

IMPROVING AND STABILIZING EDUCATION FUNDING

Adopted by Convention Delegates April 2018

- WHEREAS,** California student achievement is below the achievement level of most other states and a significant number of California students do not meet California proficiency standards; and
- WHEREAS,** Lack of quality early childhood education creates an achievement gap before students enroll in kindergarten; and
- WHEREAS,** California students have fewer counselors, school nurses, administrators, librarians, and small class sizes than most states in the nation; and
- WHEREAS,** California school funding, adjusted for cost of living, is significantly below the funding levels of most other states; and
- WHEREAS,** California's tax system fails to provide a stable, adequate source of income for children's services and schools; and
- WHEREAS,** States that invest more in education show higher student achievement levels than California and studies show greater investment in education improves student achievement, particularly for low-income students; now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge the Legislature and the Governor to improve and reform state and local funding so all California students have the opportunity to reach academic proficiency levels; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge the state Legislature and the Governor to enact legislation that allows the state to invest in education including early childhood education at the levels of our highest achieving states; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA, and its units, councils and districts collaborate with and encourage other organizations and the voters of the state of California to research and support increased, stable revenue sources in the state of California.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

California remains well below the national average in terms of per pupil spending, resulting in an education system where our children are consistently and troublingly below the national average in terms of both basic understanding and proficiency when compared to their peers across the nation. The achievement gap is even wider when we review the data for low income and minority students in the state.

Improving and Stabilizing Education Funding - continued

In 2015-16, California ranked 41st among all states in spending per K-12 student after adjusting for differences in the cost of living in each state. California schools spent \$10,291 per K-12 student in 2015-16, which is about \$1,900 less than the \$12,252 per student spent by the nation as a whole, according to the California Budget and Policy Center. This lack of funding has clear effects when we observe how the state ranks for counselors (790 to 1), school nurses (ratio of 2,784 to 1, four times what the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends), administrators (315 to 1, 48th), librarians (7800 to 1, 51st), all of whom add important components from behavioral and health interventions, student outcome and teacher efficacy supports, and assist students to better learn and process information.

The funding disparity is nowhere more evident than in the classroom. California has 42,000 fewer teachers than Texas, yet California schools serve 1.4 million more students.

Under these conditions, it is not surprising that average scores are lower in all categories for all subjects compared to the national average for California's 4th and 8th graders according to the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) 2015 Report. These issues are exacerbated and scores are significantly lower where students are eligible for free and reduced lunch.

The achievement gap begins well before K-12 enrollment. By the time children enter kindergarten, dramatic socio-economic and racial school-readiness gaps are deeply entrenched. It is for this reason that early childhood education has such a critical role to play in addressing student achievement and its funding should be considered in any California State PTA action.

According to CSBA's Policy Brief, *California's Challenge: Adequately Funding Education in the 21st Century*, current K-12 education is underfunded by between \$24-42 billion. California must consider multiple, steady and consistent strategies to address the issues detailed above and bring California's per pupil spending in line with the highest achieving states in the U.S.