



POSITION STATEMENT OF THE
CONNECTICUT PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION (PTA)
REGARDING AN ACT ENCOURAGING A GRADUATED RESPONSE MODEL
FOR SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

Connecticut Parent Teacher Association (PTA) and its over 44,000 members stand in support of Governor's Bill 6837 – An Act Encouraging a Graduated Response Model for School Discipline.

School discipline is complex and varies greatly from district to district. However, one fact is clear; students can't learn if they are not in school. While we fully support appropriate discipline and removal of students for violent offenses, too often students are removed from the learning environment either through suspension, expulsion, arrest or seclusion for behaviors that could have been addressed and potentially resolved without removing the student from a positive learning environment. Additionally, discipline is often applied unequally and more often impacts minority students and students with special needs.

This situation is not unique to Connecticut. The U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights in its Data Shop Issue Brief (March 2014) shows that "black students are suspended and expelled at a rate three times greater than white students" and that "students with disabilities served by IDEA are more than twice as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspension as students without disabilities."

Connecticut has certainly been aware of and working hard to correct these inequalities but we can do more. Additionally, with the increase in school security staff after the tragedy of Newtown it is paramount that all security personnel have appropriate training for working with school age children and that there be a clear delineation of responsibility as would be outlined by a memorandum of agreement (MOA) between school and police or other security personnel ensuring that schools, law enforcement and the community would work in concert to be sure that children stayed in class.

Parent involvement and engagement is one of the core beliefs of PTA. Providing parents with data on school arrests and on school discipline practices would help them more effectively advocate for their children and for all children and would give them the tools to work with their local districts to help create change for the betterment of all students.

We encourage the passage of Governor's Bill 6837 and hope that Connecticut will take its place as leader in reducing school arrests and keeping more of our students in the classroom learning.



About Connecticut PTA

Connecticut PTA comprises over 44,000 members consisting of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools and well-being of children. PTA is a registered 501(c) (3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education, children's health and child welfare. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health and welfare of children and youth.