



Our nation needs good public schools. For families, public education is the tool to ensure their children’s future; for businesses, to have the talent that they need to grow; and for communities, a means to come together to shape the future. And for your community to have good public schools, we need you to participate – as a parent, business leader, or as a community member. Public Schools Week 2019 is a time to get involved and talk about all of the good things happening in your school, or simply discover the breadth and depth of learning and growing going on in your school.

Public Schools Week 2019 celebrates our nation’s public schools, our students and the many school professionals who work to help students achieve their greatest potential. A broad group of educators—representing 10 million administrators, teachers, specialists, teacher educators and school board members—will mark the week with events and outreach to their communities. In Washington, a bipartisan group of lawmakers will speak on the importance of a strong public education system for our country’s future economic strength.

Nine out of 10 students in the United States attend neighborhood public schools. Our national average graduation rate is the highest in history and dropout rates--particularly for vulnerable at-risk groups—are declining. Student diversity is at an all-time high.

Public Schools Week will showcase many important programs and practices taking place each day at schools across the country. These schools embrace research-based practices and new technologies to help students build the skills they need to live in the increasingly global society.

We must also celebrate the millions of people who work in their local public education systems: the teachers, administrators, specialists, custodians, bus drivers, and everyone who helps build a better future through education. We need you.

The promise of public education

Public education is the bedrock of the United States. Public schools have helped build our nation, and public education continues to be the portal for individuals to move towards better jobs and richer lives.

As our country was being built in 1779, John Adams co-wrote the state constitution of Massachusetts with the call to create and support public schools. When the nation was expanding, even before the founding of the Constitution, the Congress created both funding and policy to expand education for all as the national expanded with the Northwest Ordinance of 1787. In subsequent years and decades, new states and territories set aside land and funds for public schools. In times of war and peace, our country’s leaders have called on public schools to build and protect our nation. And public schools have responded.

Public schools began integrating STEM classes in the 1980s, and curriculum began to shift to problem-solving models, increasing productivity and laying the groundwork for the technology boom in the 1990s. With all these new innovations, classrooms today look nothing like the models from 19th and 20th centuries.

The Challenges

The expansion of the nation's productivity has a direct relationship to the continued support for public schools and its further support the fulcrum that will determine whether or not individuals get the education that unlocks their potential, families embrace their future, and businesses expand. While we continue to see improvements, we need to expand those improvements and help every public school to be the engine of change for their students, communities, families and businesses.

Public education cannot exist without people. Millions of people, including 3.2 million teachers, currently work in school systems across the country. We need more teachers, administrators, mental health professionals, and all the jobs that help support our students.

We are also educating a more diverse population of students, with vastly different needs, at a time when the global economy and world events are rapidly changing the society that we know. We are learning more about brain development and how young minds work. And we are seeing our students face stresses and pressures that we never imagined. Each day we are confronting with new technologies and challenges we never could have anticipated. Our systems are changing to meet these needs, but moving systems of this magnitude cannot happen quickly enough. There is always room for improvement.

We are asking you to support Public Schools Week as a symbol of the importance of public schools in creating the vibrant nation that America has always promised it will become.

As our founding fathers understood, an educated America is a better America. As we are seeing today, public schools are providing the talent that will create a stronger future.