

CONTACT



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Thank you!

Just like birds work together to fly great distances, we at MoPTA are proud to work with you, our valuable volunteers, to accomplish great things. Each and every day with each and every child. #MoPTAproud

Send us pictures, brags and stories. We want to hear from you! Send everything to contact@mopta.org



Kim Weber
MoPTA President

Each year parents, students, families, teachers, school administrators, school staff and community members spend countless hours giving of themselves to make the lives of our children better in their schools, homes and community settings.

In addition so many others give many hours of our time contacting our legislators on behalf of all children to make sure that laws being considered in our state and national capitals that affect children are for the better and will help improve their future opportunities.

You are appreciated! Every bit of your time that you choose to spend with a child matters, whether it is helping them to learn to read or write, with homework, or cleaning at their school, serving as an elected officer, chairing or serving on a committee all of it matters and makes a difference in the lives of our children. Thank you! YOU are appreciated.

You must never doubt the contribution your time volunteering is truly making on the lives of our children. **For all of these efforts and so many more each of you do, the Missouri PTA Board of Managers would like to say thank you.**

To celebrate yourself not just during National Volunteer Week, April 12-18, 2015 but every day as we celebrate you making Missouri and our nation a better place for our children.

Thank You to Each and Every Volunteer

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



Meet Your Missouri PTA Board of Managers Communication Team

The Communications Team are important members of the MoPTA Board of Managers Volunteer Team.

The Communications Team supports all publicity, communication, training resources and messages for all units and councils in Missouri in all areas of MoPTA operations.

The communications team researches the best ideas from all resources and shares these regularly with you through email, Contact Magazine, social media and our website. We want to encourage you, provide best practices and standards, and model effective and timely communication.

The communications team is available to support your PTA communications by improving current practices, offering ideas to maintain successes and leading the charge in effectively communicating with members. We work to ensure that Missouri PTA leads by example in all areas of resources and messaging.

Use us to improve your PTA communication! What you should do:

Follow us on Facebook, Twitter & Pinterest - our sites are great and meant to be a resource for you and your unit/council. Don't reinvent the wheel - share, retweet and repin our ideas - we are here for you.

Use our website for resources and ideas. Tons of great, relevant information readily available to you when you need it.



Michele Reed

VP Communication
Three Trails Region
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Coordinates the publication of all resources distributed to the membership of Missouri PTA through our local units and councils. Directs the Public Relations Chairman, Information Technology Chairman, and CONTACT editor. Assists the President and other directors of Missouri PTA with communication distribution to local units and councils.



Amy Blakemore

MoPTA Information/Technology Chair
Three Trails Region
amyb@mopta.org

Amy is responsible for maintaining the MoPTA website which includes adding new content, making sure the website is current, resolving user issues and training MoPTA users on the technology services available.



Andrea Battaglia

MoPTA PR Chair
From the Ozarks Region
andreab@mopta.org

Andrea designs and manages Contact magazine, coordinates all MoPTA Social Media specialty content (Facebook, Twitter and Pinterest) and supports publicity and press releases for MoPTA.

MoPTA Special Opportunity

You can **get involved**
with MoPTA Publicity and Communications!

Current opportunities include writing articles for Contact Magazine or the MoPTA website, submitting successes for Facebook or Twitter, sending pictures for use in all MoPTA publications.

Contact **Michele Reed** at micheler@mopta.org with interest and for more information.



MISSOURI PROUD

From DESE: Why Test?

Standardized testing of schoolchildren has been around for decades, but there seems to be growing opposition to tests over just the past few years. What's behind this opposition? Is testing really bad? Here's a look at why schools test:

- There has to be a way to measure progress. Timely and meaningful assessment information can help teachers, students, and administrators understand what students know and can do.
- Public schools should use tax dollars wisely. Assessments help inform districts about the quality of their curriculum and the effectiveness of their programs.
- Missouri is testing less statewide. In Missouri, state testing takes up less than one percent of a student's time in school, so children get more time for instruction.
- It's not "teaching to the test." Tests can actually show that students understand the material, not just fill in a blank. With the information new tests provide, parents will have peace of mind knowing their child's knowledge and ability is at grade level.
- The results are used to evaluate districts. Missouri uses test results as one of the measures to determine achievement for all children.

Jennings Superintendent Dr. Tiffany Anderson recently talked with the State Board of Education about the reasons for improved student achievement in the district. One reason? Assessment.

"Some people don't like assessments. I think assessments are fantastic," said Dr. Anderson. "If you don't watch the data, you don't know what's happening in schools."

Tests are a part of life. They let us know we're ready to move on. Tests provide valuable, objective information for every kind of student. They reassure parents and help schools know that children have mastered the skills they need to succeed at the next level.

For More Information: Contact Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE)

dese.mo.gov | [facebook.com/MOEducation](https://www.facebook.com/MOEducation) | twitter.com/MOEducation | [youtube.com/MODeptofEducation](https://www.youtube.com/MODeptofEducation)

15 minutes that matter in 2015

Showing Your Appreciation For Others Makes The World A Better Place

By Andrea Battaglia, MoPTA Public Relations
adapted from www.andreabcreative.com, "15 minute Easy, Meaningful Appreciation"

Recently, I was feeling very unmotivated. I'd committed to too many things and I was feeling the pressure. And then a wonderful friend gave me just what I needed. A heartfelt thank you card. I still have the card on my desk. In fact, I save most of the thank you cards I receive. Why? Because these meaningful notes remind me that what I'm doing makes a difference and re-energizes me to keep going. **I'm encouraging you to spend your time today to write a thank you note for someone in your life. And here is the strategy to get it done in 15 minutes.**

Find the right card. I like unique cards that are blank inside because they can be used for multiple occasions. Save time and money—buy these in bulk. I also really like homemade cards. When my kids send thank yous for gifts, I give them a blank piece of paper and they draw a special message for their card. (yes, some are ridiculous—but isn't that what makes them great?) I've seen these cards displayed or saved in friends and family homes, because it's a personal card that has meaning for the recipient. Remember, it doesn't have to be fancy, just heartfelt and sincere.

Write a great message. You're not going for Lincoln's Gettysburg Address or Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a Dream" speech. Sure, it can be great, but you don't need to spend more than 15 minutes to make it happen. Here is a strategy that works every time:

Dear (Name here),

Thank you for (whatever they did or are doing). I appreciate (what they're doing) because (why you appreciate it). You've made a difference because (why it matters what they're doing). You are (awesome, great, helpful)! Keep up the good work! (or something to motivate them to keep up the good work)

Sincerely, (your Name)

Consider Extras. A heartfelt note is certainly more than enough to make someone's day. But guess what else works too, presents. Especially good presents. Gift cards are a Wow! addition, but homemade cookies or treats (you can always bribe me with sweets) will most certainly do the trick. Think about the level of "Thanks" needed and provide extras appropriately. And save yourself time; keep your gifts organized in advance, so you can just grab one and go.



Recognize Bullying

By Jennifer Council, MoPTA Regional Director, Ozarks & Andrea Battaglia, MoPTA PR Chair

Bullying comes in many forms. There is noticeably more bullying in middle school grades 6th, 7th, and 8th than in high school, but bullying can happen at any age and grade level. Most school bullying occurs inside the school, a lesser amount on school property and even less on the school bus.

Types of bullying may include:

- Emotional bullying involves factors other than physical interaction, such as insults, derogatory remarks, name calling, and teasing, which can include attempts to ostracize the victim. Emotional bullying is the most prevalent type of bullying.
- Face-to-face bullying is where a student confronts another student.
- Homophobic bullying
- Bullying of students with disabilities
- Racist bullying and Religious bullying
- Cyber bullying
- Pack bullying, characteristically last longer than individual bullying

Victims of bullying display a range of responses, even many years later such as:

1. Low self-esteem
2. Difficulty in trusting others
3. Lack of assertiveness
4. Aggression
5. Difficulty controlling anger
6. Isolation

Students can experience trouble with school work when they would otherwise not. I have witnessed bullying first hand myself and have seen others deal with bullying and the effects it can have in the future. I believe it is everyone's responsibility to help in the prevention of bullying.

When you recognize a bullying situation, you can do something about it. Speak with a teacher or your principal. You can also encourage students to stand up for each other and practice active bystander intervention. Many times it just takes one person to say "This is wrong" and others will voice their discomfort too.

We can work together to make a difference in the lives of our friends, our kids classmates and our schools.



In today's society unfortunately kids are defining themselves by television, music and their social media outlets that they frequent on a daily basis. Parents need to have conversations regularly with their children and teens focusing on safety and how to maintain their identity appropriately. **As a licensed therapist I am constantly seeing more and more parents that are not dialoguing with their children about maintaining their social network sites, it is essential to discuss the do's and don'ts before issues arise.** Here are my tips:

#iDefineMe

Sure you define you, but it is best as social teens to make up alias names when developing a social presences. Yes, what we are saying is stating your full name, school, age and grade can connect strangers to your whereabouts easily. **Instead of your full name, Lisa Jones, perhaps choose a name that is associated with your hobbies, like Poetic L. Jones.** If, you do state your name, limit your age, school, or neighborhood. Your friends will find you, instead of strangers and you will define yourself!

#Selfies

Self reflect, think, think, think about the pictures you post, people can be judgmental and pictures have a digital footprint. **Even though a teen may post and delete, it never leaves the world-wide web.** So have ongoing discussions on appropriate and self-damaging poses uploaded in inappropriate places. Sites may say that a picture disappears in minutes yet it can be maintained in clouds or in other places without your permission.

#PBP

Pause before Posting words of negativity, fighting online, participating in cyber-bullying and posting all of your whereabouts. Unfortunately, teens have tons of followers and negativity, harmful words and rumors spreads much faster than words of encouragement or positive quotes so remember PBP.

#PrivacyPlease

Manage their settings, it may be a great idea to change up passwords frequently and parents perhaps you can maintain a safe space to keep usernames, passwords and or choose an online email address specifically for social media to filter out spammers, hackers and phishers. **Our kids need to know that identity theft is a reality in the technical world we live in.**

#Discipline

Limit your kids internet time. Cell phone addictions are real! Teens get fixated on spending quality time surfing the net. Time must be managed or patterns will show up of procrastination, incomplete homework assignments, and getting behind on chores. In the meantime, communication skills are diminished to made up words not found in the dictionary. We must focus on valued time.

#Transform

Encourage your youth to be authentic, promoting positivity! Be the voice of reason, facts and creativity! **Empower them to become activist for causes that develop their leadership skills,** thus becoming social change agents for platforms encouraging transparency to be respectful, while maintaining their reputation.

#BetheKeeper to your Social Media

Remind the youth, if you no longer participate on a specific social media site, delete your info! **Be responsible and protect your personal brand, your name, your privacy!**



Tracie Berry-McGhee,
M.Ed., LPC
The NiaGroupSTL

#KeepingUp with Social Media

Educate Yourself:

commonsensemedia.org | cyberbullying.us
ikeepssafe.org | inobtr.org | nobullying.com
pewinternet.org

Educate Your Kids:

netsmartz.org | stompoutbullying.org
thatsnotcool.com | Westophate.org

The FAFSA Tips You Need To Succeed

By Meagan Gardner,
MoPTA Student Representative



Applying for student federal aid can seem overwhelming at first. Amongst picking colleges, getting applications, filling them out, getting recommendations, and sending it all off applying for federal aid can be another crazy and confusing step for students that are applying for college for the first time. However, if you slow down and look at it in smaller steps, its easily manageable.

First you want to determine your eligibility. In order to qualify for financial aid you must be a US citizen and be going to college for a degree. You must also have a high school diploma or a GED, a valid Social Security number, and sufficient grades.

Once you have established that you are eligible for financial aid you need to gather up everything that you will need for the application. You will need your ID, social security number, federal tax income from the previous year, current bank statements, current business and investment funds, W-2 forms from the year before, and untaxed income records such as social security. Ask your parents if you need help getting any of these.

Finally, its time to fill out the application. There will be questions to fill out regarding whether you are independent or dependent as well as grant offers that you will want to look over. If any of the grants fit you make sure to fill out the additional questions and request for information. However, if you don't fit under one of the grants that doesn't mean that you won't receive federal aid.

Finish filling every thing out, sign the application, and send it off to the FAFSA office. You will then need to be on the look out because the Student Aid Report that has all of the details on your financial assistance package will be headed your way soon.

Applying can seem like a scary task at first, but when you break it down you can easily accomplish it. A tip that will help make the process even easier is setting up an account on FAFSA.gov where you can do your entire application online and turn it in there. This allows you to skip the step of mailing it off by just submitting it straight to FAFSA through their website. Whatever way you decide to do it make sure you do it. Don't let the stress of applying stop you because it really isn't as bad as it seems.

-THE-

FAFSA

{ DECONSTRUCTED }

Learning to Love the FAFSA:
A No-Stress Guide

FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID

If the thought of applying for financial aid makes you want to pull your hair out, you are not alone. Many people view the FAFSA, a central element in the financial aid process, as a complicated puzzle. Fortunately, filling out the FAFSA is not as difficult as you may think, and this guide is here to help you navigate the process. So relax and let the FAFSA help you achieve your educational goals.

WHAT YOU NEED TO GET STARTED

ONLINE ACCESS

TIME

PAPERWORK

YOUR BRAIN

STEPS TO SUCCESS

- 1 **GATHER PAPERWORK**
The FAFSA references several documents. Obtain the following:

PAPERWORK CHECKLIST:	
✓ Social Security number	✓ Last year's Federal Income Tax Return
✓ Driver's license or state ID	✓ Current bank statements
✓ Last year's W-2 forms	✓ Current business and investment records
✓ Untaxed income records*	*Social Security, Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, Welfare or Veterans Benefits
- 2 **SET UP A STUDENT ACCOUNT**
Log on to FAFSA.gov. A student account allows completion of the application over multiple sessions and remains active while the student is enrolled in a degree program.
TIP Choose a PIN (Personal Identification Number) that is easy for you to remember but difficult for others to decipher.
- 3 **DETERMINE ELIGIBILITY**
Certain requirements must be met in order to qualify for federal financial assistance, including:

ELIGIBILITY CHECKLIST:	
✓ Financial need	✓ U. S. citizen
✓ Satisfactory grades	✓ A valid SSN
✓ Degree candidate	✓ High school diploma or GED
- 4 **DETERMINE DEPENDENCY**
A series of questions will be asked to help classify a student as dependent or independent:

DEPENDENCY CHECKLIST:	
✓ 24 years or older?	✓ In a Masters or PhD program?
✓ Have a spouse?	✓ In the Armed Forces?
✓ Have children?	✓ Deceased parents?
- 5 **ENTER FINANCIAL INFO**
This section requires the paperwork from step one. Accuracy is important.
TIP Inaccuracies can negatively affect your eligibility. Have someone double check your form before submitting.
- 6 **REVIEW GRANT OFFERS**
A variety of grants will be offered based on eligibility from step five. Complete all additional questions and requests for information.
NOTE If no grants are offered, move on to the next step. This doesn't immediately disqualify you for financial aid.
- 7 **SIGN AND SUBMIT FORM**
Either sign the form with the PIN number from step two and submit the application electronically, or print, sign and mail the paper form to the FAFSA office.
TIP The application process is faster if you use your PIN to sign your application.
- 8 **AFTER SUBMISSION**
Be on the lookout for a Student Aid Report (SAR) that details your financial assistance package.
NOTE You can appeal to each college's financial aid office for additional assistance if you feel there are discrepancies.

Legislative Report

May 2015

Atlaw Award has a new look!

PTA's origins are based on advocacy and recently the legislative committee gave both the individual and unit/council Atlaw awards an overhaul.

The focus of the individual award will still be centered on the individual's advocacy efforts, but now the deadline to complete the award will be tied to a one-year time frame commencing with the date of the first item complete.

We hope this will encourage individuals to start working towards the award at any point in the year.

The unit/council award received the bulk of the overhaul effort. In the past this award could be accomplished by including the efforts of individual's own advocacy work.

Now this award will focus primarily on the unit/council incorporating and accomplishing advocacy efforts at that level.

The unit/council award will serve as a guide to make sure advocacy is the cornerstone of our units and councils.

The new forms can be downloaded from mopta.org.

Family Engagement in Education Act

By Dorothy Gardner, MoPTA President Elect

This past month the Family Engagement in Education Act (FEE) was reintroduced through bipartisan efforts in both the House and the Senate (H.R. 1194 and S. 662). This marks the third year this bill, written by PTA, has been received by congress. Each year the support for this bill increases, and both PTA and the supporting congressional members hope this Act will provide a framework for the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA also referred to as No Child Left Behind). Currently the Senate committee members on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) are working on a bipartisan bill for reauthorization. Over in the House, HR.5 – the Student Success Act (the House's version of reauthorization) - passed through committee but was pulled from floor consideration. While there is still an opportunity for HR.5 to still come up for a vote, many members of the House are waiting to see what the Senate produces. Now is the time to really impress upon our federal representatives the importance of supporting the Family Engagement in Education Act.

PTA drafted this bill with the concept that family engagement is a shared responsibility, continuous (much like cradle to career), and affects multiple settings (home, school, after school, faith based institutions, and the community). When experts speak about the 5 important ingredients in turn around schools, family engagement is one of those ingredients. The research on family engagement is decades old. We know that effective family engagement leads to: higher grades and test scores; enrollment in higher-level programs and classes; grade promotion and advanced credit accumulation; adaptation to school and improved attendance; better social skills and behavior; on-time graduation and post-secondary matriculation.

It is important to note that not all Family Engagement efforts are created equal. Only highly effective quality programs produce the results found in the studies and research. Unfortunately many schools only incorporate 'drive by' family engagement events such as back-to-school night and parent-teacher conferences. While these are important they are primarily 'one touch' efforts that do not produce a shared responsibility in the education of the student. The result is a production of random acts instead of systemic structure. True family engagement is not event driven. It's about the learning and the outcome of the driven events. W.A.T.C.H Dogs and Parent Universities are examples of family engagement programs that are structured on the concept that it is the outcome that is most important.

The Family Engagement in Education Act main focus is to both provide an avenue of funding for highly effective programs and impress a stronger emphasis on the importance of family engagement. Historically the federal government has stepped in to provide support for students in populations with the most need. Education is a crucial infrastructure need and has a direct result on economic success for the individual, and also the community, state, and nation. PTA Advocacy is caring about kids and our work makes a difference.

MoPTA BOM Officers Sharing Our Talents With You

Fresh Herbs, Tomatoes and Chick Peas Salad



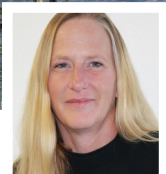
Aisha Faulkner
MoPTA Regional Director
Gateway Region

1 can Chick peas
1 cup sliced cherry tomatoes
4 olives, pitted and sliced
½ chopped red onion
½ cup chopped cilantro and mint
½ stalk chopped celery
Mix all ingredients in a bowl, pour dressing and serve.

You can use Italian dressing or make your own using:
1 Tbsp olive oil
1 tsp lemon juice
A pinch of salt and sugar
Mix and pour over salad

Meet Your MoPTA Board of Managers Officers

I am a MoPTA bylaws expert!



Region: Gateway

Years: 14 years PTA, 4 years BOM

Kids: Married, one daughter, Ann, a freshman at SEMO

Why PTA: For me, PTA is a group of parents and staff who come together to advocate for the future of their community (kids).

Why Involved: When I was in elementary school, my mom was a PTA president, cub scout leader, little league score keeper. I thought PTA was something all parents did. One of the hardest lessons I had to learn as a parent was that not everyone has the same definition of "involved parent".

What I do on BOM: I joined the BOM as a Regional Director then moved to Procedures and Bylaws Chair. Very recently I accepted the position as Director/VP of Field Service. The Field Service Department is responsible for unit/council support. We provide information and guidance to the unit/council officers. My main focus in this new role will be to increase the effectiveness of the local PTAs through training.

Advice to others: Always ask questions. The more we know, the better we do.

Sarah Day

MoPTA VP Field Service

Favorites:

Food: Cake, love cake!

Favorite TV show: Any of cooking challenge shows. I am not much of a cook, but it is fun to watch others.

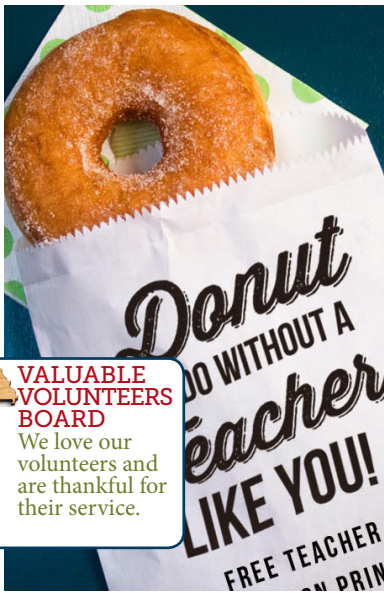
Favorite thing to do: I have always loved the outdoors. My family started out tent camping, then moved up to a pop-up camper. Last year we splurged and are now the proud owners of a RV. I am looking forward to taking it to the east coast this summer to visit family.



Grace March
MoPTA Regional
Director, Meremec
Region

My favorite pins this month

Follow Missouri PTA on Pinterest for more great ideas



VALUABLE VOLUNTEERS BOARD
We love our volunteers and are thankful for their service.



“At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents.”
- Jane D. Hull



AWESOME APPRECIATION BOARD
We could pin these cutie pie ideas all day. Seriously.