

What are the biggest issues for Georgia PTA in 2009? Public education funding. One of the most essential roles of state government is to provide a quality education to maintain an educated citizenry capable of participating in a democracy. As globalization of the world economy continues, Georgia's economic development and prosperity clearly depends on developing an educated workforce.

A quality education requires consistent and **adequate state funding**. Georgia PTA continues to ask for restoration of more than \$1.6 billion in cumulative Quality Basic Education (QBE) funding cuts that have shifted state obligations to local taxpayers, causing many Georgia school systems to exhaust reserves, cut programs, lay off employees and/or raise property taxes. Full funding of mandated programs and reforms at the time they are enacted is a state responsibility. Otherwise, even more local systems will become financially burdened trying to implement state mandates.

We oppose **tax reform proposals** that would limit funding for education by capping tax revenues or tax expenditures. Both take the final decision-making out of the hands of the locally elected boards of education whose job it is to provide and fund the programs that local constituents want.

We support school choice but oppose any use of public tax dollars that are not held fully accountable to taxpayers. Vouchers that are used to fund private education must require the same level of open public accountability that public schools must provide.



114 Baker Street, NE
Atlanta, Georgia 30308
Phone: 404.659.0214
Toll-free: 800.PTA TODAY
Fax: 404.525.0210
Email: gapta@bellsouth.net

Georgia PTA is a tax-exempt non-profit, non-sectarian, non-commercial organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Capitol Watch Power at your Fingertips

Georgia PTA makes it easy to advocate, giving you a tool to amplify your voice.

Capitol Watch is a legislative tracking and evaluation system located on our website: www.georgiapta.org.

It is simple to join our Grassroots Advocacy Network; log onto the Georgia PTA website, log on Capitol Watch and click on Grassroots to register. Each person will have his/her own user-ID and password. All information is confidential.

Capitol Watch features:

- **News** – Regular reports and news from State School Board, House, Senate and Committee meetings.
- **Legislative Alerts** – Receive timely information about contacting lawmakers on bills that will affect our children and schools.
- **Legislation** – Timely information on Georgia bills posted, numbered, and tracked by status.
- **Officials** – Contact information for all elected officials and legislators at the state and federal levels.
- **Online Library** – Direct links to various sites for reference and research.
- **Grassroots** – Create your personal profile and become a more informed and active advocate for children.
- **National PTA** – Direct hotlink to our National PTA and federal legislation issues.

Act now and explore all the advocacy possibilities and information on Georgia PTA's Capitol Watch website. Amplify your PTA voice today!

Our Mission

A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.



2009 Georgia PTA Legislative Priorities

Our Purpose

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

2009 Georgia PTA Legislative Priorities

Georgia PTA and its members:

- **Support** public K-12 schools with adequate state funding, reflective of the actual costs of providing the state defined services. **Support** equitable distribution of state funding to K-12 schools, currently calculated on property tax wealth in each school system.
- **Support** using public funds for public schools only. **Oppose** any effort to use public funding for private or sectarian schools.
- **Support** efforts to increase the graduation rate in Georgia through mandatory attendance until graduation or age 18. **Support** early identification of potential dropouts. **Support** improved instructional programs for at-risk students. **Support** expanded counseling and guidance services. **Support** job placement and work experience programs. **Support** immediate follow-up of why individual students drop out.
- **Support** using multiple criteria to determine promotion and retention, and not rely upon the results of a single test score.
- **Support** policies that increase meaningful parental involvement in decisions regarding school policies, curriculum, and academic growth for children; and increase opportunities for the development of parenting skills and school support.

- **Support** the right of local boards of education to manage and control local public schools as they seek to improve the quality of education for all students, and are sensitive to differences in educational needs in their respective communities.
- **Support** the local property tax and the educational SPLOST sources of tax revenues for local school district spending priorities.

For more information contact:

Karen Hallacy, State Legislation
gaptastateleg@aol.com

Sally FitzGerald, Education Policy
sallyfitz@bellsouth.net

Barbara Costello, Federal Legislation
gaptafedleg@aol.com



What does Georgia PTA do with the priorities? Priorities form the basis of our efforts with the Georgia General Assembly and Congress in the upcoming months. When these issues come up for a vote, expect to see them referenced in statewide Action Alerts. We will give you background information on the issues through our Capitol Watch Daily Reports, so when we ask you to take immediate action on them you are informed, equipped and prepared to act effectively as an advocate.

We are also keeping up with broader issues of K-12 education, child health and safety, governance and ethics, postsecondary education, Pre-K, gun safety, teen driving and some election issues. If new legislation is filed on which Georgia PTA has a position (supported by resolutions and voted on by our membership) we will jump in. But our priorities get most of our attention.

What if I disagree with some of the priorities? When any of us speaks *as a PTA member*, we are obliged to take the same position as the one chosen and adopted by our members and Board...or say nothing. Even if you are not 100% on board with each one, it is neither fair nor honest to disagree publicly with these positions when you are wearing a PTA nametag or speaking or appearing or acting as a PTA member.

Why does PTA advocate? Because that's what PTA was created to do. Georgia PTA's primary mission is to be "*a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.*" One of our chief purposes is "*to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.*"

And that's exactly what PTA members across Georgia have been doing for over 100 years.