

Michigan PTA 2024 Advocacy

Michigan PTA Takes Action Together to achieve the Education, Educational Success and Well-Being of Every Child.

The State Legislature, District and School Board teams, and educational professionals have the power to help ensure the educational success of all children and make every child's potential a reality in Michigan. Michigan PTA and our many members across the state advocate together, with one voice, to ensure that every child has access to a fair and equitable education in Michigan and across the United States.

That is why today, Michigan PTA is calling upon our Members of our State Legislature, school districts, and schools to:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

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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.

Every student in Michigan should have access to high-quality instruction regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, race, economic status, native language, or physical, emotional, and cognitive abilities. Students face challenges both within the classroom and coming from outside of it. There is still considerable work to be done to close the gaps in support for students with health issues, both physical and mental, as well as to equalize access for all.

Michigan PTA's first 2024 legislative priority aligns with the second goal in the Michigan Department of Education (MDE) strategic plan, which seeks to "Improve early literacy achievement", and the third, which seeks to "Improve the health, safety, and wellness of all learners."

Michigan PTA is asking our Michigan legislators to:

- 1. Support Governor's proposed budget item of \$300 million to continue historic investments for student mental health and school safety needs.**
- 2. Support Seizure Safe Schools legislation to ensure that schools are well-equipped with the tools necessary to provide a safe and enriching environment for students living with epilepsy and seizure disorders (HB 5329).**
- 3. Support legislation to remove barriers for legal name change, accurate ID documents and birth certificates (HB 5300-HB 5303).**
- 4. Support legislation aimed at banning illegal disposable nicotine vapor products that resemble school supplies (HB 5198).**
- 5. Support dyslexia legislation to ensure proper screening, instruction, and training for teachers to help ensure ALL students have access to literacy (SB 567-568/HB 5098).**
- 6. Support legislation to mandate mental health coverage, end 'chemical restraint,' and allow excused mental health absences for students (SB27-29).**
- 7. Support broader access to training and school-based programming regarding suicide prevention.**
- 8. Continue working with the MDE to develop standards for educators to recognize mental health needs and training on how to refer students for help, including services for anxiety and depression.**
- 9. Support legislation to work toward licensed mental health professionals in every high school.**
- 10. Increase screenings and expand specialized services for students with moderate and severe mental health needs.**

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2. Continue to Support School Safety Legislation and Funding. Last year, the Michigan Legislature passed significant legislation regarding gun violence prevention and firearm safety which was signed into law. Grant funding that addresses mental health and school facility safety was also provided. 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.

A founding principle of the PTA's mission is to promote the safety and well-being of all children and youth. We are encouraged to see legislation and funding that specifically addresses these critical areas. We also are grateful that the state of Michigan has supported the School Research Collaborative Infrastructure Study, especially as it relates to school safety. Through research, legislation, and funding, students can have access to safety measures and resources that promote safety through facility improvements, support staff such as School Resource Officers, and programs addressing the mental health needs of students. School safety is a critical priority for all parents, educators, students, and community members that cannot be taken for granted.

Michigan PTA is asking our Michigan legislators to:

- 1. Support legislation to raise the age of firearm purchase to 21 (HB 4203-4204).**
- 2. Support legislation to ban extended magazines on firearms.**
- 3. Support Governor's proposed budget item of \$10.8 million for Office of Community Violence Intervention Services to fund evidence-based solutions to tackle root causes of violence.**
- 4. Support \$10 million for gun violence prevention implementation, supporting initiatives for safe storage and expanding capacity to collect information and intelligence on gun crimes, to provide training for law enforcement and school communities, and expand the capacity of the OK2Say Student Safety Program.**
- 5. Support legislation requiring school districts to disseminate information regarding the safe storage of firearms (HB 5450-5451).**
- 6. Support the elimination of sexual orientation or gender identity of a victim as a defense to a crime (HB 4718).**
- 7. Continue grant funding such as 31aa that addresses both facility safety and mental health needs in schools and school districts.**
- 8. Support Governor's proposed budget item of \$25 million for a Consolidation and Infrastructure fund for districts and ISDs facing an infrastructure emergency that threatens their students' and staff's health and safety.**
- 9. Support the School Finance Research Collaborative Infrastructure Study findings, especially as they relate to student safety; help and provide funding as needed to make sure school districts can provide adequate safety measures for all students.**

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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.

From 1995 to 2015, Michigan had the lowest education revenue growth of all 50 states. Michigan PTA appreciates that in recent years funding for our schools has improved, most recently with a favorable increase for the 2023-2024 year. This includes one-time education related COVID Relief Legislation and increases to the State Foundation Allowance. However, children, families, educators, and public schools are still facing numerous critical and immediate needs, which must be addressed with additional Michigan funding for resources for Michigan children. As the COVID Relief Funding expires, schools across Michigan must have support to address the continued safety of children, the trauma from the pandemic and the myriad of instructional issues, including the effects of learning loss and the digital divide. We need to continue improving funding and investments in our children's future.

Michigan PTA is asking our Michigan legislators to:

- 1. It continues to be of primary importance to PROTECT THE SCHOOL AID FUND - changes to state tax policy that impact the School Aid Fund and local revenues must create no negative tax revenue changes for school districts.**
- 2. As many of the ESSER (Covid grant dollars) funds are coming to an end, supporting funding to continue services that have been provided for social and emotional support for students is critical. Allowing students to reach their full academic potential through an expansion of existing payments for literacy grants and literacy coaches, funding to schools for additional curriculum and professional development, supporting new math intervention programs, and supporting discretionary tutoring dollars to schools. Support funding to help students thrive by providing universally free breakfast and lunch, improving student physical and mental health, and improving school safety.**
- 3. Support funding to recruit, retain, and develop teachers, to recognize the crucial role high-quality teachers play in the success of their students.**
- 4. Support 10 million dollars to support the permanent hiring of an additional 2 FTE State School Nurse Consultants and 56 FTE ISD School Nurse Consultants.**
- 5. As the governor has addressed the delivery of free pre-K education for every 4-year-old in the state, it is critical to ensure funding to schools for the support of this important program: the expansion of early childhood programs to improve future academic and life outcomes.**
- 6. Support funding for support of students with disabilities.**
- 7. Support funding for the MI Climate Plan/Healthy Schools Grant Program for mitigation of health and safety issues in schools.**

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