

The PTA Council of Frederick County, Inc. **Legislative Position Statements 2011-2012**

“To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth”

The authority of the PTA Council of Frederick County’s legislative activity is the third object of the National PTA’s Purposes. The PTA Council of Frederick County recognizes that an organization dedicated to the welfare of children and youth must concern itself with the laws and issues that effect children.

The PTA Council of Frederick County’s Legislative Position Statements are adopted by the general membership, at a general membership meeting, and establish the authority, direction and priority for action on advocacy issues, and in accordance with National PTA and Maryland PTA’s Purposes and Basic Policies. The PTA Council of Frederick County, Inc. believes all levels of government play varying roles in ensuring that the health and welfare needs of all children and youth are met.

Summary of the Legislative Position Statements

- *The PTA Council of Frederick County’s Legislative Position Statements* is the basis for any action taken on public policy, legislation and regulations affecting the health, education and general welfare of children and youth by the PTA Council of Frederick County, Inc. or the local PTA units in Frederick County.
- **Local Frederick County PTAs and its members may support or abstain from taking action, but they may not take action in opposition or conflict with National PTA, Maryland PTA, or the PTA Council of Frederick County, Inc. (i.e., Policies, Directives, Resolutions, etc.).**

The 2011-2012 PTA Council of Frederick County, Inc. Legislative Position Statements focus on the following:

In addition to supporting the National and Maryland PTA positions, PTA Council of Frederick County, Inc. endorses the following positions based upon three general areas of support, (I) Public Education; (II) Family Involvement; and (III) Safe and Nurturing Environment.

I. Support for Public Education

Strengthen public education for our nation’s children through advocacy, promotion and engaging community members in support of public education. Therefore, the PTA Council of Frederick County, Inc. supports the following:

A. Educational Funding: We support full fiscal implementation of the Elementary Secondary Education Act (ESEA)/No Child Left Behind (NCLB), Common Core Standards and the Public Schools Facilities Act (2004) as the means to provide adequate funding for both the capital and operating educational budgets. We support the concept of maintenance of effort (MOE) as a commitment that the local government makes to education funding. This concept embodies the government’s commitment to our students ensuring local school systems receive the funding required to deliver the basic educational programs.

1. Adequate Funding:

- a. We support the current formulas for educational funding as the absolute minimum funding level necessary to provide a “free and adequate public education”, as required by federal and state law, for every student in Frederick County.
- b. We believe that educational funding formulas for specialized programs such as special education, ELL and gifted and talented must be maintained and will need to be increased in order for FCPS students to be able to meet the goals and standards established by ESEA-NCLB and Common Core Standards.
- c. We support, at a minimum, maintaining the current student to teacher ratios for elementary and secondary levels.
- d. We support the recruitment and retention of highly qualified teachers for every classroom.
- e. We believe that the authority to determine the priorities of the operating and capital budgets for FCPS rests with the Board of Education of Frederick County.
- f. We believe that in order to increase performance for students who have not yet met federal and state requirements, funding levels will need to be increased.
- g. We believe that the public education budgets should be easily understood by parents and the community, so they are able to take an active role in the development of these budgets.

2. State Educational Funding:

- a. We support an equitable distribution of state public education funding between all counties in Maryland.

- b. We support productive, ongoing collaboration between all elected appropriate representatives to ensure that Frederick County receives its fair share of state educational funding.
- c. We support a revenue structure that will reliably fund Maryland's responsibility for education, children and youth without shifting undue burdens to local governments.

3. Local Educational Funding:

- a. We support maintaining full funding of the operating budget as established by the Frederick County Board of Education as a minimum funding level required.
- b. We support a dedicated local source of revenue for the FCPS capital budget for new capacity, as well as renovations/modernizations, and systemic maintenance/improvements.

4. Capital Improvement Programs:

- a. We support the Board of Education placing an equal importance on the renovation of older schools as is placed on capacity needs.
- b. We support the ability of Frederick County Public Schools to reallocate state or local capital money, which remains unspent at the conclusion of a project, to another approved capital project.
- c. If fund balances are required to be returned at the end of a project so that they will no longer be available to address FCPS' critical systemic maintenance needs, we support specific dedicated local funding for systemic projects within the capital budget.
- d. We support FCPS and the BOE as the authority to determine the facility needs of the system in order to provide every child a seat within a safe and appropriate school building.

5. Equity in Education:

- a. We support on-going dedicated funding to address disproportionate achievement levels in the educational system.
- b. We support measures which ensure individuals with disabilities accessibility to public places, especially public schools, and require that those facilities totally accommodate individuals with disabilities.
- c. We support an educational system that is equitable in resources and programs and is free from bias.
- d. We support the right to a free, quality public education, adequate food and shelter, and basic health care services for all children and youth.

6. Adequate School Capacity: We define "adequate school capacity" for each school as less than 100% of the state-rated capacity.

- a. We support each municipality in Frederick County having an Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) with an appropriate educational component.
- b. We support the premise that the educational component of all APFOs should reflect capacity measurements that include existing and background enrollment numbers, as well as proposed and approved development projections, AND a reasonable timeframe under which capacity can be added without unfair consequences on other CIP priorities as determined by the BOE.
- c. We support the BOE as the governing body responsible for initiating policies that outline developer requirements to mitigate educational APFO restrictions.
- d. We support the BOE policy, Developer-Funded School Construction Priorities, which sets requirements for developers proposing to fund school construction projects.

II. Family Involvement

Studies continue to show that regardless of the economic, ethnic, or cultural background, family involvement in a child's education is a major factor in determining success in school. Therefore, the PTA Council of Frederick County, Inc. supports the following:

- A. **Family /Community Partnership:** We support the BOE policy regarding Family/Community Partnership, and support the development of regulations to implement this policy as outlined in the Master Plan and according to the National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships.
- B. **Measurable Standards:** We support the establishment of measurable standards for participation of FCPS schools in family involvement initiatives. We support every FCPS family being actively involved with their child's education.

- C. **Family School Partnership Committee:** We support the inclusion of a Board of Education member on the Family School Partnership Committee. We support key members of the community and community agencies who promote family involvement in the schools as members of the Family Involvement Steering Committee.
- D. **Parent and Family Involvement Coordinator:** We support the inclusion of a full-time, dedicated, FCPS Parent and Family Involvement Coordinator in the FCPS budget.
- E. **Participation in Policy Making:** We support encouragement by the Board of Education of citizen involvement and active participation in the policy making process as it (the BOE) conducts business.
- F. **Civility in all discussions/debates/meetings/public comments:** We support maintaining civility at all times during all discussions, debates, public meetings and during public comments. We support respectful discourse/discussion in all public forums to serve as a role model to our children and youth.

III. Safe and Nurturing Environment

National PTA, and its member organizations, support initiatives that foster a safe and supportive school climate, including violence prevention measures, delinquency prevention initiatives, class-size reduction efforts, counseling programs, and health and welfare reforms that meet the needs of underserved children and families. Therefore, the PTA Council of Frederick County, Inc. supports the following:

- A. **Student Transportation To/From School:** We support initiatives that foster a safe and timely means to and from school, regardless of the student's mode of transportation.
- B. **Child Protection:** We support appropriate child protection and delinquency prevention initiatives, as well as gang resistance and prevention education efforts, within the school system and community.
- C. **Disciplinary Accountability:** We support strong disciplinary accountability for perpetrators of violent acts and bullying, as well as adequate services to address the needs of all involved students.
- D. **Health and Nutrition:** We support policies that will address the epidemic of obesity and related chronic diseases in children and youth to include healthier food choices and ensure adequate daily physical activity for all children.
- E. **Environmental Hazards:**
 - 1. We support initiatives that strengthen the protection of children and youth on school grounds and in the community from environmental hazards in accordance with National PTA and Maryland PTA directives.
 - 2. We support requirements that ensure parents and communities be notified of environmental conditions and remedial actions in and around school buildings.
 - 3. We support appropriate and periodic testing of air, water, fungi, mold and other microbial contaminants in public school buildings, and the results of such tests be released to the public.
 - 4. We support the same tests and standards being applied to portable classrooms.
- F. **Emergency Preparedness:** We support the timely communication of, and family involvement in, FCPS emergency preparedness plans and notification efforts.
- G. **School Security:** We support the development, funding and implementation of necessary security measures for the safety of children and youth in school buildings, including relocatable classrooms and the main office.