



To: Local Unit Presidents, Council Presidents, and Board of Managers
From: Kathy Burcher, Chairman, Legislation Committee
Subject: Proposed Legislation Program and Ballots for 2010
Date: May 20, 2009

Enclosed is the Proposed Legislation Program for 2010 and Local Unit Ballots. These are the initial proposals members reviewed at their spring District annual meetings. They have been heard at a public hearing and were then amended and approved by the Virginia PTA Board of Managers.

This is the local units' opportunity to present these proposed LAIs and PS for a vote of their membership and to report those results to their district directors. Local Units should try to send their results to their District Directors by October 24, 2009. District directors will bring their results to the Board of Managers meeting prior to Convention where the results will be presented. These will be combined with the resolutions approved at convention to make up our legislative program for the coming year which we will present to our legislators.

The Virginia PTA Legislation Committee and our leaders speak on behalf of our membership as they have directed us through this process. This involvement and opportunities to hear from our members is what makes us a meaningful voice for children and youth.

LEGISLATION ACTION ITEMS (LAI): are requests for the introduction, passage, or defeat of specific legislation by the General Assembly and/or regulations by the Virginia Board of Education or other appropriate agencies.

POLICY STATEMENTS (PS): are statements of Virginia PTA on general issues and may be used as the basis for addressing issues before the General Assembly, Virginia Board of Education or other appropriate agencies.

LEGISLATION ACTION ITEM #1

The Virginia PTA/PTSA seeks and supports programs that prevent crimes against children. The Virginia PTA/PTSA supports legislation that increases funding for government agencies in identifying and prosecuting those who have committed crimes against children.

Rationale:

Crimes committed against children in school and in the community can have a dramatic negative impact on a child's life, including school performance. There are a number of crimes committed against children by adults and peers including sexual exploitation, abduction, harassment, physical abuse, and bullying. The sexual victimization of children is overwhelming in magnitude yet largely unrecognized and underreported. Research indicates that 1 in 5 girls and 1 in 10 boys will be sexually victimized before adulthood (National Center for Missing and Exploited Children). Between 1980 and 2006, an estimated 52,300 juveniles were murdered in the United

Rationale:

The effort to professionalize teaching is predicated on a professional work environment. Teachers who work in collaborative school environments enjoy their work more, work harder, improve their practice of teaching, and see themselves as being more effective. Providing teachers time to plan instructionally together and observe one another so that they can improve is a key to an environment where teachers cooperate in school improvement and professional development tasks.

The report of the Task Force on Improving the Profession of Teaching notes that the “conditions typical of most schools are not conducive to the professional practice of teaching. Teachers work in isolation. Opportunities for collaboration in addressing the needs of students are minimal. School schedules and teaching assignments constrain professional collaboration in planning and problem solving.”*

Planning time for teachers clearly qualifies as an essential condition for the professional practice of teaching. In the accreditation standards, the Commonwealth of Virginia has required planning time for full-time secondary teachers and for middle school teachers under certain conditions. Elementary planning time has recently become required by the commonwealth. All teachers—elementary, middle and high school— should be guaranteed a daily period within the student day or an extended period of time one or more days a week, exclusive of travel time and free of supervisory or instructional duties, for the purpose of instructional planning.

* “The Carnegie Foundation Task Force on Teaching: A Nation Prepared, Teachers for the 21st Century”, 1986

PTA MEMBER BALLOT

2010 Virginia PTA Proposed Legislative Program (PLP)

The PLP, the Proposed Legislative Program, contains issues and proposed positions on which PTA members are asked to vote upon. The members will decide if the Virginia PTA should advocate for these issues.

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LAI #1 The Virginia PTA/PTSA seeks and supports programs that prevent crimes against children. The Virginia PTA/PTSA supports legislation that increases funding for government agencies in identifying and prosecuting those who have committed crimes against children.

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Abstain

PS #1 The Virginia PTA/PTSA supports local school boards in evaluating their grading scale policies for middle and secondary schools, to reflect current academic trends, local norms, and student achievement expectations in their school divisions.

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Abstain

PS #2 The Virginia PTA/PTSA supports the requirement that all public school teachers are provided fully-funded, unencumbered planning time.

_____ Yes _____ No _____ Abstain