



You are powerful.
You have the power
to change the world
and you're doing it.
Thank you for your
time and dedication.
#MoPTAProud

Parent Engagement Matters



**Susan
Rupert**
MoPTA

VP of Programs

This article is part of a series
from the executive board
of Missouri PTA.

Looking back, I believe either one of my parents (Bill & Zella) could have been the “poster child” for parent engagement well before the phrase was ever thought of. My mom always attended parent/teacher conferences, plays, art shows and band concerts. She made sure I was at school and on time with my homework done. Every day after school I spent thirty minutes telling her about my day. In high school public speaking became my passion. She would listen to me practice speeches while she cooked dinner. She never complained and pretty soon she knew it better than I did!

In the 70's, PTA dads volunteering at school were not as common as now. My dad attended my programs and conferences but mostly helped me with practical knowledge and character building. Important skills like driving the tractor or truck before I could reach the pedals and how to deliver a baby calf. We would work together in the hay field or feeding the cattle. I learned a lot about working hard and working safely. I knew mistakes had consequences and were an opportunity to learn.

It was the spring of our daughter's kindergarten year when I was asked to join PTA and be a part of the board. **I was pretty new to the community and wanted to be involved in the school just like my parents were when I was in school.** No problem! I could be a PTA mom too by volunteering and baking a few cookies. What I didn't realize years ago is there is so much more to being an engaged PTA parent than baking cookies.

I started attending meetings and went to training. **I learned about the importance of parent involvement and the impact it has on a child's achievement.** I heard speakers talk about legislation and the role PTA plays as the largest child advocacy organization in the country. I felt that I needed to let other parents know about the importance of PTA and why they needed to join. I realized there was a lot I could do on behalf of not just my children but all children. Parents needed to see how hard our teachers work for children and teachers needed to learn how to communicate effectively with parents. Students were given the opportunity to volunteer with adults while providing a service to their school.

PTA has had a big impact on my family and engagement is a priority for us. My husband and children are members. There have been many times we have volunteered at events together. My children, John Michael and Amanda both believe in the importance of being engaged in their school community and advocating for those who cannot advocate for themselves.

It is funny how history repeats itself. I'm a soccer mom driving ten miles to after school activities, I get up thirty minutes early three times a week for jazz band practice. I volunteer for after prom, help with Teachers Appreciation and the local Reflections program. I preview PowerPoint presentations instead of listening to speeches. I check grades online and Trigonometry is way out of my league. Every night my twenty year old tells me (or rather texts me) about her day, says good night and that she loves me.

I realize my parents did so many things to help me reach my potential throughout my childhood and my education. Their engagement has helped me become a better person and parent. Our family engagement has impacted our children's potential to achieve will have a lasting effect on their lives. I encourage you to start your own circle of life that includes family engagement.

Parents Are Powerful

~~BIO~~
~~ADOPTIVE~~
~~FOSTER~~
~~STEP~~

It's not the word before parent that defines, but rather the love and dedication in the parent's heart.



Kristina Wilmoth

Kristina and her husband Josh are birth, foster, and adoptive parents in Springfield, MO. Kristina is a graduate of Missouri State University with a BS in Business and an MS in Health Promotions & Wellness Management but refers to parenting a total of 11 children as her true education.

As an active PTA member at Boyd Elementary and a grant writer for Drew Lewis Foundation, she enjoys creating partnerships with local organizations to make tangible differences in the lives of area children, their families, and their communities.

Being a parent is important. We know this because experts have been telling us for years. But more importantly, we know this because we all have parents who have affected us and made a huge impact on the people we have become. Experts say that parents directly influence the quality of their child's education, sense of self-efficacy (self-confidence), and the relationship between teacher and student by simply being involved. **By attending parent-teacher conferences, engaging in meaningful conversations with our children, and actively seeking out opportunities to interact, we are contributing to the success of our child and that's a big deal.**

Tradition has taught us that the title "parents" belongs to the biological mother and father that gave birth to the child and then raise that child through adulthood. Truthfully, parenting is not so limited. Parents are those directly concerned and interested in the success or failure of a child.

Parents work day and night to provide stability, comfort, and safety for their children. Parents are grandmas and grandpas, aunts and uncles, and older siblings. They are foster parents, adoptive parents, partners and single parents. They are guardians and neighbors, teachers and caretakers. **Parents are those that have taken on the responsibility and the privilege of being mentors, guiding children as they navigate life.**

In the world of business, there is a term frequently used when describing a specific population that is

directly concerned and interested in the success or failure of an organization: Stakeholder. We may think of stakeholders as monetary investors but stakeholders are so much more than a paycheck. They include fundraisers, supporters, employees, volunteers, government partners, and neighbors. Stakeholders provide support for the organization and allow it to contribute as part of a community.

When we realize our position as parents, the next step is to recognize our influence as a stakeholder in our child's life. We have such an amazing power beyond signing permission slips, making tomorrow's sack lunch, or even joining the PTA (although those are important tasks). **Our children provide pure possibilities and it's our responsibility to be support for them as they explore and develop their potential.**

Too often, we give up our power and we don't realize what we have discarded. We succumb to feeling overwhelmed and instead of relying on other stakeholders in our child's life, we ignore the help and forgo the possibilities. In these difficult parenting moments, it's more vital than ever to remember what we already know: being a parent is important. Let's not waste moments and regret missed chances. **If we are present in our child's life, listening to them and experiencing life with them, we are encompassing what parenting has to offer.**

Parenting is important. We know this because our children are worth it...and that's powerful.

Start building a Going to College Culture



By Sharon R. Anhalt
Home/School Communicator,
Hazelwood School District

From the very start, a college-going culture sends a message and develops a mindset of education after high school – college, trade school, community college. It encourages all students to do their best to achieve their goals.

Now, the average two-year old doesn't have goals, but a two-year old can have an expectation of going to college. I once heard a four-year old girl say she was saving her birthday money for college. All children know they are going to high school, but when children grow up in a college-going culture, postsecondary education is the next step after high school.

It would be great if schools, at all levels would create a college-going culture, but even if your school is progressive, parents should start at home. A college-going culture supports or changes your child's mindset about life after high school. Conversations revolve around when/where, not if they're going to continue their education after high school. It's the same as a young child looking forward to going to kindergarten.

Creating a college-going culture at home sends a positive message about the value of your child's goals and academic achievement. If you wanted to promote your family's culture, you might cook certain foods, celebrate specific holidays, speak a language other than English, join a particular religion, embrace certain beliefs, etc. Developing a college-going culture at home is simple.

Start by talking about your child's goals – "You build such amazing buildings with your Legos. I think you might grow up to be an architect." "You do such a good job talking care of your sick dollies, I bet you're going to be a doctor when you grow up." Talk about your child's educational options – "See that building over there, that's where kids go who want to become an architect." "That's St. Louis University's Med School. That's where you could go to become a doctor."

Expose your child to learning opportunities - Visit college campuses or point out local colleges. When you take a trip to Six Flags, you might ask your child, "How do think the rides work?" A trip to the park can lead to a discussion about nature or some science concept. Take a trip to a college game and don't forget to discuss the educational needs for a career.

Introduce Research – you might start when your child is 3rd grade. Ask your child to look up colleges online. You might

need to assist your child with their search. Select one or two of the colleges and ask your child to pretend they will attend one of the schools.

Wear college clothing – dress your kids in college clothing. It's fashionable and gives children a sense of identity, much like a little boy who wants to wear a Ninja Turtle tee-shirt. Wearing college clothing makes an unconscious connection of attending college. You can purchase college tee shirts for children in the school's bookstore.

Start saving for college – Learn about Missouri's 529 Plan. It's an education savings plan operated by the State of Missouri designed to help families set aside funds for future college costs. It is named after Section 529 of the Internal Revenue Code which created these types of savings plans in 1996. The earlier you start depositing money into a MOST account, the more time their money has to grow. Opening an account is free, and you can invest as little as \$25 each time you contribute (\$15 if you choose payroll direct deposit).

Ask your child to contribute to saving for college. I told you about a little four-year old who wanted to save part of her birthday money for college. This may be a good time to teach your child about the benefits of saving money. You might want to open them a bank savings account.

Decorate with college, college, college — decorate your child's room or a wall in the family room or play room with college posters, pennants and pictures. Take pictures of your child on a college campus and post it on the refrigerator. Make sure your child helps you decorate. Older children can do this on their own.

Talk to your child about your experiences if you attended college or trade school and ask your other family members to talk to your child about your college experiences. Tell them about the fun, funny and crazy times you had. Explain what it took for you to get accepted in college, your classes and other interesting facts. Take your child to your school for a visit. Research shows us the value of postsecondary education. United States Labor Statistics show us how a postsecondary education affords us with good job opportunities, higher salaries and an improved quality of life.

A college-going culture early in the early stages of a child's life, inspires and motivates them to do their best in school and beyond. **Building a college-going culture at home promotes an appreciation of academics, drive to achieve goals, desire to succeed in life and to attend a postsecondary institution of education.**

Start today, it's simple and will be second nature.

The AP Class Information You Need To Succeed

By Meagan Gardner,
MoPTA Student Representative

One thing that can be very helpful when it comes to college is taking AP classes in high school. When you take AP classes in high school not only is it great because it allows you to take a harder more college like level class, giving you an idea of what to expect in college while still in the safety of your high school, but if you choose to take the corresponding AP tests you can earn college credit. Each AP test cost a little under 100 dollars, and while this sounds like a lot, if you do well and earn college credit it saves you a lot of money because you will have less hours to pay for in college. However, how do you get to the point of earning credit for college through AP classes?

First you want to make sure that the colleges you are interested in give credit for AP tests. If they do, which a lot of non-private colleges do, then the next step is to figure out what you have to score, on each AP test in order to earn credit at the colleges you are interested in. Most AP tests are graded on a 1-5 scale with a 5 being the best that you can earn. Once you figure out all of this you're set and can decide if it's worth taking, and usually it is.

Don't worry too much about where and when to sign up for AP tests. While each school goes about this differently, they typically send out this information in March/April. However, if you are concerned about how signing up works in your school just go and talk to your counselor; they will be more than happy to help explain how signing up in your school works.

Now what about actually preparing for the AP test? The tests can seem very overwhelming. The number one advice I have for you is to buy a Barron's AP book for whatever course you are planning to take the test in. These books break down the test layout, provide practice tests, and have chapter reviews to prepare you. Start reviewing about late March. You will be coming close to the end of the course so you will have already gone over all of the material at some point in the year. This gives you plenty of time to go in for extra help from your teacher, figure out what you need the most review on, and do the practice test so that you know how the timing and layout of the test works.

I know April and May in high school get very busy, but make time to study. If you go in cold you WILL NOT do well, and then you've wasted your time and money. However, if you've studied and taken the practice tests, you will do just fine. Just relax and remember that you know this stuff, and you'll do great!



COLLEGE ADMISSIONS: What Really Matters?

GPA, extracurricular activities, ACT scores, recommendations: With so many factors playing a part in the college admissions process, some students may wonder which carry the most weight. Collectively, all of the factors come together like a puzzle that will help the admissions officer discover who you are. That said, some factors do weigh more heavily than others.

In 2011, the National Association for College Admission Counseling released its State of College Admission Report, which reveals which factors admissions officers value most!

Considerable Weight Limited Weight
Moderate Weight No Weight

Main Factors



GRADES IN COLLEGE PREP COURSES



Over time, college prep class grades and the strength of a student's curriculum have been the two top factors in the admission decision. Admissions officers view these as the best indicators of how well a student will do in college.



STRENGTH OF CURRICULUM



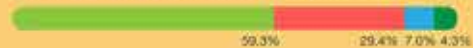
PURPOSE: Shows your motivation and ability to succeed.



TIP: If you're looking to increase the "strength" of your curriculum, take Advanced Placement and International Baccalaureate classes.



ADMISSION TEST SCORES (ACT & SAT)



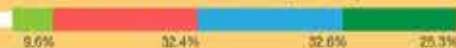
PURPOSE: Compares you to other students nationally.



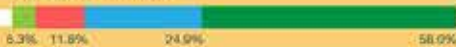
TIP: Retake a test if you feel that the score doesn't reflect your abilities and knowledge.

If your testing scores match up with everything else you've submitted, they'll likely not be a deciding factor.

SUBJECT TEST SCORES (AP, IB)



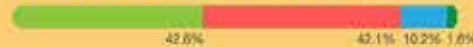
SAT II SCORES



STATE GRADUATION EXAMS



GRADES IN ALL COURSES / GPA



PURPOSE: Provides an overall view of your academic success.



TIP: Speak to your counselor to see if you can take more advanced classes in the future.

While overall GPA can serve as an indicator of academic success, it doesn't necessarily reflect your academic potential or if you challenge yourself. A student taking rigorous classes with a 3.0 GPA is more attractive to colleges than a student taking all regular classes with a 4.0 GPA.

Related factors





Make reading seem fun with games or together time. Your attitude makes a difference. Visit our [Pinterest board Reading Rocks!](#)

Avoid the “Summer Slide” with Read **M**ORE, Missouri!

As the school year winds down, you’re probably turning your attention to summer getaways – amusement parks, water parks, and state parks. The “summer slide” may sound like something you would find in those fun-filled locations, but it’s actually much more serious. The term refers to the decline in reading proficiency that often affects students during their summer break.

Research shows that kids can lose one to three months of learning over the summer. Struggling readers, in particular, lose reading and spelling skills during their time away from the classroom. For Missouri children to reach the Top 10 by 20 goal of college and career readiness, they must have proficient reading skills. You can help prevent summer slide by encouraging your kids to choose appropriate books to read over the summer.

We encourage reading every day, and reading just a few books during the summer months can help children retain their skills for next school year. You can also help your kids discover or renew the joy of reading for pleasure, unlocking new worlds in their imaginations. Find out more with Read MORE, Missouri!, a summer reading program promoted by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: <http://goo.gl/4SBDIO>.

25



Launching young readers!

Reading Rockets

Activities

for Reading & Writing Fun

By: U.S. Department of Education

Spending time reading to your children - whether it's a bedtime story, a family favorite or a new discovery at the library - makes a difference in your child's confidence and ability to read.

Getting a child to be interested in reading and writing is letting them start with a book on a subject the child is interested in.

These activities have been developed by the national reading experts for you to use with children ages birth to Grade 6. The activities are meant to be used in addition to reading with children every day.

In using these activities, your main goal will be to develop great enthusiasm in the reader for reading and writing. You are the child's cheerleader. It is less important for the reader to get every word right exactly right. It is more important for the child to learn to love reading itself. If the reader finishes one book and ask for another, you know you are succeeding! If your reader writes even once a week and comes back for more, you know you have accomplished your beginning goal.

Find ideas for reading & writing fun here!

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/25-activities-reading-and-writing-fun>

We wish you many wonderful hours of reading and writing with your children.

Activity 20 Greetings

Everyone loves to get mail, especially when the card has been personally designed.

What you'll need: Paper and pencils, Crayons and magic markers, Stamps and envelopes

What to do: Ask your child to list the birthdays of family members, relatives, and friends. Show your child some store-bought birthday cards with funny, serious, or thought-provoking messages. Your child can then create his or her own birthday card by using a folded piece of paper, making an attractive cover, and writing a short story or quote inside. Then your child can mail the cards to friends and relatives for their birthdays.

Activity 23 Map to Success

Children love to read road maps and this activity actually helps them with geography.

What you'll need: A road map or atlas, Paper and pencil, Stamps and envelopes

What to do: When planning a vacation, let your child see the road map and help you plan where you will drive. Talk about where you will start and where you will end up. Let your child follow the route between these two points. Encourage your child to write to the Chamber of Commerce for brochures about places you will see on your trip. By exposing your child to words and letters often, your child will begin to recognize the shapes of letters. The world of words will become friendly.

Activity 8 World of Words

Here are a few ways to create a home rich in words.

What you'll need: Paper, Pencils, crayons, markers, Glue, Newspapers, magazines Safety scissors

What to do: Hang posters of the alphabet on the bedroom walls or make an alphabet poster with your child. Print the letters in large type. Capital letters are usually easier for young children to learn first.

Label the things in your child's pictures. If your child draws a picture of a house, label it with "This is a house." and put it on the refrigerator.

Have your child watch you write when you make a shopping list or a "what to do" list. Say the words aloud and carefully print each letter.

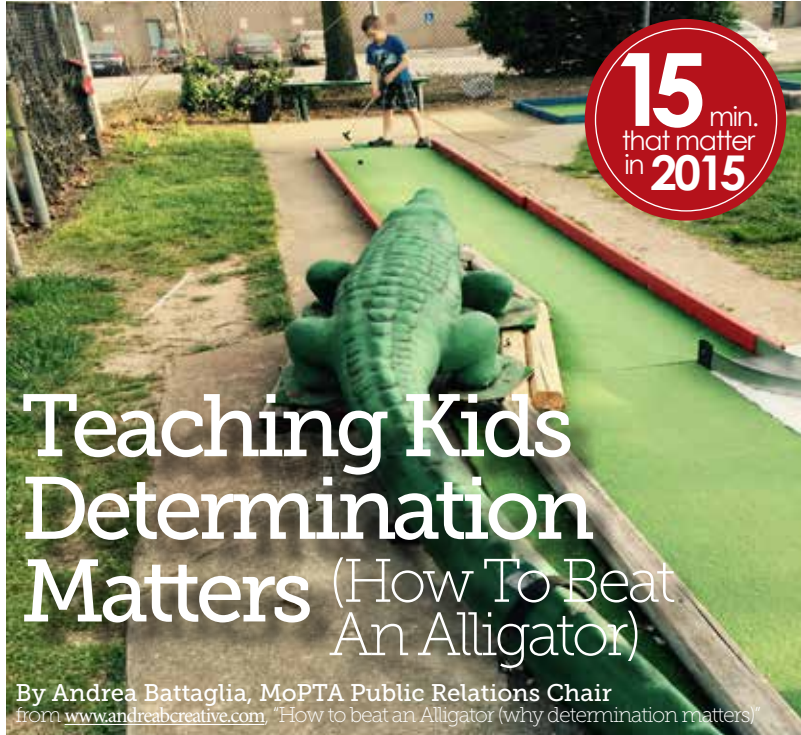
Let your child make lists, too. Help your child form the letters and spell the words.

Look at newspapers and magazines with your child. Find an interesting picture and show it to your child as you read the caption aloud.

Create a scrapbook. Cut out pictures of people and places and label them.

By exposing your child to words and letters often, your child will begin to recognize the shapes of letters. The world of words will become friendly.





Teaching Kids Determination Matters (How To Beat An Alligator)

By Andrea Battaglia, MoPTA Public Relations Chair
 from www.andreabcreative.com, "How to beat an Alligator (why determination matters)"

Understanding and displaying determination matters. It matters for you and it matters for our kids. When things aren't going well – what can pull you through is determination, a positive attitude and a good strategy. Something as simple as a mini-golf course alligator can bring it all into focus.

When the going gets tough; try try try again. My 8-year-old met his nemesis recently. It's the alligator at our local mini-golf course. It was a difficult hole that took just the right angle to make it work, and he couldn't get that angle. Combine that

with the fact that I had made a hole-in-one and little brother had already made two. My competitive 8-year-old hadn't made any, it was almost the end of our game and he was well aware of his situation. You could see the tears brimming in his little eyes. But there was no other mini-golfers around us and I knew we had time, so I encouraged him to try again. He kept hitting it out, he'd hit the side, he'd hit it weird, he'd hit it on the other side – nothing was working. But he kept trying.

For the little things and the big things; don't freak out. With one of his wild hits, he fell to the ground and was ready to give up. He came close to losing it. This Close. But we weren't under pressure to finish our mini-golf game quickly and I knew he needed to learn to be frustrated and work through it. So we kept going and encouraged him to stay focused on his goal of beating this alligator. It was touch-and-go for a little while and it took major focus and just the right angle. But my 8-year-old was starting to be more focused on making his goal than he was realizing how long it was taking.

It helps to have supporters. So, little brother (who is apparently amazing at mini-golf), started cheering my 8-year-old to make the hole-in-one. With every shot, we'd tell him that it was a good try or to keep going or he was making progress. You could see my 8-year-old's attitude changing when he had his cheering team supporting him. He started to believe that he could do it. And finally, it happened! I'll tell you that he earned that hole-in-one on the alligator course. And he was so proud. He only needed 99 practice shots to make it happen.

What really matters at the end of the day. What was most important was our conversation later that evening. Just before bed, my 8-year-old came in to kiss me good night. As he was leaving, I stopped him and said, "You know I'm really proud of you. You kept going and didn't give up. You had a good attitude and you figured out how to reach your goal. Good job." You could see him beaming as he walked out of the room.

Because really, the hole-in-one doesn't matter at all. What was most important was his determination.

The Power of Parents



By Jennifer Council, MoPTA Regional Director, Ozarks

Over and over, major educational research studies have shown how vital it is for parents to be involved in their children's schooling. For instance, encouraging education supports children's achievement more than income, educational level or cultural background.

The earlier parental involvement begins at home the better the results. And the children of parents who participate in school go further in school and attend better colleges than those with uninvolved parents.

Participating in your child's education doesn't mean that you bombard the teacher with questions about your child's progress. Rather, it might begin with a simple question, "How did [my child] do in school today?"

And don't wait for scheduled parent-teacher conferences. Instead, regularly take a few minutes to discuss your child's progress with his or her teacher, whether on the phone or via e-mail depending on what the teacher prefers. Also, check your child's homework, keep track of assignments and assist your child when he or she doesn't comprehend an assignment.

Not convinced that taking part in your child's education has lifetime benefits? Consider the following facts.

- The most accurate predictor of school success is a home setting that encourages children to learn.
- Parents who participate in their child's education improve the child's achievement.
- Positive benefits of parental involvement extend through high school.
- Children from culturally and racially diverse or low-income families have the most to gain from parental input.

There is great power in being a parent. The power of reason, to influence, to make sense, to counter temptation. It comes from the heart and make no mistake, teenagers are fueled by it, sustained by it. To use it is to keep them alive. To ignore it is to risk everything.

Our children enjoy seeing parents being involved even if they don't show it. It shows that you are invested in them and their future.

Legislative Report

June 2015

Local PTA Information

It's not too early to prepare for next school year. Making sure advocacy is at the center of your unit's efforts only takes a little bit of planning. As does any program or event. **Now is the time to identify who will be your local unit legislative chair.**

Great News! The July issue of CONTACT will be devoted to legislation and advocacy, helping you understand the basics or use it to train new members on the information they need to be effective advocates for our children.

Additionally a completely updated Legislative handbook is just about ready to unveil. These resources will provide your unit with the tools for a great advocacy year.

Student Data Privacy

The Missouri Department of Elementary & Secondary Education recently released a memo encouraging school administrators to utilize the U.S. Department of Education's model terms of service guidance when looking to identify online education services and apps that have strong privacy and data security policies to protect students.

This guidance, Protecting Student Privacy While Using Online Education Services: Requirements and Best Practices, explains how these online services and apps rely on a Terms of Service (TOS) agreement commonly referred to as "click-wrap" agreements. Before a district or school clicks on the "I agree" they should carefully review the content of the TOS to make sure the agreement does not lead to violations of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA).

The guide provides examples of best language and warning language. Our students and teachers need access to online tools and apps that can enhance the education. The lure of the multitude of free and low cost products available should not outweigh the importance of protecting our student data privacy. Does your school have a policy in place to address the vetting of online services or apps?

How to be an Advocate

Join the JC/DC Network - forms are located in the Tool kit. You can also join online under the 'Act Now' section on the homepage of the Missouri PTA website for Missouri alerts and online at <http://cqcengage.com/npta2/home> 'PTA take action network' for National PTA alerts.

Utilize the new Unit/Council AtLaw award as a guide for next school years advocacy efforts.

Attend a school board meeting before the end of the school year. This is a great way to get to know any newly elected members of your school board.

Do you tweet?

Follow Missouri PTA (@MissouriPTA) and National PTA (@NationalPTA).

Missouri General Assembly 2015 Session

By Dorothy Gardner, MoPTA President Elect

The deadline is looming for bills to make it through the legislative process. Per the Missouri Constitution, the assembly will adjourn on May 30th. However, May 15th is the last day any bill can be considered. Bills not perfected and concurred to by both the House and the Senate will fail and have to start the process over, complete with sponsorship and filing, next session.

Missouri PTA recently testified before House and Senate committees on two very important issues. Testimony was presented supporting HB 1329 which would ban powered alcohol. The FDA recently approved this substance after originally declining approval in 2014. PTA is very concerned about this potentially harmful powerful substance. Remember to read the testimony for HB 1329.

PTA has long supported legislation that would prevent housing of youth in adult facilities. HB 708 and SB 320 are companion bills (identical bills filed in both the senate and house) that would prohibit youth 17 and younger certified to stand trial as an adult from being detained in adult jails. Currently there are fewer than 20 youth certified to stand trial as adults. As Cole county Sheriff Greg White pointed out during his testimony, these kids have not yet been convicted. Typically youth who commit these crimes are in desperate need of social and mental services. Services they will not receive in an adult facility. Be sure read the testimony for HB 708 and SB 320.

Many JC/DC Action Alerts have gone out for a variety of issues. Expect this trend to continue in the next couple of weeks and please make sure to act on each individual alert. It only takes an average of three contacts by constituents on a particular bill for a legislator to take notice. Your action does make a difference.

A complete list of the bills PTA is watching and current important action can be found on the Capitol Chatter page of the Missouri PTA website.

National Information

Bipartisan Legislation to Safeguard Children's Data

April 29th, Representatives Luke Messer (R-IN) and Jared Polis (D-CO) introduced the Student Digital Privacy and Parental Rights Act of 2015 as a means to protect student data. Technology is a powerful tool for teaching and learning, but at the same time, it is imperative that students' academic and personal information is protected.

It is a top priority of National PTA to safeguard children's data and ensure that parents have appropriate notification and consent as to what and how data is collected and used. National PTA is pleased to see this important topic being brought to the forefront and endorses the introduction of the Student Digital Privacy and Parental Rights Act of 2015. The association applauds Representatives Messer and Polis for their bipartisan leadership and commitment to safeguard student data and privacy. We look forward to working with Congress and engaging with our members to ensure that privacy law is updated to reflect today's technology-dependent world.

Every Child Achieves Act

The Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee unanimously passed the Every Child Achieves Act, a bill to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act/No Child Left Behind (ESEA/NCLB). This is another step toward reauthorization of the ESEA/NCLB. Comprehensive reauthorization of the ESEA/NCLB is National PTA's top legislative priority this Congress.

The bill will now go to the floor of the U.S. Senate where all Senators will be able to debate and have the opportunity to amend the bill. PTA is hearing that the bill could be brought to the floor in mid-May or June.

National PTA and Colorado PTA worked with Senator Michael Bennet (D-CO) to introduce an amendment that would create a program to authorize Statewide Family Engagement Centers as a replacement to Parent Information and Resource Centers, which were eliminated in the bill. Senator Bennet offered his amendment but then withdrew it. This was done for strategic reasons, and the Senator plans to offer it again on the Senate floor. National PTA seeks to strengthen the family engagement provisions in the bill and will be asking PTA advocates to reach out to their Senators to ensure that the Every Child Achieves Act has specific improvements that prioritize capacity building for the implementation of systemic and sustainable family engagement practices that increase student achievement.

During the markup, several amendments passed that National PTA supported, including the elementary and secondary school counseling program; the Javits gifted and talented program; the 21st Century Community Learning Centers program, which would provide academic enrichment opportunities during non-school hours; and an amendment that would provide resources to initiate, expand and improve physical education programs in schools. These amendments provide needed resources and supports to students and schools and are aligned with PTA's 2015 Public Policy Agenda.

Another PTA-supported amendment that passed would enable states and school districts to conduct audits of their testing systems to reduce low-quality, misaligned and redundant tests.

PTA is also pleased to see the passage of an education technology amendment that would foster innovative technology initiatives in classrooms and schools and provide professional development for educators as well as a grant program that would improve coordination, quality and access to early learning opportunities for children and families.

We will need PTA advocates to gear up for the action on the Senate floor to strengthen family engagement provisions and ensure that every child has the resources and support he/she needs to reach his/her full potential.

Juvenile Justice – Life Without Parole

By Dorothy Gardner, MoPTA President Elect

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in June 2012 that juveniles convicted of murder cannot be subject to a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole. This left Missouri without legislative guidance in the handling of certain felony cases of juveniles. In an effort to solve this problem Sen. Dixon has proposed in SB 200 50 years or life imprisonment without parole for a person who was 16 or 17 years old at the time of the crime and a sentence of at least 35 years or life without parole for a person who was under the age of 16.

SB 200 is just a back door route of sentencing youth to life without parole. A mandatory 50 year sentence IS life without parole. While juvenile offenders should be held accountable for the crimes they commit, the Missouri PTA believes that it should be done in a way that is fitting to the specifics of each case and that judges should be allowed to consider mitigating circumstances.

The American Bar Association (ABA), the nation's most respected legal membership organization representing nearly 400,000 prosecutors, judges, defense attorneys and other lawyers, approved a resolution calling for an end to the practice of sentencing children to life in prison without parole and urging "meaningful periodic opportunities for release."

The Facts:

- Children sentenced to life in prison without parole are often the most vulnerable members of our society. A national survey revealed that nearly 80% of juvenile lifers reported witnessing violence in their homes; more than half (54.1%) witnessed weekly violence in their neighborhoods.
- African American youth are sentenced to life without parole as children at a per capita rate that is 10 times that of white youth.
- The Eighth Amendment demands that states provide juvenile offenders a meaningful opportunity for release. Since *Miller v. Alabama*, several states have eliminated juvenile life without parole entirely, providing for parole eligibility after 10-35 years. Litigation in this area is rampant, depriving victims of the finality they deserve.
- It costs approximately \$2.5 million to incarcerate juveniles for life, whereas it costs taxpayers approximately \$625,720 to incarcerate a juvenile for 20 years. Early release for those individuals who have demonstrated that they have sufficiently matured and rehabilitated can save the state approximately \$1,874,280 per inmate. That figure does not include the extra costs of litigation currently associated with life or functional life sentences, which are expected to substantially drive up those costs.

Contact your Senator in opposition of SB 200. Missouri can do better.

Congratulations to the 2015 MoPTA Scholarship Recipients



You can find the MoPTA scholarship applications on the MoPTA website at www.mopta.org. We encourage you to apply!

Missouri PTA is pleased to announce our 2015 scholarship recipients. These recipients were chosen from a number of applications based on their academic integrity, community service, recommendations from teachers and counselors and their desire, passion and commitment to the teaching profession. We are proud of the accomplishments of these young people and we look forward to their future success as students and as teachers. Congratulations to the class of 2015 and to these outstanding students!

Missouri PTA offers scholarships to assist and encourage young people to enter into the teaching profession. Applications are available on our website beginning in December. Each high school with at least one PTA unit "in good standing" in its district is eligible to send one application to Missouri PTA for scholarship consideration. Since the 1920's, our goal in providing scholarship opportunities is to help outstanding students realize their dream of becoming teachers. Each scholarship recipient will receive a stipend of \$500 per year up to a maximum of \$2,000 (subject to continued eligibility). In addition to these six new scholarship recipients, 12 students will be eligible to renew their scholarships and receive \$500 disbursements this fall.

Each fall, the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Memorial Award (PAH Award) is bestowed upon a scholarship senior, with a record of exceptional academics, outstanding character, community service and a commitment to teaching. Income from the PAH Fund is used to finance this award. Michelle Evans, a 2011 graduate of William Chrisman High School in the Independence School District is the 2014 PAH Award recipient. Michelle is currently an Elementary Education major with a minor in Early Childhood Education who maintains a 3.97 GPA and has been recognized on the "Dean's List" at Westminster College for 6 consecutive semesters.

The Missouri PTA Scholarship Program is funded by scholarship investment income and receives continuing financial support from contributions by local units and councils of the Missouri PTA, as well as individual gifts and memorials. The fund receives additional support from one-half (1/2) the proceeds from each Missouri PTA Distinguished Service Award and all proceeds from the sale of each Missouri PTA 100th anniversary commemorative book Honor, Celebrate, Imagine. Missouri PTA appreciates the support of its member units and councils in helping perpetuate these awards.



Colton Hatfield (CBU Fund scholarship recipient) is a senior at Clever High School, Clever, MO, and he plans to attend Missouri State University to study Secondary Education to teach Theater, Speech and Debate. He has been active in Speech and Debate, FBLA (National Competition Qualifier), Jr Class Secretary, Science & History Club President, academic team, Color Guard, golf, tennis, A+ tutor and mentor, and church youth group. Colton wants to share his ever growing love of theater with his students. According to those that know him, over and over again he has demonstrated "dependability, tenacity and strong work ethic."



Victoria Grace Kelley was selected as recipient of the Dillard A. Mallory Fund Scholarship for Social Studies and the Humanities. Tori is a senior at Lee's Summit North High School who plans to attend Missouri State University to pursue a Secondary Education degree and plans to teach History, Government and Political Science. She has been involved in NHS, Youth in Government, Student Senate, soccer, basketball and as a new student mentor. Tori is inspired by the teachers in her life to be someone who will help shape and mold the minds of future generations. Those who know her say that "this is one student who I hope will eventually make it back to (our school) as one of our teachers," and that she has "intellectual curiosity" and skills for life-long learning. "Tori Kelley might be president one day."



Jessie Lynn Smith was selected as the recipient of the Irma G. Detjen Fund Scholarship. Jessie is a senior at Central High School in Springfield, MO, who plans to attend Missouri State University to pursue a Secondary Education degree to teach Biology, Chemistry and Physics. She is a member of NHS, band and jazz band. She has been involved in teaching middle school jazz band, A+ tutoring and has been a teaching mentor. She wants to become a teacher because she wants to inspire children to be lifelong learners. She is championed as an overcomer and as such she can "identify very well with others who struggle and is able to guide them in the right direction." As a peer tutor, she was able to quickly identify students in the classroom that needed extra help.



Rachel Ladd was selected as a Carolyn B. Ullmann (CBU) Fund scholarship recipient. (The CBU fund was the original Missouri PTA Scholarship fund established in 1923). Rachel is a senior at Blue Springs South High School, Blue Springs, MO, who plans to attend Northwest Missouri State University to study Elementary Education. She is involved in many activities including National Honor Society (NHS), A+ and cadet teaching and tutoring, Future Teachers of America Club, FCA, and Cross Country. She is an award winning Drum Major and member of Marching Band, Wind Symphony, Symphonic Band, Winter Percussion, Pep Band and Church youth mentor and praise band member. She hopes to foster a love of learning in her students so they will become lifelong learners. "Rachel has a huge heart for serving and helping people-especially kids!" Whenever she talks about the kids in the class she cadet teaches for "she glows." It's obvious to those who know her, that teaching "is what Rachel was created to do."



Makenzie Erikson (CBU Fund scholarship recipient) is a senior at William Chrisman High School, Independence, MO, who plans to attend Central Methodist University to study Secondary Education to be able to teach Chemistry and Mathematics. She has been a member of NHS, Spanish Honor Society, basketball, soccer, volleyball, A+ tutoring, and has served as a leader at kids' sports camps. She is ranked 2nd in her class of 286 students. She "played school" when she was younger, working on white boards and workbooks. Her goal is to "enlighten students' minds with new information and make them excited for school." Those who know her wish they could "bottle up her heart and work ethic and pass it along to every student, athlete, and young person, the world would be a better place."



Legand James was selected as the recipient of the Helen B. Maupin Foundation Scholarship. Legand is a senior at Cameron High School, Cameron, MO, and plans to attend William Jewell College to pursue a Music Education degree. She has participated in band, tennis, DECA, drama, and choir and has been tutoring 6th graders in band, volunteers at the local women's shelter and helps organize and lead Girl Scout events. Her passion for teaching is to help students find what they enjoy to do and help them reach their highest potential. According to her school's dual credit coordinator, "Legand is the kind of person that thinks a lot about what needs to be done, prioritizes the responsibilities, puts a plan in motion, monitors its progress and sees it through to the finish."



On May 7th, at Fort Osage High School in Independence, Missouri, the Greater Kansas City Area of School Librarians presented the GKCASL Outstanding Advocate of the Library Award to Trailridge Elementary PTA.

The school, located in Lee's Summit, Missouri, was nominated by their Library Media Specialist (LMS), Jaci Hurley. Hurley's nomination was to recognize the unit as "Trailridge PTA has been a long-time supporter of the library program at Trailridge Elementary. In the four years that I have served as LMS at this school, they have provided support in a number of ways. The library is an annual line item in their budget, with yearly contributions that allow me to maintain and expand our collection and fund other opportunities for students.

The PTA additionally funded a new soft seating area for students in honor of the school's 20th anniversary.

Their annual Read-a-thon promotes reading and rewards it with gift certificates to my yearly book fair, which in turn increases the library's profits.

For many years TRE PTA has led Reading Cafe, allowing students in grades 2-6 three opportunities per year to participate in book club discussions led by PTA volunteers. The Cafe chairperson meets with me to choose quality, age-appropriate books for each grade level. As an LMS who serves two schools, I believe our PTA continues to go the 'extra mile' to promote reading and our library to the school community. It is my pleasure to nominate the Trailridge PTA for this honor."

The Greater Kansas City Area of School Librarians, www.gkcasl.org, sponsors the Great Kids Can Read Program, provides educational grants, and honors outstanding media center programs, advocates and librarians.

Unit Spotlight Congrats Trailridge!

Want to be featured in MoPTA Contact? Send your success to contact@mopta.org



R Reflections®

Student Showcase

Scholastic Photography
... photographing the future!

The 2015 Reflections theme, "The world would be a better place if ..." came to life on Saturday, April 18th. More than 400 people gathered for the annual Missouri PTA Student Showcase that was held at the Stoney Creek Hotel in Independence. Students were recognized for their achievements in dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts. Medals were awarded for first through fifth place and ribbons for honorable mention.

Scholastic Photography sponsored the showcase for the fourth consecutive year. Local units submitted almost 1,000 entries to the state level utilizing the online submission process. Missouri PTA participated in the online trial this year and will continue to use that method of submission. Those entries receiving first place were advanced to the national round.

To view the complete list of entries that placed on the state level, visit the MoPTA website at www.mopta.org.



Susan Rupert

Vice President and Director
Pony Express Region
susanr@mopta.org

Meet Your Missouri PTA Board of Managers Programs Team

As vice president and director of programs Susan coordinates the workshops of our annual convention. She brainstorms with other board of managers to develop a line up of topics and guest speakers that will provide valuable training to our delegates. Susan also works closely with an outstanding group of individuals aka The Programs Department.



Marilyn Aikins

Reflections Chair
Three Trails Region
marilyna@mopta.org

Marilyn is the resource for Missouri unit's reflections chairs regarding promoting, judging and advancing their entries utilizing the online submission process. She chairs the State Reflections committee which coordinates and hosts the annual Missouri PTA Reflections Student Showcase.



Christine Kent

Health, Wellness & Safety Chair
Three Trails Region
christinek@mopta.org

This chair has the responsibility to stay informed about topics that do or could affect the well being of our children. Christine is always looking for ways to help local units and councils to promote awareness among their members and schools. She is Missouri's link to National PTA's activities regarding health, wellness and safety.



Pat Higginbotham

Family Engagement Chair
Pony Express Region
path@mopta.org

Formally known as the Parent Education & Involvement Chair, this position has evolved just as the definition of parent has. Family means everyone. Pat's focus is to bring new ideas into view for units to educate their schools and parents about the importance of family engagement as well as increase the level of engagement.



Steven Cook

Student Involvement Chair
Gateway Region
stevenc@mopta.org

As student involvement chair Steven works very closely with the two student representatives to help them develop their leadership skills and reach their potential as PTA leaders. This position focuses on ways to encourage units to have more student leadership. He promotes the idea what better advocate for students than students.



Meagan Gardner

Student Representative
Three Trails Region

Meagan works as a team with the Student Involvement Chair to be a resource to PTSA units across the state of Missouri for information about how/ways to get students more involved and invested in their school community. She writes our College Ready! section of Contact magazine and helps develop workshops as well as seek out presenters.

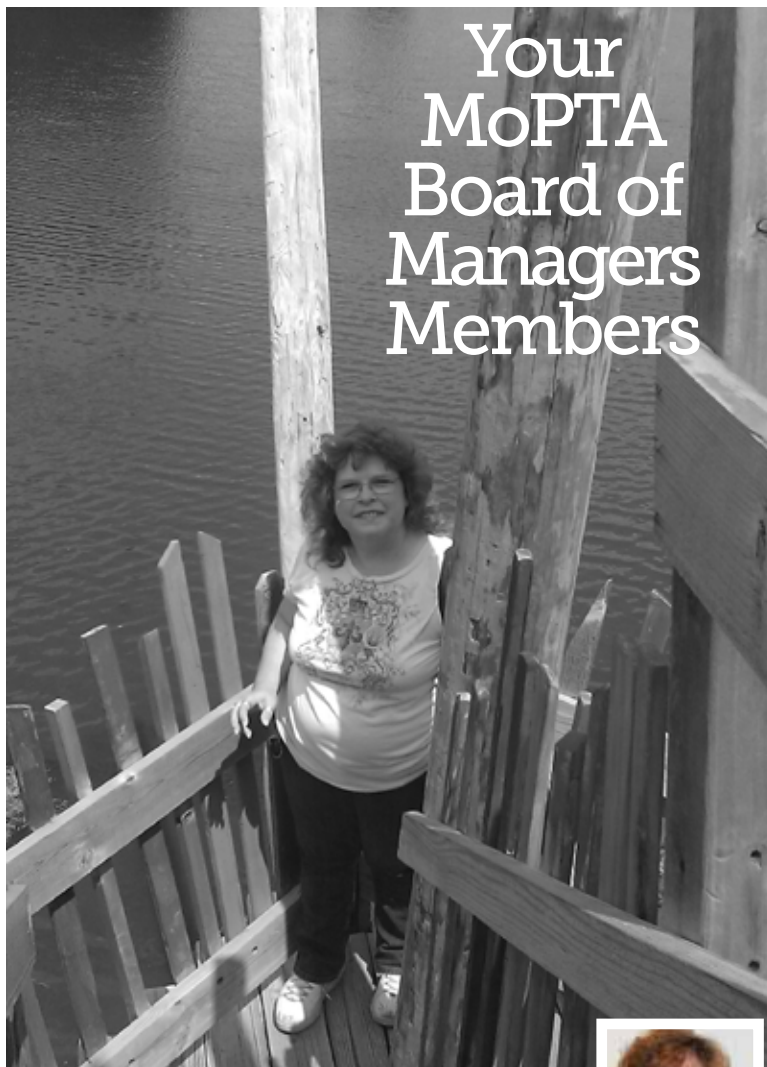


Myranda Cook

Student Representative
Gateway Region

Myranda works as a team with the Student Involvement Chair to be a resource to PTSA units across the state of Missouri for information about how/ways to get students more involved (engaged) and invested in their school community. She helps develop for the annual convention on topics that are geared toward the interests of students.

Your MoPTA Board of Managers Members



Christine Kent

MoPTA Health & Safety Chair
Three Trails Region

Married to Bruce.
Son, Liam, who is going into 6th grade next year.

Cat person, have two.

Born in Independence, Missouri
and raised in Blue Springs.

Currently working, doing what I always wanted to
do, Computer Aided Drafting & Part time teaching -
Cake Decorating.

Favorites:

I really don't have a lot of those because I am very diverse in all things. But if I had to choose something it might be favorite Dr. Who, that would be the fourth doctor. And of course I always say to my son he's my favorite. I know he's our only one but he is still my favorite.



My PTA Story: I heard about the Harvester's Snack Backpack program a few months before our son was to start Kindergarten. This program provides enough food for a child to eat over the weekend to those families who may need a little extra help with making ends meet. I had asked his school if they had the program in place but they had just signed up for it and that would be the first year of them participating. I immediately said with extreme enthusiasm, **"Sign me up for that, I want to help in anyway I can."** The school jumped at the opportunity and hooked me up with their Family Liaison to set up and learn more about the program.

At the time, I wasn't working for an outside source of income and was able to be at the school at any given moment. My son and I would pack snack bags into backpacks for 35 kids once a week after school every week for the whole school year. This went on every school year until 3rd grade when my husband started to lend a hand. **I was proud to see that I made a difference, not only to help the now 40 children with snacks, but the two people that now see things a little differently today because I kept doing what I felt strongly about (helping others especially kids) and talked about it from time to time to them and showed the value in just doing.** The three of us are still working together on this volunteer work every week, as a well oiled team, talking about our day as we feel good about the whole family joining in now to help and doing for others.

I was at the school and volunteering for everything going on that Kindergarten year including Character Plus bookmarks once a month, for the next 3 years. It was a total surprise to me that the Principal and PTA President approached me at the end of that first year to be a part of PTA. I was hooked from that point on. **I wanted to do more for all kids everywhere.** I was unit President for 3 years. In that same time frame I sat on the Independence Council of PTA as Corresponding Secretary (one year) and also Health & and Safety Chair for MOPTA (still holding onto this position). I am excited to be back into a unit PTA as President next year, moving into middle school along with my son, once again as President.

I don't know what I will be doing in the future but one thing I do know is that I will be a PTA member for life. I couldn't have done any of the things I mentioned before without my son. He has shown me to be better, braver, more aware not only of others but of myself as well. And for my husband, he supported me in whatever I wanted to try even if I wasn't so sure I could do it myself. **I wanted to help and PTA gives me a great opportunity to do that.**



Your MoPTA Board of Managers Members

I can help with your PTA questions, ideas and resources



Aisha Faulkner

MoPTA Regional Director
Gateway Region

Your PTA region : **Gateway**

years involved in PTA and MoPTA Board of Managers: **19 years in PTA , 2 years in BOM**

Kids names and ages: **Ahlam 24 years, attending MS&T (Chemical Engineer) Intisar 20 years, MSU (Broadcasting & Journalism)**

Why do I believe PTA is important : **the voice for kids**
Why did I get involved with BOM : **To be able to help more schools, it has been fun to get to know everybody on the PTA BOM.**

What do I do on the Board: **Regional Director**
Something interesting I have done this year: **Get more involved with my schools**

Advice I'd give others: **Listen more!!!!!!!**

Favorite movie, TV show: **Sound of Music (original) Law & Order**

Favorite food: **anything spicy**

Something that makes you stand out: **English is my 3rd language**

Healthy living tip: **Laugh more**

Describe yourself in 3-5 words: **Caring, compassionate and understanding.**

What am I learning this year: **Finance and Budget**



Aisha Faulkner

MoPTA Regional Director
Gateway Region



MoPTA BOM Officers
Sharing Our Talents With You

Favorite Frito Salad

- 8oz Catalina dressing
- 1 small onion chopped
- 1 small can black olives chopped
- 1 small can jalapeno chopped
- 2-3 medium tomatoes chopped
- 1-15oz can RANCH STYLE BEANS original style or with jalapeno
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 small head iceberg lettuce chopped
- 1 bag frito chips

Directions: Pour Catalina dressing in a large bowl, coat all over the base of the bowl. Sprinkle onion, olives, jalapeno and tomatoes. Pour ranch style beans over the tomatoes, sprinkle 1 cup of cheese. Arrange thinly chopped lettuce over the beans and cheese. Sprinkle 1 cup of cheese. Pour fritos on top of the lettuce. Can be made one day in advance. Mix when ready to eat.



SHOW ME AWESOME BOARD
 Find more info about this museum on MoPTA Pinterest.



SMART SNACKS & MEALS BOARD
 Can we eat one now, please?
 #yum

27 WAYS TO REFOCUS A TEAM

Rescuing Teams That Have Gone Off the Deep End

Observe Quietly observe the team. Look for clues.	Ask Ask if the team wants help working it out or needs a little time.	Retrace Have the team physically retrace the steps taken to get to the dysfunction. List these steps out.
Back-Up Ask the team to back-up to where it was working. List these steps out.	Hear Hear each other out in the team. Are there personal hurts or offenses?	Sticky Use sticky notes to record on a timeline where certain events occurred.
Draw Draw it out with markers, visual graphics, and in other terms.	Lego's Using Lego's, ask the group to build the perfect team. Discuss what their team is missing.	Care Determine whether the members of the team care to refocus.
Acknowledge Help the team acknowledge, for themselves, that there is a problem.	Find Find others to look in and help mediate the issues.	Mediate Use mediation techniques to hear one another and find a solution (as a team).
Hear Practice active listening and hearing skills.	Replace Replace members of the team if they cannot work it out.	Mix Mix-up how the team members are seeing each other and the task at hand.
Build Start over and build a team.	Find Find and identify each team member's strength.	Confront Ask team members to confront behaviors that hold the team back.
Document Document the progress. When the team reverts back, point out what the team has accomplished.	Record Record what each team member agrees to. Sign the document as a covenant for team unity.	Look Once the past is handled, look to the future. Don't slide back to where the team was.
Goals Set team goals.	Set Set team rules and responsibilities.	Draw Draw it out and keep it visible.
Expect Patiently expect positive change.	Mentor Bring in positive members to guide the team.	Model Model a positive team environment. Let the team look in on other teams.



Amanda Weber
 MoPTA Office Assistant

My favorite pins this month

Follow Missouri PTA on Pinterest for more great ideas

