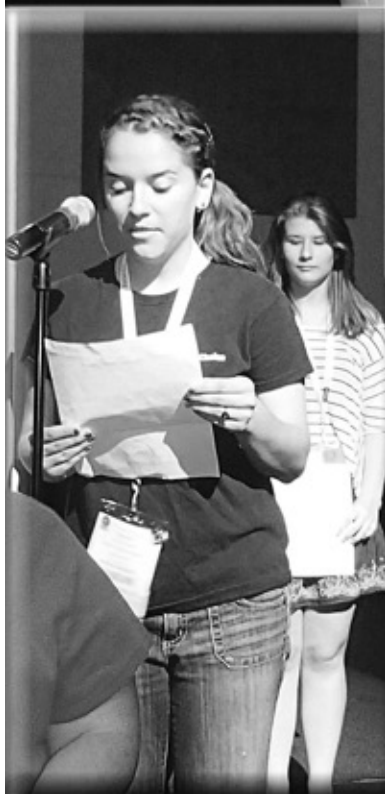


CONTACT

Volume 94, Issue 1
September 2012



Call to Convention

Missouri PTA 97th Annual State Convention
Hilton Kansas City Airport
Kansas City, Missouri October 19 - 21, 2012



Our Anniversary Convention includes -

- ◆ National PTA President—Betsy Landers, All-Conference Speaker and Convention Representative
- ◆ Workshops full of information to help you through the year
- ◆ Exhibit Hall with vendors just waiting to help fulfill your needs
- ◆ PTA Shoppe stocked with items
- ◆ Awards...Awards...Awards
- ◆ Banquet and 100th Anniversary Diamond Celebration!

PTA[®]
everychild. one voice.[®]

*Mark your calendar to come celebrate
Missouri PTA's 100th Anniversary.
Lots of information, networking and fun.*

Complete information regarding the convention can be found at www.mopta.org

Don't Forget Your Membership Card!
*You must present your PTA membership card when attending convention,
so don't forget to bring it!*

Cover photo:

Missouri Delegates at National Convention, Missouri PTA student delegates address National PTA delegation in San Jose.

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NOTE: Advertisements appearing in this publication do not constitute PTA's endorsement of the product or service.

PLEASE SHARE THIS MAGAZINE.

Information from this magazine may be excerpted for other PTA publications as long as credit is given to Missouri PTA and any byline that may appear with the item must be included.

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MO PTA 800-328-7330

President's Message By Donna Petiford, Missouri PTA President



Just a few quick reminders this month because I know you are very busy at this time of year.

Please remember that the Board of Managers of Missouri PTA serve as a resource on call. If you have questions or need help or inspiration, please ask us, that's what we do! You will find a complete list of board members included in this publication.

Our website is available 24/7 and is full of information you may need to help with the organization or planning of your PTA year. Don't forget that we have tools available to members under the Members Only section. You will just need your password and user ID to access (you will receive both when you activate your New and Improved PTA membership card). We've even included a FAQ under the Membership tab.

www.mopta.org/membership/faq. If you haven't already done so, please consider providing the students in your school with a Reflections event. This gives your students the opportunity to express themselves in a variety of artistic forms and the chance to be recognized locally and possibly at the state and National level. You will find the guidelines and rules on our website, including information about the new Special Artist category. This event takes organization and time, but it is an investment that will provide a great return for both the students and your PTA/PTSA volunteers.

Now would be a great time to find a Legislative chair for your PTA. I know this is not always at the top of the committee list, however, I've done this job and it is one of the easiest. In the beginning I just shared a few

points at each PTA/PTSA meeting and asked people to join the legislative network on the Missouri PTA and National PTA websites. At first, I thought that people on my board were not interested in the legislative activities that pertain to children and youth, but after a few meetings, I had several people thanking me for providing them with this information.

Another position that is sometimes overlooked and very helpful is that of the Parliamentarian. Parliamentary procedure is a set of rules for conducting orderly meetings that accomplish goals fairly. Benefits of parliamentary procedure include the following:

- Justice and courtesy for all
- Maintenance of order
- Consideration of one item at a time
- All sides being heard
- Ability for each member to provide input
- Majority rule

Even if you don't have an official Parliamentarian on your board, you will find the book *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised in Brief* very helpful in answering basic parliamentary questions. In addition, Convention delegates will have the opportunity to attend a workshop presented by Leonard Young, President of the National Association of Parliamentarians. This workshop is always well attended and is one that you won't want to miss at our upcoming event.

Our 97th Annual Convention and once in a lifetime 100th Anniversary celebration are just around the corner! We hope you are making plans to join us. It will be an event to remember!

"Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does." ~ William James

Who We Are

PTA Vision

Making every child's potential a reality

PTA Mission - PTA is:

- A powerful voice for all children,
- A relevant resource for families and communities, and
- A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

PTA Purposes

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship
- To raise the standards of home life
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teacher may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth
- To develop between educators and general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education

Build Your Child's Tomorrow In Today's PTA!

By Betsy Landers, National PTA President

Welcome back to school and back to PTA! PTA has created a meaningful relationship with its member base, and as with any good relationship, it takes hard work and adapting to change to ensure the relationship lasts. This school year, PTA is taking a great leap forward with new and improved resources and services to help families, schools, and PTAs succeed in our changing and challenging world. We invite you to discover the many enhancements National PTA is rolling out to put children, educators, and PTAs on a fast track to building **Today's PTA**.

Just what is **Today's PTA**? It is relevant...it's bold...and it's now! Today's PTA is on the move. In addition to providing information on National PTA's established programs, like **Reflections** and **Healthy Lifestyles**, and new initiatives, like a more powerful membership card that offers member benefits, the annual Back-to-PTA issue of **Our Children** is also changing. To adapt to the way our parents, children, and volunteers like to receive and share information, **Our Children** is going digital. Anyone with internet access will be able to read **Our Children** at www.pta.org/pta_magazine.asp, where links will be live, embedded videos may be viewed, and e-mail and social media may be used to share content and communicate

with National PTA staff, authors, advertisers, and other organizations.

National PTA will also be unveiling a newly designed, easier-to-use website, and we will be broadening our established **Schools of Excellence** program to allow for continuous improvement that will make collaboration between schools and families even stronger and more effective.

As we promised, we are using the financial resources you have entrusted to us to provide more value to you as we work together to ensure a bright future for our nation's children!

We welcome your comments and feedback on our efforts at Membership@pta.org.

Welcome to Today's PTA! Together, we are building our children's tomorrow. We are on the move—join us!



From a Students Point of View

By Amanda R., MOPTA Student Representative

Did you know not every state has students on their state PTA board? I was asked by the Missouri State Board to attend the National Convention as an elected delegate for Missouri PTA. I attended workshops and learned many things and met so many new people. I learned ways to get students involved all across the United States. One state said that their students serve meals to people who live in homeless shelters as community service projects. Another state told me about how they host a dance and students who are PTSA members get in free. They use this as an incentive to get students to join.

While in San Jose attending convention, we spent workshop time talking about our Distracted Driving Resolution. Many people from many different states sat in and listened to our resolution and wrote amendments to change two things they felt were worded wrong. We then presented the resolution in the General Meeting on Sunday. At the end of the discussion, our resolution passed. Everyone was so impressed that the students of Missouri took the time to do the research, write and promote the resolution.

I am very thankful to have attended the convention and I look forward to attending it again next year. I am also thankful to all of the members of the Missouri PTA Board of Managers who not only supported me as a student representative but also supported many of the student representatives who have come before me and have paved the way for students serving on state PTA boards.

Family Health Message

- *Walking to school is a great form of family exercise!*

Visit PTA.org/healthylifestyles for more health and safety messages!

Walking is a fun and healthy way to spend time with your children while teaching them skills that can serve them well throughout life.

Children learn through experience. Walking with parents or another caregiver is an important way for children to practice crossing real streets and picking safe places to walk. There is no magic age when children are old enough to walk without an adult. But, as a parent, you should decide when your child has the skills and experience to deal with traffic safely without you. Walking skills will not only make children become better pedestrians but they'll learn to become better motorists when the time comes.

As you walk with your child, remember these safety tips from the National Center for Safe Routes to Schools:

- Wear bright-colored clothes (at night, carry flashlights or wear reflective gear)
- Look for traffic at every driveway and intersection. Be aware of drivers in parked cars that may be getting ready to move.
- Obey all traffic signs and signals.
- Cross the street safely:
 1. Stop at the curb or edge of the street.
 2. Look left, right, left and behind you and in front of you for traffic.

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www.mopta.org

Parent Teacher Conferences - An Ideal Place for Your PTA to Plug In

The average parent-teacher conference lasts only 20 minutes, so one of the valuable things that your PTA can do is to welcome and help parents make the most of this important meeting. Think about the best ways to reach as many of your parents as possible – through a newsletter, email, website, phone message, student's weekly folder, a short presentation at meetings or events, a short video, or a combination of methods. Think about the diversity of your parent group and try methods to reach out to all of them in their language and modes of communication. **The goal is to let them know when conferences will be held, how important it is to their child's education that they make every attempt to come, and what to expect when they get there.**



You will want to check with your principal to find out how parent-teacher conferences are done in your school and what they see as reasons for its success or lack of parent participation. It is important to recognize that not all parents, grandparents, and guardians are comfortable coming to school and are not sure how to handle this meeting with their child's teacher. It may be the first time they have come inside the school building. There may be barriers to them feeling comfortable in this environment such as their own personal experience in school or language barriers. Your PTA's advance efforts are key to getting more parents engaged in their child's school. Below is some information for you to share with all parents in your school.

Research shows that when parents are involved, students achieve more. The most accurate predictor of a student's achievement in school is not income, social status, ethnic/racial background, or a parents' education level. It is the extent to which that student's family is able to create a home environment that

- encourages learning and nurtures their child's physical, mental, social and spiritual education
- communicates high, yet reasonable, expectations for their children's achievement and future careers
- develops knowledge of how their child functions in the school environment by becoming involved in their children's education at school and in the community.

Parent involvement is essential for the positive emotional and social development, cultural growth and academic achievement of every child.

A parent-teacher conference is a time to get to know an important person in your child's life regardless if they are in elementary, middle, or high school. It is a time for parents and teachers to discuss how they can work together as a team to help the child do well in school. It is a chance to ask questions about the class and the child's progress. Before the conference think of any specific items that you would like to discuss.

Talk to your child to find out what classes they like best and least. Ask why. This may provide information that you can share with the teacher about how your child feels about their class or why they may or may not be doing well in class. Ask your child if there is anything they would like you to talk to the teacher about. Let your child know that you and their teacher are meeting to help him or her.

Gather information. If your spouse, other parent, caregiver, or someone with pertinent information or insight (doctor, counselor or guardian) cannot attend the conference, ask for that person's concerns or questions before the conference.

Make a list. Before you go to the meeting make a list of questions you have about academics and behavior. You may want to talk to the teacher about the child's home life, personality, concerns, habits and hobbies, what your child excels at and where your child struggles. You might also want to talk to them about and other topics that might help the teacher understand your child such as religious holidays, part-time jobs, a sick relative, or past school experiences.

Important Questions to Ask at Parent – Teacher Conference:

1. Does my child seem happy and engaged in school? Does my child speak or ask questions in class?
2. Is my child working to the best of his ability? Are my child's assignments completed on time?
3. Is there a way I can know what homework has been assigned each day? How much time do you expect students to spend on homework assignments? How is it graded?
4. What does he need to work on and how can I help?
5. Do tests, attendance and homework all count to the grade?
6. Are there programs to help kids who need extra help?
7. How is my child getting along with others? Are there any classroom relationships or situations that I need to be aware of?
8. Have you noticed any changes in behavior? Has my child complained of having trouble seeing the board or does my child seem sleepy?
9. Do you have suggestions for things that we can do at home to help my child do well in school?
10. How would you like me to communicate with you when I have questions or concerns?

Once you have discussed how to reach out to your parents to encourage them to attend it is time to plan how your PTA will make parents feel welcome when they arrive. Arrange with your school to have your PTA provide a sign marking the entrance and a hospitality table where parents will enter the building. But before they reach the table it is important to have greeters standing at the door to let them know that they are in the right place and that you are thrilled to see them and direct them to the next group of smiling faces. The hospitality table can be as simple as a table with easy to follow maps of the building and bowl of candy. Have someone at the table with information to help the parent find the location of their conference and able to mark it on the map for them.

Then provide escorts that will visit with parents while walking them to the classroom, pointing out the school office, the library, gym, and where students eat lunch. All of this helps parents get a picture of their child's world and makes them feel comfortable with the school. If you have a PTSA you might consider using students as classroom escorts. Give them pointers of things to point out and talk to parents about as they walk with them. If you have a diverse group of parents in your school it would be good to have a diverse group of welcoming volunteers, men and women. It helps people feel comfortable when they identify with someone like themselves. After your event encourage your volunteers to make a point to go up to the parents that they meet at parent-teacher conferences when they see them at other school events or in the community. Tell them they don't have to remember their name, just say "Didn't I meet you at parent-teacher conference? Your child goes to my son's school. How are you doing?"

Don't forget try to identify the obstacles that may keep parents from attending. Is transportation a problem? Is there a language barrier? Does the time of the conference likely to create a childcare problem? Try to provide solutions. If childcare is an issue then provide a space where children can do an activity while their parents meet with teachers. You may be able to use high school or college students that need community service hours to help with this. Work with your school to make sure that translators are available if needed. You may be able to find these in your school system, colleges, community groups, churches, or other parents. Advertise that these services will be provided and make sure that you let grandparents that are raising children that they are welcome to attend. Of course use the parent-teacher conference as an opportunity to let people know that PTA is there for them. Put up a PTA banner, have your volunteers wear PTA Volunteer nametags with their first name written in large letters, provide information about PTA (in various languages if appropriate), and offer them the opportunity to join PTA as they leave the building. After the positive experience that you have provided for them it is very possible that they will want to be a part of your efforts to support your school if not at this time, then in the future.

The efforts of your PTA to provide advance information and make their visit a pleasant experience will help ease their minds, encourage more parents to attend, and very possibly increase future parent involvement in your school and PTA.

National Council of States

By Susan Rupert, Director and Vice President of Membership

I had the privilege to represent Missouri PTA at the National Council of States on June 19 in San Jose, California. This year's topic was "Supporting Educational Challenges in Rural Communities". I was so excited to be asked to attend because I understood what it means to live and work in a rural community. I have lived on a working farm almost my entire life. I attended a school district with only one elementary, one middle school and one high school. Now I work in one. I was a proud member of the Future Farmers of America and now my kids are. I graduated from college with three degrees in Agriculture. I am 40 miles from the nearest mall. Farmland surrounds the entire city limits of our town. I live about 10 miles outside those city limits and can look out every window of my house to see only trees and cropland. I even drive my own tractor! I was sure I understood what rural meant... but I was wrong.

We were asked to read "Why Rural Matters 2011-12: The Condition of Rural Education in the 50 States". It is a biennial report by The Rural School and Community Trust that gives details of a state's rural school condition. A rural community is defined roughly as school "districts with average daily attendance of fewer than 600 students, or districts in which all schools are located in counties with a population density of fewer than 10 persons per square mile". With this definition in mind let's look at these facts about our nation.

- More than half (56%) of all school districts are in rural areas
- Nearly a third (31%) of all public schools are rural
- Nearly a quarter (23% or 11.4 million) of public school students attend rural schools.

Rural schools face unique challenges such as recruiting and retaining effective teachers, providing access to a well-rounded education and offering a diverse array of courses. These challenges were brought to our attention during the conference by John White, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Rural Outreach at the US Department of Education. There are unique strengths rural schools have as well. These include easier decision-making because of fewer layers involved in the process, the school is usually the center of the community's life and students are well known by faculty and staff. He also shared information from "A Blueprint for Reform: The Reauthorization of

the Elementary and Secondary Education Act" (designed to overhaul No Child Left Behind) and its benefits to rural education.

In a roundtable setting we were challenged to identify state and National PTA priorities for rural education such as technology, teacher retention and parent education on advocacy & involvement. We held critical discussions on ways to increase PTA family engagement and relevancy in rural communities. Like in all communities, a relationship between the families and PTA is the key. It is vital in determining and meeting their needs. It may be providing information about continuing education classes for unemployed parents, sponsoring financial aid workshops for parents of high school seniors or coordinating a school supply drive for families. It may be just asking them to be a part of an event. In the end you want them to say, "I am so glad PTA did that" or "PTA really is an important part of our community" or "Thanks for asking me to help". Once you have achieved this, a relationship has been formed between the school, PTA and the parents. Parents need to feel invited, they need to feel they are capable of contributing (some way, shape or form) and what they are capable of doing is very important. Relationships are the pathway to getting people inspired, informed, and involved. They will then realize we don't join PTA for a season, but we are involved for a lifetime. The possible answer to the million dollar question, how do we grow and retain PTA memberships?

I thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to network with representatives from across the nation. We shared ideas and concerns as well as best practices about membership. We exchanged email addresses so we can continue to share those things and pass on the information to the units in our home state. I found out I am not as rural as I thought. I have internet and get to shop at WalMart more than once a month. I do not have to drive 3 hours between our PTA units. My school district doesn't own housing for teachers and we do not have multi grade level classrooms. But I would find it interesting to announce a lock down at my school . . . due to bears on the playground.

If we want to keep jobs in our country, we must have an educated work force. We have to educate our way to a better economy." Arne Duncan, U.S. Secretary of Education

NPTA Member Benefits

Introducing our newest member benefit provider !!!
SocialScout™



Get peace of mind with a new tool to track your child's social networking and mobile phone activity. As a PTA member, you save 10% on SocialScout™, a parental intelligence system that helps you monitor and quickly analyze your child's social networking and mobile phone interactions. Keep your kids safe while safeguarding their privacy and reputation on sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Twitter. Find out:

- Who are your child's online friends and view new friend requests
 - What's being posted about your child
 - How and when your child is using technology
- **SHARP ELECTRONICS** - The PTA/Sharp Electronics member store is now available to offer you valuable member discounts on Sharp AQUOS Liquid Crystal Televisions and

other home electronics products! Every unit is offered at special PTA member pricing, guaranteeing you the lowest possible price.

- **T-MOBILE** - 14% discount off your monthly service charges for new and existing T-Mobile subscribers, plus additional savings for new subscribers.
- **Hertz** - We're at the Airport and in your Neighborhood. The world's largest airport general use car rental brand, operating from approximately 8,500 locations in 146 countries worldwide is proud to offer PTA members benefits like: Savings of up to 20% off rentals, special promotions in addition to your discount and Fee Waived Hertz #1 Club Gold® enrollment—a \$60 savings!
- **METLIFE** - MetLife Auto & Home® has worked with PTA to bring PTA members a group insurance program that comes with special savings and benefits. This program includes competitive benefits and superior discounts for members.

Check out the National PTA, www.pta.org website for further information on how your members access these benefits. Make sure the details on benefit access are provided only to your PTA members.

10+ WAYS to keep your Membership Campaign Blasting Off!

1. **60 Second Elevator Speech:** Tell your unit's PTA story in terms of definite goals and achievement; not bland general statements. Know why you joined and how PTA can benefit others.
2. **BE INFORMATIVE:** Use your newsletter to explain that their membership is an important part in the powerful PTA voice. Make it clear we are about advocacy, not a fundraising group.
3. **TRACK YOUR SUCCESS:** A giant thermometer in the hall, a large jar filled with jellybeans on the office counter or numbered happy faces in the windows are just examples of great ways to publicize your progress. Make it visible, don't give up and celebrate when you reach your goal.
4. **LOCAL NEWSPAPER:** Provide news articles about the goals and activities of your PTA. Include information about the important advocacy role PTA plays and how the reader can become a part of that ... JOIN!
5. **LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS:** Contact those serving your community with the opportunity to be members in their school's PTA.
6. **NATIONAL BENEFIT PROVIDERS:** ALWAYS...ALWAYS... ALWAYS be sure to promote these exclusive discounts along with any local incentives you may be offering. Provide details on how to access the benefits only to your PTA members not to the school as a whole.
7. **SCHOOL EMPLOYEES:** Encourage membership by placing a PTA sticker on members' mailboxes &/or having a thank you drawing for just those employees who join.
8. **REACHING THE T:** Hang a laminated sign, "A PTA Member Teaches Here" outside the classroom of each teacher that is a member.
9. **TRAINING:** Encourage your officers & chairman to attend available trainings, i.e. State Convention in October!
10. **UTILIZE PTA RESOURCES:** National PTA & MO PTA are here to serve you. Check out the websites www.pta.org or www.mopta.org or call MO PTA at 1-800-328-7330.
11. **ARE YOU READY FOR SOME FOOTBALL?** What about softball or soccer? It is fall sports season in your community - your PTA membership table should be there!
12. **THE GIFT THAT KEEPS ON GIVING:** Make it an option on your membership form to purchase a PTA membership as a gift. Ideal for someone who isn't in a PTA school and could use one of the member benefits, i.e. the T-Mobile discount.
13. **COUNCILS:** Remind your schools superintendents and others in the central administration departments to join PTA. Many education employees don't work at a specific school site, but could join one or all of your council's units.
14. **COUNCILS:** Have your own membership contest and recognition. Look at the state awards for ideas.
15. **COUNCILS:** Develop partnerships with local businesses that could benefit the entire council and help units increase their memberships. I.E. Anyone showing their PTA card (no matter the school) receives a free small drink.



Early Bird Awards

The unit that sends the
HIGHEST MEMBERSHIP
based upon last year's
TOTAL MEMBERSHIP to the state office
POSTMARKED ON OR BEFORE
SEPTEMBER 28, 2012 will earn the
EARLY BIRD AWARD
and be recognized at the Missouri PTA Convention
in Kansas City in October.

**THREE (3) WINNING
CATEGORIES**
Early Childhood/Elementary/Special Ed.
Middle School-Jr. High/Combined Unit
High School

NO APPLICATION NECESSARY
Get those dues in by September 28, and
YOU MAY BE A WINNER!

Put Your Unit or Council in Contact!

Let everyone across the state know about the great things your unit or council is doing by submitting an article and/or photography to Contact. Submissions can be sent to Contact@mopta.org.

PTA Takes Action

On November 6th our nation will head to the polls for a general election. This election is bigger than just deciding who will be the country's president for the next four years. Missourians will



make congressional choices for a variety of offices from the US Senate to district representation in the Missouri House. No one person runs our federal and state governments. Decisions are made that affect the lives of children by individuals in a variety of different positions. It is important as an advocate for children to be aware of and cast your vote for who represents you and your child from the local level and up. On our Advocacy Resources page (located on our website under the Legislation tab) there is a widget you can click on called "Election" to find out who the candidates are in your district. Be informed and Take Action.

Of course you can't take part in the democratic process unless you are registered to vote. In the state of Missouri the voter registration form must be either filled out in person at designated locations, or mailed. In an effort to make things easy for individuals to register MOPTA has added a widget to their Advocacy Resources page located under the Legislation Tab on the website. Click on the "Register to Vote" widget, answer the three eligibility questions, fill in the form, print and mail. The deadline to register for the November election is October 10th.

There is a famous anonymous quote that reads, "The world is run by those who show up". We need to make sure we have a say in who will make decisions that will affect our children and grandchildren's futures. Also when you go to the polls take your child with you. It will be a memory both of you can share.

Kids Voting USA

Who will your students vote for during this year's November election? During the 2010 mid-term elections 97,539 students from across Missouri participated in the Kids Voting USA program. This program is designed to educate students about the democratic process through a combination of classroom curriculum, family activities and a mock election. The results of the mock election are broken down by school district and state and can be viewed online. With the presidential election being held this year expect the number of students participating to at least double. And you know what – usually the students pick the actual winners! To learn more about this program visit the Kids voting USA website at www.kidsvotingusa.org.



Advocate – Yes You Can

Anyone can advocate. No special skills or in depth knowledge about the legislative process is required. Your passion to be a voice for *everychild* is all that is needed. Pick one or two of the ideas below and become an advocate today.

- Attend a local school board meeting. This is one of the best ways to learn what is going on in your district. It will also give you better insight into how the administration and school board function together and run the school district.
- Invite your state representatives to attend a PTA meeting. Now is the time to get them in your schools doors. The Missouri Legislative session will not reconvene until January. Our elected representatives can represent us best when they understand the issues from our point of view.
- Go online and check out the National PTA's PTA Votes section of their website (http://www.pta.org/pta_votes.asp). They have some great tools every advocate should have in their own toolbox.
- Print out from the Tool kit or download a copy of the Atlaw award from our website (www.mopta.org/forms-awards-grants.html). Make a commitment to complete the requirements during this school year. Better yet, find a friend and challenge them to complete it with you. See who can rack up the most points. Having a buddy is often the best motivator to accomplish long-term projects.
- Not a member of the JC/DC network? Join today!! The only way to compete with the lobbyist and special interest groups is to join together and shout louder. Forms can be found in the Took kit, Winter Packet or go online to the Missouri PTA webpage, www.mopta.org, and click on the "subscribe to Legislative alerts" in the 'Act Now' box on the front page. When legislative alerts arise be sure to take action.

Getting Fathers Involved

Father involvement is critical for your PTA/PTSA in many ways. Getting fathers involved is essential for happy, healthy, well-adjusted children and families. When dads aren't involved, children are more likely to:

- engage in drugs, alcohol, violent crimes, and other harmful behaviors
- drop out of school
- live in poverty
- face teenage pregnancy
- struggle with depression and even commit suicide

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Meeting with Legislators

Town Halls

If your unit or council hasn't picked a date to host a Kids First Town Hall meeting now is the time to get the planning underway. During our State convention, this October, the Legislative Department will kick off its Legislative focus and priorities for 2013. It is important to make our legislators aware of our concerns before the madness of the Legislative session begins. This year the Missouri Assembly session runs from January 9th until May 30th. However, Friday May 17th at 6pm is the deadline for the assembly to consider a bill. Legislators can start, and will start, pre-filing bills on December 1st. It is much easier to support bills that reflect our message than hope amendments will be made so the bill will conform to the real needs of our children. Hosting a Town Hall is a great way to not only demonstrate our *Everychild Onevoice* in action but also gain perspective into how our elected representatives plan to act on prospective upcoming bills related to child welfare.

For more information on how to conduct a Kids First Town Hall refer to the step-by-step guide located in the Legislative Handbook. This handbook was mailed to all units this past January. It can also be found in the 'members only' section of our website.

One-on-one meetings

Creating a personal connection with your legislator is one of the best ways you as an advocate can be highly effective. While elected officials do work for you there is still a code of etiquette that should be followed when engaging in one-on-one meetings. Here are a few tips to keep in mind.

- Make an appointment ahead of time and arrive promptly.
- Make sure your legislator knows you are speaking on behalf of the PTA. Remember you are speaking for PTA. Use "we," not "I." Bring copies of the current MOPTA Legislative Priorities.
- Always be respectful in your tone and language.
- Present yourself in a professional manner – business casual is acceptable.
- Be reasonable in presenting your position(s). Be a good opponent by fighting the issue, not the person.
- Present the facts and reasons why your PTA is involved in the issue.
- Use the art of compromise – offer possible alternatives.
- Thank your Legislator for their time and interest.

Special guest during a PTA meeting

One of the best ways for elected officials to get in touch with parents and teachers is to go back to school. Just getting the representative in the school doors brings them in closer contact to the child's world. And we want them to feel personally connected and very aware that education is about all children. Before inviting your elected official make sure to check with the school principal on any district policies that may be in place with regard to elected officials visiting the school. Does your PTA routinely give out any sort of awards for student achievement or Reflections participation? Inviting your representatives to present the awards is a great way to connect your representative to the school and make the students feel extra special. Is there an annual family engagement program coming up? A visit would be a great way to highlight family engagement and stress the importance of legislation supporting family engagement. Pick one or two of the legislative priorities for 2013 and ask your representative his or her view on the issue. Planning out the agenda with your principal will provide your visit with the well-planned message you would like to deliver. Be sure the elected official, school staff and parents are aware of the agenda prior to the visit. You want to make sure everyone is clear on the purpose for the visit. A guest visit's focus should only be about the school, family engagement and the need for legislation that supports education. This type of visit should never become a campaign platform.

Advocacy Stand

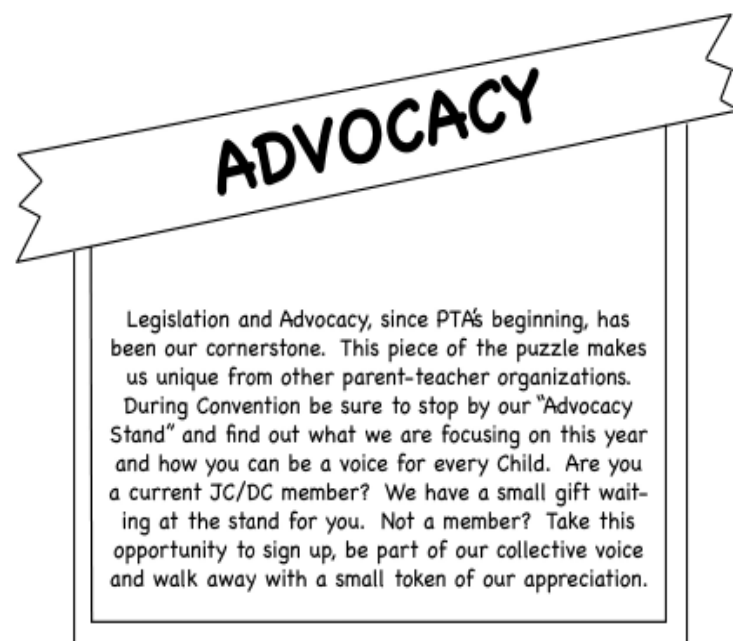
Resolutions Adopted by NPTA

This past June during the National PTA convention delegates from all PTA congresses unanimously adopted both the Missouri submitted Distracted Driving and Improved Infrastructure Around Schools resolutions. These were the only two resolutions considered at convention and we were proud to present them both.

This convention standing rules required all amendments to be submitted at a specific time prior to the report of the Resolutions committee and debate during the general meeting. A resolution briefing was held giving delegates the opportunity to hear some background and ask the presenters any questions or raise possible concerns. VP of Legislation and Advocacy, Dorothy Gardner, along with student representatives Amanda Rupert and Meagan Gardner, presented the resolutions on behalf of Missouri PTA. Following the briefing Missouri representatives along with the National PTA Resolution committee members were on-hand to assist with any amendments being offered by delegates.

Amendments were made and approved by the delegation to both resolutions. With regard to the Distracted Driving resolution amendments simply changed the verbiage strengthening the intent of the resolution. For the Improved Infrastructure Around School an additional resolved was added. Missouri representatives and the National PTA Resolution committee worked with delegates from Nevada to word this resolved in a way that would serve the resolution for years to come. This resolve will encourage transportation planners and engineers to design and improve roadways to provide safe routes to school. To view both resolutions as adopted by National PTA visit www.pta.org/current_resolutions.asp.

Both our student representatives spoke in favor of the Distracted Driving resolution on the floor during debate. We are so proud of all the work and time they, along with former student representative Amanda Weber, put into making the resolution a reality. During the close of convention a delegate from another state used a point of personal privilege to publicly thank our students. It was a great way to end an awesome convention.



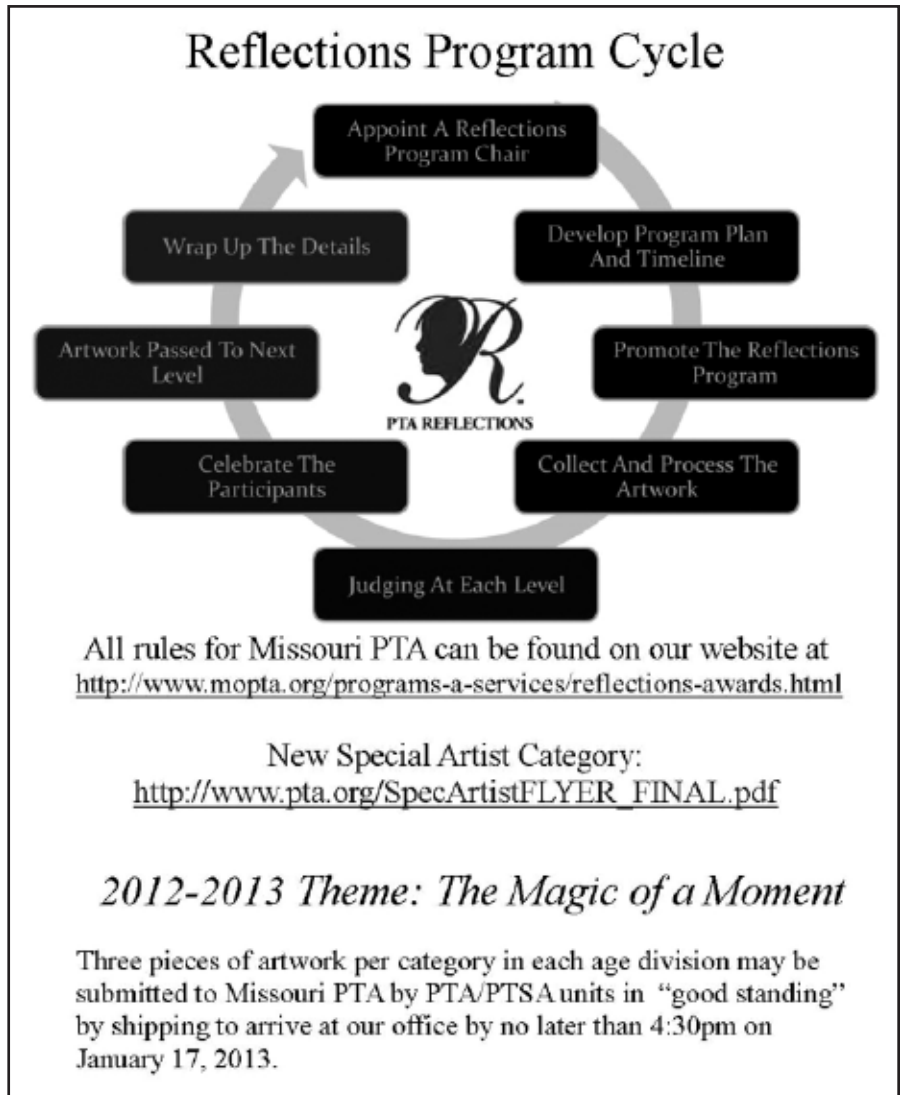
Reflections – New Guidelines for 2012-2013

By Michele Reed, VP and Director of Programs

In the past 40 plus year's Reflections has seen many changes from the artwork the students create, to the way the units process and judge the entries, but through it all the program stands strong. This year is like no other. Over the past year state PTAs across the nation have voiced their concerns over the complexity the management of the Reflections program has become; and National PTA has listened.

National PTA has taken a step back and chosen to simplify the process for students submitting entries to local units, local units submitting entries to state PTAs and state PTA submitting entries to National PTA. They are embracing technology and moving us forward into the 21st century.

For this reason when local unit president's received their summer mailing from Missouri PTA, they found it just a bit lighter. The new Reflections rules were released by National PTA in late June, and Missouri PTA worked fast and furious over the summer to complete them and get them distributed to the units. All rule changes for Missouri PTA can be found on our website at <http://www.mopta.org/programs-a-services/reflections-awards.html>



Family Health Message continued from page 2

3. Wait until no traffic is coming and begin crossing.
4. Keep looking for traffic until you have finished crossing.
5. Walk, don't run across the street.
6. Understand your child's limit

Walking opens everyone's eyes to the need for sidewalks and trails, safe street crossings, more cautious drivers and safer walkers and bicyclists. PTAs play an important role in engaging families, teachers and children to develop safe, healthy behaviors. By promoting and modeling healthy behaviors, such as walking and biking to school, PTAs can help address the nation's obesity epidemic.

PTAs can help make their schools more walking and biking friendly by assigning a school "nonmotorized transportation

coordinator" whose job it is to promote and support safe walking and bicycling to school.

PTAs can also collaborate with community partners to address a number of school pedestrian and cycling concerns.

For more resources and information on making your school community more walking and biking friendly, please visit the National Center for Safe Routes to School Web site at www.saferoutesinfo.org.

**WALK TO SCHOOL DAY IS
OCTOBER 3, 2012**

116th National Convention Overview

By Kim Weber, President Elect

Missouri PTA was represented at the 116th Annual National PTA Convention in San Jose, California this past June 21-24 by over fifteen delegates from across Missouri. The convention was held at the San Jose McEnery Convention Center in downtown San Jose and while the convention center was going through construction and remodeling, the unusually cool temperatures the area was experiencing made up for all of the inconvenience of the construction.

Convention kicked off on Thursday with the two workshop sessions and the Male Engagement Summit. As was introduced at the National Convention last year, there were different types of workshop tracks offered for different levels of interest and leadership. The biggest highlight for Missouri PTA was on Thursday afternoon when National PTA held the resolutions briefing. This was the first chance we would get to address the convention delegates the information on the two resolutions that were being presented for approval by the voting body that were submitted by Missouri PTA. The evening concluded with a Welcome reception held in the exhibit hall where over 250 exhibitors were on hand to share their products and resources with the delegates. It was a fun event and a great chance to network and meet other PTA members from across the country in a fun, casual sitting.

Friday was an interesting and motivation day as we started it off with the first General Session where music artist Jon Christopher Davis kicked off the release of the PTA song, otherwise known as (PTA) "Every Child, One Voice" that he wrote for PTA. This song and ring tone is now available on I Tunes with proceeds from every download of the school going to National PTA. It was a great moment to see such energy and enthusiasm from over a thousand people in the room. I would encourage anyone who can to download the song and play it at your back to school events in the fall; it is bound to bring potential interested people to your membership table.

After greetings to the delegates from National PTA President Betsy Landers and California PTA President Carol Kocivar, introductions were made for the rest of the National Board and Board of Directors. The Keynote Speaker for this General Session was from Wes Moore, author and youth advocate. Wes Moore published a book in 2010 called "The Other Wes Moore". Wes has dedicated his life to helping young people redirect their lives. He stated that "we cannot just talk about it, we must be about it". His message was to provide hope and resources for the single moms and dads who are raising a family on their own; the teachers who are working with at-risk youth; the teenagers who know there is a world outside of the inner-city or rural plains they call home, but don't know how to scale the walls to get to it; the non-profit organizations that are on the front lines of fighting for the tomorrow of our nation's children each and every day.

Friday afternoon brought another breakout workshop session

before the second General Session. Keynote Speaker for this session was Clark Flatt, Founder and President/CEO of the Jason Foundation, Inc. which he founded after the tragic suicide of his sixteen year old son, Jason in 1997. Mr. Flatt shared an emotional story about his son's suicide and the alarming rate of suicide with our young people in this nation. Some of the statistics he gave in his presentation were that suicide ranks as the THIRD leading cause of death for ages 10-24 and FOURTH for ages 10-14 and is the SECOND leading cause of death for our college-aged youth. One of the most alarming facts he shared was that each week in our nation, we lose approximately 100+ young people to suicide and in 2011, one of our every 13 youth attempted suicide.

Saturday brought a jam packed day of activities to the convention delegates as there were two workshop sessions in the morning followed by the endearing Arts in Education Luncheon. This luncheon is an annual event during convention and honors the National PTA Reflections Program Winners and their families. To see all of the students and listen to their stories truly brings home the benefits of our fine arts curriculum in our schools and the important role that PTA can play with that.

The third general session of the convention was held in the afternoon and the first Jan Harp Domene Diversity and Inclusion Award was presented to the California PTA. Mary Kenfield, Chair of the National PTA Legislative Committee gave the Legislative report by sharing what a difference the PTA voice made this past year in local, state, and national legislature. She reminded the delegates of the powerful voice each one has and what a huge impact PTA has a whole. "Hard times are coming for education and for our youth, the PTA voice is going to be so very important in the weeks, month and year ahead". She closed by encouraging everyone to sign up for their particular state as well as the national legislative alerts.

Heather Dean, National PTA Deputy Executive Director kicked off an early premiere of the newly designed National PTA website, which is set to launch and go live in October. The new "Today's PTA" video was also shared with the delegates and I encourage all of you to go the PTA website and watch this wonderful video, use it at your Back to School Events and or at your first general membership meeting. It truly is an inspiring and motivation video.

Sunday was possibly the most exciting day for Missouri PTA and their delegates as this was the day that our resolutions that all of you approved at our last state convention was to be introduced for approval by the voting delegates of the National PTA convention.

The last General Session for the convention kicked off by a fantastic keynote speaker, Rebecca Mieliwocki, National Teacher of the Year, who was raised by two parents who were lifelong public schoolteachers. She took a somewhat roundabout way

Missouri PTA Welcomes Our Newest Units

Missouri PTA would like to welcome several new units:

Hazelwood Galactic PTA	Gateway Region
Pony Express Region	Little Blue Elementary PTA
Jasper Elementary PTA	Ozark Region
Tiffany Ridge Elementary PTA	Three Trails Region

In joining PTA, these PTA units have become part of over 400 units and nearly 75,000 members across Missouri, and have dedicated themselves to being advocates for our children and youth. PTA is the oldest and largest children's advocacy organization in the state. Congratulations and welcome!

Inspired by PTA, Texas Songwriter Composes 'Every Child, One Voice'

When National PTA President Betsy Landers heard Jon Christopher Davis perform "Every Child, One Voice" at the Texas PTA summer Leadership event, she knew she had to bring him to the 116th Annual National PTA Convention. Davis performed the song live to provide a high-energy kickoff to the convention. He also announced that a portion of the proceeds for any download of the song or ringtone will be donated to National PTA.

"Every Child, One Voice," featuring Jon Christopher Davis and Annagrey, is available on iTunes, Amazon and Spotify.



Start Planning for 117th Annual National PTA Convention

Convention attendance is a legitimate investment for local units to make. The leadership training skills learned at convention can provide a huge return on investment not just for your unit, but for your school, its students, and your community. Please consider investing in convention attendance for 2013. The 117th Annual National PTA Convention and Exhibition will be June 20-23, 2013, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

National PTA Delegates Approve Two Resolutions Aimed at Driving Safety at National Convention

Delegates approved two resolutions written to improve child safety during the 116th national PTA Convention in San Jose, CA. The first resolution urges the creation and enforcement of laws that restrict the use of handheld and portable communication devices while driving, which 80% of drivers rate as a very serious threat to their safety, according to recent studies. The second resolution calls for PTAs to work with school administrations to call attention to unsafe walking and biking routes to schools and urge local governments to seek state and federal infrastructure grants.

To read these resolutions go to www.pta.org click on "Running a PTA" and select resolutions

REMINDER 2012 Emerging Minority Leaders Conference
September 21-23, 2012 DoubleTree Washington, DC - Crystal City

The PTA Emerging Minority Leaders Conference offers the

perfect opportunity for you to continue building a national network of peers and to learn how to overcome the challenges you face as a PTA leader, community advocate, parent and/or caregiver. For six years, PTA's Emerging Minority Leaders Conference has encouraged the development of new PTA leaders who can succeed in building bridges to ethnically diverse families to engage with PTA. Now in its seventh year, this conference has emerged as the premier family engagement program for training ethnically diverse leaders to serve underserved school populations.

Destination Leadership VII: Excellence in Action is the leadership conference you will not want to miss. We hope you will join us in Washington, DC September 21-23, and encourage other dedicated parents in your school community to attend. You'll learn about the issues that face ethnically diverse families in our nation's school systems, develop your leadership skills, and have a chance share your experiences with others. You want to attend this conference if you:

- Are an emerging minority leader
- Are interested in increasing your leadership skills to grow as a PTA leader and child advocate
- Want an opportunity to share information and resources with fellow emerging minority PTA leaders
- Want to learn strategies for engaging ethnic minority communities and schools

Registration Information

Registration is open to local, council, district, region and state PTA leaders; community leaders and advocates; parents and caregivers; educators; and anyone else working with or on behalf of ethnic minority families and children.

General Registration

Conference Attendee: \$200

Student Attendee: \$100

Travel: Registrants coordinate their own travel and transportation.

Hotel: The rate is \$99 per night per room (plus tax) at the DoubleTree by Hilton – Washington, DC – Crystal City. Registrants should make room reservations directly through the hotel online or by calling (800) 222-8733 (Group code: PTA).

For more information, email Manager, School Relations and Diversity Renee Jackson, or call her at (800) 307-4782.

Getting Fathers Involved continued from page 6

PTA provides a list of resources for becoming an involved father or father figure on our website: http://www.pta.org/pta_more.asp. The *PTA Parent* e-newsletter also offers valuable involvement and parenting tips ([subscribe on the PTA.org homepage](#)).

You may also want to encourage fathers to register to receive a weekly email from Fathers.com. These messages are designed to make the most of your time with your children. Each week covers a timely fathering topic and provides practical fathering tips. Simply provide your first name, last name, e-mail address and zip code to sign up at <http://support.fathers.com/site/QuickReg>

All Pro Dad, founded by Tony Dungy, is a program of Family First, an organization dedicated to strengthening the family. All Pro Dad programs include:

- All Pro Dad's Day—A one-hour monthly breakfast held before school where fathers/male role models and their kids can meet, have fun and discuss family topics. Materials for All Pro Dad's Days are free of charge to local organizers. These

materials include videos, father/child discussion cards, door prizes, meeting instructions, brochures, posters and promotional flyers.

- NFL Father and Kids Experience—Held in conjunction with an NFL team, these events include workshops on father and child relationships, motivational talks, and interactive sports and games.
- Play of the Day—A concise daily e-mail of fatherhood advice.

For more information, check out their website: allprodad.com

Are you ready for some football! Missouri PTA day at the Rams (vs San Francisco 49ers) is December 2! Order your tickets today! www.stlouisrams.com/groupticketinfo. Tell them you are part of Missouri PTA and receive a ticket savings and \$10 food & beverage voucher.

116th National Convention Overview continued from page 9

into the profession. She first aspired to be a lawyer, then worked in publishing, floral design and event planning, but ultimately, found herself drawn to the classroom. Mieliwocki sets high expectations for her students and herself, developing creative lessons, hosting family nights, sending weekly parent memos and maintaining a Facebook page for her class and tries to maintain the persona of the definition of "above and beyond." I am not the best teacher in America — there isn't one," she said. "All across this nation there are millions of teachers who do the work that I do and many do it better." Mieliwocki said that across the country, teachers are working wonders despite the mounting barriers they face. "Our children are our future and that I have a hand in guiding and shaping that future compels me to make every minute, every lesson, every moment with them count," she said. Her last message to the PTA members in the audience was to "Be passionate, stay curious, and set high expectations. You are a hero to someone even if you don't know it."

The installation of the newly elected Board of Director members for National PTA followed but for Missouri PTA, it was our time to shine as a state PTA and present our two resolutions for approval during this last general session. Reading and speaking to the first resolution, Distracted Driving was

Missouri PTA Student Representatives, Meaghan Gardner and Amanda Rupert. All of us should be proud of this resolution as it was written by our student delegates and representatives. Dorothy Gardner, VP of Legislation and Advocacy for Missouri PTA presented the second resolution from Missouri PTA on Improved Infrastructure around Schools. Both of our resolutions easily passed without debate because of the great preparation and leadership shown before leaving Missouri for California by our resolutions committee from Missouri PTA.

I encourage each of you to put June 20-23, 2013 on your calendar to attend the 2013 National PTA Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. The resources and tools that you will learn as a delegate cannot be measured. June Hurdle, a first time attendee to National PTA convention from Columbia had this to say about her experience as a first timer, "I was impressed with the outstanding inspirational speakers that spoke at the general sessions and the highly qualified speakers that presented workshops on useful topics that I could take back to share with members in my area and use to help me be a better leader. I learned that there are a lot more resources - people, material, programs and vendors - to help PTA leaders than I had ever imagined." I hope each of you can experience that for yourself and for your PTA membership.

Donations

Thank you for your generous donations. With your continued support, we can do great things.

Building Fund Donations PTA

Bingham Middle School PTSA
North Kansas City Council PTA
Truman Patriots Club PTSA
Espy PTA of Nixa
Inman PTA of Nixa
Mathews PTA
James Bridger Middle School PTSA
Mason Elementary PTA
Raytown Middle School PTSA
Greenwood Elementary PTA
Blue Springs R-IV School District Council PTA
Delta Woods Middle School PTSA
Raytown High School PTSA
Christian Ott Elementary PTA
Summit Lakes Middle School PTA
Liberty Oaks Elementary PTA
James A. Jeffries Elementary PTA
Nixa Jr. High PTSA
Hawthorn Hill Elementary PTA
Richardson Elementary PTA
Longview Farm Elementary PTA
Franklin Smith Elementary PTA
Lee's Summit Council PTA
Sunset Valley Elementary PTA
Trailridge Elementary PTA
Pleasant Lea Elementary PTA
Blue Springs Early Childhood Preschool PTA
Nixa Council PTA
Underwood Elementary PTA
Woodland Elementary PTA
Mark Twain Elementary PTA
Lee's Summit West H.S. PTSA
St. Joseph Council PTA
Prairie View Elementary PTA

Scholarship Fund PTA

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Summit Pointe Elementary PTA
Inman PTA of Nixa
Mathews PTA
James Bridger Middle School PTSA
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Raytown Middle School PTSA
Greenwood Elementary PTA
Blue Springs R-IV School District Council PTA
Delta Woods Middle School PTSA
Meadowbrook Elementary PTA
Raytown High School PTSA
Voy Spears Jr. Elementary PTA
Christian Ott Elementary PTA
Glendale PTSA
Hickman High School PTSA
Pleasant Lea Middle School PTA
Ruth Oliver Walker Elementary PTA
Summit Lakes Middle School PTA
Liberty Oaks Elementary PTA
Nixa Jr. High PTSA
Hawthorn Hill Elementary PTA
Richardson Elementary PTA
Longview Farm Elementary PTA

Franklin Smith Elementary PTA
Lee's Summit Council PTA
Sunset Valley Elementary PTA
Trailridge Elementary PTA
Pleasant Lea Elementary PTA
Hawthorn Elementary PTA
Portland Elementary PTA
Blue Springs Early Childhood Preschool PTA
Springfield Council PTA
Central High School PTSA
Harold L. Holliday, Sr. Montessori School PTA
Hickman Mills Council PTA
Sherwood Elementary PTA
Nixa Council PTA
Gracemor PTA
Yeokum Middle School PTSA
Lee's Summit North High PTSA
Woodland Elementary PTA
Linden West Elementary PTA
inactive Dixon PTA
Thomas Hart Benton Elementary School PTA
Mark Twain Elementary PTA
Osceola Grade & High School PTA
Lee's Summit West H.S. PTSA
Parkway PTA
St. Joseph Council PTA
Prairie View Elementary PTA
Glendale Elementary PTA

Founders Gift PTA

Raytown Council PTA
Bingham Middle School PTSA
Ozark Council PTA
Summit Pointe Elementary PTA
Inman PTA of Nixa
Mathews PTA
Mason Elementary PTA
Raytown Middle School PTSA
Greenwood Elementary PTA
Blue Springs R-IV School District Council PTA
Delta Woods Middle School PTSA
Meadowbrook Elementary PTA
Raytown High School PTSA
Christian Ott Elementary PTA
Century PTA of Nixa
Pleasant Lea Middle School PTA
Summit Lakes Middle School PTA
Liberty Oaks Elementary PTA
Independence Council PTA
Nixa Jr. High PTSA
Hawthorn Hill Elementary PTA
Richardson Elementary PTA
Longview Farm Elementary PTA
Lee's Summit Council PTA
Sunset Valley Elementary PTA
Trailridge Elementary PTA
Pleasant Lea Elementary PTA
Hawthorn Elementary PTA
Blue Springs Early Childhood Preschool PTA
Lakewood Elementary PTA
Timber Creek Elementary PTA
Nixa Council PTA
Gracemor PTA
Yeokum Middle School PTSA

Underwood Elementary PTA
Woodland Elementary PTA
Columbia Council PTA
Lee's Summit West H.S. PTSA
Prairie View Elementary PTA
Belton High School PTSA
Peculiar Elementary PTA

Mark Your Calendar

September

National Preparedness Month

Baby Safety Month

- 1 Dues to State Office
- 1 Deadline for Advocacy Through Leadership Awards (Individual/Unit/Council)
- 3 Labor Day - Missouri PTA Office Closed
- 9 Grandparents Day
- 9-15 Missouri Parent and Family Involvement in Education Week
- 17 Deadline for Certified PTA Leader Application
- 17 Constitution Day
- 28 Deadline for Early Bird Membership
- 22 Fall Begins

October

Breast Cancer Awareness Month

- 1 Dues to State Office
- 3 Walk to School Day
- 19-21 Missouri PTA 100th State Convention in Kansas City

November

PTA Healthy Lifestyles Month

- 1 Dues to State Office
- 6 Election Day
- 11 Veteran's Day
- 18 National Parent Involvement Day
- 25 Thanksgiving

Missouri Congress of Parents & Teachers
Missouri PTA
2101 Burlington St.
Columbia, MO 65202

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We invite you to attend –
The 97th annual
Missouri PTA Convention
And Centennial Celebration
October 19th -21st, 2012
“Missouri PTA-100 Years”
Hilton Kansas City Airport
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Kansas City, MO 64153

Learning, networking and celebrations will be everywhere!

Don't miss this opportunity to gain new ideas and a fresh
perspective for your unit!

All PTA members are encouraged to attend!