarks to determine which students will need additional support, so families and schools can provide appropriate intense, targeted intervention in a timely manner
- Consistently effective home-school communications and family engagement that assists in the instructional development of children
- A funding formula that ensures children with more need get adequate support to meet standards

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CHARTER SCHOOLS

Legislative principle: Public education policies and funding

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The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that drive innovation and accountability in public education by allowing the operation of public charter schools in the state of Washington.

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EARLY LEARNING

Legislative principle: Public education policies and funding

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The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that increase families' access to high-quality early learning programs and improve students' transition to kindergarten. This includes but is not limited to:

- Phasing in universal pre-kindergarten services for 3- and 4-year-olds, such as provided by our state's Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program
- Improving access to high-quality child care by expanding Washington's quality rating and improvement system (Seeds to Success), a voluntary support and professional development service for licensed providers
- Continuing to phase in universal all-day kindergarten and use of a readiness assessment process, such as the state's new Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS), a longitudinal data system that informs schools and families of a learner's needs so that they can better support them.
- Provide resources and support for pre-kindergarten through third-grade alignment.

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HIGHLY CAPABLE

Legislative principle: Public education policies and funding

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Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that ensure highly capable children (K-12) receive an appropriate basic education, which includes access to highly capable programs (K-12). The Washington State PTA recommends that the legislature and Quality Education Council build on the work of the Highly Capable Program Technical Work Group. This shall include, but not be limited to:

- Advocating for a standard definition of highly capable and working to ensure students who are both highly capable and students of color, who are poor, or who have disabilities, have equitable access to the state's highly capable program.
- Further, Washington State PTA supports the recommendation that districts that do not currently offer highly capable programs refer to the guidelines set forth in the report of Highly Capable Program Technical Work Group.

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JUVENILE JUSTICE

Legislative principle: Health and Well-being of Children and Youth

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The Washington State PTA renews its support for the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act and shall initiate or support legislation or policies that:

- Keep youth in school and out of the justice system
- Ensure equity and cultural competence within the justice system
- Ensure age- and developmentally appropriate responses
- Strengthen the partnership between the federal government and state and local governments in juvenile justice matters.

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SCHOOL-ZONE SIGNAGE

Legislative principle: Safe and Nurturing Environments for Children and Youth

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The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that create consistent school speed zone and school warning signage across all school districts, counties and cities so that drivers routinely recognize them, reduce speed and watch out for pedestrians and bicyclists.

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The proposal to amend our No. 6 priority failed. That priority reads:

- 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.

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A proposed amendment would have changed the wording to:

- The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that reward teachers for academic credits and degrees as well as years of service to students.

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During the legislative assembly a motion to change the amendment passed. The NEW proposed amendment read:

- The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that consider research-based teacher compensations along with research-based evaluation models, including the Washington Teacher/Principal Evaluation Pilot.

This proposed amendment failed.

Note: The evaluation pilot is supported as part of our No. 1 priority. The pilot aims to evaluate teacher growth in supporting student learning. While there was agreement on the importance of evaluating for growth, delegates reaffirmed that they felt student learning needed to be a component of the compensation system. No specific compensation system has been identified.