



Gear up for PTA Healthy Lifestyles Month in November and all year long!

It is important for children to come to school emotionally and physically healthy. Studies have shown that children's physical well-being has a significant effect on their learning and long-term success. When children are well-rested, well-nourished, and physically fit they are more ready to learn.

Texas PTA is committed to building healthy families and healthy communities, and believes we all have an important role to play in making sure parents, schools, and communities have the support and resources they need.

Texas PTA Advocates for the Whole Child

by Carey Dabney, Texas PTA Healthy Lifestyles

Children learn what we teach them. If we only teach them math, science and English, then leave it up to them to learn about health, art and music on their own, we will get what we have now - children whose health is failing and whose creative problem solving abilities have been stifled by lack of opportunity. Too many of our Texas children are unhealthy and too many of them are failing to graduate.

According to [The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development](#), who champion changes to ensure that all children get a great education, "Common sense and research tells us that to do well academically, students must be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged."

Teaching The Whole Child is an important concept for Texas parents and legislators to understand. As Texas schools have faced decades of budget cuts and increased emphasis on testing core academic subjects, they have done away with art and music, PE and health, nurses, and now recess. In their place we have junk food and vending machines, soda sales, and candy fund raisers. As budget cuts undermine and test preparations limit a school's ability to teach The Whole Child, rates of obesity and Type II diabetes, which are diet and exercise-related diseases, have skyrocketed in both children and adults, while the achievement gap and health disparities have grown. Poor health and an undereducated population cost the state of Texas billions of dollars in health care costs and lost productivity, all of which contributes to the budget challenges facing our state and our public education system.

As children go back to class this year, schools continue to look for places to trim the budget. Texas has some of the strongest school health laws and policies in the nation, but implementing the law that requires school districts to have a School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and following the Texas Public School Nutrition Policy (TPSNP) has been difficult. As concerned parents and community members, it is important you understand the issues, know who to speak to and what to ask. Schools need help finding solutions to the many challenges confronting them today, and Texas PTA is here to help you open up a dialog between parents, schools and policymakers to find those solutions.

If you are not yet a member of PTA, consider joining one of the largest child advocacy organizations in the country. Texas PTA celebrates its 100th birthday this year and proudly continues to strive to fulfill the mission of being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities and a strong advocate for the education and wellbeing of every child. We need your help to ensure that every child in Texas has the opportunity to receive a quality public school education and that we are teaching and supporting The Whole Child.