



PENNSYLVANIA TEACHERS
ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**Executive Summary of Resources
and Actions
for Implementation**

**PTAC Virtual Summit on Teaching
and Learning
2020-2021 School Year**

About the Pennsylvania Teachers Advisory Committee

Vision

All students thriving in a quality education system shaped by teacher expertise

Mission

To ensure essential decisions that impact students are informed by expert teachers

About

The Pennsylvania Teachers Advisory Committee (PTAC) is a non-profit organization composed of active classroom teachers from across the Commonwealth who have been recognized as expert practitioners and demonstrated professional leadership.

PTAC Members have been recognized for teaching excellence by these organizations and others like them:

- American Association of School Librarians
- Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation
- Center for Creative Learning through the Arts
- Future Farmers of America
- Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History
- GRAMMY Educator Awards
- Global Teacher Prize
- International Society for Technology in Education
- International Technology and Engineering Educators Association
- Microsoft
- Milken Family Foundation
- NASA
- National Board for Professional Teaching Standards
- National Education Association
- National Liberty Museum
- National Geographic Society
- National School Boards Association
- National Science Foundation
- National Science Teacher Association
- Pennsylvania Art Education Association
- Pennsylvania Association of Educational Communications and Technology
- Pennsylvania Association of School Retirees
- Pennsylvania School Librarians Association
- Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Philadelphia Home and School Council
- US Department of Education
- US Department of State
- Yale University
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Voya

GEOGRAPHIC DISTRIBUTION OF PTAC MEMBERS

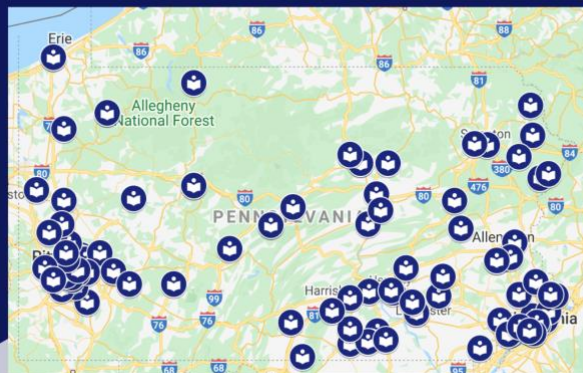


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Introduction

In the spring of 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic created an unprecedented disruption to education in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) scrambled to develop ways to continue learning and meet a myriad of student needs during this period of remote learning. The pandemic has exposed and amplified systemic issues in education that directly impact student growth and success. Driving many of these issues is the lack of equitable access across Pennsylvania to quality education grounded in the holistic wellbeing of children and informed by teacher expertise. This inequity, coupled with insufficient resources and focus for teachers' professional learning, has created one of the most challenging times in education. However, it has also created an opportunity to address these issues which have impeded education in Pennsylvania for decades.

As an organization, PTAC has been uniquely positioned throughout the pandemic to capture data and narrative, drive discussion and begin to formulate solutions specifically impacting teaching and learning. Having met throughout the pandemic in teacher networks, PTAC developed recommendations for teaching and learning in the 2020-2021 school year, which were published in June 2020. On July 16, 2020, PTAC hosted a Virtual Summit on Teaching and Learning with teachers, organizations, and education stakeholders from across the Commonwealth focused on these recommendations. Below is a curation of resources and strategies developed during the collaboration that occurred during the summit.

Methodology

On March 13, 2020, Governor Tom Wolf mandated the closure of all Pennsylvania school buildings due to the COVID-19 pandemic. PTAC responded by immediately creating teacher networks designed to support both member and non-member teachers, to engage with education decision makers in Harrisburg, and to develop resources for teachers transitioning to a remote teaching environment. PTAC's strategy involved two synchronous virtual weekly PLC (Professional Learning Community) meetings. One organized by grade level for member and non-member teachers and one member-only meeting focusing on a problem of practice. These virtual meetings began during the week of March 16th and continued well into June.

Throughout this time, PTAC conducted a series of online surveys designed to better understand the experiences of teachers and students in Pennsylvania. These surveys received over 900 responses from active classroom teachers in the Commonwealth and served to guide PTAC's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected, and responses were disaggregated by the geographic location of the respondent (rural, suburban, small urban, and large urban).

The data and narratives in these surveys, as well as hundreds of reflections in live PLC meetings, exposed a series of concerns that teachers had about both teaching and learning during the pandemic. Teachers had grave concerns for students' social-emotional and mental health, inequitable access to education, a lack of culturally responsive learning, and the trauma children were experiencing during the pandemic.

As professionals, they also were worried about their own mental health and that of their colleagues, a lack of professional training on new technologies and teaching strategies that meet the needs of students at this unsettled time, and the negative unintended consequences that students would face if teachers were not informing district and state education decisions for the next school year.

After a series of virtual work sessions, a PTAC committee was convened to develop recommendations for teaching and learning during the 2020-2021 school year (Appendix A). Unlike guidance that has been developed by some other organizations, these recommendations focus exclusively on teaching and learning rather than operations and procedures.

Organizations Represented at the PTAC Virtual Summit on Teaching and Learning

- Pennsylvania Senate Education Committee
- Pennsylvania House Education Committee
- Pennsylvania Department of Education
- Pennsylvania Attorney General's Office
- Pennsylvania State Education Association
- Pennsylvania Association of Intermediate Units
- Pennsylvania Chapter, Education Theatre Association
- Pennsylvania State Modern Language Association
- Pennsylvania School Librarians Association
- Pennsylvania Council of Teachers of English & Language Arts
- Literacy Association of Greater Erie
- Pennsylvania Teachers Advisory Committee
- Pennsylvania School Boards Association
- Pennsylvania Music Teachers Association
- Pennsylvania Art Education Association
- Pennsylvania Arts Education Leadership Coalition
- Pennsylvania Science Curriculum Council
- Pennsylvania Association for Educational Communications and Technology
- Network of State Teachers of the Year - Pennsylvania Chapter
- Teach Plus Pennsylvania

According to self-reporting on conference registration

On July 16, 2020, PTAC hosted a virtual summit in which delegates from state-level education organizations, PTAC members and active teacher guests, representatives from the PA House and Senate Education Committees, and the Pennsylvania Department of Education were invited to develop advice for schools to implement PTAC's recommendations for teaching and learning. During the call, participants were randomly assigned to three breakout rooms, each focusing on a different focus area. After the summit, PTAC members who served as moderators in each of those breakout rooms met to develop this executive summary.

Recommendation 1 - Holistic Wellbeing of Students

Participants in Breakout Group 1 focused on the importance of protecting the holistic wellbeing of children during the 2020-2021 school year. 74.7% of Pennsylvania teachers responding to a PTAC during the spring quarantine, claimed to be either very concerned or extremely concerned about meeting the needs of students. One rural high school teacher shared,

“My greatest concern is the mental health of my students. I worry about how they are coping with all of the current changes. More importantly than teaching content, the students need to feel supported. If they do not feel safe and supported, they will struggle to learn. I hope that I am doing enough to help them.”

Her concern was echoed by many teachers in multiple survey comments, as well as narrative from Professional Learning Communities held throughout the quarantine. Teachers fundamentally understand that students cannot effectively learn when their basic needs are not being met (Maslow, 1943). Many schools developing continuity of education plans for the 2020-2021 school year are engaged in discussions about how curriculum can be delivered in virtual classrooms, hybrid models, and physical locations that are adapted to new safety standards. The teachers in our Professional Learning Communities and those who have responded to surveys have overwhelmingly expressed the importance of school districts equally focusing on the social and emotional needs of our children.

Teachers and schools in Pennsylvania are not equally able to address that socio-emotional health, however. Feedback from teachers across the Commonwealth has shown us that disparities in resources, training, and intentionality of focus in this area have led to gross inequities.

Participants at the summit in the discussion about holistic wellbeing of students extended PTAC’s earlier survey findings and narrative. They determined that meeting the social and emotional needs of all students in the Commonwealth is only possible with an intentional focus on culturally responsive educational practices. It was also emphasized that many of Pennsylvania’s educators require targeted professional learning experiences to develop culturally responsive strategies for their classrooms. The discussion also acknowledged that, while the challenges of developing a culturally responsive school are substantial in all areas, these challenges manifest themselves differently in rural, suburban, and urban communities.

Summit participants in this breakout group also discussed the role and importance of the arts, humanities, physical activity, mental health resources, and librarians. These vital aspects of a holistic education both promote social-emotional health and aid in developing competencies that are vital to the future workforce into which our students will graduate. There was worry expressed during the conversation that during this time of crisis and uncertainty schools might look to restrict access to these subjects and resources, thus jeopardizing the holistic wellbeing of students.

During the breakout group conversation, many participants shared resources on Social-Emotional Learning, whole-child education, arts-integration, culturally responsive teaching, and other topics that were discussed. These resources can be found below.

Resources

Topic	Resource	Where to find it
Social-Emotional Learning & Whole Child Education	Second Step Program	https://www.secondstep.org/
Social-Emotional Learning & Whole Child Education	Discovery Education SEL Channel	https://www.discoveryeducation.com/learn/go-beyond-sel/
Social-Emotional Learning & Whole Child Education	Restorative Practices and Classroom Circles	https://www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/Resources/
Social-Emotional Learning & Whole Child Education	ASCD Whole Child Approach	http://www.ascd.org/whole-child.aspx
Social-Emotional Learning & Whole Child Education	Learning Policy Institute: Leveraging Social and Emotional Learning to Support Students and Families in the Time of COVID-19	https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/blog/leveraging-social-emotional-learning-support-students-families-covid-19
Arts Integration and Social-Emotional Learning	Pennsylvania Art Education Association Resources	http://paeablog.org/resources-for-art-educators/
Arts Integration and Social-Emotional Learning	University of Chicago Arts Education and Social-Emotional Learning Outcomes Among K-12 Students	https://consortium.uchicago.edu/publications/arts-education-and-social-emotional-learning-outcomes
Arts Integration and Social-Emotional Learning	National Association for Music Education: Music Education and Social-Emotional Learning	https://nafme.org/music-education-social-emotional-learning/
Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning	<i>Culturally Responsive Teaching and the Brain</i>	https://us.corwin.com/en-us/nam/culturally-responsive-teaching-and-

		the-brain/book241754
Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning	CommonLit: A Reading Program that Reaches All Students	www.commonlit.org
Equity and Inclusion	Pennsylvania Department of Education Equity and Inclusion Information	https://education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/equityandinclusion https://www.education.pa.gov/Schools/safeschools/equityandinclusion/Pages/default.aspx
Equity and Inclusion	PaTTAN Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS)	https://www.pattan.net/Multi-Tiered-System-of-Support/Equity
Equity and Inclusion	First Book: Encouraging Educators to Have Conversations with Students about Race	https://firstbook.org/
Equity and Inclusion	Great Lakes Equity Center: Assessing Bias in Curricular Materials	https://greatlakesequity.org/resource/assessing-bias-standards-and-curricular-materials
Teaching/Curriculum Resources	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development: Annotated Resources for Online Learning	https://www.oecd.org/education/Supporting-the-continuation-of-teaching-and-learning-during-the-COVID-19-pandemic.pdf
Teaching/Curriculum Resources	ActivelyLearn: award-winning digital curriculum drives engagement and equity in class and at home.	https://www.activelylearn.com/

References

Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370–396.

Recommendation 2 - Teacher Informed Decision Making

Participants in Breakout Group 2 discussed how teachers, more than any other education stakeholders, are uniquely positioned to understand the daily challenges within classrooms and the collective needs of students. To ensure a quality education for students and to avoid the negative unintended consequences of decisions that are made without deep understanding of their practical implications, teachers should be included in all discussions that shape teaching and learning. Additionally, the perspectives and expertise of teachers representing the diverse backgrounds, cultures, and identities of students should be included in shaping education policies at both the local and state levels.

Recognizing that both teachers and students have a variety of talents and skills, summit participants emphasized the importance of differentiating instruction to meet the needs of individual students and classes throughout the 2020-21 school year. Participants recommended using locally developed assessments rather than standardized tests. Participants concluded that standardized assessments cannot account for the disruption and inequitable educational experiences that students have faced, and are facing, during the pandemic. A rural elementary teacher in northeastern Pennsylvania shared,

“In the best of times, the standardized test that we use as the basis for many important decisions in our schools cannot account for the diversity of backgrounds, lived experiences, and challenges that our students face. Now, during this time of incredible disruption caused by COVID, any decisions that rely on impersonal data rather than my intimate understanding of what my students are experiencing are bound to do much more harm than good.”

Participants agreed that quality teaching and learning requires a focus on differentiation, equity and inclusiveness for all. This includes, but is not limited to, racial, socio-economic, geographic language, and gender considerations. During the period of remote learning, many equity gaps were exposed that created barriers for certain groups of students to succeed. As an example, 22.6% of Pennsylvania teachers responding to a PTAC during the spring quarantine, shared that language barriers prevented some of their students from participating fully in learning. These issues must be addressed if Pennsylvania schools are to give every child the opportunity to succeed next school year.

Of great concern throughout the conversations was the issue of equity. It was noted that structural reforms, including an examination of funding formulas, were necessary to ensure that all groups are provided equitable opportunities. Inequitable access to internet connectivity and devices for students and teachers trying to engage in remote learning and teaching was provided as an example of how school funding directly impacts the education to many students in Pennsylvania. This observation extends to access to course offerings, software packages and support systems (see recommendation #1).

The intentional inclusion of teachers in school decision-making, especially when those teachers are representative of the students they teach, can guide schools in developing a culture of inclusion that supports all children. A teacher in the Philadelphia Public School System stated that the district includes teachers and board members in their planning and decision-making matrices in an intentional manner.

Summit participants agreed that teachers should have agency in shaping their curriculum and classroom activities. A high school teacher from a suburban southwestern Pennsylvania district pointed out that classroom teachers are effective when they use their expertise and knowledge of students to teach the required curriculum instead of being forced to use scripted textbook programs. Scripted programs prevent teachers from leveraging knowledge of students' individual background and interests to personalize learning and provide the maximum opportunity for success. Those in the conversation stressed how critical culturally inclusive curricula and pedagogical practices are. The Project Lit Community was shared as a resource for integrating authentic literature into instruction.

The importance of teacher networking and professional development also was discussed. As with any profession, educators who are isolated from others cannot improve and grow effectively. Participants argued for an increased focus on instructional coaching and school-district level collaboration opportunities throughout the year to assist both teachers and administrators in developing competencies based on the PA standards and allow for all students to experience differentiated developmental and academic growth.

A PTAC member who teaches in a suburban middle school in southeastern Pennsylvania shared information from the Sanger Unified School District in California, which has successfully closed equity gaps, improved student outcomes, and increased property values after implementing a distributed leadership model and other reforms. This led to a robust conversation about the success of distributed leadership models in closing equity gaps and elevating the professional expertise of teachers in school district-level decisions. Several resources were shared that highlight the power of this model to promote positive outcomes for all students and may be found in the resources below.

Finally, the group expressed that experienced teachers can be efficient mentors. It was suggested that expanded mentorship programs be implemented in districts in collaboration with universities offering pre-service educational programs. Giving novice teachers access to real-world experience and support from their professional peers would help to support and develop the future teaching force. A PTAC member and high school teacher from a small urban district in central Pennsylvania recommended that the complete final year of new teacher schooling be an in-school mentorship to help new teachers understand the unforeseen expectations in the classroom. Participants also felt that continued education and training must be provided to help experienced teachers in navigating the ever-changing initiatives in education.

Resources

Topic	Resource	Where to find it
Teacher-Informed Curriculum	Sanger Unified School District: Sanger	https://www.sangerlearns.com/gvc.html
Authentic Literature Integration	Project Lit Community	https://www.booksourcebatter.com/2018/06/25/what-is-project-lit-community/
School Distributed Leadership Model	Gates Foundation: 4 Things to Know about Distributed Leadership	http://k12education.gatesfoundation.org/blog/4-key-things-know-distributed-leadership/
School Distributed Leadership Model	Learning Policy Institute: Positive Outliers Case Study on Sanger Unified School District	https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Positive_Outliers_Quantitative_CS_Sanger_REPO_RT.pdf
School Distributed Leadership Model	Bain & Company: Transforming Schools - How distributed leadership can create more high-performing schools	https://www.bain.com/insights/transforming-schools/
Teacher Diversity	Research for Action: Data on Teacher Diversity in Education	https://www.researchforaction.org/publications/new-data-on-teacher-diversity-in-pennsylvania/
Teacher Diversity	Pennsylvania Department of Education: Aspiring to Educate	https://www.education.pa.gov/Postsecondary-Adult/Pages/Aspiring-to-Educate.aspx

Recommendation 3 - Teacher Well-being

Breakout Group 3 focused the conversation on the importance of local schools and school districts prioritizing and creating support for teacher well-being. During the 2020-21 school year, safety requirements in classrooms, changes in scheduling and methods of delivering instruction from in-class to hybrid or fully asynchronous and synchronous remote learning, will require teachers to completely rethink all of their lessons and teaching strategies. In addition, teachers are likely to be exposed to COVID-19 by their students and are, therefore, at a greater risk of endangering their own families. The need for intentional and comprehensive planning for and support of teacher well-being has never been more critical.

In January 2019, before the start of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the National Institutes of Health published a report entitled, "School Mental Health Is Not Just for Students: Why Teacher and School Staff Wellness Matters" (Lever et al, 2019). The report discloses that

- According to a 2015 Gallup poll, 46% of teachers in K-12 settings report high levels of daily stress during the school year - tied with nurses for the highest among all professions surveyed,
- The American Federation of Teachers in 2015 found that 78% of teachers reported feeling physically and emotionally exhausted at the end of the day, and
- In a 2014 survey by the American Psychological Association, while 89% of teachers reported being enthusiastic about teaching when they started the profession, only 15% reported being enthusiastic at the time they completed the survey.

In the midst of remote teaching last spring, PTAC surveyed hundreds of Pennsylvania teachers about their experiences. Many teachers shared their increased concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of themselves and their colleagues, citing increased stress and anxiety about the social-emotional health of students, balancing family and work obligations, protecting themselves and family members from becoming infected with the virus, and increased professional responsibilities being imposed on them. Those concerns are exemplified by this quote from a rural high school teacher in southeastern Pennsylvania:

“One of my biggest concerns is... the mental health strain on teachers and students moving forward in a time of extreme uncertainty.”

If teachers are physically, emotionally and mentally well, then they are unable to help students be physically, emotionally and mentally well. Many students entering the 2020-21 school year have experienced trauma during the pandemic and will need help coping with that trauma. Teachers will be the first responders for many of these students. Summit participants were clear: Teachers must be provided with emotional, instructional, social, and technological support to meet the needs of the students in their

classroom environments, but also support to be socially, emotionally, physically, and mentally well themselves.

Several teachers and other summit participants shared effective tools and strategies that districts have used to address teacher well-being. These are shared below.

Strategies

- A kindergarten teacher from a rural school district in Northeastern Pennsylvania shared that conversation prompts are given to teachers to help them identify potential social-emotional issues in their classrooms. Since school administrators, like teachers, often lack training in the social-emotional domain, districts could provide conversation prompts to school leaders that could be used to identify potential issues with the staff.
- Teachers, like students, sometimes have a difficult time verbalizing their anxiety or stress. A PTAC member who is an elementary teacher in southern Pennsylvania explained that allowing teachers time to write and reflect as part of a districts' professional development could be used as a way to help teachers identify, and then address, factors that are negatively impacting their mental wellbeing.
- Both a suburban elementary school teacher from southwestern Pennsylvania and an elementary teacher in a rural northwestern district shared that their schools were explicit and intentional about building relationships between teachers and students through a buddy program. Teacher mentorship programs could be used to be intentional about building staff relationships in the same way.
- A Philadelphia elementary teacher explained that her school uses "Morning Meetings" (<https://www.edutopia.org/practice/morning-meetings-creating-safe-space-learning>) to create a culture of safety and trust among students. Faculty meetings that incorporate components of this "Responsive Classroom" model could assist in building the same culture building wide.
- Because so many students are in need of additional monitoring of social-emotional health, a rural elementary teacher in northeastern Pennsylvania suggested that providing additional time for teachers to make phone-calls home and interact with parents would alleviate some of the stress that teachers are feeling.
- A high school music teacher in suburban southwestern Pennsylvania shared the 2 x 10 philosophy (<https://thecornerstoneforteachers.com/the-2x10-strategy-a-miraculous-solution-for-behavior-issues/>) he uses to systematically build rapport with students over a ten day period, and wondered if something similar could be used with school staff.

Resources

Topic	Resource	Where to find it
Teacher and Student Wellness	Pennsylvania Department of Education Staff and Student Wellness Guide	https://www.education.pa.gov/Documents/K-12/Safe%20Schools/COVID/GuidanceDocuments/Staff%20and%20Student%20Wellness%20Guide.pdf
Teacher and Student Wellness	<i>Permission to Feel</i> by Dr. Marc Brackett - Recommended to be incorporated into teacher PD plans	https://www.amazon.com/Permission-Feel-Unlocking-Emotions-Ourselves/dp/1250212847
Teacher and Student Wellness	Centers for Disease Control Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Survey - Recommended to be adapted to assess teacher trauma	https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/acestudy/index.html
Teacher Professional Learning and Development	Allegheny Intermediate Unit 3: TransformED Educator Workshops	https://pa49000033.schoolwires.net/Page/4852
Teacher Professional Learning and Development	<i>Relationship, Responsibility, and Regulation: Trauma-Invested Practices for Fostering Resilient Learners</i> by Kristin Van Marter Souers and Pete Hall	https://www.amazon.com/Relationship-Responsibility-Regulation-Trauma-Invested-Practices-ebook/dp/B07LG53N3D
Teacher Professional Learning and Development	Edcamp: Free Professional Development for Teachers by Teachers	https://www.edcamp.org/

References

Lever N, Mathis E, Mayworm A. School Mental Health Is Not Just for Students: Why Teacher and School Staff Wellness Matters. *Rep Emot Behav Disord Youth*. 2017;17(1):6-12.

Appendix A

PTAC Recommendations on Teaching and Learning for the 2020-2021 School Year

June 22, 2020

Fellow Pennsylvanians,

Last month, a Philadelphia high school senior opened a borrowed Chromebook for the first time, frustrated that he didn't know how to engage with the new technology necessary for remote learning. A student in rural Pennsylvania wanted to send an email to his teacher explaining that he was struggling to complete his schoolwork because of the hours he was spending at his new job at the grocery store, but couldn't because he had no internet connection at home. A teacher in the suburbs of Pittsburgh couldn't sleep because she was worried about the students she had not heard from despite repeated attempts - more than 50% of her class.

Pennsylvania has some of the most severe race and income disparities in educational access and opportunity in the United States. These disparities were exposed and amplified by the shift to remote teaching during the COVID-19 Pandemic, despite the intrepid efforts of teachers who adapted to remote teaching with unprecedented speed. The 2020-2021 school year will undoubtedly continue to present many challenges, and a crisis is not a time to take chances with our children. Therefore, in this critical time we must look to those who best understand the learning needs of our students and ensure that the expertise of teachers is driving education decisions.

To that end, since the disruption of education in mid-March, PTAC has conducted surveys and held dozens of online meetings to gather thousands of perspectives from Pennsylvania teachers in urban, suburban, and rural areas. Based on these trends, the highly recognized classroom teachers that compose the membership of PTAC make the following recommendations.

Education must focus on the holistic wellbeing of children to ensure our students are mentally, emotionally, physically, and academically healthy.

- We recommend every school district develop locally relevant, comprehensive, and sustained Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) plans that prioritize the holistic wellbeing of students. These plans must involve families and communities, focusing on activities that promote relationships and student wellness, especially during the first weeks of school.
- We recommend school districts support access to arts, humanities, physical education, and electives, as well as mental health professionals, school nurses, and school librarians. A holistic education prepares children for a 21st-century workforce, develops engagement in learning, supports social and emotional wellness, and allows students to understand how learning applies to the world. These programs must be equitably accessible to all children.
- We recommend every school district embrace culturally responsive teaching and

learning. This should incorporate history inclusive of marginalized perspectives and literature that represents and celebrates diverse cultures and individuals.

- We recommend district leaders reject any efforts to restrict access to the above-mentioned resources and curriculum areas. Additional trauma cannot be inflicted on students by cutting school programs that help them find their identities and passions.

Teachers are educational experts, and thus all decisions about teaching and learning must be driven by their input.

- We recommend every school district create avenues for teachers to help shape teaching and learning for the upcoming school year.
- We recommend all education decisions at the state level be informed by teachers from diverse backgrounds. Teachers, who understand the practical implications of policies, must be included in conversations with decision makers and guide the decision-making process.
- We recommend differentiated instruction (teaching that meets the needs of each individual student) continue. Teachers must be allowed to create their own lessons. Scripted and standardized instructional programs that do not account for teacher expertise limit students' learning and exacerbate equity gaps.
- We recommend determining student needs, designing interventions, and assessing student growth next year be done through teacher-created or local assessments. Standardized tests cannot account for inequitable access to education this spring and should not be administered in the upcoming academic year.

Districts and schools must prioritize the support and wellbeing of teachers, because teachers cannot help students be successful if they are not well themselves.

- We recommend all teachers receive training to meet all children's needs. All school staff must have ongoing support in promoting social-emotional learning, identifying children who have experienced trauma, and creating inclusive classroom spaces protective of all children.
- We recommend teachers receive training on relevant new technologies. If remote teaching must occur, teachers should have access to professional development on effective remote teaching practices and technologies for their content areas.
- We recommend teachers have the ability to self-identify and access professional development that will help them better meet the needs of students.
- We recommend that districts develop and implement a plan that gives teachers sustained access to mental health professionals and creates safe working conditions.

Sincerely,

The Pennsylvania Teachers Advisory Committee

PTAC Board of Directors

<p>Mairi Cooper, President The 2015-16 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year and Yale University Distinguished Music Educator, Mairi is the orchestra director and chair of the music department at Fox Chapel Area High School.</p>	<p>Michael Soskil, Vice-President The 2017-18 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year and a 2016 Global Teacher Prize Top-10 Finalist, Michael is an elementary science teacher at the Wallenpaupack South Elementary School.</p>
<p>Brice Hostutler, Treasurer A National Board Certified Teacher, Brice is a special education teacher at Pittsburgh Perry High School. He teaches math and English while specializing in therapeutic support.</p>	<p>Cindy Ollendyke, Secretary A 2006 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year finalist, Cindy has thirty-five years' experience teaching science at the middle school level in the Peters Township School District.</p>
<p>Karey Killian The 2017 International Society for Technology in Education Librarian of the Year, Karey helps students see themselves as explorers, makers, inventors, and solution finders in the Milton Area School District.</p>	<p>Allison Mackley A 2017 Pennsylvania Teacher of the Year Finalist, Allison is published in professional journals and has received several honors for library programming and educational leadership in her position at Hershey HS.</p>
<p>Jeffrey Patrick A recipient of the Carnegie Science Award, Jeffrey teaches computer science at Propel Schools in Pittsburgh.</p>	<p>Tony Rocco Recipient of the National Liberty Museum's "Teacher as Hero" Award, Tony teaches children photography and how to appreciate one another in Philadelphia.</p>
<p>Rebecca Snyder The 2009 Pennsylvania Teacher of Year, Rebecca teaches English Language Arts at Greater Latrobe Senior High School.</p>	<p>Heather Zajdel A recipient of the Fulbright Distinguished Award in Teaching and Lindback Teaching Award, Heather is a science lead and member of the Social-Emotional Learning Team in the Philadelphia School District</p>

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