

Cascade Ridge PTSA

Focus on Advocacy

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Understanding the Role of Engagement Through
Advocacy in your Child's K-12 Education Journey

PTA History and Advocacy

National PTA was founded in 1897 by advocates, and has a strong history of impacting education policy and advocating for children.

PTA is the oldest and largest volunteer child advocacy association in the United States. PTA has a long, successful history of influencing federal policy to promote the education, health, and well-being of all children — resulting in kindergarten classes, child labor laws, school lunch programs, a juvenile justice system, and strengthened parent-teacher relationships

PTA Now

PTA continues that legacy today by fighting for change under its federal public policy priorities in these vital areas:

- **Family Engagement and General Education**
- **Special Education**
- **Early Childhood Education**
- **Education Funding**
- **Child Health and Nutrition**
- **Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention**
- **School Safety**

Advocacy Defined and Clarified

Advocacy can take many forms and each of these can be effective based on the outcome they seek:

- When the provision of a direct service is the goal such as PTSA buying printers when a school lacks funds or
- Collecting information on a specific topic such as family engagement and educate members of the public on it with relevant research or
- Speaking on behalf of a group (in our case kids) affected by issues, with one voice or
- **Grassroots advocacy where people directly affected by the problem take action to win a solution**

Grassroots Advocacy

This type of Advocacy is the primary way in which most action that eventually translates into legislative principles, resolution and recommendations for the Legislature is conducted.

Legislative advocacy aims to:

- Identify a problem
- Turn the problem into an issue campaign
- Create a strategy
- Advocate

In addition child advocates work with policy makers to ask for changes in federal and state policies. A simplified example of how this would work is how the problem of childhood obesity was turned into the issue campaign of improving school lunch nutrition.

Ways to Engage with the Legislative Process

Anyone with children in the public school system can feel called upon to be child advocate. There are always new issues and problems that arise for consideration or the reframing of long standing issues with new fresh perspectives.

Here are a few ways local PTSA members can influence policy:

- Educate members of Congress and their staff on PTA's federal public policy priorities
- Sign up for the PTA Takes Action Network at www.pta.org/takeaction and respond to action alerts to reach your legislators on important issues and legislation.

Ways to Engage, Cont'd

- Work with the school to implement a strong family engagement policy, as required by federal law.
- Serve on the school board; attend school board meetings
- Attend school district meetings on such topics as healthy alternatives in the lunchroom and federal, state, and local budget cuts.
- Work with school leaders and state education officials to implement PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.
- Write a letter in a widely read community forum about the importance of family engagement in education.

Legislative Assembly & Focus on Advocacy Week

In Washington state there are two key events the WSPTA organizes that highlight the collaborative, engaged and cooperative nature of civic participation. Qibo and I registered as voting delegates in the most recent Legislative Assembly that was held at Bellevue College on October 15-16. This gave us a front row seat to proceedings of the 44th Annual Legislative Assembly and allowed us to observe and participate in the legislative process.

After a sharing a brief overview of how Legislative Assembly works to serve us, we will share details of the upcoming Focus on Advocacy week scheduled for Feb'2023 and invite participation from the Cascade Ridge community. We will also be sharing a list of resources that will be helpful if you would like to begin your Advocacy journey. By the end of this presentation, we hope you would have gathered helpful information on advocacy and how it can help you become a more engaged community member and parent.

Legislative Assembly Workings

Legislative assembly is WSPTA's annual event allowing PTSA members statewide to participate in true grassroots advocacy by building both our short-term and long-term **legislative** platforms.

Legislative platform is a consolidation of the top five priority issues voted on by assembly delegates each year. The Washington State PTA 2023-2024 WSPTA Legislative Platform is a two year platform that mirrors the WA state legislative cycle. Every two years a new platform is voted on by members. Other issues are placed in an 'also supported list'. In addition, delegates also vote on issues and resolutions.

Prior to the beginning of legislative assembly, WSPTA sends out resources for multiple learning and caucusing opportunities to allow voting delegates to participate in informed and collaborative ways.




Top 5 Legislative Priorities for 2022-2024

1. Addressing the Student Mental Health Crisis
2. Addressing Critical Gaps in Education Funding
3. Preventing and Reducing Gun Violence and Suicide
4. Addressing Funding, Inclusion, and Supports in Special Education
5. Building and Maintaining Safer School Facilities

FOCUS ON ADVOCACY WEEK, FEBRUARY

20-24,2023


An opportunity to engage directly with state legislators in Olympia
on issues and legislative principles

February 20-24, 2023
Focus on Advocacy Week 

Your actions throughout this week will be quick and easy but will make a tremendous impact. It will be so easy that you can take action from home, while waiting for a coffee order, or sitting in your child's pick-up line!

WSPTA will be asking members to act virtually throughout Focus on Advocacy Week. Each day will focus on an important part of the WSPTA platform. The best way to participate is by subscribing to the [WSPTA Action Network](#) so that you receive the daily calls to action for this week and periodically throughout the legislative session. You will be provided with easily customizable messages that the action alert system will automatically send to your legislators. It is easy to do and only takes a few minutes! We also encourage you to share your advocacy work on your personal and PTA social media accounts throughout the week using the hashtag ~~#WSPTAOneVoice~~.

FOCUS ON ADVOCACY ENGAGEMENT

February 20, 2023
Focus on Advocacy Day 

What is Focus on Advocacy Day? This day kicks off a full week of member advocacy! We need WSPTA leaders and members to meet with their state representatives and senators to share the PTA mission and priorities. Let's make sure the PTA voice is loud and proud on this day! You will be provided with everything you need to know in order to schedule and hold a successful meeting with your legislators. While these meetings would ideally be on Monday (Focus on Advocacy Day), they may need to be scheduled throughout the week to accommodate your legislators' schedules.

2023 Virtual National PTA Legislative Conference, LegCon March 7-8, 2023

LegCon is a valuable opportunity to engage and gain familiarity with local legislators, congressional staff and aides on Capitol Hill in Washington, DC

Washington State PTA coordinates these meetings. Please email us if you would like to participate, we will also send reminders

2023 Virtual National PTA Legislative Conference

Health & Safety for Every Child

Join fellow PTA members and other passionate advocates for LegCon 2023 on March 7 and 8, 2023! This year will be a fully virtual experience, where you will hear about emerging issues for children and families, learn how to have an impact on policy decisions, network with fellow PTA advocates, and speak with your members of Congress about issues important to you and your community.

Don't miss the chance to expand your knowledge of the ins and outs of federal law, grow your advocacy skills, explore National PTA's legislative priorities for the 118th Congress and virtually meet with your federal representatives on Capitol Hill.

Call to Action and Resources

As parents and members of the Cascade Ridge Elem community, we hope the information and ideas shared here will help you decide, analyze and articulate the issues, concerns and problems you feel deserve attention at a community wide, state wide or even national level.

The legislative priorities shared earlier could give you some ideas on issues and goals that are top of mind for WA state communities. The WSPTA website has excellent and exhaustive resources and we will be sharing these.

WSPTA Website

- <https://www.wastatepta.org/focus-areas/advocacy/focus-on-advocacy/>

- Here you can find helpful info such as

- **How To Find Your Legislators**

- **Subscribe to WSPTA Action Network**

- **How To Make Appointments With Legislators**

- **How to Have a Successful Meeting with Legislators**

- **Zoom Background** – For legislator meetings and testifying.

- **Talking Points for Focus on Advocacy Meetings**

- **Sign up for Action Alerts newsletters**

WSPTA Resources for Drafting and Submitting Legislative Issue Proposal

- <https://www.wastatepta.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/2023-2024-WSP-TA-Legislative-Platform.pdf>
- <https://www.wastatepta.org/focus-areas/advocacy/> all the way down
- There are detailed instructions on how to draft, factors to consider and prioritize issues that matter to you.

This I feel is the most empowering section on the website.

Next Steps...

Decide what is a Priority for Cascade Ridge

- Research Decision Makers
- School District Officials
- State Legislators
- Federal Legislators
- Local Government Officials
- Other State Agencies

Thank you so much for your time.

For questions, information or brainstorming please email:

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