



87th Legislative Session

Texas PTA Legislative Priority

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

Support policies that reduce childhood obesity through education, healthy food choices, and physical activity.

Texas PTA is a member of The Partnership for a Healthy Texas (PFHT). With 50 participating organizations, the coalition develops and promotes state policies that prevent and combat obesity in Texas.

The Partnership for a Healthy Texas works to:

- Encourage collaboration among parties interested in policy change to reduce obesity.
- Inform and educate policymakers about the consequences of obesity.
- Promote evidence-based obesity reduction strategies in policymaking.
- Disseminate policy information and resources to stakeholders interested in obesity prevention.

Texas PTA will support legislation to:

- Ensure all Texas children have access to a well-rounded education which includes recess, physical education, and instruction on health.
- Eliminate food insecurity exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic; increase Texans' access to healthy foods and decrease their risk of obesity.
- Maintain and strengthen Texas' current public infrastructure to address obesity.

BACKGROUND

Ensure all Texas children have access to a well-rounded education which includes recess, physical education, and instruction on health.

- By adolescence, [33% of Texas youth](#) are overweight or obese.
- Only 27% of Texas children get the recommended amount of daily physical activity.
- PE has shown to provide a positive 'return on investment.' [Research has found](#) a benefit of more than \$33 for every \$1 invested in school-based physical activity and PE programs, such as reduced healthcare costs and increased labor participation.
- Physically [active children are more likely to thrive](#) academically and socially. Children who participate in physical activity tend to have better grades, and higher levels of activity and physical fitness are associated with improved memory and concentration among students.
- PE instruction is designed to develop motor skills, knowledge and behaviors for active living, physical fitness, sportsmanship, self-efficacy, and emotional intelligence.

Visit txpta.org/legislative-priorities



87th Legislative Session

Texas PTA Legislative Priority

HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

- According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), PE reduces obesity and related chronic diseases. Physical inactivity and poor nutrition are contributing to high rates of heart disease, diabetes, and other related chronic diseases.
- According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), 71% of young adults in Texas between the ages of 17-24 would not qualify to serve in the U.S. military. One of the leading medical disqualifiers is being overweight.
- Our increasingly sedentary lifestyle has led to dramatic levels of obesity among children and youth.
- Schools can serve as an important support to families teaching about healthy eating and activity. Learning how to live a healthy lifestyle, and [understanding the impact of food and physical activity](#) on your overall health, are essential to a student's growth and their ability to learn.

Eliminate food insecurity exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic; increase Texans' access to healthy foods and decrease their risk of obesity.

- According to [Feeding America](#), the largest hunger-relief organization in the United States, "an estimated 17 million people in the country could become food insecure because of the pandemic, bringing the total to more than 54 million people in the country, including 18 million children. Before COVID-19, food insecurity was at its lowest since the Great Recession, but it still impacted 37 million people."
- A [report published by the United States Department of Agriculture](#) in 2017 found that food insecurity was associated with 10 of the costliest and most deadly preventable diseases in the country, including hypertension, diabetes, cancer, and stroke. Conversely, a healthier diet, particularly one that focuses on plant-based meals, has been associated with reduced risk for several chronic diseases, depression, and decreased mental function.

Maintain and strengthen Texas' current public health and educational infrastructure to address obesity.

- Roughly 12 years ago, the Texas Legislature removed the requirement that high school students take one semester of health in an effort to reduce the number of required classes, making room for more electives.
- The [state of Texas requires](#) schools to provide physical education that meets curriculum standards but provides school districts a great deal of flexibility in how they may deliver that instruction. At the high school level, students must earn at least one physical education credit (not to exceed four credits) in order to graduate.
- [Research by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#) shows a strong connection between healthy behaviors and academic performance. Healthy students are better learners, and academic achievement bears a lifetime of benefits for health.

Visit txpta.org/legislative-priorities