



everychild.one voice.

Iowa PTA

Legislative Program

Adopted April 21, 2007

PTA Mission

PTA Vision

Making every child's potential a reality.

PTA Mission. PTA is...

A powerful voice for all children,
A relevant resource for families and communities, and
A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

PTA Values

Collaboration: We work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to accomplish our agreed-upon goals.

Commitment: We are dedicated to promoting children's health, well-being, and educational success through strong parent, family, and community involvement.

Accountability: We acknowledge our obligations. We deliver on our promises.

Respect: We value our colleagues and ourselves. We expect the same high quality of effort and thought from ourselves as we do from others.

Inclusivity: We invite the stranger and welcome the newcomer. We value and seek input from as wide a spectrum of viewpoints and experiences as possible.

Integrity: We act consistently with our beliefs. When we err, we acknowledge the mistake and seek to make amends.

The Purposes of the PTA

To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship;

To raise the standards of home life;

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

To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth; and

To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

Legislative Program Includes

Preamble that adopts the National PTA Legislative Program

Iowa PTA Planks – Items requiring legislative action

Resolutions – Call for action without legislative action

Position Statements – Statements of concern

At each annual convention, Iowa PTA members as delegates from their units to the convention vote on planks to be included in the Iowa PTA Platform. If a PTA unit desires to have a plank considered to be added to the platform, or a revision of a present plank, the unit should submit the proposal to the Iowa PTA Office, attention Legislative Committee, by November 1, prior to the spring convention. Contact the Iowa PTA Office for details on how the proposals need to be submitted.

Continuing Resolutions and Position Statements are resolutions and positions statements that were adopted by delegates at prior conventions. In order to amend them, a motion must be made to "amend (or rescind) a previously adopted resolution (or position statement)".

TABLE OF CONTENTS

EDUCATION

1.	Parent Involvement in Education.....	4
2.	Parenting Education.....	4
3.	Students' Parenting Education	4
4.	School Finance Formula.....	4
5.	State Support-Federal Program and Federal Funding Changes	4
6.	Special Needs	4
7.	Early Childhood Education.....	4
8.	Public School Preschool	4
9.	Use of Licensed Personnel	4
10.	Adherence to Standards	4
11.	Bond Issue	5
12.	School Infrastructure	5
13.	School Energy Conservation	5
14.	State Department of Education.....	5
15.	State Director of Education	5
16.	Corporate Sponsorship	5

PRIVATE SCHOOL FUNDING

17.	Public Education Funds	5
18.	Vouchers.....	5
19.	Non-Public Schools Transportation.....	5

HEALTH AND WELFARE

20.	Immunizations	5
	A. MMR	
	B. Immunization By Age Two (2)	
21.	Nutrition	6
	A. School Lunch Program	
	B. School Breakfast Program	
	C. WIC Funding	
	D. Snacks and Beverages	
22.	Medical, Social Services.....	6
23.	Funding for Family Unity	6
24.	Out-of-Home Placement.....	6
25.	Lead Poisoning	6
26.	Environment	6

JUVENILE PROTECTION AND SAFETY

27.	Age of Sexual Consent	6
28.	Student Working Hours	6
29.	Weapon Sales	6
30.	Helmet Use	6
31.	Moped Age and Education	7
32.	Traffic Fines in School Zones	7
33.	Before- and After-School Programs	7

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS

34.	Suppliers	7
35.	Possessors	7
36.	Driving Under the Influence.....	7
37.	Carry-out, Refrigerated.....	7
38.	Age of Selling/Serving	7
39.	Tobacco Products	7
40.	Drugs and Pornography	7

NEW RESOLUTIONS AND POSITION STATEMENTS 8

CONTINUING RESOLUTIONS

Youth Violence Prevention 8
Funding for Reading Teachers in Elementary Schools 9
Funding for the Iowa Communications Network 10
Certified Athletic Trainers 10
Playground Injury Prevention 10
Sports and Sportsmanship 11
Exemption From Health Care 11
Gangs 12
Fire Safety 13

CONTINUING POSITION STATEMENTS

Identity Development 14
Seat Belts/Child Safety Seats/Air Bags 14
Child Abuse 14

PREAMBLE: The Iowa PTA supports the National PTA Legislative Program. Further, the Iowa PTA has proposed the following planks for Legislative Action:

The Iowa PTA:

EDUCATION

1. PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN EDUCATION

. . . supports legislation that would require local school boards, the State Board of Education and the State Department of Education to adopt policies which would enhance and encourage parental involvement in their children's education. (new 93)

2. PARENTING EDUCATION

. . . supports legislation that would require that parenting education be made available to all first time expectant parents, and to those who parent children from birth to kindergarten. (new 91)

3. STUDENTS' PARENTING EDUCATION

. . . supports legislation that would require the inclusion of parenting education as part of the required curriculum at every Iowa school district. (new 94)

4. SCHOOL FINANCE FORMULA

. . . supports fully funding public schools and an equitable school finance formula which will provide funding for public education commensurate with rising costs and the challenges facing public education in providing quality instructional programs for all its students. (new 92, revised 01)

5. STATE SUPPORT - FEDERAL PROGRAM AND FEDERAL FUNDING CHANGES

. . . supports equitable distribution of Federal funds including block grants if implemented by Congress, to adequately meet the educational and other needs of children. Further, supports state funding to maintain present educational opportunities and services to children and youth that may be under funded because of federal budget cuts or reallocation of resources. (revised 97)

6. SPECIAL NEEDS

Funding and release time should be provided for teachers, support staff and administrators for training in how to serve special needs children; and ensure that other students' educational needs are not compromised. It is also necessary that support staff be maintained to meet the identified needs of children served. In order to meet these needs, Iowa PTA:
(revised 00)

A. . . . supports continued funding to ensure a free, appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment by local schools for all children with special needs. (revised 95)

B. . . . supports a requirement that school districts include individualized education programs, which must be signed by parents, for each student eligible in the Gifted and Talented Program. (new 92, revised 99)

7. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

. . . supports early childhood opportunities (birth through 3rd grade) for all children. (new 97)

8. PUBLIC SCHOOL PRESCHOOL

. . . supports legislation that would provide for and fund a developmentally appropriate public school preschool program which would be available for all children. (new 92)

9. USE OF LICENSED PERSONNEL

. . . supports legislation that requires that each school provide the services of traditionally licensed counselors, media specialists, nurses, teachers, and their respective substitutes in order to optimally serve the needs of the students. (new 00, revised 01)

10. ADHERENCE TO STANDARDS

. . . supports legislation that would require non-public schools receiving public funds to meet the same standards and statutory provisions as do public schools. (revised 92)

11. BOND ISSUE

. . . supports legislation that would allow passage of a school bond issue by a simple majority vote. (reviewed 97)

12. SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE

. . . supports legislation that would provide adequate resources to update and maintain Iowa's public schools. (new 1997)

13. SCHOOL ENERGY CONSERVATION

. . . supports allowing flexibility for all public school districts in Iowa to fund energy conservation projects by borrowing against future energy savings, thereby enabling the acquisition of energy efficient equipment with little or no taxpayer-funded initial capital investment. (revised 04)

14. STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

. . . supports a state-level Department of Education to coordinate and carry out state responsibilities in education at all levels, with provision for cooperation with related agencies. (new 96)

15. STATE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION

. . . supports legislation that would restore to the State Board of Education the task of appointing the State Director of Education. (revised 92)

16. CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

. . . opposes the commercial exploitation of students which would require their exposure to commercial messages as part of the instructional activity. (revised 93)

PRIVATE SCHOOL FUNDING

17. PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDS

. . . opposes the use of public tax dollars, directly or indirectly, to support non-public schools. (new 92, revised 98, 00)

18. VOUCHERS

. . . opposes the use of the voucher/tuition tax credit system and any other means of providing public funds, directly or indirectly, to support non-public or charter schools at elementary and secondary levels. (revised 94)

19. NON-PUBLIC SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION

- A. . . . supports legislation that would require non-public schools to provide their own transportation to and from their schools.
- B. . . . supports legislation that would prohibit parents transporting their children to non-public schools from receiving reimbursement or tax credit for doing so. (reviewed 97, revised 00)

HEALTH AND WELFARE

20. IMMUNIZATIONS

A. MEASLES (RUBEOLA, MUMPS AND RUBELLA) (MMR) VACCINATION

. . . supports legislation that requires each child to have measles, mumps and rubella vaccinations (MMR) at age fifteen (15) months and at entry into kindergarten. Iowa PTA further supports legislation that would ensure that all youth who did not receive the second MMR vaccination should do so before entrance to seventh grade or twelfth grade. (revised 92)

B. IMMUNIZATION BY AGE TWO (2)

. . . supports legislation that would require and provide for immunization against vaccine preventable diseases by age 2 for all children. (revised 97)

21. NUTRITION

A. SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

... supports maintenance of a nutritional school lunch program and the continuation of both federal and state funding to adequately support the program. (revised 99)

B. SCHOOL BREAKFAST PROGRAM

... supports maintenance of a nutritional school breakfast program and the continuation of both federal and state funding to adequately support the program. (revised 99)

C. WIC FUNDING

... supports the continuation of state and federal services for the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Program. (revised 95)

D. SNACKS AND BEVERAGES

... supports the limitation of non-nutritional snacks and beverages available to students through the school day. (new 99)

22. MEDICAL, SOCIAL SERVICES

... supports adequate funding for medical and social services for all children and families to ensure that every child will start school ready to learn. (revised 91)

23. FUNDING FOR FAMILY UNITY

... supports full funding of effective services and programs designed to keep the family unit intact, if appropriate, for the benefit of the children. (revised 92)

24. OUT-OF-HOME PLACEMENT

... supports appropriate programs and adequate funding for out-of-home placements. These should include detention centers, shelter care, emergency care and foster care, and hospitals. Such facilities should be as close as possible to a child's home. (revised 95)

25. LEAD POISONING

... supports legislation that would establish and fund programs to test children for the presence of lead in their blood, guide them to treatment if necessary and perform follow-up inspections of their homes and/or schools to identify and eliminate the source of the lead. (new 92)

26. ENVIRONMENT

... supports legislation that would protect the ecological and environmental qualities necessary to the development of healthy and productive children and youth. (revised 92)

JUVENILE PROTECTION AND SAFETY

27. AGE OF SEXUAL CONSENT

... supports raising the Iowa age of sexual consent from the current age of 14. (revised 95)

28. STUDENT WORKING HOURS

... supports legislation that would limit the hours during which a student works. (Student would be defined as full-time and between the ages of fourteen (14) and seventeen (17)). A waiver may be granted due to hardship or with written parental request. (new 92)

29. WEAPON SALES

... supports legislation that would prohibit the sale or provision of dangerous or offensive weapons, as defined by Iowa statute, to juveniles. (revised 95)

30. HELMET USE

... supports legislation that would mandate the wearing of protective headgear for motorcycle, moped, scooter and bicycle riders under the age of 18 while on public streets or public property. (revised 93, 01)

31. MOPED AGE AND EDUCATION

. . . supports legislation that would classify a motorized bicycle (moped) as a motorcycle for purposes of driver age and education requirements. (revised 92)

32. TRAFFIC FINES IN SCHOOL ZONES

. . . supports legislation that would require that fines for traffic violations occurring within school zones be doubled. (new 00)

33. BEFORE- AND AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

. . . supports legislation that would expand the availability of high-quality, affordable school-based before- and after-school programs. (new 04)

ALCOHOL, TOBACCO AND OTHER DRUGS

34. SUPPLIERS

. . . supports significant, mandatory and equal penalties for selling, giving, or otherwise supplying alcoholic liquor, wine or beer to any individual under the age of twenty-one (21) and supports vigorous enforcement. (revised 92)

35. POSSESSORS

. . . supports significant, mandatory and equal penalties to any individual under the age of twenty-one (21) who is in possession of alcoholic liquor, wine or beer and supports vigorous enforcement. (revised 92)

36. DRIVING UNDER THE INFLUENCE

. . . supports legislation that would establish uniform, vigorous statewide enforcement and strict sentencing for violations of statutes regarding driving under the influence of alcohol and other physical and mind altering drugs. (revised 92)

37. CARRY-OUT, REFRIGERATED

. . . supports legislation that would prohibit the sale of carryout, refrigerated alcoholic beverages. (revised 92)

38. AGE OF SELLING/SERVING

. . . supports legislation that would make it illegal for any individual under twenty-one (21) years of age to sell and/or serve alcoholic beverages. (revised 92)

39. TOBACCO PRODUCTS

. . . supports laws and their rigorous enforcement which prohibit the sale, availability and advertisement of tobacco products to those under legal age. (revised 98)

40. DRUGS AND PORNOGRAPHY

. . . supports laws and their rigorous enforcement which prohibit the sale and availability of drugs, drug paraphernalia, and pornography (including sale or rental of pornographic video tapes, computer bulletin boards, Internet sites and 900 telephone numbers) by and to those under legal age. (revised 98)

New Resolutions and Position Statements

(none)

Continuing Resolutions and Position Statements

The following Resolutions and Position Statements have been submitted by local units and adopted by delegates at previous Iowa PTA Conventions. These provide a basis for the Iowa PTA to take positions on issues as they emerge through the year. In order to amend them, a motion must be made to "amend (or rescind) a previously adopted resolution (or position statement)".

RESOLUTION: YOUTH VIOLENCE PREVENTION

- WHEREAS, The PTA in its purposes and programs promotes safety for children, youth and families; and
- WHEREAS, Fifty-seven percent of public elementary and secondary school principals reported that one or more incidents of crime/violence occurred in their schools during the 1996-1997 school year and were reported to law enforcement officials. (Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-1997, National Center for Education Statistics, 1998); and
- WHEREAS, Ten percent of all public schools experienced one or more serious violent crimes (defined as murder, rape, or other type of sexual battery, suicide, physical attack or fight with a weapon, or robbery) during the 1996-1997 school year and were reported to law enforcement. (Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-1997, National Center for Education Statistics, 1998); and
- WHEREAS, Forty-five percent of elementary schools reported one or more violent incidents compared with seventy-four percent of middle and seventy-seven percent of high schools during 1996-1997. (Violence and Discipline Problems in U.S. Public Schools: 1996-1997, National Center for Education Statistics, 1998); and
- WHEREAS, Forty-six percent of secondary school teachers said that disruptions often interfere with teaching and learning. ("National Education Goals: Building a Nation of Learners," The National Education Goals Panel, 1997); and
- WHEREAS, The most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey found that ten percent of high school students had carried a weapon (e.g., gun, knife, or club) on school property in the month preceding the survey. (Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1997 Update on Violence, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1997); and
- WHEREAS, Fear of school-related violence kept five percent of high school students home at least once in the month prior to the most recent Youth Risk Behavior Survey. (Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 1997 Update on Violence, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 1997); and
- WHEREAS, The seventh goal of the National Education Goals Panel, a bipartisan, intergovernmental body of state and federal officials, states that "By the year 2000, every school in the United States will be free of drugs, violence, and the unauthorized presence of firearms and alcohol and will offer a disciplined environment conducive to learning."; and
- WHEREAS, Making schools safer is the goal of many state policy makers as the next century approaches and state legislatures and governors have taken action to achieve this goal by making decisions that are designed to make schools safer; and
- WHEREAS, Media coverage of the tragic shootings which occurred during the 1997-1999 school years has motivated many communities to act; and
- WHEREAS, Parental involvement is crucial and a critical component of school violence prevention efforts; therefore be it

- RESOLVED, Iowa PTA, its units and councils collaborate with community members, school staff, students and parents to create and implement a multi-strategy school violence prevention and response plan, utilizing "Early Warning Timely Response" and other research based resources, including consideration of but not limited to; presence of police or other law enforcement representatives in schools, curriculum that enhances safety, violence prevention or reduction programs, policies to prevent firearms in schools, zero tolerance policies, school uniforms, security measures, technology, school climate and physical design, law-related education, conflict management and peer mediation, mentoring, S.A.V.E. (Students Against Violence Everywhere), Teen/Student court, and be it further
- RESOLVED, Iowa PTA, its units and councils work together with community members, school staff and parents to recognize early warning signs of violent behavior toward self and others, and be it further
- RESOLVED, Parents and other community members can and should become involved in the safe school planning that is carried out at the district and building levels so that their views are taken into account. Such involvement also fosters understanding of the plans that are or will be implemented. (Center for the Prevention of School Violence), and be it further
- RESOLVED, Iowa PTA members support data collection about youth behavior and required incident reporting to promote youth safety, and be it further
- RESOLVED, Iowa PTA, its units and councils utilize existing PTA programs for violence prevention and provide educational opportunities, and participate in coalitions with similar goals (law enforcement, SAFE Coalitions) in their communities to discuss safety issues openly, including forums and town meetings and be it further
- RESOLVED, Iowa PTA, its units and councils collaborate with community members to support and provide safe and drug free opportunities for its youth (Project Prom, Safe Night), and be it further
- RESOLVED, Iowa PTA, its units and councils support early and effective interventions and coordinated service systems for children who are at risk for behavior problems and violent behavior, and be it further
- RESOLVED, Iowa PTA, its units and councils work together with school boards to develop policies that address both prevention and intervention for trouble children and youth, and be it further
- RESOLVED, That the Iowa PTA strongly advocate that the Iowa General Assembly provide adequate school funding for more qualified school counselors and violence prevention programs, pass laws for the safe storage of firearms, require gun show and pawn shop dealers to follow the same regulations as licensed dealers, and pass laws banning assault weapons.

(Adopted 1999 Convention)

RESOLUTION: FUNDING FOR READING TEACHERS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

- Whereas, Without good reading skills a person is severely limited in what he or she is able to accomplish in life; and
- Whereas, Children with reading problems can come from any neighborhood or background; and
- Whereas, Each child with a reading difficulty has a unique problem that must be identified and solved; and
- Whereas, Reading teachers are specifically trained and experienced in identifying and solving reading problems; therefore be it
- Resolved, That the Iowa PTA support state funding which will provide for a reading teacher in every public elementary school where such a position is not funded by federal programs such as Title I.

(Adopted 1998 Convention)

**RESOLUTION:
FUNDING FOR THE IOWA COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK**

- Whereas, The significance of technology in the world today is undeniable; and
- Whereas, It is imperative that all students have as much exposure as possible to technological advancements; and
- Whereas, The Iowa Communications Network (ICN) offers the emerging technologies of video conferencing, data transmission, and Internet access to each of Iowa's school districts as well as to libraries and community colleges; and
- Whereas, The ICN provides Iowa's students the opportunity to access classes and information from other districts; and
- Whereas, The ICN is unique and innovative and has the potential for attracting high-technology industries to the state; and
- Whereas, Maintaining state funding for the ICN ensures that everyone will have equal and inexpensive access to technology; therefore be it
- Resolved, That the Iowa PTA urge the Iowa Legislature to continue to support state funding for the ICN.
(Adopted 1996 Convention)

RESOLUTION: CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINERS

- Whereas, The Iowa PTA has long been concerned with the health, welfare and safety of all children and youth; and
- Whereas, Statistics show that the majority of interscholastic sports injuries occur in practice rather than competitive events (games); and
- Whereas, Research indicates school districts utilizing certified athletic trainers have fewer sports injuries and better levels of athletic health care; therefore be it
- Resolved, That the Iowa PTA through its constituent bodies encourage school districts to utilize certified athletic trainers who provide services and support for all practices and competitive events.
(Adopted 1996 Convention)

RESOLUTION: PLAYGROUND INJURY PREVENTION

- Whereas, Iowa PTA's are reporting an increase in playground injuries; and
- Whereas, National statistics indicate that approximately 237,000 children under the age of fifteen require hospital emergency room treatment annually for injuries related to playground equipment; and
- Whereas, Seventeen children die annually as a result of playground related injuries; and
- Whereas, The Consumer Federation of America and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission have established guidelines for playground safety and injury prevention; therefore be it
- Resolved, That the Iowa PTA urge its constituent bodies to become more knowledgeable in recognizing the hazards of playgrounds in their communities; and be it further
- Resolved, That the Iowa PTA through its constituent bodies encourage the Iowa Department of Education and all local school districts and municipalities to enact guidelines for school playground safety.
(Adopted 1996 Convention)

RESOLUTION: SPORTS AND SPORTSMANSHIP

- Whereas, The purpose of athletic programs whether high school or sandlot is to teach children the skills of the game, the fun of the sport, and provide a positive outlook toward life; and
- Whereas, Sports programs should provide a positive learning experience in areas of sportsmanship, teamwork, competition, and how to win and lose gracefully; and
- Whereas, Athletics play an important part in helping the individual develop a healthy self-concept as well as a healthy body; and
- Whereas, Coaches and parents should serve as positive role models for children by exhibiting sportsmanlike behavior at games, practices, and at home; and
- Whereas, The National PTA promotes sports and children stating that parents positively reinforce their children's activities and teach them good sportsmanship, by showing them that fun, recreation, and cooperation are more important than winning, and by helping children to lose gracefully, and by sharing their disappointments as well as their triumphs; and
- Whereas, Leadership should be of the highest quality so as to exemplify to the participants that success is not measured by the won/loss record, but rather in the intangible personality factors that result from participation; and
- Whereas, The National PTA, the National Youth Sports Coaches Association, the Drug Enforcement Administration, and the U.S. Office for Substance Abuse Prevention have joined together in a national campaign, "Say Yes to Better Sports for Kids"; therefore be it
- Resolved, That the Iowa PTA provide information to local units and councils about programs available to help parents improve local youth sports programs; and be it further
- Resolved, That the Iowa PTA and its local units and councils encourage hiring and retaining coaches who exemplify the principles of fair play, honesty, good sportsmanship in their own actions and promote these qualities before others; and be it further
- Resolved, That the local units and councils be encouraged to educate and inform parents to be positively involved in all levels of athletic competition.

(Adopted 1996 Convention)

RESOLUTION: EXEMPTION FROM HEALTH CARE

- Whereas, Iowa PTA has long been concerned with the health, welfare and safety of all children and youth; and
- Whereas, Religiously-based medical neglect has not only jeopardized the health, welfare and safety of our children and youth but has caused unnecessary suffering and/or loss of lives; and
- Whereas, Children are suffering and or dying because of their parents' religious beliefs which do not allow their children to receive treatment for diphtheria, appendicitis, diabetes, measles, (rubella and roseola), gangrene, dehydration, blood poisoning, cancer, diarrhea, respiratory infections, kidney infections, Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever, epilepsy, bowel obstruction, etc., and
- Whereas, The American Medical Association stated in 1987 that children with religious exemptions from immunizations "lower the general immunization level of the community" and "may become foci for a communicable disease"; and
- Whereas, Measles is such a highly contagious disease that even a few unvaccinated carriers can spread the disease rapidly and to epidemic proportions; and
- Whereas, Children born with congenital rubella may have central nervous system damage, mental and motor retardation, be blind or deaf, have underdeveloped pulmonary arteries and eyes (or no eyes at all); and

- Whereas, The HIB vaccine prevents several diseases caused by Hemophilus influenza bacteria, the most common being H-flu meningitis, which is fatal without medical treatment; and
- Whereas, All children are believed to carry Hemophilus influenza bacteria in their bodies, meaning those children who do receive the HIB vaccine will be protected while those who do not are at risk even if they are surrounded by vaccinated children; and
- Whereas, Infants (of religious groups or the mainstream population) who are too young to be immunized are at great risk of contracting diseases from unvaccinated carriers of these diseases; and
- Whereas, Schools today have an increasing number of immune-suppressed children, such as those stricken with AIDS or cancer, who need to be protected from all contact with unvaccinated carriers; and
- Whereas, According to the American Academy of Pediatrics about one-fourth of all preschoolers and one-third of all poor children are not fully immunized and would be at greater risk of contracting diseases when exposed to unvaccinated carriers; and
- Whereas, Parents in the State of Iowa who, for religious reasons, refuse medical care for their children cannot be charged with endangerment unless they are ignoring a court order; and
- Whereas, Iowa is one of only two states with religious exemption laws which can shield parents from manslaughter charges; and
- Whereas, No court has ever ruled that our First Amendment right to religious freedom includes the right to deprive children of health care and, in fact, have ruled religious exemptions unconstitutional for establishing religious privilege; and
- Whereas, Courts have ruled religious exemptions unconstitutional as they deny children equal protection as guaranteed in the Fourteenth Amendment; therefore be it
- Resolved, That Iowa PTA support legislation which removes religious exemptions from the Iowa Code when the law deprives children and youth of health care; and be it further
- Resolved, That Iowa PTA support legislation which removes religious exemptions from immunization; and be it further
- Resolved, That Iowa PTA support legislation which removes religious exemptions from medical care for handicapped or indigent children and youth; and be it further
- Resolved, That Iowa PTA support legislation which removes religious exemption from the definitions of child abuse and endangerment; and be it further
- Resolved, That Iowa PTA support legislation which would impose a legal duty on parents for the health care of their children, and be it further
- Resolved, That Iowa PTA support legislation that will give children and youth equal protection under the law.

Adopted 1993 Convention

RESOLUTION: GANGS

- Whereas, Gang activity promotes violence on its own members and on the community at large as acceptable behavior; and
- Whereas, Gang members are proceeding with active recruitment of children and youth through intimidation or enticement at the secondary, as well as, at the elementary school level; and
- Whereas, Signs, identifiers or "colors" worn by gang members are recognizable and, therefore, are a constant reminder of gang presence and activity; and
- Whereas, The display of gang signs, identifiers and "colors" causes disruption of the school and school activities; and

- Whereas, The student on school property or attending a school activity should be involved in a positive learning experience and not subjected to gang presence or criminal activities; and
- Whereas, The school district needs to maintain control in school and at school activities to provide a safe, learning environment for all children; therefore be it
- Resolved, That Iowa PTA support schools' efforts which limit display of known gang identifiers, signs or colors (e.g. clothes, accessories, markings) while on school property or at school sponsored events, since these overtly or covertly disrupt the school's function or that activity; and be it further
- Resolved, That Iowa PTA continue to work with the Iowa State Education Association, the School Administrators of Iowa and Iowa Association of School Boards to educate parents, teachers and communities on gangs and their influence; and be it further
- Resolved, That Iowa PTA, its units and councils, school boards, educators and communities find alternative activities for those children and youth who are at risk of succumbing to gang influence.
- (Adopted 1993 Convention)

RESOLUTION: FIRE SAFETY

- Whereas, Safety of school children has always been a major concern of PTA; and
- Whereas, The State Fire Marshall stated that many of Iowa's schools have fire hazards such as:
 Emergency exit problems,
 Electrical or heating problems,
 Improperly stored flammable materials,
 Fire extinguishers that could not be easily reached, were not working properly or were the wrong type,
 Fire alarm, sprinkler or smoke detector problems
 Fire containment problems
- Whereas, Schools across the state have deficiencies which are going unattended due to lack of funds or lack of priority; therefore be it
- Resolved, That Iowa PTA units and councils:
 1. Study the fire inspection report for their school buildings.
 2. Monitor the results of fire drills in their schools,
 3. Work with administrators and school boards to find ways of correcting deficiencies,
 4. Cooperate with the schools in teaching fire safety to the students; and be it further
- Resolved, That the safety of Iowa's children become a top priority of school districts, communities and government when viewing fire hazards in our schools.
- (Adopted 1992 Convention)

POSITION STATEMENT: IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

The Iowa PTA recognizes the importance of a safe, caring environment for the healthy development of all children and youth. Because of a fear of being rejected, harassed, or physically harmed, youth, including gay and lesbian, may be hesitant to ask for help or to share their concerns with others. Therefore, the Iowa PTA supports a school environment that is understanding of, and knowledgeable about, the nature of identity development.

(Adopted 2000 Convention)

POSITION STATEMENT: SEAT BELTS/CHILD SAFETY SEATS/AIR BAGS

In July 1986, the seat belt and child restraint law took effect. PTA was very active in promoting child safety through the use of these safety features. However, many still choose to ignore their use and fail to properly protect their children.

Iowa PTA urges its membership to again be in the vanguard of child safety by promoting the proper use of seat belts, child safety seats and air bags. Through example and through education, PTA can create a public awareness campaign and enlist the aid of others in protecting our children.

(Adopted 1992 Convention)

POSITION STATEMENT: CHILD ABUSE

The Iowa PTA supports the development of prevention, education and treatment programs to protect children from physical, sexual, mental and emotional abuse or neglect.

We encourage those hiring or otherwise securing individuals who care for or work with children to use every means available to them to ensure the safety of children who are under those individual's care or influence.

The Iowa PTA supports the most severe penalties available for those who are convicted of abusing children.

Each year hundreds of thousands of children are starved, abandoned, burned, beaten, raped and sodomized, berated and belittled all across the United States. The system to respond to abuse is failing. Billions of dollars are spent on the results of our country's failure to prevent abuse to children.

We encourage the State of Iowa to seek federal grant monies available for prevention and treatment programs, and require criminal information exchanges, at least with contiguous states.

(Adopted 1991 Convention)

Iowa PTA
5619 N.W. 86th St., Suite 600
Johnston, IA 50131-2955
(515) 225-4197
(800) 475-4782
E-mail: ia_office@pta.org
Website: www.iowapta.org

National PTA
Office of Programs & Public Policy
1400 L Street, NW, Suite 300
Washington, D.C. 20005-9998
(202) 289-6790

National PTA
541 N. Fairbanks Ct, Suite 1300
Chicago, IL 60611-3396
(312) 670-6782
(800) 307-4PTA (4782)
E-mail: info@pta.org
website: www.pta.org