

PAA HISTORY AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS



Parents Across America (PAA) was formed in 2010 by a small group of active parent leaders from all backgrounds across the U.S. who shared a concern about the direction of public education policy making, and the fact that the voices of grassroots parents were not being heard as critical policy changes were being made. We developed a “What We Believe” statement, which specifies our opposition to the corporate education agenda of mass school closings, charter school expansion, high-stakes testing, and attacks on teacher professionalism and student data privacy, strategies that are not based on solid research or supported by most parents, and are harmful to our children, our communities and our democracy. Our statement of beliefs also details our support for proven, progressive policies and practices such as a child-centered curriculum, a strong parent voice in school decision making, quality multiple assessments, experienced and well-supported teachers, and adequate funding for solid, effective programs such as preschool, increased social services and reduced class size, and for schools overall.

This statement of beliefs has resonated strongly with parents all over the U.S. Parents want to join us, and many have formed new PAA chapters which have empowered them to carry out this vision at the local level. We currently have 50 chapters in 26 states.

In 2017 we carried out our first [survey of parents](#) on what's most important in public education, and shared the responses of the 584 parent participants in a webinar, with Congress, and the media. We feel that our survey helps us stay current with public school parent issues and concerns, and keeps our voice authentic.

We have been in the forefront of challengers to the expansion of digital technology in schools which is being driven by corporate interests with little attention paid to the many negative effects on students. Our research work (<http://parentsacrossamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/Documentation6-29-16JW.pdf>) is strengthening parents' efforts to raise questions about the amount, effects, and effectiveness of this growing use of digital devices in schools and was recognized by the Maryland legislature in a proposal to monitor in-school screen time.

Our groundbreaking research (<http://parentsacrossamerica.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/Test-Stress-facts-2-1-16rev.pdf>) found links between the misuse and overuse of standardized tests and increased student test anxiety. Standardized testing has been significantly cut back in most states.

We developed an extensive program addressing Race, Poverty and Educational Opportunity by collaborating with well-known educator, Dr. Paul Thomas, prepared parent-friendly materials

exposing the “unlevel playing field” (<http://tinyurl.com/oplkauv>), sponsored several webinars and workshops, and established a topical online book club.

We communicate our concerns and recommendations to Congress and the House and Senate education committees with regular “Parent Voices Education Faxes” sent directly to each member (sample here: <http://parentsacrossamerica.org/thanks-congress-esea-listen-parents/>)

We have challenged efforts of corporate reform to gain ever more access to our children's school and personal data. We worked with our Chicago affiliate to completely stop a contract between the Chicago Board of Education and inBloom, a data gathering firm owned by Rupert Murdoch. Shortly after that, inBloom closed its doors.

We have expanded the [resources](#) we developed for parents, including new fact sheets on [Stand for Children](#), [vouchers](#), and [educational inequities](#) helping expose many of the fallacies of corporate school reform. While the federal government is putting more and more money into charter school expansion, there is growing skepticism from state and local officials.

Our executive director testified before the Nevada legislature about the local school council model, a form of parent-led site-based school management that parents far prefer over the fake “school choice” of charter and voucher proponents, and which is endorsed by PAA (<http://parentsacrossamerica.org/parents-rights/>). The legislature adopted some of the ideas from that model in the structure they adopted for the Clark County NV school system.

We have presented [workshops](#) at national conferences, held three of our own national conferences, offered several webinars including our 2015 and 2017 [PAA Week](#) events, and collaborated with many groups including the Network for Public Education, FairTest, Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, the Parent Coalition for Student Privacy, and Defending the Early Years.