

## TEMPERATURE CONTROL STANDARDS IN THE SCHOOL SETTING

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 2019

- WHEREAS, California Education Code fails to set indoor classroom temperature limits for children designed to meet the research based needs of 68 degrees to 80 degrees in a school setting, and
- WHEREAS, Senate Bill No. 1167 directs California Occupational Safety and Health Act to review and adopt heat illness and injury prevention standards for workers of indoor places of employment, and
- WHEREAS, Researchers have identified children and adolescents as especially vulnerable to the harmful effects of heat, and
- WHEREAS, Research shows children with special needs other health related issues are even more vulnerable to heat related illnesses, and
- WHEREAS, Research finds that an increase of classroom temperatures impairs student performance, such as decision making, reduces academic achievement, decreases productivity, and increases aggressive behavior beginning at 81 degrees, and
- WHEREAS, California Code of Regulations fails to address mitigation of heat for indoor temperatures when remodeling or building schools to limit extreme temperatures, and
- WHEREAS, Research shows that humidity levels combined with temperature shows an increased risk of heat related illnesses, known as the heat index.
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation to amend the California Education Code to establish indoor classroom minimum and maximum temperatures of 68 degrees to 80 degrees; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation to provide funds for air conditioning of schools where temperatures exceed 80 degrees inside the classroom while school is in session; and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA seek and support legislation to amend Title 5 of the California Code of Regulations to add systems which allow for indoor climate control between 68 degrees to 80 degrees when building or remodeling schools; and be it further

*Continued on next page*

## Temperature Control Standards in the School Setting – continued

**RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge units, councils and districts to work with local boards of education to encourage site-based classroom temperature research and adoption of policies to mitigate the effects of hot weather on students and staff without compromising lighting or increasing ambient noise levels, and to help school personnel recognize and treat heat related illness; and be it further

**RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA urge units, councils and districts to educate parents and the community regarding the effects of heat index and classroom temperatures on student health and learning.

###

### BACKGROUND SUMMARY

Due to the lack of ways to mitigate heat in many schools, some classrooms are exceeding recommended, research-based temperatures of a maximum of 80 degrees. Students are suffering from heat related illness due to these extreme classroom temperatures since children have a harder time regulating body temperature. Children do not self-monitor as well as adults to know when to remove layers of clothes, drink more water or take a break from play. Children with disabilities, such as Sensory Processing Disorders, heart conditions, asthma, type-2 diabetes and epilepsy, are even more susceptible to heat related illness.

Research shows that high humidity levels combined with temperature (known as the heat index) shows an increase of heat related illnesses. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration has determined heat related health risks begin at 80 degrees and a relative humidity of 40%, and caution should be used.

Recent research has shown a direct correlation between student learning and classroom temperatures. Heat stress has shown to decrease productivity and academic achievement. A decrease in test scores is shown in several studies to begin at 81 degrees.

California Education Code fails to adequately address indoor classroom temperature limits for students in K-12 classrooms. Education Code also fails to require HVAC or any temperature control measures to mitigate heat in the classroom when building a new school or remodeling an older school. Legislation exists to protect adults in the workplace setting yet fails to protect our children from excessive heat, therefore leaving them vulnerable to heat related illnesses and diminished educational performance.