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Each month, we encourage you to share this great resource with your entire membership. Forward it today!

## We Are All Advocates

### Understanding Legislation & Advocacy



Advocacy comes in many forms. Advocacy can include direct efforts such as working with policy makers on individual pieces of legislation, but it can also have a civic bent, such as volunteering or serving on a jury. Advocacy is the decisions and behaviors you enact on a daily basis to shape the world around you.

**Shannon Sevier**  
National PTA  
Vice President for  
Advocacy

As we move into the summer months you will have various opportunities to continue your advocacy initiatives. Your efforts might include August visits to your congressmen while they are in recess, posting opinion pieces in your local paper regarding education policy for the coming school-year, or even hosting voter-registration drives (it is never too soon to prepare for the 2016 election). You may also want to build a Facebook page or start using Twitter to connect your membership to advocacy initiatives and to inform them about opportunities to engage.

Whatever the level of engagement you choose remember that National PTA has many online resources to help you with your work (PTA.org). The advocacy toolkit hosts supporting documents for testimony preparation, issue cards, hosting visits with law makers, conducting forums and tips for working with the media. National PTA also hosts a variety of resources on current policy and governance documents to inform your state and local advocacy efforts.

You are a trusted agent in your community, use the resources that National PTA provides and continue to use your service as an opportunity to engage community members around education issues. Always seek to serve the whole child, the whole school, and the whole community.

Most importantly, never discredit your informal expressions of advocacy: the fruit that is born from daily selfless service; the quiet behaviors of servant leaders; and the activities you engage in on a daily basis when you give your time and energy to your schools, your churches, and your communities. Continue to celebrate your volunteerism, the power of mentorship, and the transformative nature of civic support. Thank you for volunteering and advocating for our children with PTA.



# You can be an Advocate

**Anyone can be an advocate, even you! Wonder where to get started? Try these simple tips from Missouri PTA to help you on your advocacy journey. It's not hard - you just have to take the first step.**

Attend a Kids First Town Hall or local legislative forum. This will give you an opportunity to hear your local representatives points of view on issues.

Sign up for the JC/DC network and respond to action alerts.

Pick one of the issues from the Missouri PTA Legislative Platform and write a short note to one of your local legislators letting them know why you feel it is an important issue.

Vote and encourage others to vote on election days. The world is run by those who show up.

PTA has some great E-Learning tools. Two great ones - PTA Basics and Effective Advocacy for Your Child.

**Step up and be the unit or council Legislative Chairman. No experience required just passion.**

Collaborate with district personnel or the Highway Patrol to provide education articles in your newsletter or bring in a guest speaker to one of your general meetings.

Pick one of PTA's many resolutions and educate members and the community on the topic. For example Missouri PTA has a resolution on Substance Abuse adopted in 2010.

Is your school hosting a mock election for students? Ask your child what they are learning and see if the school needs any volunteers.

**Attend a school board forum!**

Pass along copies of your unit or council newsletter to your state and federal representatives with a note telling them you wanted to share the great things that are happening at your school. Just like us, often the stories they hear about education from the news media is negative. This is a great way to show them how parents, teachers, and the community are working together to help education excel.

Did your PTA host participate in the Reflections program? Write a short note to your representatives explaining the program, how many children participated, and any winning entries that went on to the state level. This helps create a connection between your students and the elected official.

**Encourage your membership to sign up to vote. It's easy to print and set out the forms at any sign up table or PTA meeting. You'd be surprised how many parents and guardians are not registered voters.**

Watch and share the PTA Advocacy: A Legacy in Leadership video.

Remind your local city leaders (mayor, council members) of Teacher's Appreciation Week. Let them know how teachers in your school are making a difference.

Follow Missouri and National PTA on social media. Be in the know.

Make a commitment to achieve the individual or unit/council AtLAW award. These are the perfect guides to being a great advocate.

During legislative session keep an eye on the Missouri PTA Bill Watch list and find out which bills Missouri PTA supports and opposes.

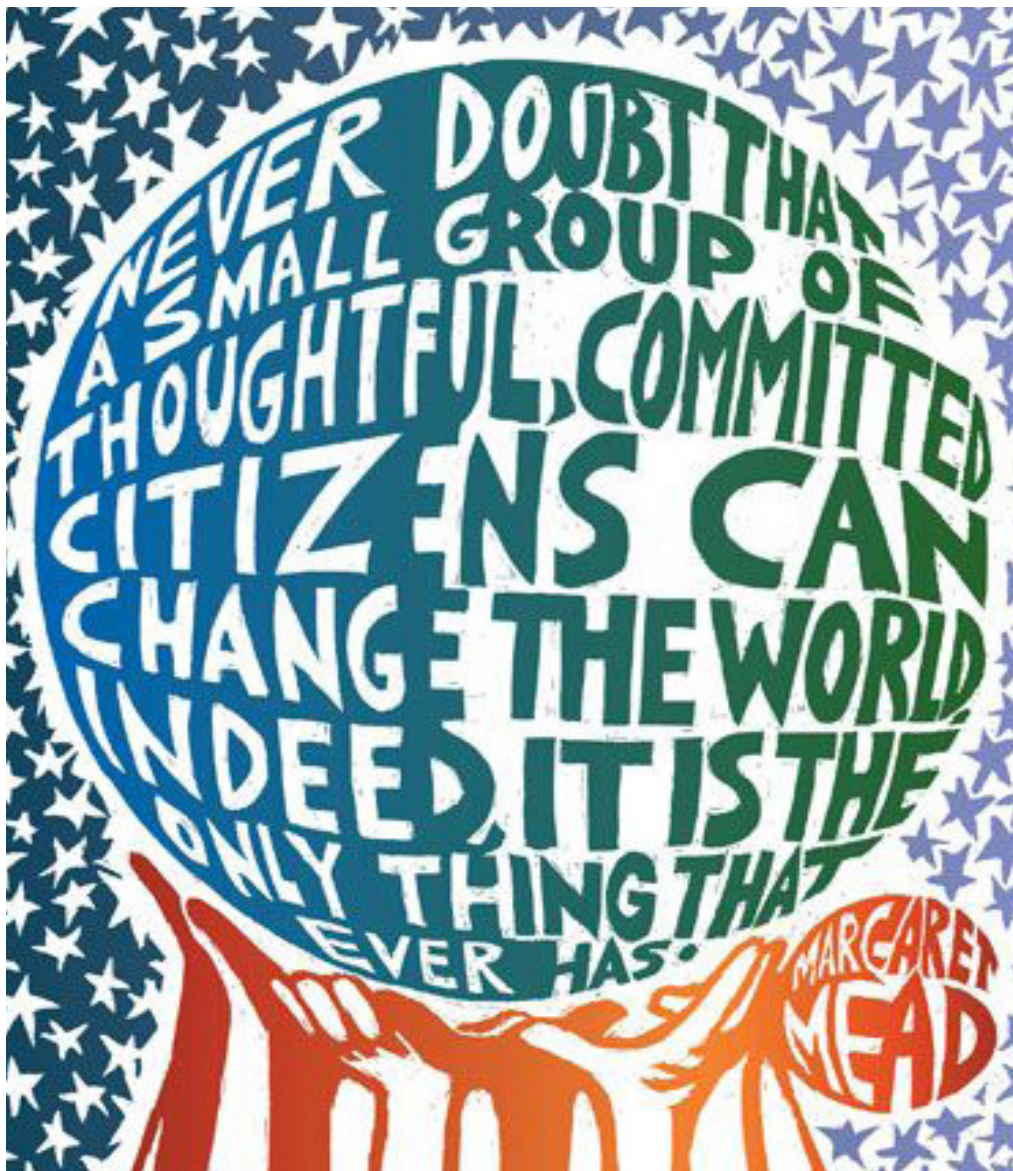
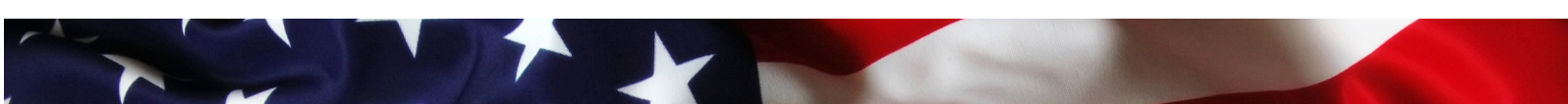
Become knowledgeable about your school's emergency plan. Ask someone from the school or district to go over the plan with parents.

Check out the Missouri PTA advocacy resources and student data privacy webpage.

Read through the National PTA Federal Policy. It comes out annually around February/March.

Read through and share the National PTA information on Making Parent-Teacher Conferences Work For Your Child. Make the conference an engaging experience instead of a 'drive-by' event.

**Be a PTA member and encourage others to join - numbers do matter! When Missouri PTA board members speak with legislators or other organizations the number of members in the state does make a difference.**



## Wow! Did you know?

**PTA has an impressive history. Alice McLellon Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst were ground breaking when they founded the National Congress of Mothers in 1897. They advocated on behalf of child welfare at a time when they were not afforded the right to vote. But, that was only the start. Did you know:**

Theodore Roosevelt Chaired the PTA's Advisory Council of Fathers.

PTA advocated for children not to be tried and incarcerated as adults, forming the basis of our juvenile justice system today.

As early as 1916 PTA advocated that sex education be taught to children before they reached puberty.

PTA advocated for child labor laws to protect against unsafe working practices and conditions for youth.

PTA supported the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974.

PTA advocated for a Federally-Funded School Lunch Program. This program today feeds more than 26 million children daily.

In the 1980s, PTA undertook a massive public education campaign about HIV/AIDS.

PTA helped develop the TV rating system adopted by the FCC in 1988 based on program content, not just age appropriateness.

PTA's National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs define "parent involvement" in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

# Brief History of PTA

The seeds of PTA were planted when two women, Alice McLellan Birney (a teacher) and Phoebe Apperson Hearst (a Missouri Mother) joined forces to voice their belief that children should be in school rather than working in factories. It was early 1897, a time when not only women didn't have the right to vote but social activism was frowned upon. Not easily deterred, these two women had faith that other mothers would support their advocacy mission to protect the interest of children. With this in mind they began a nationwide campaign to bring together like minded individuals.

On February 17th, 1897, the first conference of the National Congress of Mothers was held in Washington D.C. Of the over 2000 in attendance, the majority were mothers but fathers, teachers, laborers, and legislators were also present. The first issue taken on was legislation directed at creating child labor laws.

Other important issues taken up in the early 1900's - juvenile justice, pure food bill (first consumer protection act regarding food and drugs), Kindergarten, hot school lunches, infant mortality rates, automatic sprinklers in schools, physical education, and schools for deaf children. In 1908, with the assistance of the U.S. State Department, PTA brought together representatives from 12 countries and state governors representatives for the First International Congress on the Welfare of the Child. The opening speech was given by President Theodore Roosevelt and a formal reception was held at the White House. Quite impressive accomplishments for a group of mothers, especially when you take into account all this took place prior to ratification of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote!

The cornerstone of PTA is advocacy. It is what sets PTA apart from other parent teacher organizations. We are so much more than cookies and fundraising. The simple power of PTA is the power to effect real change in all children's lives.



# How to be a Legislative chair

By Dorothy Gardner, MoPTA President Elect

**Sure experience and background can be a great benefit for a legislative chair but is it necessary, No! What it really takes is a passion for PTA advocacy.**

The very first step is to send your email and contact information to the state office. Specific information regarding legislation is emailed to not only unit/council presidents but also legislative chairs. From September through May, the Missouri PTA Legislative Department produces a monthly suggested legislative report. This report provides you with local, state and national information, and is intended as a tool for you to create your own report. Making sure you are on that list will ensure you receive resources to assist you with your role. Next sign up for the JC/DC network. Responding to PTA action alerts is the most fundamental way to function as a legislative chair. Legislators value their constituents concerns and need to hear from you on the issues. Download or bookmark a copy of the Missouri Legislative Handbook. This resource will provide you with more detailed information about how to be a legislative chair and legislation and advocacy the PTA way. Become familiar with the 'Advocacy' tab of MOPTA.org site and the 'Advocacy' tab of the PTA.org site. These pages are continually being updated with information and resources.

What happens when someone gets a new job or promotion at their place of work? They receive training. Just because PTA members volunteer in their PTA roles doesn't mean they shouldn't receive training to do their job. This is always a justifiable expense in your PTA budget. Not only do the leaders benefit but so does the entire PTA. There are several training opportunities throughout the year: both National PTA and Missouri PTA conventions, Schools of Information, Regional Conferences, National PTA Legislative Conference (probably the best legislative training available which includes a day lobbying on Capitol Hill), PTA webinars, and E-learning Modules. Things are constantly changing and there is always something new to learn.

## Helpful insights for the Legislative chair

**Elections:** There are two main elections held during the school year and they are both held on the first Tuesday of their respective month.

November hosts the general election. Legislators at the state and federal level are elected. And state propositions, or ballot initiatives, are brought before the voters. April is typically when school board elections, bonds and levies are decided upon.

The Missouri Statutes, section 115.135.1 spells out the deadline for registering to vote. It states that in order to be eligible to vote a qualified voter must be registered no later than 5pm on the 4th Wednesday prior to the election. Registration can be done in person or the form mailed. **As a legislative chair it is always a great idea to remind members of this deadline and encourage voting.** You'd be surprised how many qualified people are not registered and how many registered voters fail to show up at the polls.

**Missouri General Assembly:** The regular legislative session runs from January through May. Specifically, session starts the first Wednesday after the first Monday in January, and the last day to consider a bill is the First Friday after the second Monday in May. Session may start in January, however bills can be pre-filled beginning December 1st.

If a bill is not truly agreed to by both the House and the Senate by the last day to consider bills, the bill is considered dead and must start the process over again during the next legislative session. The road to becoming a law is not an easy one even for the simplest of bills. Both the House and Senate can amend a bill at any point prior passing each chamber. This can result in different language being passed on the same bill. When this happens both chambers conduct a conference on the bill to come up to agreed common language. Then the bill must be voted on again.

Finally the bill must be signed or vetoed by the governor. If a bill is vetoed during session, the House and Senate can immediately vote to override the veto. Since most bills arrive at the governor's desk at the end of session, legislators meet again during August to decide if they will act to override. This August session is referred to as Veto Session.



Send us pictures, brags and stories. We want to hear from you! Send everything to [contact@mopta.org](mailto:contact@mopta.org)



# Missouri PTA Resolutions

## You Can Make A Difference

Denise McCarter, RN, BSN, CPRN  
Past MOPTA Resolutions Chairman, VP  
and Director, Legislation and Advocacy



For over one hundred years, The PTA's mission has been to support and speak on behalf of children and youth in schools, in the community, and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children and youth. This mission is put into action through the resolutions process. Issues such as prescription drug abuse by children and teens, class size, funding for public schools and child abuse reporting are topics that have been addressed by MOPTA resolutions in the last decade. Changes in legislation, practice concerning these issues and education on these topics have brought about a safer environment for Missouri's children. What child safety or health issues are you aware of in your school, your city, or in Missouri that could be addressed through the resolution process?

What is a Resolution? A resolution is a proposal that something is to be done by, or that something is the wish, opinion or sense of, the organization. The resolutions process is a democratic process by which we, as an organization of child advocates, decide what actions and principles we will support. Through this process, we develop our organization's legislative platform and the programs that we will sponsor to address an issue specified in a resolution. The resolutions process gives us clarity on how to make Missouri's children's world safer and more promising.

Through this process, you, as a Missouri PTA leader or member, can bring issues that concern Missouri's children to the attention of the entire Missouri PTA membership and then to our schools and governmental representatives.

To initiate a resolution, discuss with your board, unit, council, your school's teachers and principals the issue that you would like to see addressed through legislation, programs, or education. You, your unit, and your council can make a difference for our children.

Take time to look over the current resolutions of Missouri PTA. There may already be a standing resolution that addresses your concerns. Current standing resolutions are available at [www.mopta.org](http://www.mopta.org) under the Advocacy tab. Please see the complete instructions for writing and submitting a resolution on the website and in the Legislation Handbook.

When resolution proposals are approved by the Resolution Committee, they are then brought before the MOPTA Board of Managers. If approved by the Board, a resolution is then presented to the State Convention Delegates for consideration of approval during the General Sessions at State convention. If passed at Convention, the resolution becomes a part of the MOPTA Legislative Platform and thus permits MOPTA to advocate for those concerns listed in the resolution. This is when advocacy can begin to bring about change in current legislation, in school and community practices, and in education about important issues.

Please thoughtfully consider taking the time to bring an issue concerning Missouri's children to the attention of MOPTA through a resolution. The time and effort you invest may make a significant difference in the life of many children.

# Are we Lobbyists or Advocates?

## PTA and the IRS code

By Dorothy Gardner, MoPTA President Elect

Quite often the words "lobbying" and "advocacy" are used interchangeably. However they are in fact different. All lobbying is a form of advocacy but not all advocacy is lobbying.

Advocacy encompasses a wide range of activities. At its core, PTA means supporting and speaking up for all children. All children means not just the children in our kids classroom or school, but all the children in our community, state and nation.

We do this by supporting or opposing issues related to children, providing education/programs to not only our members but the community, and urging elected officials to vote in a specific manner. This last aspect, the direct ask of an elected official is lobbying. Lobbying is defined as the attempt to influence a public official or decision maker in favor of a specific opinion or cause.

Because PTAs are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations there are specific things we can and cannot engage in when it comes to politics. PTAs are absolutely prohibited from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of or in opposition to any candidate for elective public office.

A good rule to follow is PTA supports/opposes issues not people.

If a candidate is involved we must remain completely neutral. But, this doesn't mean PTAs are not allowed to participate in the election process. Providing our members and the community with an avenue to find out about candidates is definitely a role for PTA. The individuals who govern our schools, community, state, and nation will make decisions that affect our children's lives.

## PTA Legislative Resources

**Advocacy Resource Page** (<http://mopta.org/advocacy-resources/>) - How to be a Legislative Chair, Monthly legislative chair suggestive reports, Letter to Legislator template, sign up for JC/DC network, Guide to hosting candidate forums, Resolutions guide, Legislative Platform, Legislative Handbook, Town Hall Guide.

**Take Action** (<http://mopta.org/category/action-alerts/>) - current JC/DC action alerts

**Capitol Chatter** (<http://mopta.org/category/advocacy/capitol-chatter/>) - Missouri bill watch list, legislative articles/information

**Resolution webpage** (<http://mopta.org/category/advocacy/resolutions/>) - current and historical Missouri PTA resolutions, Missouri PTA position statements

**Student Data Privacy** (<http://mopta.org/student-data-privacy/>) - Privacy Pledge, Information on what data is collected, Student data privacy laws

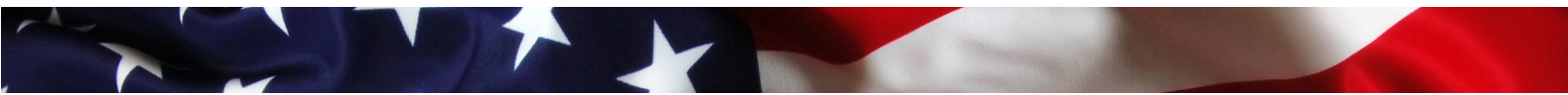
**National PTA Advocacy page** (<http://www.pta.org/advocacy/?navItemNumber=505>) - Advocacy toolkit, Election guides, Federal Public Policy, Guide to State Assessments, National PTA resolutions and positions, National PTA Take action network, Family Engagement in Education Act, Common Core State Standards

**National PTA One Voice Blog** (<http://onevoice.pta.org/?navItemNumber=4181>) - articles and information on a variety of topics including advocacy, art education, President's corner, Education news, Family Engagement, Communications, Health & Safety, Membership, and Money Matters

**National PTA e-newsletters** (<http://www.pta.org/about/SignUp.cfm?navItemNumber=3365>) - PTA parent, PTA Takes Action Update, Local Leader News, Leadership Briefing.

The screenshot shows the National PTA website home page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with "National PTA" logo, "everychild.onevoice", and links for "About PTA", "News & Events", "Advocacy", "At School", "For Families", and "PTA Leaders". Below the navigation bar is a sidebar with a "Login" link and a list of menu items: "Advocacy", "PTA Takes Action Network", "Federal Policy Agenda", "Family Engagement in Education Act", "Common Core State Standards", "Resolutions & Position Statements", "Advocacy Toolkit", "Election Guides", and "Advocacy Now". The main content area features a large image of the U.S. Capitol building. Below the image are two boxes: "2015 Policy Agenda" and "Advocacy Now". The "2015 Policy Agenda" box contains text about the annual public policy agenda and a "more" link. The "Advocacy Now" box contains text about family engagement and a "more" link.

The screenshot shows the Missouri PTA website advocacy page. At the top, there is a navigation bar with "Missouri PTA" logo and links for "ABOUT MISSOURI PTA", "MEMBERSHIP", "PROGRAMS/SERVICES", "NEWS", "EVENTS", "ADVOCACY", and "PTA MEMBERS SECTION". Below the navigation bar is a search bar and a "CONTACT" link. The main content area features a "Bill Watch List 2015 Legislative Session (as of April 27th)" section. Below this section is a "Student Data Privacy" section with text about SB 546 and a "CONTACT" link. At the bottom, there is a "CONTACT MAGAZINE" link and a "MISSOURI PTA CALENDAR" link.



# The voice of a PTA member

## Be Well And Be Heard



**Kenya Pieters** MoPTA Legislative Chairman | [kenyap@mopta.org](mailto:kenyap@mopta.org)

I've spent many years as a PTA mom serving in many different capacities beginning as a room parent. I wanted to be involved at my child's school. I wanted to be a familiar face to school teachers and administration. As I grew as a PTA mom of children in public school I realized that while I was providing much needed and appreciated help, I could strive for positive and lasting changes by advocating for all children. **Advocacy for all children is not what attracted me to PTA but it is one of the key reasons I've stayed.** Many of us have advocated at some level for our children.... Whether it was talking to a teacher regarding our child's needs or speaking to a principal about issues at the school. It is a great first step when as a parent you advocate for your child. However, when you speak with the backing of 50,000+ other parents your schools, communities and law makers take notice. **As a member of MO PTA we have that power.**

What does Child Safety, Data Privacy, Nutrition, College Preparation, Bullying, Childhood Immunization and Mental Health all have in common? Policy makers have heard PTA's voice on each of these issues. PTA is the only national school-parent membership organization and is often looked to nationwide when discussing anything related to the welfare of children.

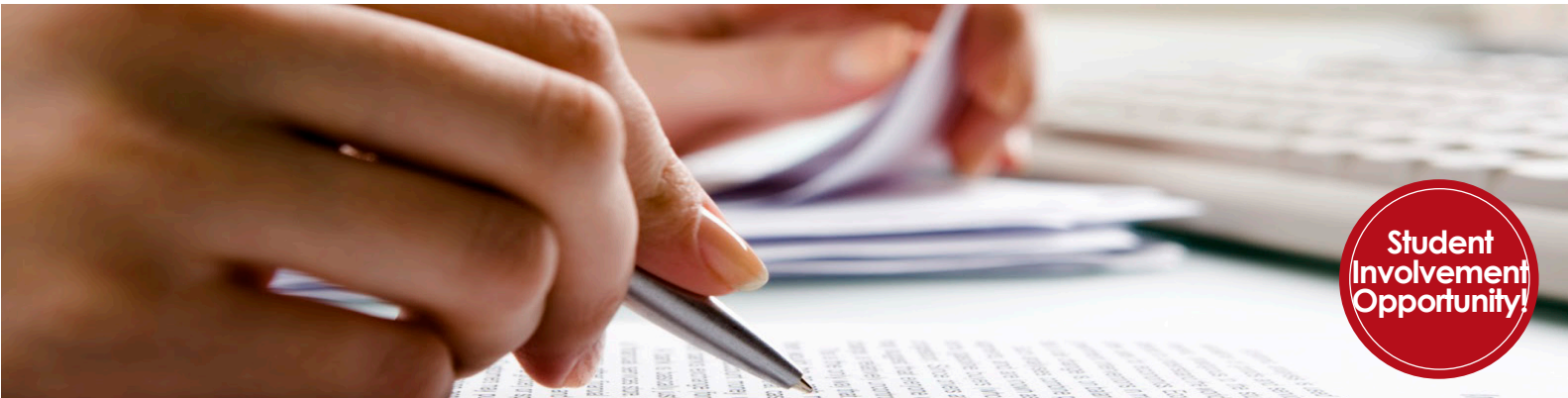
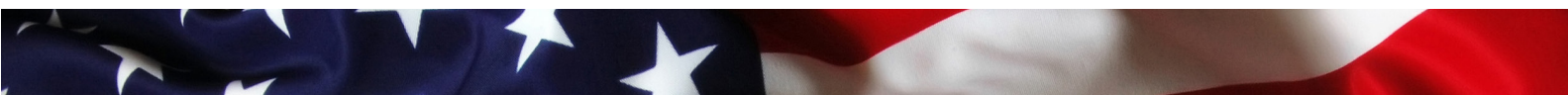
I volunteered to serve as the Missouri PTA State Legislative Chairman earlier having no background in higher level advocacy. It's true I had been in PTA for several years, but this position proved very different. It was intimidating at first and there is still so much to learn. Two truths became crystal clear to me since taking on this role:

**#1 The voice of a PTA member truly matters to law makers (I've seen this first hand).**

**#2 We don't use our voice nearly enough. There is power in numbers and we fall short in tapping into our power.**

**As an organization who has a rich and respected history of advocating for children we have the resources, the infrastructure and the ear of policy makers to truly make a difference.** Don't know where to begin? You can start by signing up for legislative alerts. Not that interested in what's happening state wide? Missouri PTA leaders are here to help. The same playbook used to advocate at the National and State level is transferable to the local district and school level. Here are a few tips...

- **Take advantage of the resources PTA has to offer through MO PTA's website or through National PTA.**
- Set a goal - Choose a focus that garners mass appeal or support.
- Build upon the relationships you have inherently as a member of the PTA.
- Organize (remember there is strength in numbers)
- Engage the decision makers.



# The Writing A Resolution Information You Need To Succeed - As a Student!

By Meagan Gardner, MoPTA Student Representative

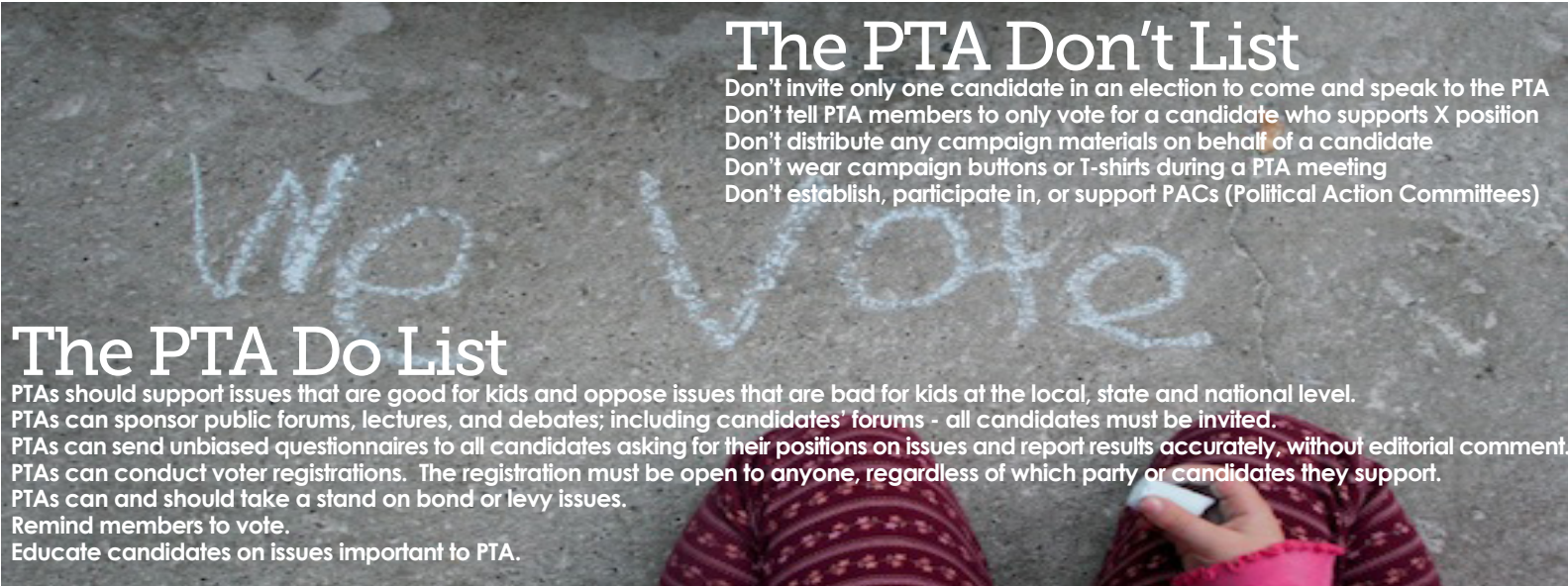
As a student, have you ever felt like you noticed something in your school or community that you thought wasn't right? When you felt this did you also feel like you had no power to change it? Well I'm here to tell you that that's not true. I noticed that in my community and PTA there were laws and resolutions against teens and texting and driving, but it's not just texting that distracts drivers and leads to accidents and it's not just teens doing these distracting things.

I thought that this was wrong, so I got together with two other friends of mine and we wrote a resolution. Now don't get me wrong there's a lot that goes into writing a resolution. First, you have to do your research. Look up all you can find on your issue and take note of it. Then, use those statistics to write your resolved lines of the resolution. The resolve lines kind of state the problem and help explain why it is a problem. After the resolves are written, you need to decide what you are trying to accomplish. When I wrote my resolution I was trying to get ALL people to stop being distracted drivers. I used this goal to write my resolved statements.

That's just to write the resolution. Once the resolution is written you have to send it to the state where they read it over and decide if it will be heard at convention. Then, if it's being heard at convention, you get to go speak about it and defend it. I got to do this when I sent my resolution to the state, and while it was kind of nerve racking to talk in front of that many people, it was also fun to share this resolution that I was so passionate about and had worked so hard on with all of the people there at convention.

If the resolution gets passed at state level you can send it to national PTA. Kind of the same thing happens there where they decide if it should be heard and voted on at national convention. If they say yes to the resolution you get to go speak about it there which is when it gets really interesting. You get to lead workshops and talk to adults about why they should vote to pass your resolution. Yes I know that this seems very daunting, and it can be at first, but then you realize you have the knowledge and statistics and power. You know more than them and you get to share all of the information you learned with them in order to help fix your issue.

So as crazy as writing a resolution may seem, it's not impossible and it's a great way to try and fix issues you see in your community.



## The PTA Don't List

- Don't invite only one candidate in an election to come and speak to the PTA
- Don't tell PTA members to only vote for a candidate who supports X position
- Don't distribute any campaign materials on behalf of a candidate
- Don't wear campaign buttons or T-shirts during a PTA meeting
- Don't establish, participate in, or support PACs (Political Action Committees)

## The PTA Do List

- PTAs should support issues that are good for kids and oppose issues that are bad for kids at the local, state and national level.
- PTAs can sponsor public forums, lectures, and debates; including candidates' forums - all candidates must be invited.
- PTAs can send unbiased questionnaires to all candidates asking for their positions on issues and report results accurately, without editorial comment.
- PTAs can conduct voter registrations. The registration must be open to anyone, regardless of which party or candidates they support.
- PTAs can and should take a stand on bond or levy issues.
- Remind members to vote.
- Educate candidates on issues important to PTA.



# College Ready Tips for Seniors

School is out and it's finally summer! It's all about sleeping late, making money and hanging with friends at the pool. But your Senior year is just around the corner. Don't let it sneak up on you! Take action now to be more prepared for your senior year and your college experience by following these tips:

Review your career plans and use this to narrow down the list of colleges you are considering. Once you've made a list of colleges, contact the admissions office to ask about financial aid, request information about admission requirements and deadlines, ask for information about the college and it's costs; you can also set up visits to schools that interest you.

Start checking out scholarship deadlines which are often in the fall; don't miss out on these opportunities for extra financial support for your college education.

Create or refine your resume. For tips look at: <https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org/explore-careers/careers/how-to-create-your-resume>

# Tips on College Readiness

College readiness should begin earlier than you may think, as early as middle school. Family involvement contributes to other positive outcomes, such as better school attendance, improved homework completion rates and higher graduation rates and can help make students more successful and college-ready. The partnership between families and schools is an important one to enhance student success.

Schools should explain to students and their parents the effects of taking a challenging curriculum on their future educational, career, and income options.

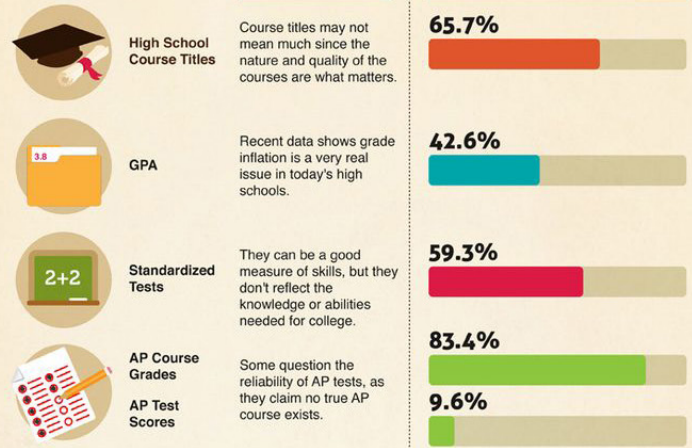
Schools should use multiple sources of information, including standardized assessments, to inform students and their parents of the students' progress toward college readiness. Schools should work with families to calculate college costs and develop a plan to meet these costs.

Parental encouragement is often the strongest factor in helping students develop educational plans. Regardless of the economic, ethnic, or cultural background, family/parent involvement in a child's education is a major factor in determining the child's success in school.

Parents are crucial in guiding their children through a college preparatory curriculum, and students generally cite their parents as their top resource for academic planning and support. It is important that parents and families without knowledge of the college experience receive more help from teachers and counselors.

## TRADITIONAL FACTORS

High schools and colleges traditionally value these factors:

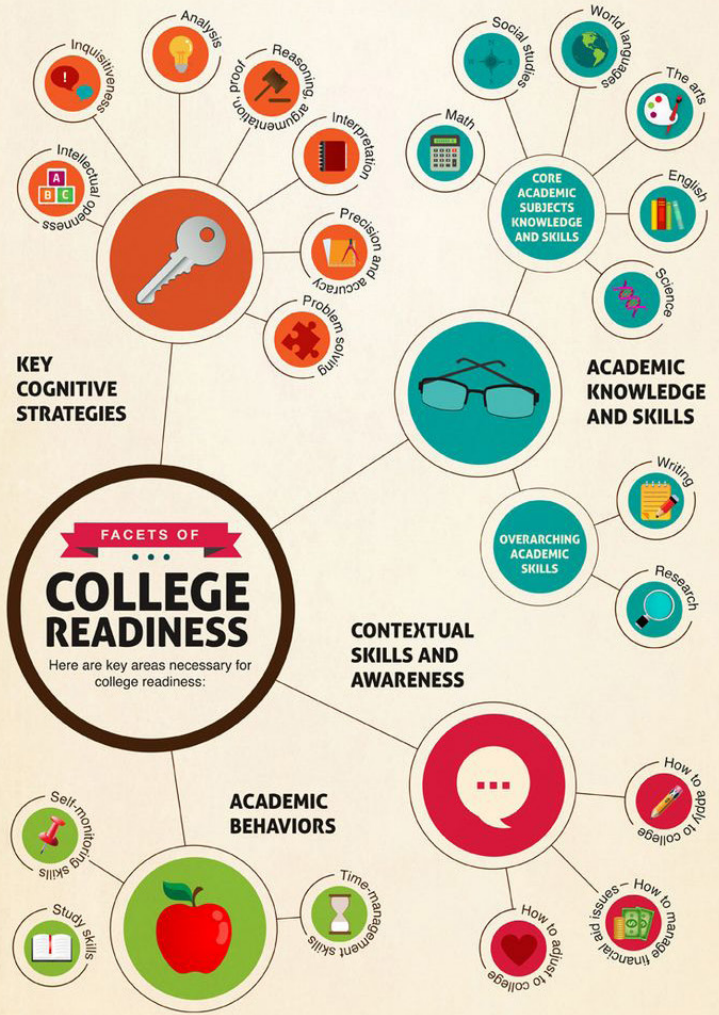
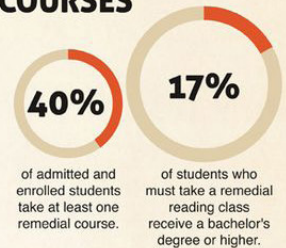


\*Percent of colleges attributing considerable weight to this admissions factor

## PERFORMANCE IN COLLEGE COURSES



Of course the true test to find out if a student is prepared for college is to see how well he does in his college courses. Students who enroll in remedial courses or fail entry-level courses find it more difficult to graduate from college.



# Think Like A Risk-Taker

By Andrea Battaglia, MoPTA Public Relations Chair from [www.andreabcreative.com](http://www.andreabcreative.com). "Think Like A Risk-Taker"

15 min.  
that matter  
in 2015

**I read an article recently by Doug Sundheim called "Taking Smart Risks" that really helped change my perspective. I love the strategy of getting started, but I didn't realize how purposeful this thought could be. I've heard many people make the self-deprecating statements and with a simple switch in thought, they can be self-empowering statements. I challenge you this month, think like a risk taker and see what changes. I bet you'll be pleased.**

**The timing isn't right -> The timing will never be perfect.** The truth is, the timing will never be perfect to get started, to make change, to have everything you want. But the people who make the most of their situation are the people who get started anyway. Risk-takers get started anyway. When you think like a risk-taker, you remember what you want to accomplish and realize that now is as good of time as any to get started. Then you start making goals, making plans, making actions to achieve your accomplishments. What do you want to start? Get started anyway.

**My ideas aren't good enough -> My ideas are good enough to get started.** That saying, "You'll never learn if you don't try" is genius. Your ideas are good enough to get started. Everyone has ideas and as you start your process, your ideas will grow and change as you grow and change. You don't have to know everything to make a difference - you just have to know you're good enough.

**I don't know what I'm doing -> I won't know what I'm doing until I do it.** I've spent the last decade working with college student leaders. Many of them are brand new to their leadership roles and have no idea what they're doing. But they have the skills to change the world - they just haven't discovered it yet. I love working with potential and pushing them to achieve what I know they're capable of. Love it.

You see, so many people are capable of amazing things, but they think because they lack the experience or the knowledge, they can't do anything. I love developing risk-taking thought and educating, empowering and challenging the people around me to learn from their experiences to learn what they're doing as they're doing it. And I've not been disappointed by the results. Think like a risk-taker and start doing it.

## Mental Health in Teenagers



By Meagan Gardner, MoPTA Student Representative

These days there is so much pressure on teenagers. The need to be popular, get good grades, and look and act a certain way is more prevalent than ever before, and as most of you know, this can lead to terrible things such as eating disorders, depression, and even suicide.

**I'm going to tell you from a high school student's point of view how easy it is for us to hide issues we are having and what you can really do to help us.**

Teenagers don't want to advertise it when we are having issues. Instead we put on a brave face so no one knows. This makes it harder as a parent to realize that something's wrong. It doesn't matter if you're looking for the "behavioral changes" that everyone talks about. If your child is trying to hide their issue, you

**I don't want to make mistakes ->**

**I have to make mistakes in order to grow & improve.**

I've made a lot of mistakes in my day. Some still make me blush to this day. Sometimes I've felt like a full-on idiot. But I'm ok with this. You see, I make a lot of mistakes because I try lots of things. I know change is messy and frustrating sometimes, but to grow and improve, I have to keep moving forward.

Mistakes aren't always of giant proportions. Sometimes, you have to run multiple tests to realize the best path. Are the failures mistakes? Well, technically, yes. But they are also your risk-taking discovery to success. Don't ever be afraid to make mistakes, that would be the biggest mistake of all.

**I'll regret it if I fail -> I'll regret it if I don't try.** Many years ago, when I was a brand-new manager, my boss asked me to attend a special meeting in her place. In that meeting, the group was asked a question about a new product and I thought "I have the right answer, I know!", but I didn't say anything. Many of my superiors in the room offered their answers, but none of them were what the trainer was looking for. I never spoke up. And when the trainer announced what he was looking for, it turns out I had the right answer all along - and I was the only one. What a missed opportunity!

I thought because I was the youngest and the newest in the room, that it couldn't have been right. I wish I had tried. I regret now that I didn't try back then. But I learned an important lesson that day. I was too worried about failure to try and that was the wrong perspective. I needed to trust my ideas, trust my decisions and trust my confident voice.

Have you ever been in this situation? Learn from my mistakes - Think like a risk-taker and regret it if you don't try and put yourself out there.

**Thinking and acting like a risk-taker is more important than many of us realize. It's the path to confidence and change. Both are essential for you, for me and to develop in others. Think like a risk-taker until you know you're a risk-taker. Then I challenge you to build this skill in others around you too. We'll all be better for it.**

may not realize something is wrong until it's too late. What you really need is communication.

As kids, we need to know that we can trust you and talk to you about anything. I know as parents your job is to protect us and teach us right from wrong, If we think you're going to get mad about something we try to hide it. Personally, my mom and I have a very open relationship, but there are still times I'm afraid to go to her about things because I think that she'll get mad. The only thing that gets me to finally tell her is knowing that she won't freak out, and instead she'll listen. While she might get a little mad sometimes, she is always more focused on helping me find the answer rather than punishing or yelling at me.

By the time we come to you about something chances are it's already happened, whether it's a friend that's that is becoming a bully or a class where our grades are dropping. We already know its bad and are concerned about it so yelling and getting mad at us only makes it worse. Instead, as hard as it may be, you have to try to remain calm. Talk it out. Really listen to what we are saying and how we feel. Forget about all those stereotypes about teenagers "hating" their parents." **You would be surprised how much more we would talk to you and tell you if we were given the chance.**

It may be hard, but you need to talk to us. Tell us we can always come to you and then when they do come, stay calm. **I know your first instinct may be to freak out, but don't. I promise if you listen and give us that safe environment to talk to you, you will find out so much more.** You will know when we have something going on instead of finding out later, after they've been hiding it, and when it may be too late to help.



## Kenya Pieters

MoPTA Legislative Chairman  
Three Trails Region

# years involved in PTA and Board of Managers: **6 years involved in PTA/ 5 months with BOM**

Why do I believe PTA is important : **Because of what it stands for and who it serves. I believe in advocating for children. I am a Children's Therapist professionally and a mother of 2 boys whom I adore. I see firsthand the need and the impact good advocacy does in the lives of our future generations.**

Why did I get involved with BOM : **I was interested in taking advocacy to the next level and wanted to grow as a PTA leader.**

Kids names and ages: **Isaac age 12 Winston age 7**  
Something interesting I have done this year: **Parenting my middle school child**

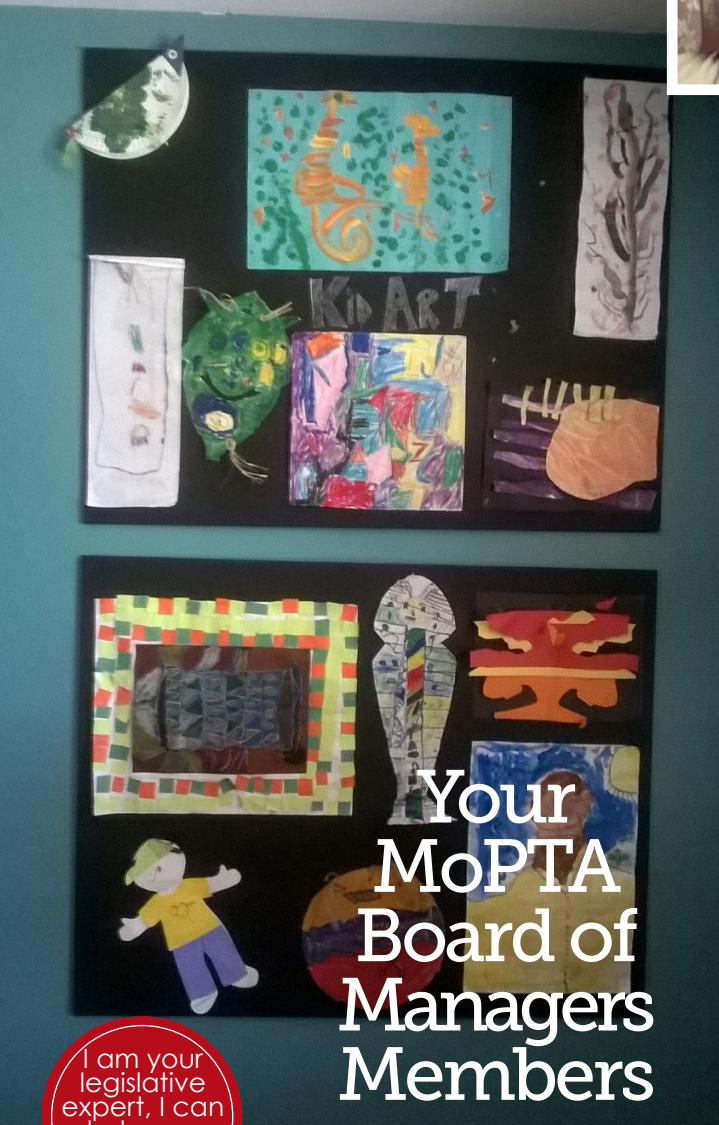
Advice I'd give others: **Enjoy the journey.**  
Healthy living tip: **Best Rx for Anxiety Relief: Proper Planning.**

Favorites: **Book: Power of a Prayer Parent Movie: I love old black & white classics T.V. show: House of Cards**

Favorite food: **Mid-Eastern cuisine**

Describe yourself in 3-5 words: **Think. Plan. Do.**

What am I learning this year: **I'm learning to discern what my fight is and what isn't.**



I am your legislative expert, I can help you understand too!

**Aisha Faulkner**  
MoPTA Regional Director  
Gateway Region



MoPTA BOM Officers  
Sharing Our Talents With You

# Scrumptious Fried Squash

## Ingredients

- 1/4 C corn meal
- 1/4 C all-purpose flour
- 1/4 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp Tony cacheres or seasoned salt
- 1 egg beaten add salt and pepper
- Oil
- 2 squash sliced

## Directions

- 1) Mix the first 4 ingredients
- 2) Dip the sliced squash in the beaten egg
- 3) Roll the squash in the flour mixture
- 4) Fry until golden brown on each side

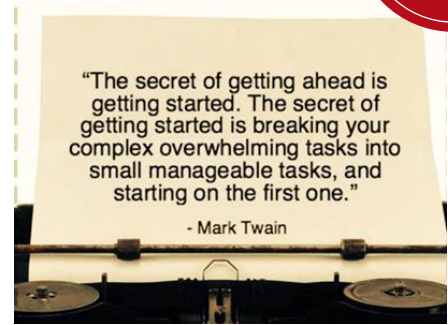
Serve with dressing of your choice



**Norvel Johnson**  
MoPTA Secretary

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**SMART SNACKS & MEALS BOARD**  
Everything seems to be better as a popsicle. We need these now. #yum



**AWESOME APPRECIATION BOARD**  
Ideas like these make us want to create even more gift-giving opportunities. #socute