

April 17, 2011

Dear PTA members,

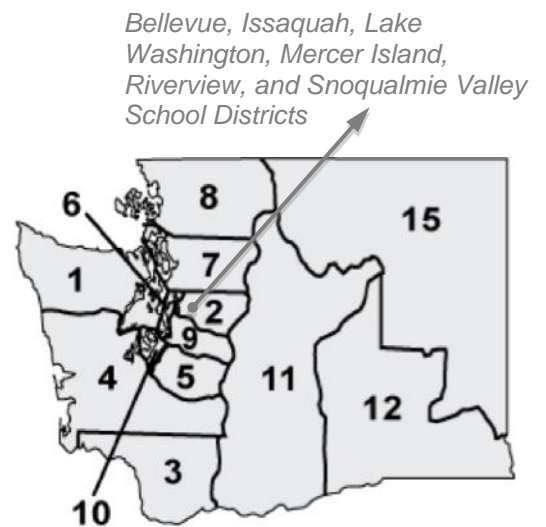
We are a community that cares and is committed to our public schools. That is why, over the past few months, the Bellevue PTSA Council has engaged in an advocacy effort to share parent and community voices with both the Bellevue School District (BSD) and Bellevue Education Association (BEA) as input to this year's contract negotiations. Our goal in developing a community values statement is to communicate values and concepts that are important to parents and community members with respect to our students' educational experience. We ask that both sides hear this perspective and keep student achievement at the forefront during their negotiations. We value and respect both our talented teacher corps and our administration for their work and commitment to our students. Working together we will continue to strengthen our schools.

PTA is an advocacy organization. It was founded to advocate for all children. We recognize that most parents and educators join PTA to support their local school. Many may not be aware that PTA has multiple leadership levels: Council (operates at a school district level with four delegates from each school), Region (operates across multiple school districts), State (operates across the state of Washington) and National PTA.

Developing a community values statement is a new kind of local advocacy for us. We are bringing aspects of the State PTA legislative platform to the local level and following the lead of other PTA Councils in our area who have also engaged in local advocacy to gather and share parent voices with their negotiating parties.

The opportunity is now. Across the nation districts and unions are working collaboratively to change contracts with the goal of improving student achievement. We have WA State PTA legislative priorities (attached) that have applications at the local level. An important component of our school system is coming up for discussion this year. Considering these factors, our school system has an opportunity to build on our schools' success and implement changes that further improve outcomes for *all* students. We want to be proactive and share our voice before negotiations close, rather than complain later. If not now, it will be another 2-3 years before this opportunity comes up again.

We communicated early on with both parties – the BEA and the District – that we were engaging in this process. PTSA Council leaders, with support from representatives from League of Education Voters and Stand for Children, reviewed State PTA legislative priorities, the community values process in other



WA State PTA Regions

districts, the current contract, contract best practices, and examples from around the country. Based on this work we developed a draft document for parents and PTA members to respond to, along with an option to provide written comments. We sent a questionnaire, based on our draft, to local unit PTA presidents and asked that they send the link to their parents and PTA members. Our objective was to gauge the level of support for the draft and obtain feedback on the concepts. Based on some of the feedback we received, we regret the wording and questionnaire's implications that led to a misunderstanding of our intent.

We received 876 responses with over 950 written comments. We carefully reviewed all of the feedback, both positive and negative. The results and comments from parents and educators were used to revise and clarify the final values statement. The statement was then discussed, modified and endorsed by the PTSA Council voting delegates.

The concepts included with our values are open by design. We do not want to prescribe any one method of achieving any of these ideas. Methods, details and implementation would need to be driven by the professionals in our schools. Those concepts that take time to develop and implement may not be *in place* for the start of the new contract, but the new contract could support taking steps toward the concepts.

Our hope is that our district and union can agree on a contract that benefits our students and attracts and retains highly effective professionals at every level of our school system.

Sincerely,

Linda Mui, Bellevue PTSA Council President, on behalf of the PTSA Council Board

On the following pages:

2010-2011 WA State PTA Legislative Priorities

2011 Community Values Statement

2010-2011 WSPTA Top Five Priority Issues

The Washington State PTA, through its annual grassroots process, has adopted this legislative platform for the 2011 session of the Washington State Legislature.

Following up on Education Reform Efforts (HB 2261, HB 2776, SB 6696):



The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislative or policies that advance implementation of and/or provide funding for the realization of the basic education reform bills passed in 2009 and 2010, which describe our state's plan for developing and phasing in system improvements to meet the educational needs of students in the 21st century.

Math and Science Education:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that strengthen math and science education to include but not be limited to: improving teacher pre-service training and recruitment, developing an Elementary Mathematics Specialty endorsement, increasing teacher professional development and supporting implementation of math and science standards.

Literacy Instruction:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that support the state-wide adoption of early phonological awareness screening, and the state-wide implementation of research-based, direct, explicit, and systematic literacy instruction in every classroom.

Teacher Reduction in Force:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that expand school district teacher



"reduction in force" policies to include factors other than seniority, such as teacher effectiveness and the cohesiveness of school teams.

Fund Education First:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that fund education first. In order to implement Article IX of our state constitution which says "It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders", education funding would be considered first in any budget process undertaken in the state legislature.

New Model for Teacher Compensation:

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that lead to a new research-based state teacher compensation model that emphasizes rewarding teacher effectiveness in improving student learning.



Additional 2011 Issues Supported by Washington State PTA

- School Breakfast and Lunch Programs:** The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that improve the quality and nutritional content of school breakfast and lunch programs.
- Physical Education and Health:** The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that strengthen physical education and health to include but not be limited to 1) designating physical education and health as a core subject in the state of Washington and 2) adding physical education and health to the list of core subjects in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act- formally known as No Child Left Behind.

Get Involved;
Learn More

Visit our advocacy web site: <http://www.wastatepta.org/advocacy/index.html>

Get connected

- Want background and enews updates? Sign up for Grassroots Connection
- Want to chat with other advocates? Join our Legislative Listserv
- Ready to take on an issue and contact your legislators? Join the Legislative Contact Team.
- Send a note to adminstaff@wastatepta.org telling us how you want to connect.

About the Washington State PTA...

OUR VISION: "Making every child's potential a reality."

OUR 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.

The Washington State PTA accomplishes the mission of PTA by:

- Speaking on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
- Supporting parents* in developing skills to raise, protect and advocate for their children;
- Encouraging parent*, teacher, student and community involvement;
- Promoting opportunities for positive outcomes for children; and
- Being a financially stable, well-managed organization that promotes diversity, provides quality service, models best practices and values its members and employees.

Founded in 1905, the Washington State PTA is the largest volunteer organization in the state, with more than 145,000 members in 920 local units across the state. In addition to providing training and assistance to local units, WSPTA is an active voice for children in pursuit of PTA's vision that every child's potential becomes a reality. More information about WSPTA can be found on its website at www.wastatepta.org.

*Parent may include adults who play an important role in a child's family life since other adults (grandparents, aunts, uncles, or guardians) may carry the primary responsibility for a child's health, welfare, education and safety.

COMMUNITY VALUES STATEMENT 2011

We are proud of Bellevue schools and our outstanding reputation for the quality of our public education system. We feel that it is essential for Bellevue public schools to build on our success and continue to change and evolve in a positive way to ensure that we are focused on continuous improvement, maintaining our leadership position in education in Washington and, most importantly, that **all** children in Bellevue receive a high quality education.

As community members and parents, we believe that we are collectively responsible for the growth of all of our children through education. We believe the upcoming teachers' contract negotiation provides an excellent opportunity for Bellevue public schools to build on our success and make great strides for all of our students.

Given this opportunity, we have articulated a set of shared values, linked to best practices and negotiated aspects of the teachers' contract, to inform the parties of what is important to our community. We share this information with the teachers' union, district administration and school board as a data point for the 2011 contract negotiation.

We value the teachers, staff, administrators and school board members who demonstrate a commitment to excellence and to developing our highly regarded educational programs. We value a public school system that is **student-centered** and meets the needs of **all** students. We value a system that is **collaborative, flexible** and **innovative**. We value a system that attracts and retains **highly effective** professionals and that supports and recognizes them based on **performance** and **contribution**.

Value	Supported Concepts
Every Student Deserves Highly Effective Teachers and Principals	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Robust and fair evaluation systems for teachers and principals (vs. satisfactory/ unsatisfactory) that include multiple measures of effectiveness (to include qualitative and quantitative student growth data and parent/student feedback as factors in the evaluation).• Performance considered in staffing decisions (hiring, transfers and layoffs).• Recognition and reward for excellence and innovation.• Effective mentoring program available for teachers.• Informed and intentional supports and professional development based on evaluations and student growth data.• Leadership opportunities and incentives, other than moving to administration, to keep great teachers in the classroom.
Collaborative Focus on Student Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborative and flexible use of non-student work time that balances the need for school-directed programs and teacher autonomy in order to minimize work-related absences from the classroom.• Meaningful and timely feedback for all students, including online posting of grades in secondary schools.• Parent involvement in student learning supported through timely responses to family inquiries.