

Michigan PTA's 2024 Advocacy Day was held in Lansing on Tuesday, March 12, 2024. We were proud to have 88 registered attendees (with 46 of them student members). We heard from several fabulous presenters, some of whom were also students, and held 16 legislative meetings. The highlight for many was the opportunity to get a selfie with Governor Whitmer!

Michigan PTA Advocacy Activity

The Michigan Legislature is unusual in that it is full time and has a two-year session. While this is the second year of the current session, things got off to a very slow start this year, for two reasons. First, two Representatives were elected Mayor of their respective communities in the fall, which meant the House was at a 54-54 split until special elections were held in April and the new members were seated in early May. The second reason is that the redrawing of thirteen Michigan House and Senate districts in the Metro Detroit area was court ordered in January, keeping those districts in stasis until the new maps were drawn up in early spring.

Work has continued, and committees were meeting, but most legislative movement was happening in the Michigan Senate during this hiatus. The annual budget process is the current focus of the Legislature (and Executive) this week, so it is only just now that we are beginning to see real progress on our 2024 legislative priorities. Here are some actions we have taken:

Michigan PTA put cards in support of HB 5300-5303 for a February 14, 2024 hearing in the House Judiciary Committee. Michigan PTA supports this legislation aimed at facilitating the legal name change process, updating birth certificates, and improving access to accurate identification documents for transgender and non-binary individuals. Michigan PTA cites the *Michigan PTA Resolution on Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Schools*, *Michigan PTA Resolution Regarding LGBTQ Students*, and Michigan PTA's 2024 Legislative Priorities, which request legislation and funding for safe and supportive schools, addressing prevention and treatment for all students. We believe that this legislation will positively affect many other members of the wider community, as well, resulting in a more equitable process for everyone.

Michigan PTA put cards in support of HB 4089, HB 4092, HB 4095, HB 4096, HB 5549 for a March 19, 2024 hearing in the House Education Committee. Michigan PTA supports all five bills in this education safety legislation package. HB 4089 requires a school safety and mental health commission. HB 4092 requires notification of tips reported under the OK2Say program. HB 4096 requires that public schools and nonpublic schools adopt and implement a standardized response terminology plan. HB 4095 requires the department to establish a standardized response terminology plan. HB 5549 requires schools to create behavioral threat assessment and management teams. Michigan PTA included these items in our 2024 Legislative Priorities, specifically asking that Michigan legislators continue their commitment to Safe and Supportive Schools through legislation and funding, addressing prevention and treatment for all students.

Michigan PTA put a card in support of SB 741 for an April 16, 2024 hearing in the Senate Education Committee. Michigan PTA supports this legislation to require a school library and participation in the interlibrary loan system at every public school. Michigan PTA cites the

National PTA Position Statement on Libraries and Educational Material, Michigan PTA Resolution on Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Schools, and Michigan PTA's 2024 Legislative Priorities, which request legislation and funding to maximize education delivery for our children, teachers, and administrators across the state.

Michigan PTA put a card in support of HB 4718 for an April 18, 2024 hearing in the Senate Committee on Civil Rights, Judiciary, & Public Safety. Michigan PTA supports this legislation to prohibit the use of the sexual orientation or gender identity of a victim as a defense to a crime. Michigan PTA cites the *Michigan PTA Resolution on Safe, Supportive, and Inclusive Schools*, *Michigan PTA Resolution Regarding LGBTQ Students*, and Michigan PTA's 2024 Legislative Priorities, which request legislation and funding for safe and supportive schools, addressing prevention and treatment for all students. This specific bill is 2024 ASK #2, Item 6.

Michigan PTA put cards in support of HB 5450 and 5451 for an April 23, 2024 hearing in the House Education Committee. Michigan PTA supports this legislation requiring DHHS to develop and districts to provide information regarding the safe storage of firearms to parents and legal guardians. Michigan PTA cites the *2022 Michigan PTA Resolution on Safe Storage of Firearms*, *2023 National PTA Resolution on Safe Storage of Firearms*, and Michigan PTA's 2024 Legislative Priorities, which request legislation and funding for safe and supportive schools, addressing prevention and treatment for all students. These specific bills are listed under 2024 ASK #2, Item 5.

Other updates:

"Safe Homes, Safe Schools" Bills - HB 5450-5451, hearings held on 4-23-24 and 4-30-24 in House Education Committee, and updated to include nonpublic schools, clarify that DHHS is translating, and align dates.

Dyslexia Bills - SB 567-568 have passed Senate, waiting for first hearing in House Education Committee.

SB27 (Mental Health) provides parity of coverage for treatment for mental health and substance use disorder - is on its way to the Governor to be signed.

SB28 (Mental Health) expands definition of restraint - awaiting hearing in Senate Health Policy Committee.

SB29 (Mental Health) allows a certain number of excused mental health days for students - awaiting hearing in Senate Education Committee.

Seizure Safe Schools Bill - HB 5329 - awaiting first hearing in House Education Committee.

Given the afore-mentioned situation, Michigan PTA will be issuing action alerts during the next couple of months. Please make sure you are registered!

Michigan PTA 2024 Advocacy Platform

PTA has been advocating for children and families for over 126 years, on issues such as child labor, school meals and Kindergarten. While we **do not** endorse candidates or parties, we **do** take positions on issues, and we continue to advocate for all children and families.

In 2024, Michigan PTA is calling upon our Members of our State Legislature, school districts, and schools to:

ASK #1: Support Student Health & Wellness Legislation and Funding. Support programs to help students experiencing health issues and encourage school wellness. Fund more mental health professionals in schools and expand training and safety resources for educators.

ASK #2: Continue to Support School Safety Legislation and Funding. Michigan PTA is asking our Michigan legislators to continue their commitment to Safe and Supportive Schools through legislation and funding, addressing prevention and treatment for all students.

ASK #3: Support Increased and Sustained School Funding. Make needed investments in education, and find permanent replacements for temporary funding, to provide a safe environment and maximize education delivery for our children, teachers, and administrators across the state.

**Please find the full text of these legislative priorities at <https://michiganpta.org/advocacy>*

To stay up to date on the progress of these pieces of legislation:

Find and follow Michigan PTA Advocacy on Facebook (for safety, this is a private group and you must answer questions to be approved as a member). To receive action alerts, sign up for **Michigan PTA VoterVoice** at www.votervoice.net/MIPTA/home, and sign up for **National PTA VoterVoice** at www.pta.org/home/advocacy/take-action. We also send advocacy information emails to PTA leaders in Michigan many times throughout the year, so make sure that your PTA unit has their officers entered into GiveBacks. As always, please contact childadvocacyvp@michiganpta.org with any advocacy questions.

Resolution Update:

The **Resolution to Prohibit the Sale of Illegal Disposable Nicotine Vapor Products Marketed toward Minors** was approved by the membership at the 106th Michigan PTA Convention in April. It has been posted to the website (<https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/c035063d-73fc-4604-940f-a2ccbd4af5ca/Resolution%20to%20Prohibit%20the%20Sale%20of%20Ill-b547c14.pdf>) and sent via VoterVoice elected official broadcast email to the state Legislature and Administration. The Advocacy Committee will develop tools and guidance to send out with the Resolution to all our member units and councils over the next few months. Also, the Resolution Committee intends to update this Resolution for submission to National PTA in the fall (for consideration at the 2025 National PTA Convention).

Kinship Care:

Michigan will become the first state in the country to acknowledge kinship caregivers with the same level of financial assistance and licensing requirements as other foster care providers. It will be the first state to implement separate licensing standards for kin caregivers to make the process simpler and allow them to get aid.

While Michigan has supported kin families with state and county funds since 2019, the new rule means those families will receive federal support for the first time and the state can then redirect local funds toward prevention services.

As of May, the state health department said 7,268 foster families were serving children and youth in Michigan and 42% were kin families. The new standards for kinship approval will also increase access to subsidized guardianship, the state health department said. This will allow Michigan to officially approve these kinship families, ultimately improving permanency outcomes through an increase in subsidized guardianship placements.

Kinship caregivers can only access financial assistance through assessment and placement by a case manager of a child in foster care in need of out-of-home placement. Michigan is requiring all new relative providers who accept a placement as of March 4 to complete the approval requirements. Unlicensed relatives with a placement prior to March 4 are considered legacy caregivers and are encouraged but not required to pursue approval.

Currently, only 11% of kinship caregivers qualify for the new federal aid in Michigan. That's how many are licensed as foster parents, and have accepted placement of children Child Protective Services removed from their parents and placed after March 4, 2024.