



# HOME



September 2017  
Volume 98  
Issue 9



# CONTACT

IN THIS EDITION  
HELP DISASTER SURVIVORS  
FREE TECH RESOURCES  
ESSENTIAL FINANCIAL INFO  
FAMILY ENGAGEMENT  
**STUDENT SAFETY**  
MEMBERSHIP RESOURCES  
GET YOUR STUDENTS  
INVOLVED IN PTSA





# From the Missouri PTA Contact Editor

MissouriPTA MissouriPTA @MissouriPTA



**Andrea Battaglia**  
Missouri PTA Contact Editor  
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## Coming Soon to Contact:

October/November 2017 - Technology  
Send us your stuff by September 20

December 2017 - Awkward!  
Send us your stuff by November 20

Contribute to Contact and earn your  
"Featured Article in Contact" Advanced  
Leaders Project requirement - original  
articles, pictures, quotes, ideas, ANYTHING!

Include pictures or hyperlinks (and send it to [contact@mopta.org](mailto:contact@mopta.org)  
in Word with the author's name, email, title and photo.

**PTA Vision:** Making Each Child's Potential A Reality

**PTA Mission:** PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for all families and communities, and a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

**The Purpose of PTA** is to promote the welfare of the 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 close relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth; to develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

Where we live is where we choose to invest, where we feel connected and where we know we belong and can make a difference.

Right now, my husband and I are choosing to invest in our local community - including our city, our neighborhood and our boys' school.


What we've seen recently is that decisions adults are making are impacting our children. Our elementary school has reduced transfers, which moved our oldest son's classmates and friends from their 5th grade classroom. Our school has shifted personnel, which means that our 5th grader also had to change teachers after two weeks of classes.

I watched as these changes unfolded to see how my oldest son would react. Both of these could be scary situations and might have really left him upset or shaken. And while watching him, I'm reminded how resilient kids are. With a good attitude, he's making the best of the situation and I've been told, has also been a leader and a helper at his school, especially for what he calls the "little, wiggly kindergarteners"

(and I think, "he was one just yesterday" - I blinked and now he's a 5th grader).

As PTA parents, these changes sparked serious discussions. Our schools will continue to face obstacles and we, as parents, must do what we can to support (and advocate) for our kids. We talked about ways we could provide additional support to the overloaded 5th grade teacher, we made a commitment to amp up member recruiting efforts to provide longevity to our PTA and our parent support (we are all 5th grade parents - and some are aging out of our elementary school after this year), we have increased building projects and parent work nights, we've regularly communicated with parents and are partnering with our school for family events.

Each of these seem like small things, but we've started to see a difference. We could have been angry and complained about changes. Instead, we let this situation - and our kid's positive reaction - help guide us to making a difference in our school, our neighborhood and our city. I encourage you to do the same thing.



Sweet Success Tip:  
You can make a difference by spending time investing in others. Meet new people, get to know them and encourage them regularly.

## Consider serving as Contact Editor

Missouri PTA transitions positions in May 2018 and I'll be moving to another role on Missouri PTA Board of Managers. I'd love for you to consider joining us in an open MoPTA position (like Contact Editor). You will get great training and support, have a guide to show you what needs to be done and connect with other PTA leaders across the state.

You might be a good fit for Contact Editor if you are organized, like to manage projects, are creative and responsible. You will need to know how to use a design program (I use InDesign) to design a monthly newsletter.

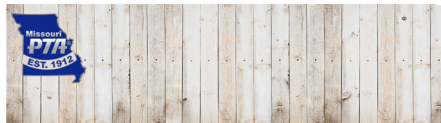
If you are interested in learning more about this opportunity, let's talk - email me at [andrea@mopta.org](mailto:andrea@mopta.org). And trust me, you have time to do this.





# From the Missouri PTA President

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## PTA President Monthly checklist

Download the entire year in a customizable word doc from the PTA members section of our website at [www.MOPTA.org](http://www.MOPTA.org). Just log in with your username and password. If your login information is lost or wasn't passed along email [website@mopta.org](mailto:website@mopta.org) to have it reset.

## To Do This Month: September

Hold general membership meeting if did not do so in August

Send in membership dues (these are due monthly)

Send in End of Year Financial report, Annual Review form and copy of 990 submission (due 12/1 but why wait)

**E-learning** – Quick Guide to Taking & Approving Minutes

Kick off Reflections program

Hold Executive Board meeting

# Home is where the heart is

When I was very little my entire notion of where I lived didn't extend beyond the end of my street. My family and neighbors were the community I knew. That was where I felt at home. Until the day I started Kindergarten. I didn't know it then, but that very first day of school marked the beginning of my expanding community. Where I felt 'at home' grew from my street to my town. High school brought greater independence and with it 'my home' grew to include the entire metropolitan area. College, career, marriage – all those life milestones have continually widened my community. Social media has allowed me to keep in touch with neighbors and classmates who now live in vastly different points on the map but still share similar life experiences as we navigate the waters of our adult lives. My concept now of 'where I live' has few boundaries. Regardless of where someone lives or their socio-economic background, I can sympathize with their own story about their children heading off to that first day of Kindergarten.

Ideally our concept of our PTA 'home' has a similar evolution. The first time we join PTA it is typically for our own child. Our goals are simple. We want to be part of their lives and ensure they have the best education possible. Soon we realize in order to achieve those goals we need to support all the children in the school. As they move through the school system and become engaged in a wider array

of school experiences we see the value in supporting the district as a whole. Our goals are still the same. If the district is the best it can be our child will receive the best education possible. Together we as a community succeed.

But our PTA 'home' shouldn't be bound by merely school districts. We live in a world where it is now atypical to grow up and continue to live out our entire lives in the same community. The chances our children will someday live at a point on the map drastically different from where they grew up is high. The ability for public education to provide the best education possible is not tied to the support for an individual school district but public education as a whole. In order to ensure our children grow up to live in a country with ample opportunities we need to support all children and all schools. Our PTA 'home' should know no boundaries.

It would be great if PTA evolved in the other direction. Members joined first primarily because they support the concept of public education for all and then evolve to supporting the district and then the individual school. It would be a much quicker process. But that is not reality. Our challenge is to provide our members with the opportunity to evolve. Provide that constant reminder that the PTA 'home' is so much bigger. That together, as a community, a state and a country, we will be most successful.

Congratulations to the School of Excellence award winners in Missouri for 2017-2018!  
**Shoal Creek Elementary and Thomas Chinn Elementary**

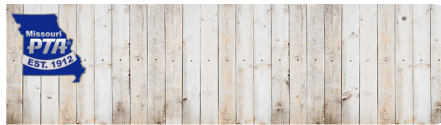
**Want to step up your PTA's involvement in school improvements? Join the National PTA School of Excellence program!** This year-long program offers customized tools to help you make a substantial, positive impact on school and student success, and to earn acknowledgement for your PTA and school.

ENROLL NOW at [PTA.org/Excellence](http://PTA.org/Excellence) and learn more by watching our **PTA Live!** about the program on Facebook.



# From the Missouri PTA President

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## Missouri Tax-Exempt Certificate

All PTA units and councils are able to obtain a Missouri Tax-Exempt Certificate. While it may be tempting to use your school building certificate, units and councils are separate entities filing their own taxes. The unit or council should use its own tax-exempt certificate. If your unit or council does not have a tax-exempt certificate or the certificate is expired an application must be filled out with the Missouri Department of Revenue.

Missouri PTA has developed a [step-by-step guide](#) to assist you in filling out the application form. One item you will need from Missouri PTA is a Letter of Determination. Because all units and councils are registered under the broad Missouri Congress of Parents and Teacher non-profit filing in Missouri, Missouri PTA is charged with making sure all units and councils are abiding by state non-profit requirements.

Whether or not a unit or council is in Good Standing determines alignment with state non-profit requirements. Meaning, your unit or council must be in good standing to obtain a Letter of Determination, which can be requested from the state office at [office@mopta.org](mailto:office@mopta.org).



## New Fundraising Opportunity! Chromebooks for PTAs

Google Chromebook is PTA's Newest Proud National Sponsor!



PTAs often help buy technology to support classrooms. To help with fundraising, Google's Chromebook partners are launching a program that contributes funds to your PTA whenever a family in your community buys a Chromebook.

Chromebooks are a hit in classrooms and many students and their families also use them at home.

Here's how the program works:

- Enroll in the program using the Chromebook manufacturer pages on the [Chromebooks for PTAs fundraising program website](#). You'll receive a special purchasing link to track purchases made in your community so that funds can be provided to your PTA.
- Spread the word about Chromebooks with those in your network and encourage them to use your special purchasing link so their purchase

can help your PTA.

- Your PTA earns money for every local Chromebook purchased online using your special purchasing link.

To get your special purchasing link and find out how much your PTA can earn, visit the [Chromebooks for PTAs fundraising program website](#). You may sign up with any/all of the manufacturers you want. If you aren't sure which manufacturer(s) to sign up with, ask your school which devices they use.

For more information about the program, check out the [Chromebooks for PTAs fundraising program website](#). We hope this helps your PTA earn extra funds to do even more to help the children and families in your community!

# Intergovernmental Affairs Advisory HOW TO HELP DISASTER SURVIVORS

The compassion and generosity of the American people is never more evident than during and after a disaster. It is individuals, non-profits, faith- and community-based organizations, private sector partners, and governmental agencies working together that will most effectively and efficiently help survivors cope with the impacts of Tropical Storm Harvey or Irma.

Please follow a few important guidelines below to ensure your support can be the most helpful for Tropical Storm disaster survivors.

## TO DONATE TO RELIEF EFFORTS

The most effective way to support disaster survivors in their recovery is to donate money and time to trusted, reputable, voluntary or charitable organizations.

Cash donations offer voluntary agencies and faith-based organizations the most flexibility to address urgently developing needs. With cash in hand, these organizations can obtain needed resources nearer to the disaster location. This inflow of cash also pumps money back into the local economy and helps local businesses recover faster.

Please do not donate unsolicited goods such as used clothing, miscellaneous household items, medicine, or perishable foodstuffs at this time. When used personal items are donated, the helping agencies must redirect their staff away from providing direct services to survivors in order to sort, package, transport, warehouse, and distribute items that may not meet the needs of disaster survivors.

Donate through a trusted organization. At the national level, many voluntary-, faith- and community-based organizations are active in disasters, and are trusted ways to donate to disaster survivors. Individuals, corporations, and volunteers can learn more about how to help on the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NVOAD) website.

In addition to the national members, The Texas Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (Texas VOAD) has a list of vetted disaster relief organizations providing services to survivors. Texas VOAD represents more than three dozen faith-based, community, nonprofit and non-governmental organizations.

## TO PERSONALLY VOLUNTEER IN THE DISASTER AREAS

Impacted states are asking volunteers to not self-deploy, as unexpectedly showing up to any of the communities that have been impacted by Hurricane Harvey or Irma will create an additional burden for first responders.

The National VOAD has also noted the situation may not be conducive to volunteers entering the impacted zone and individuals may find themselves turned away by law enforcement.

To ensure volunteer safety, as well as the safety of disaster survivors, volunteers should only go into affected areas with a specific volunteer assignment, proper safety gear, and valid identification.

At this time, potential volunteers are asked to register with a voluntary or charitable organization of their choice, many of which are already in Texas and supporting survivors on the ground.

Most importantly, please be patient. Although the need is great, and desire to help strong, it is important to avoid donating material goods or self-deploying to help until communities are safe and public officials and disaster relief organizations have had an opportunity to assess the damage and identify what the specific unmet needs are.

Volunteer generosity helps impacted communities heal from the tragic consequences of disasters, but recovery lasts much longer than today. There will be volunteer needs for many months, and years, after the disaster, so sign up now.

Tropical Storm Harvey and Irma are still dangerous, with the potential to impact additional areas of Texas and Louisiana and Florida. As the situation changes, needs may also change in these areas. Continue monitoring traditional and social media channels to learn more.



# FEMEA

**CJ Huff** | Former  
Superintendent of Joplin  
Schools and current Special  
Advisor for Missouri Center for  
Education Safety

Thank you Missouri for your positive and supportive measures to help your friends, family and community down in Texas and Florida. I've seen natural disasters first hand and the aftermath of what a city, community and surrounding area looks like in the days, months and years to come. Our Southern Friends are hurting right now, but with time, they will rebuild to be even more strong.

In speaking from experience, here is what I recommend: **The best and most helpful thing to our friends in natural disaster areas is this - donate funds.** Yes, supplies are needed and essential, but there are many logistical problems with items such as storage and distribution to families who are displaced.

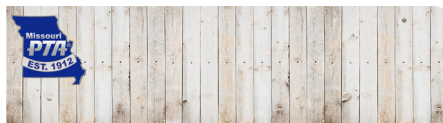
We don't want their good efforts to go to waste.

Thank you for your devotion to serving others and we know that Missouri will continue to "Show Me" (and everyone!) that we are better together.



# From the team: Missouri PTA Communications

f MissouriPTA p MissouriPTA @MissouriPTA



**Amy Blakemore**

Missouri PTA VP Communications

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Our favorites  
this month

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## Learn more about Missouri PTA Public Relations

Public Relations Chair is a fluid position, changing as our world does. Many things change what I do on a daily basis including changes in technology, political climate, and the needs of Missouri PTA. My job description and daily duties are always aligned but they are not exactly the same. The bulk of my job is centered on Social Media management which includes:

- Creating social media campaigns highlighting a specific subject like, “#StopCutsToClassrooms” campaign
- Reposting social media posts from National PTA and other sources
- Creating posts for events, legislative issues and calls to action
- Live posts during conferences, School of Information, and other events
- Create social media education & presentations for conferences and SOI

Even though this is what my position looks like now, I imagine it won't look exactly the same in the near future. I envision that Twitter reposts and tagging political representatives in those posts as an important and timely priority as the year progresses. This is the first time in history that a single voice on a technological public forum can create buzz that influences and changes politics! It's exciting and I'm grateful I have the chance to experience it while still filling my self-imposed obligation to be a part of PTA for the duration of my children's' childhood.

My goal is to continue to learn. I want to learn about what other units are doing, what other state boards are doing, and what comparable organizations are doing. I will work to create best practices that can be duplicated. And I will continue to find passionate leaders who want to be a part of the big picture.

What's your passion? What are your gifts? PTA is more than a monthly meeting or bake sale (although I love both of those aspects), it's about being a voice for our children and making a difference locally, state-wide, and nationally. Let's do this together.

## Missouri PTA President Connect Facebook Group

This resource provides presidents across the state with a networking tool so we can work together to achieve our common goal of helping our children reach their full potential. Share ideas, ask questions, or ask for advice. Send a request to join at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/presidentconnect/>

## Training for your Board

Missouri PTA offers Convention in April of each year, but what do you do if someone on your board needs training and didn't attend convention last spring or you have a new board member? You have a few options:

- Reach out to Missouri PTA to see if there is a School of Information or regional training opportunity in your area. A lot of Council PTAs host Schools of Information at a low cost. (You can email our office at [office@mopta.org](mailto:office@mopta.org))
- Review past Convention workshops on our website under the Members Section>Workshops.
- Use [National PTA's E-Learning](#) to do your own training in-house.
- Register for and read through the [National PTA Back-To-School Kit](#).

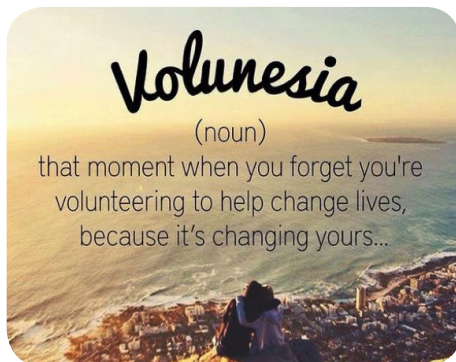
## Stay Connected This Year and use Tech Resources to Help

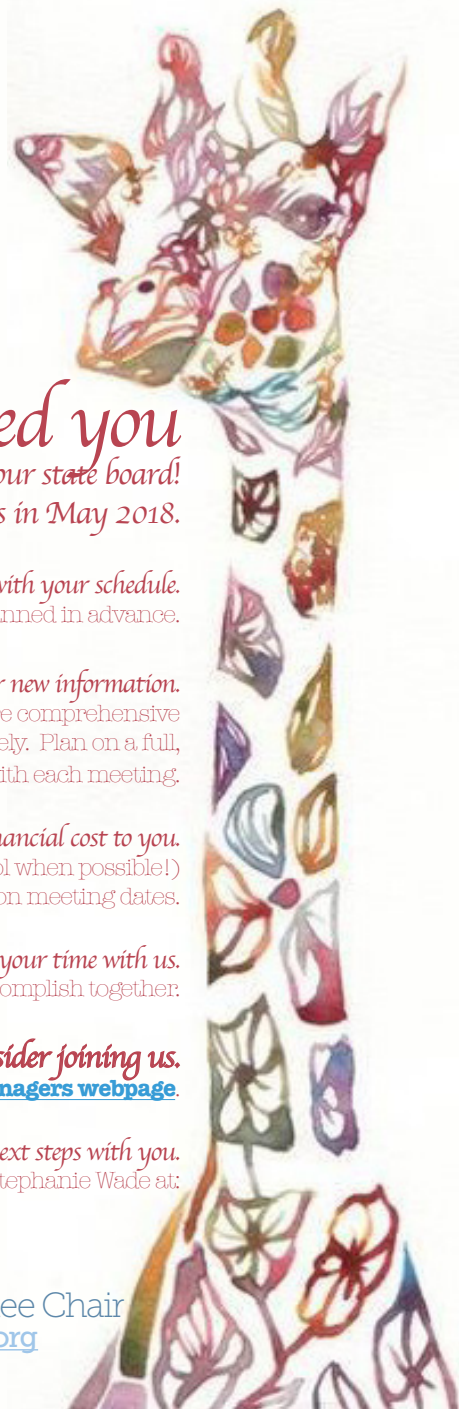
It's simple to stay connected this year and we have great resource options for you to consider. There are a lot of technology companies that have resources for non-profits at free or discounted prices. Here are a few that Missouri PTA utilizes:

- [Office 365](#) will give your non-profit free access to online Office apps as well as document storage, email, video conferencing, and more!
- [Google for Non-Profits](#) offers access to the G Suite of apps, email, expanded document storage, Google calendars (which can be subscribed to by your members!), and more!
- [Techsoup](#) connects non-profits with tech companies that want to offer donations or products/services at a discounted price.

Create an email database of your members so that you can communicate with them on a regular basis to keep them engaged. Use these tech resources to get your unit set up and to keep your membership engaged by communicating with them with these tips:

- Subscribe to [Missouri PTA newsletters](#) and [National PTA newsletters](#) - share with your members!
- Read Missouri PTA CONTACT digital magazine each month for great news, tips and resources.





## We need you

We are looking for more interested, committed volunteers to join our state board!  
*We have open positions now and more opportunities in May 2018.*

*Involvement on Missouri PTA Board of Managers is workable with your schedule.*  
Tasks and most meetings can be done from your home and are planned in advance.

*Missouri PTA Board of Managers is a great way to make connections and discover new information.*  
We meet in person quarterly in Columbia at the State PTA office. Our meetings are comprehensive and concise - our working groups get stuff done and do it quickly and accurately. Plan on a full, informational and fun day with each meeting.

*Involvement in Missouri PTA doesn't add a financial cost to you.*  
Mileage is reimbursed for travel (be sure to carpool when possible!) and we provide lunch and dinner on meeting dates.

*You will make friends and love your time with us.*  
Our state is full of passionate, hardworking PTA parents; it's energizing what we accomplish together.

*Take the next step and consider joining us.*  
To learn about all our positions or apply online, please visit our [Board of Managers webpage](#).

*We know you are interested and we want to share information and next steps with you.*  
To learn more, please contact our Nominating Committee Chair Stephanie Wade at:

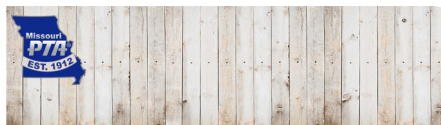


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# From the team: Missouri PTA Field Service

MissouriPTA MissouriPTA @MissouriPTA



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**We need you!**

Missouri PTA  
Position  
Open

Missouri PTA Heritage  
Regional Director

[More Info & Apply Online](#)

## Missouri 2017-18 Regional Teacher of the Year Winners Announced

From Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

DESE announced its 2017-18 Regional Teachers of the Year in late July as part of the Missouri Teacher of the Year program. The [32 teachers selected](#) from all over the state are now eligible for the state teacher of the year award, an effort to celebrate outstanding teachers. The 2017-18 Missouri Teacher of the Year will be selected in August.

## Back to School Books for All Ages

From Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Whether starting preschool, kindergarten or middle school, beginning a new year can be stressful for children and families. Sharing books about the transition can help you engage children in conversations about concerns they might have. Check out this list of [back-to-school books](#) for kids of all ages for some new titles and some old favorites.

## Dads Rock - Serve Families and Support Fathers - Learn How Here

From Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Studies have shown that outcomes are better for children when their fathers are actively engaged in their lives. However, many services for families are more likely to focus on mothers than fathers. Take a look at this [great video](#) to learn how your program can better serve families by meeting the needs of fathers.

## Parents as Teachers Educators are Lifelong Learners

From Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

This summer, parent educators throughout Missouri sharpened their skills and increased their knowledge to better support Missouri families through home visiting. Additional professional development opportunities can be found on the [DESE Parents As Teachers website](#).

## How Test Results Can Help You Be a Better Advocate

All parents should be able to use results on tests to help improve their child's learning and advocate for sound assessment practices. Use the following resources to ensure parents at your school are empowered to take an active role in advocating for sound assessment practices, not only for their children, but for every child.

- National PTA: [Assessments](#)
- CCSSO: [NCSA 2017 Conference Resources](#)
- Michigan Assessment Consortium: [Assessment Literacy Standards](#)
- The Assessment Learning Network: [Learning Points](#)
- Assessment Literacy—Making Sense of K-12 Assessment for Learning: [Different Assessment Types](#)

# Start Your PTA Year on the Right Foot

Pat Higginbotham | Missouri PTA Gateway Regional Director

This is the time of the year for PTAs that can be overwhelming, as the first day of school is about to begin. Whether you're new or returning PTA officers, you are busy with PTA Meetings, planning the PTA budget, planning your Back to School Events, PTA Membership drives and more. When it becomes time to put your plans in action, it can feel a bit intense. We encourage you to make the most of your year by starting it on the right foot.

Never turn away a volunteer, there is always something for them to do! And remember to thank them for helping. Always thank those who help make your life a little easier! Don't forget to thank yourself, too!

Engage in PTA mode wherever you're going, whatever you're doing. Communicate PTA when you're talking to people. You never know when you might find another person interested in helping your PTA.

PTA meetings can feel a bit mundane to some people, even though they want to help in their child's school. Make meetings more convenient for them! Have refreshments, have child care set up with high school students who need service hours, or perhaps another group, like older Girl Scouts, to come in and do activities with the kids while Mom and Dad are in the meeting.

Soak in all of the PTA training you can get! There are so many PTA educational tools that Missouri PTA and National PTA have, and they are all online at your fingertips, USE THEM! Enrich your PTA experience.

Have FUN doing what you do in PTA! It doesn't have to be all work and no play! No matter what the job, take the time to laugh and enjoy life. Your positivity is influential!



# Essential Financial Information

## Membership is Tax Deductible

Did you know that both individual and business PTA memberships are tax deductible? As stated in the IRS tax publication 526, PTAs are qualified organizations and membership fees or dues can be deducted providing only the amount deducted is the amount over any benefits received. There are a few benefits that can be disregarded such as discounts on events/goods/services and preferred access to goods and services. Token items can also be disregarded.

For Example – A unit gives each member a discount for spirit wear, free admission to their annual family night and 10 carnival tickets. The discount, free admission and tickets are defined as disregarded and token items. They can deduct the full value of the membership.

If the membership provides the member with something of monetary value over and above the disregarded and token items the tax payer must deduct that amount prior to claiming the deduction. An example of this would be providing a business membership with advertising as part of their membership dues. To assist the tax payer just be sure to spell out what is included with the membership. This will come in handy when the individual or business is filing their taxes.

## Do you have insurance?

Every PTA should have insurance. Period. Because it can happen to you. If the unit's budget did not provide for an insurance line item amend that budget now. It is recommended to have the following insurance coverage.

- Fidelity Bond – protects the unit against fraud and embezzlement
- General liability insurance – protects the units from liability arising from bodily injury, personal injury, advertising injury, and property damage.
- Directors and Officers (D&O) liability insurance – provides protection for the directors and officers from claims pertaining to the policy making and managing of the unit.

## 990s when to file

According to the IRS, a non-profit must file their 990 no later than the 15th day of the 5th month following the end of the fiscal year. So, if the PTA's fiscal year ended on June 30th the 990 should be filed no later than November 15th. Don't wait! Once the unit has finalized their finances for the fiscal year the 990 can be filed. There is no need to wait until the deadline. Go ahead and file. Don't forget to send a copy of the accepted submission to the Missouri PTA office. The deadline to send that submission to MOPTA is December 1st. But again, there is no need to wait. If you have it done go ahead and send it.

## You Asked, Missouri PTA Answers!

### What do I send to the state of Missouri?

Yes, most non-profits must file an annual registration and fee each year with the state of Missouri. However, PTAs are an exception. All PTAs are umbrellaed under the Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers. Basically, every unit and council is a dba under Missouri PTA (this is also why when the unit files the 990 the official name is Missouri Congress of Parents and Teachers). And the state of Missouri has a separate special non-profit status entitled a benevolent non-profit. It is the responsibility of Missouri PTA to report annually for all the units and councils. Units and councils send in the required items of Good Standing and the state MOPTA office reports to the state of Missouri.

The only item units and councils must file directly with the state is the application for a Missouri tax-exempt certificate. Please note merchants and business are not obligated to honor the tax-exempt certificate. If that situation would arise your unit can either choose to pay the sales tax or find another vendor.

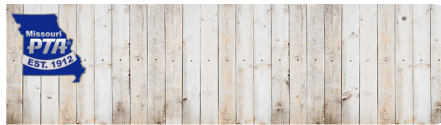
Also, never never never use personal information such as your SSN when conducting business on behalf of the PTA. Each PTA has its own EIN. This federally assigned identifying number should be used for the business purposes of PTA (such as setting up a bank account or entering into a contractual agreement).



From the team:

# Missouri PTA Legislation & Advocacy

 MissouriPTA  MissouriPTA  @MissouriPTA



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Missouri PTA VP Legislation & Advocacy

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# RAISE THE AGE

**This October Missouri PTA will lead the campaign with a student-led advocacy social media push. We know our students can draw attention to this issue and raise awareness across the state.**

**Look for more information and direction coming from our Advocacy Chair, Will Wiese, later in September and pledge to help us Raise the Age!! Learn more online at [Raise the Age MO](#).**

## Missouri Can't Be Last - Raise The Age

New York State passed legislation raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction. Starting October 1, 2019, children younger than 18 will be included in New York's juvenile justice system -- not pushed prematurely into adult jails, courts, and prisons.

Now, there are only six states left that prosecute all 17-year-olds as adults. And Missouri is one of them.

In the other states that haven't yet raised the age, there's real momentum for change. On April 20, Texas' House of Representatives passed raise the age legislation. In North Carolina, bipartisan raise the age legislation has garnered support from the Democratic governor and law enforcement groups.

Missouri, whose juvenile justice system once led the nation, has a chance this year to join the near-unanimous trend of states who know that raising the age improves public safety, saves money,

and keeps kids safe. Last session Missouri's Raise the Age bill was overwhelmingly supported in committee, and was nearing debate on the House floor as the session unfortunately came to an end without a vote.

Raising the age means including 17-year-olds in the juvenile justice system. Right now, Missouri is one of only 6 states that exclude all 17-year-olds from the juvenile justice system.

In Missouri, 17-year-olds can't vote, serve on juries, join the military, or buy a lottery ticket. They aren't treated like adults. There's only one exception: Kids are automatically charged, jailed, and imprisoned as adults the day they turn 17, even for the most minor offenses.

Raising the age will improve public safety, save taxpayer dollars, treat families fairly, and get better outcomes for vulnerable young people.

Will we do the right thing? Or will we be the last in the nation to take a common-sense step towards safety and justice?

As PTA members, you know that family engagement is an important part of your child's successful development and academic outcomes. You participate on school advisory committees, lead parent advocacy, work with teachers in their classrooms, read all about ESSA and other regulations related to children's health and education, and inspire your community to support all children.

Family engagement is evolving from "involvement" in the sense of families receiving a one-way stream of information and sponsoring endless fundraisers at school. Instead, it's the opportunity to build relationships between two crucial components of a child's life together—families and school personnel—to further support their successful education, well-being and development.

As a parent, you have plenty of options, depending on availability, interests, skills, and personal constraints, to be engaged. Many of you are finding ways such as these to become a part of your child's school community:

- Establishing positive relationships with administrators and teachers.
- Meeting with teachers about academic and social development goals for your child. If you aren't exactly sure what to ask your child's teacher, check the Department of Education's [Parent Checklist](#) to get started.
- Attending PTA or school meetings to find out about the issues in your school. Ask questions if others aren't bringing up the things that matter to your child's success or your community.
- Volunteering on a committee that focuses on an activity or issue important to you, whether it's school transportation, safe places to play after school, teacher diversity, bullying or academics.
- Voicing your opinion to local and state Boards of Education and local, state and national elected officials on things that matter to your family.
- Keeping up with and providing input on your state's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan. Check your state's education website to find out about your parent representative and the developing plans.

Being engaged in education doesn't require endless free time or multiple degrees and in-depth knowledge about schools. You just need a concern for your child and a little bit of time to act on that concern. We know you are engaged in your schools, supporting your community. If you've been recognized for your involvement in education by your state, [share your story](#) with the Department of Education.

## Family Engagement Builds Important Relationships

**Francis Frost** | Department of Education, Family Ambassador



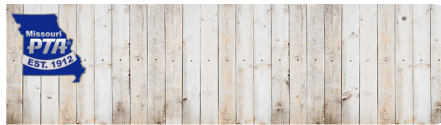


From the team:

# Missouri PTA

## Legislation & Advocacy

[MissouriPTA](#) [MissouriPTA](#) [@MissouriPTA](#)



**Carla Wiese**

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## New Bipartisan Bill Will Benefit Student Borrowers, Taxpayers by Promoting Competition Amongst Student Loan Servicers

Missouri PTA supports this Act. I do not think anyone would argue that students today are paying more and coming out with more debt than ever before.

Competition in the student loan market place will benefit students by lowering costs and making sure they are able to pay their loans. The United States, under the current student loan contracts, has seen defaults and non-or late payments costing taxpayers million of dollars annually increase yearly.

This current system is broken. Missouri PTA applauds the work of these Senators who are trying to correct it.

- Carla Wiese VP of Legislation and Advocacy

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senators Roy Blunt (Mo.), Elizabeth Warren (Mass.), James Lankford (Okla.), and Jeanne Shaheen (N.H.) yesterday introduced the bipartisan Student Loan Servicer Performance Accountability Act. The legislation would benefit student loan borrowers and taxpayers by protecting and strengthening performance-based accountability of federal student loan servicers through greater competition and stronger oversight.

"Maintaining choice and competition amongst student loan servicers is the best way to ensure they will continue improving services for student borrowers," Blunt said. "This bill will strengthen the performance-based incentives we have now, and prevent any one student loan servicer from becoming so large it poses a risk to taxpayers. I urge my colleagues to support this bipartisan, commonsense measure."

"The federal government has a responsibility to make sure student loan servicing is working for student borrowers and for taxpayers. The Education Department's plan to switch to a single servicer for its trillion-dollar loan portfolio heads in the wrong direction and could create a 'too big to fail' federal contractor," Warren said. "Our bipartisan bill will ensure that there is real competition in student loan servicing and that servicers are held accountable for serving student borrowers effectively."

"The Department of Education's plan to reduce the number of contracted student loan servicers to just one would reduce the quality of assistance, make it harder for borrowers to manage their debt, and ultimately hurt our students, their families and our economy," Shaheen said. "The Student Loan Servicer Performance Accountability Act will ensure strong competition and oversight so that students have high quality service so they can make informed decisions about their loan and repayment options."

"The Student Loan Servicer Accountability Act is a commonsense bill that temporarily suspends the US Department of Education from awarding a servicing contract to a sole provider for all student loans owned by the US Department of Education," Lankford said. "As the nation's student loan debt continues to grow, we need to enact measures that will ensure students have all the resources available to them so they can repay their loans and get good customer service. Moving to a single federal student loan servicer would not accomplish this goal because it eliminates performance-based competition that incentivizes improved service for students. I look forward to working with my colleagues on this bipartisan legislation to prevent any disruption in service for borrowers to pay back their student loan debt."

The current federal student loan servicing contracts expire in 2019. In May 2017, the Department of Education released a revised plan for the servicing competition that would reduce the number of federal student loan servicers from nine to one servicer for the entire trillion-dollar federal direct loan portfolio. This plan would limit the Department's ability to ensure high-quality service to student borrowers.

The Student Loan Servicer Performance Accountability Act would:

- Cancel the Department of Education's current competition for a single federal student loan servicer;
- Ensure performance-based competition in federal student loan servicing by requiring the participation of multiple servicers that contract directly with the Department of Education;
- Promote competition by requiring the Department of Education to allocate loans to servicers based on measures of their performance, including scores on borrower satisfaction; and
- Prohibit the Department of Education from awarding all federal student loans to a single federal student loan servicer and creating a federal student loan monopoly.

## Do you have a Legislative Chair?

A Legislative Chair is a very important member on your PTA team. With Missouri PTA's and National PTA's support and resources this position is not difficult.

National PTA has created an [Advocacy Toolkit](#) as a step by step guide to help you along the way.

Missouri PTA is also here to help. The first step is to register for [Missouri PTA JC/DC](#). This will allow you to receive our important Action Alerts.

When you receive these alerts we will tell you what to do and whom to contact for each alert. We also provide verbiage to use when creating emails, letters or phone calls.

For our Leg Chairs we also provide our monthly Bill Watch List so you can keep your Unit or Council up to date on legislation in Missouri. All you have to do is customize the unit or council information at the top of the report and distribute it to your members.

Are you ready to get started or want to learn more? Contact Carla Wiese the Vice President of Legislation and Advocacy to get started at [carlaw@mopta.org](mailto:carlaw@mopta.org).

**The National Action Plan for Sports Safety has been created to bring to light the benefits and potential risks to student athletes while playing sports. National PTA and MO PTA support this plan. You can read the entire plan [here](#).**



# Is Your Child's School Prepared?

## 8 Questions Parents Can Ask to Assess School Safety

The safety of children at school is a primary concern of parents and communities. In light of man-made and natural threats to school safety, parents naturally want to be reassured that children are safe and secure when in the care of the school. Unfortunately, for many parents not knowing what to ask is a barrier to getting the answers needed for that reassurance. The following is a list of basic questions that can be asked by parents to determine if the school takes a proactive approach to school safety.

### 1 Does our school have a written emergency plan? And if so, when was the last time it was updated?

Every school should have a written plan in place that is reviewed and updated at a minimum of once per year.

### 2 Does our school have a "Safety Team" that monitors school safety and is prepared to implement the plan? How often do they meet?

Proactive schools have a team of staff members who meet regularly to evaluate the status of safety in the school.

### 3 Are practice drills scheduled regularly to test emergency procedures?

Many states mandate that certain drills be conducted on a regular basis throughout the year. Regardless, drills should be practiced to test procedures and to help students and staff react with confidence in the event of an emergency.

### 4 Does the school district have school safety and security policies? Where can I find those policies?

Sometimes a simple search of the district website will answer this question, but school personnel should be aware and capable of pointing you to those policies.

### 5 Does our school have a reunification plan? Is it practiced? How are parents informed of our responsibilities in the implementation of that plan?

Following an emergency requiring school closure or evacuation, safety minded schools have thought through how to reunite children with families in a secure and orderly manner.

### 6 In our school, are all staff including substitutes trained to implement the emergency plan?

A plan is only as good as the confidence of the people responsible for carrying out the plan. Training and practicing plan implementation is essential.

### 7 In the event of an emergency, how will our school district communicate with parents?

Every good emergency plan has a focus on internal and external communication. Having a variety of communication tools such as text messaging, auto dialers, social media, etc. is helpful in reaching all parents quickly to communicate facts and directives.

### 8 How can I help?

Many proactive schools are adopting a collaborative approach to school safety, involving parent representatives and support to make the most of available resources and gain community support for school safety initiatives.

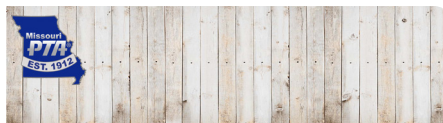
It is important parents keep in mind some pieces of an emergency plan are confidential and may not be able to be shared. However, asking these questions will give you a good sense of the level of preparedness of your child's school and help you find a way to help support and protect the safety of your child's school.



For additional information or to access school safety resources, visit the MSBA's Center For Education Safety at [www.moces.org](http://www.moces.org) or contact CES at [info@moces.org](mailto:info@moces.org).

# From the team: Missouri PTA Programs

MissouriPTA MissouriPTA @MissouriPTA



**Susan Rupert**  
Missouri PTA President-Elect  
susanr@mopta.org

MANY  
HANDS  
MAKE  
LIGHT  
WORK



**We need you!**  
Missouri PTA Reflections Chair  
[More Info & Apply Online](#)



**Carrie Dixon**  
Missouri PTA Resource  
Development  
carried@mopta.org



**Alex Wiese**  
Missouri PTA Student Rep  
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**Lexis Wade**  
Missouri PTA Student Rep  
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## Child Safety is Everyone's Business

**CJ Huff** | Special Advisor, Missouri Center for Education Safety

Feeling safe at school is a basic need that must be met for learning to occur. Left unmet, insecurity and fear creep into their minds instead of math facts, spelling words, and reading strategies. That feeling of safety starts with our ability, as adults, to create structures and practice behaviors that support a safe and secure school environment.

Last spring principals across Missouri received "Is My School Prepared?" A document meant for school leaders to reflect on current safety practices and procedures. Today you are receiving the "Is My Child's School Prepared?" document to provide parents an opportunity to ask questions of school leaders related to school safety and security. The purpose of these questions is not to play the game of "gotcha" with your schools leadership. However, it is intended to create dialogue and to find ways to partner together to create safer school environments where teachers can teach and children can learn.

The safety of our children is everyone's business. Get involved and engage in those important conversations today!



## Join National PTA to STOP Cuts To Classrooms

Did you know that Federal funding for public education programs has remained at **2% of the federal budget** for decades, despite the increase in public school enrollment and the rising cost of education resources and services?

This disparity between funding levels and actual costs means that the federal government has essentially enacted cuts to classrooms.

**National PTA is running a nationwide campaign**—from July 7 to September 29—to raise public awareness that current levels of federal education funding are an inadequate investment in our children.

To learn more about the nationwide campaign and get involved in PTA's advocacy efforts visit [PTA.org/STOPCuts](http://PTA.org/STOPCuts).

## Stop Doing More With Less

**Susan Rupert** | Missouri PTA President-Elect

As an officer, especially Vice President, you may find that you have several different roles or tasks to perform aka "wearing multiple hats". This is not uncommon in the world of PTA volunteers. Let's face it; we always want to do more for the kids. More programs, more activities, more recognition, more, more, and more.

Over the years I have found myself being that person who just does it alone rather than asking for help. I didn't want to "bother" others because I felt they were too busy to ask. So I would just take care of it.

I realize now that is totally the wrong view point. When you are a committee of one you are denying others a chance to volunteer and be engaged in the school and community. You are not sharing the opportunities and moments that make you feel great about what PTA and you are doing.

We are all busy with work, family, kids' activities but the work we do is very important for all kids.

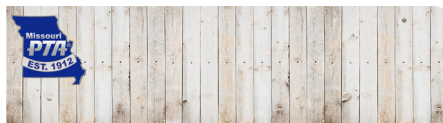
Inviting others to share in those volunteer opportunities is not asking them to perform a chore but rather you are gifting them a chance to make a difference in the life of a child.





# From the team: Missouri PTA Programs

MissouriPTA MissouriPTA @MissouriPTA



**Susan Rupert**

Missouri PTA President-Elect

[susanr@mopta.org](mailto:susanr@mopta.org)

YOU MUST DO  
THE THING WHICH  
YOU THINK  
YOU CANNOT DO.

— Eleanor Roosevelt —



## We need you!

Missouri PTA Reflections Chair  
[More Info & Apply Online](#)



**Carrie Dixon**

Missouri PTA Resource  
Development  
[carried@mopta.org](mailto:carried@mopta.org)



**Alex Wiese**

Missouri PTA Student Rep  
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**Lexis Wade**

Missouri PTA Student Rep  
[lexisw@mopta.org](mailto:lexisw@mopta.org)

## Learn more about PTA Vice President Positions

Sometimes the Vice-President position is viewed as the easy or doing nothing job. If you look at the responsibilities outlined in most unit bylaws it would be really easy to assume that. Most state the position holder serves as an aide to the president and performs the duties of the president in the president's absence or inability to serve. So basically you could "stand" around waiting to see if you need to do anything. I have even heard of nominating committees using this as a selling point in order to fill the position.

Ideally the Vice-President should be filled with someone that aspires to serve as the next President of the unit. He/she should use this time as a training opportunity to work closely with the current president and learn the best practices of running a PTA unit.

Here are some key points to help get you started on the road to success:

- Know your bylaws and standing rules
- Learn how to plan and run a meeting
- Understand basic parliamentary procedure

I like to view the Vice-President position as the "Jack of all Trades". You need to have an understanding of the responsibilities of each office and chairman on your board. You need to be that valuable resource when they have questions, are seeking advice or need encouragement. You may need to step in to meet an obligation for someone or fill an unexpected chair position opening at the last minute or until a replacement can be found. Knowledge comes from training, networking and experience.

Take advantage of any and all formal training opportunities by attending regional and state trainings; i.e. State Convention in April. Utilize the E-Training courses on the National PTA website. There are many relevant topics available. Be familiar with the resources that are available here in Missouri by visiting the Missouri PTA website, [www.mopta.org](http://www.mopta.org) frequently. The National PTA website [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org) has a lot of information for local leaders as well.

## Start Reflections at Your School

The Reflections program is "Within Reach" of every unit with the resources available. The Local Leaders' Guide details the steps of planning, promotion, reviewing, advancing and celebrating. Everything for a successful program is available on the Missouri PTA and National PTA website. The Reflections program builds connections with your families, school and community and provides a venue for students to explore, learn and create.

## PTA Back-to-School Kit

The 2017-2018 [Back-To-School Kit](#) is now live! As always, it's jam-packed with tools, resources and information specially designed to help you run your PTA. The kit is also completely digital and mobile-friendly, meaning you can view it from your phone, tablet or other mobile devices—perfect for the on-the-go PTA leader! We encourage you to share the tool kit with all of your board members.



## Back to School Time

While we all hope for a smooth start to the school year it can sometimes be a little rough. Transiting to a new grade, teacher, building or a new district can be hard.

[Verywell.com](http://Verywell.com) has great tips and solutions for common back to school problems.



## Consider serving as State Reflections Chair

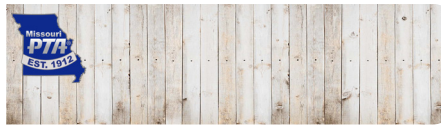
Missouri PTA is seeking a volunteer to fill the State Reflections Chair immediately.

This rewarding position oversees the state Reflections program and the annual Student Showcase Event. To ensure a successful program year this opening needs to be filled as soon as possible. The suggested skills for the position are listed below. Information regarding serving as a Board of Managers member will be discussed during interview. Interested individuals should email Susan Rupert at [president-elect@mopta.org](mailto:president-elect@mopta.org).

- Knowledge of the Reflections program basics.
- Local Reflections Chair Experience a plus. Willingness to learn is a must.
- Good organizational and communication skills. Enjoys working with a team.
- Understands the importance of volunteers to our organization.
- Good work ethic and follow through with commitments.
- Comfortable with using email. Experience with Power Point, Excel and Google Docs.
- Not afraid to speak up for children and promote the benefits of PTA.

# From the team: Missouri PTA Membership

MissouriPTA MissouriPTA @MissouriPTA



**Christine Kent**  
Missouri PTA VP Membership  
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**Burchell McGhee**  
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**Doty Hoffman**  
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**We need you!**  
Missouri PTA Student  
Involvement  
[More Info & Apply Online](#)

## **Doty Hoffman** | Missouri PTA Membership Growth & Development Chair

I am fortunate to serve on a PTA board in one of the largest elementary schools in the state. My kids' school has a student population with over 900 kiddos. It can be challenging, but at the same time rewarding to know that by participating in PTA, you are making a difference in the lives of every, single, student.

A strong, communicative relationship with administration is key in order to be the very best we all can be. A supportive staff, from committed teachers to administrative assistants, help our PTA recruit and promote our cause and our mission.

Our PTA's mission is to "advocate for all students by engaging and empowering families, teachers and community."

Membership is incredibly important and completely reliant on parent-teacher relationships at our school. Parents provide support and assistance to the staff and also arrange celebrations such as conference meals and staff appreciation. They say it's a "two-way street" but it's more of a "I'll pick you up if you need a ride" sort-of scenario.

Membership provides a database, a pool of contacts, volunteers and community partners. Many parents own businesses or can contribute their talents in some fashion to the PTA. It is important to grow those relationships and get to know your membership.

I live in a hurried and busy community where parents run from one thing to the next. I live in a place where parents support administration and staff, and teachers in turn support parents. I live in a PTA membership who is 200% committed to ALL the students at our school. Where do I live? I live in the shoes of a PTA mom who knows that hard work, commitment and student advocacy are always important.

## **Membership Focus: The President's Award**

**Matched or increased membership over previous year by October 31st.** Units may earn **the President's Award** by matching or increasing their total memberships by 10/31 over previous year's membership totals. Payment must be mailed by 10/31.



## The 2017-2018 Membership Campaign is live!

We have a goal of 50,000 members in Missouri this year and we need your help to achieve that goal. Our Missouri PTA theme this year is "Membership Is Within Your Reach!". Feel free to use this theme in your local units as well if you like. We have some great new resources for you.

Some resources you will need to login to the website to access. If you have trouble logging in, or don't have your login information, please email [website@mopta.org](mailto:website@mopta.org) and we'll reset your password to get you logged in.

- Request your [2017-2018 Membership Cards](#). Membership Cards will NOT be sent without a request through this form! Cards sent from our office will be pre-cut cards. If you want full sheets of cards, or an electronic membership card, those resources are below.
- Submit [Membership Dues online](#) (must pay with PayPal)
- [Printable Membership Dues form](#) (fillable PDF) for mailing dues
- [Electronic Membership Card Download](#) (JPEG)
- [Membership Card Template](#) (to print sheets on your own) - use Avery White Matte Clean Edge Business Cards #8871




If you have Membership questions, please reach out to our Membership Chair at [membership@mopta.org](mailto:membership@mopta.org).

We wish you all luck with your Membership Campaigns this year!



From the team:

# Missouri PTA Membership

 MissouriPTA
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**We need you!**  
 Missouri PTA Student Involvement  
[More Info & Apply Online](#)

## Membership Can Be FINE (Friendly. Invite. Neighbors. Expectations)

**Doty Hoffman** | Missouri PTA Membership Growth & Development Chair  
**FRIENDLY!** Be friendly! So many parents are already intimidated at back to school nights and open houses, a smiling face goes a long way!

**INVITE!** Make sure folks are invited to a meeting, remember that the date should be published and visible! Offer something simple at the meeting like cookies or coffee. Advertise they can be "in the know" of school events and get an update from administration.

**NEIGHBORS!** We're all on the same team and hoping to build and grow community. Most of our schools are neighborhood schools and PTA is a perfect opportunity to meet someone you didn't even know lived around the corner!

**EXPECTATIONS!** Remember, all members are volunteers, so don't expect too much from one person. The Book Fair mom shouldn't have to run the fundraiser, the carnival and restaurant nights, spread the wealth! The more you involve people, the more ownership they take and the more they are proud to serve!

## The Value of Student Memberships

For PTSAs, getting the involvement of our students is the very foundation to what the "S" stands for in PTSA. Here are our favorite ideas for getting students more involved in PTSA:

Invite students to be members of committees, sit in on meetings or volunteer to help plan or participate in an event.

Have students recruit fellow student members or teachers.

Include students in your unit budget to allow for MoPTA Convention attendance.

By including, educating and engaging our students today we will be building the leaders of tomorrow.



**Just for Kindergarten Parents**

Sending your child to school for the first time can be stressful. Back to school time is stressful for teachers too. They spend many hours making sure their rooms look inviting for their new students. Just like you, they want your child's first day to be perfect. [Verywell.com](http://Verywell.com) has hints including things kindergarten teachers wished parents knew.



*What a cute snack to make for your next meeting!*

Get the [Recipe](#).

## Encourage Your School to Participate in the Congressional App Challenge

The Congressional App Challenge (CAC) is a congressional initiative to encourage student engagement in coding and computer science through local app challenges hosted by the Members of Congress. The CAC aims to bridge the gender, geographic and racial gaps in tech.

During the next 14 weeks, thousands of students in participating Congressional districts will create and submit their own original applications, that will be evaluated by panels of local judges. To get involved or for more info, visit [CongressionalAppChallenge.us](http://CongressionalAppChallenge.us).

## Consider serving as Student Involvement Chair

Missouri PTA currently has the Student Involvement Chair position open. **We'd love for you to consider joining us in this immediate MoPTA position opening.** You get great encouragement and support, will have a leader to guide you with your responsibilities and supporting PTA leaders - parents, teachers and students - across the state.

**You might be a good fit for the Student Involvement Chair if you are resourceful, personable, innovative and responsible.**

In this position, you spend time providing information to units that wish to become PTSAs, developing ideas and coordinating resources for students to become more involved in PTA/PTSA. You work with student reps to plan student workshop activities and promote student participation in Missouri PTA.

This is a great leadership position for you - to express interest, you can [Apply Online](#) And trust me, you are probably just what we need.

## Who are PTA/PTSA's student leaders?

Students who are committed to improving their school. Does that sound like YOU? If the answer is yes, then join your PTA/PTSA.



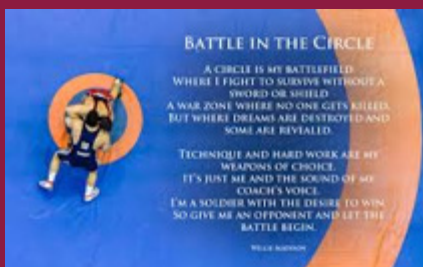
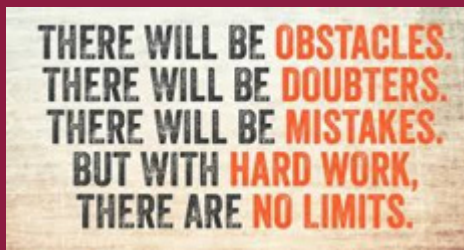
**Alex Wiese** | Missouri PTA  
Student Representative

Hello, my name is Alex Wiese and this is my first year on the BOM as Student Representative.

I am a freshman at Timberland High School in Wentzville, MO. I have one older brother (Will), one younger brother (Ben) and a little sister (Katie). At Timberland I am on the freshman football team and am practicing with and will be a member of the wrestling team.

In addition to sports I am a member of FBLA and HOSA. I am also working on my Boy Scout Eagle Award, which I hope to have completed by the end of the school year.

I joined the Board of Managers after watching all the things my mother and brother have done serving on the Board. Throughout my life I have seen the benefits of PTA. I wanted to be a part of that. My goal is to help PTSA Units understand the importance of the S, the students, in their Unit.



## Why should I join PTA/PTSA?

PTA/PTSA membership gets you a seat at the table with school decision-makers like parents, school leaders and community members

At all levels, but especially the secondary grade level – student voices must participate in the conversation as equal members with an equal vote. That's why you should add PTA/PTSA to your student leadership resume. You will gain experience in leadership, advocacy, public speaking, teamwork, event planning – all while improving your school.

In many places, PTA/PTSA student leaders earn community service hours for their contributions to the organization. Find out if that is possible through your PTA/PTSA.

## How do I join?

It's easy! Here are the steps:

1. Contact your PTA/PTSA President or Board to share why you want to help support student success and how you would engage your peers in improving your school.
2. Ask what your PTA/PTSA is planning for the year and decide with other PTA/PTSA leaders where student perspectives and leadership are important. Help to survey students and make recommendations to inform key decisions.
3. Get connected to other PTA/PTSA student leaders nationwide through our #PTSA Proud Network.
4. Share your success! We want to spotlight your efforts with our #PTSA Proud student leader movement. Email how you've engaged students to improve your school at [youth@pta.org](mailto:youth@pta.org)

## How does National PTA support PTA/PTSA student leaders?

In the months ahead, the National PTA and its Youth Involvement Committee will roll out a number of strategies to support your efforts.

When you join the #PTSA Proud Network, you will learn about:

- Recruitment tools to engage new PTA/PTSA student leaders
- Leadership events, such as PTA/PTSA Youth Summits
- Programs for PTA/PTSA student leaders, such as Connect for Respect
- Advocacy alerts on issues that affect your education – now, and in the future
- #PTSA Proud Spotlights of PTA/PTSA student leaders from across the country