

### Summer Learning Loss

- Whereas, Summer learning loss is of greater magnitude for the most vulnerable learners including children from lower socio-economic households, ethnic minorities and English Language Learners; and
- Whereas, Most students lose approximately two months of math-computation skills over the summer and the learning loss in reading varies across socioeconomic status with low income students losing about two months of reading achievement, and
- Whereas, Summer learning loss is cumulative and it accounts for more than one-half of the achievement gap between lower and higher income students, and by the end of fifth grade, disadvantaged youth are nearly three grade equivalents behind their more affluent peers in reading; and
- Whereas, Children who participate in five to six weeks of quality summer-learning opportunities which include a wide range of activities including the arts, physical education, science, math, and community service make significant gains in reading and math; now therefore be it
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations educate parents, administrators, school board members, teachers and communities about the impact of summer learning loss and the advantages of summer learning and enrichment programs; and be it further
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations urge policy makers at federal, state and local levels to create policies and legislation that support and fund summer learning programs with emphasis on reading and math for disadvantaged youth; and be it further
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations encourage collaboration and partnerships between school districts, park and recreation departments, libraries, youth-serving organizations, community and faith-based organizations, businesses, and nonprofits to provide children and youth with summer learning activities and enrichment programs.

### Rationale

All students experience “summer learning loss” which is defined as the devastating result of an absence of summer learning and enrichment. Low income students lose about 2.6 months of math computation skills and two months of reading skills while middle and upper income students may actually gain in reading comprehension over the summer. Because this loss is cumulative, the achievement gap widens for minority and vulnerable students over the years.

Low-income parents often lack the resources to provide children with summer enrichment activities or sufficient reading materials needed to reinforce important literacy skills. Further, children who are English Language Learners need additional exposure to printed material, which may be difficult for children in homes where English is not their first language.

Research shows that students who participate in high quality summer learning and enrichment programs that include the arts, physical education, science, community service and more, do as well as their more affluent counterparts.

### Supporting Florida's Homeless Students

- Whereas, Families with children are the fastest growing homeless population, and
- Whereas, Since 2007, the Florida Department of Education has seen a dramatic increase in homeless and unstably housed students, and
- Whereas, Homeless children have much higher rates of emotional, behavioral, nutritional and other health problems compared to children who have a permanent home, and
- Whereas, High mobility, poverty, and other family stresses associated with homelessness create unique educational barriers that negatively impact learning, and
- Whereas, The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act requires schools to remove any barriers that limit the ability of a student experiencing homelessness to enroll, attend, and succeed in school; however, funding allocations have not increased at rates that correspond to the growing need, now therefore be it
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations educate their communities about the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act which is designed to aid in the education of homeless children by providing comprehensive services necessary to guarantee equal educational opportunities; and be it further,
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations urge policymakers to implement and full fund the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act provisions in all Florida school districts, and be it further,
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations urge policymakers to establish an ample funding allocation for the Title I-set-aside for Title X, which is a funding source used to support the requirements of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

### Rationale

The number of Florida students who are considered homeless has doubled since 2007 and families with children are the fastest-growing segment of homeless people. Last school year, thousands more children were found living in hotels or shelters or crammed into homes with other families or neighbors.

Homelessness has a devastating effect on a student's mental and physical health, nutritional intake, and academic achievement. High mobility, trauma, and poverty associated with homelessness create unique educational barriers and challenges that permanently housed students may not face.

Homelessness is a multifaceted problem requiring comprehensive solutions. Unfortunately, during a time when the federal government should be increasing funding for homeless programs to keep pace with the increased numbers of homeless children and families, funding for these programs has been held level or cut.

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act is designed to ensure that children experiencing homelessness have access to the same free, appropriate public education and related services as their permanently housed peers. The Act requires State and Local Educational Agencies to remove any barriers that may limit the ability of a homeless student to enroll, attend and succeed in school. This critical act also emphasizes collaboration with other support service agencies and encourages parent participation as critical to the educational success of homeless students. It's imperative that the policy makers establish adequate funding allocations to support Florida's homeless students in accordance with the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Solutions like these have the potential to significantly improve the academic outcomes of students experiencing homelessness.

### Response to Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence in Schools

- Whereas, Research shows that over 40% of middle and high school students are victims of sexual violence or sexual harassment and these acts are vastly under reported, and
- Whereas, Research indicates that school is the most common location of peer sexual victimization, and
- Whereas, Sexual violence or sexual harassment have devastating effects on adolescents, negatively impacting their emotional and physical well-being, and depriving them of equal and free access to an education, and
- Whereas, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (“Title IX”), 20 U.S.C. Sec. 1681et seq., prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in any federally funded education program or activity. Under Title IX, discrimination on the basis of sex includes sexual harassment or sexual violence. However, there is a lack of compliance with Title IX Federal law which requires schools to take immediate action to eliminate harassment and sexual violence, prevent its occurrence, and address its effects, now therefore be it
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations urge and support compliance with Title IX provisions concerning sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools and be it further
- Resolved, That Florida PTA and its constituent associations encourage and collaborate with school administrations and community partners to present awareness and prevention programs that address sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools, including the responsibilities of school districts and the rights of sexual violence and sexual harassment victims under Title IX.

#### Rationale

Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 is the landmark civil rights legislation that bans sex discrimination in education, including sexual violence. When students suffer sexual assault and harassment, they are deprived of equal and free access to an education. The law requires schools to “take immediate action” to eliminate sexual harassment or sexual violence, “prevent its recurrence, and address its effects”. (Office of Civil Rights)

Yet 40 years after the adoption of Title IX, sexual harassment and sexual violence in our schools remains a problem with research showing that over 40% of middle and high school students have been victimized. Sexual violence in any form is harmful to children and can affect their physical and emotional health as well as their academic success.

In keeping with the Parent Teacher Association’s longstanding history of advocating for safe learning environments, PTA must take an active role to raise awareness and support sexual harassment and sexual violence prevention strategies including the enforcement of Title IX provisions concerning the sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools.

**ALL RESEARCH INFORMATION FOR EACH PROPOSED RESOLUTION IS LOCATED ON [WWW.FLORIDAPTA.ORG](http://WWW.FLORIDAPTA.ORG), “ADVOCACY” TAB, UNDER PROPOSED RESOLUTIONS.**