



3 Reasons Why I am Thankful for Public Education

by Carla Wiese
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As we enter the season when everyone turns their minds toward what they are thankful for, this year I am especially thankful for public education. The reasons “why” fill a very long list but here are the top 3 reasons:

1. **Innovation-** Teachers across the state are doing AMAZING things in their classrooms. From corner to corner, our teachers are stimulating our children’s minds through technology, global partnerships, and taking the classroom out into the community. Students in one school come in at 5:00 am to interact with students on the other side of the globe. In another school, a special education class operates a snack cart selling snacks to staff and students. A teacher in one Title I school, takes her kindergarten class to visit a farm to see where their food comes from. These creative teachers are not the exception but the norm. It is an exciting time to be a student in Missouri.
2. **Accessibility-** No matter your background, social class, or ability the United States makes certain every child can attend school. Is it perfect? No, but we are improving year by year and step by step. In many countries around the world students attend school on the ability to pay, proximity to a school, or perceived cognitive or physical ability. Here EVERY child attends school. We understand education paves the way for success in life.
3. **Parental Involvement-** This generation of parents understands the importance of partnering with their children's school. It is within this framework of mutual respect that the lessons children learn at school are reinforced at home. We know parental involvement is a key piece to students’ success and Missouri parents get it. During this season of

thanksgiving say “thank you” to your children’s teachers, principals, counselors, bus drivers, custodians and cafeteria workers. When you hear negative information about public schools speak up about all the great things your schools are doing. If we all become cheerleaders for public education our voices will drown out those seeking to privatize it. After all we are PTA, every child.one voice®.

Reflections



THE MISSOURI PTA REFLECTIONS DEADLINE IS DECEMBER 15, 2018!

Make sure to have your local unit deadlines set with enough time to judge and submit to MOPTA! Each unit may ONLY submit THREE entries per category, for each division-Primary, Intermediate, Middle & High!



REFLECTIONS

National PTA has engaged millions of students through its Reflections Program by inspiring students to reflect on a specific theme and create original artwork.

WHAT?

Reflections welcomes students of all grades and all abilities to explore their inner artist.

Students may explore six arts disciplines: Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography & Visual Arts

Every student is recognized for their accomplishments, with the opportunity for state and national awards and recognition.

WHY?

The love of art and celebration of students can bring together people from across the community: families, teachers and friends.

New academic standards require more critical thinking and problem-solving, which translates into more creativity and deeper reflection.

REGISTER YOUR UNIT NOW AT PTA.ORG

Legislation & Advocacy

Missouri PTA's Advocacy Chair, Will Wiese attended the Youth Advocacy Summit at National PTA headquarters in Alexandria, VA in October. He had the opportunity to attend advocacy workshops, visit the sites of Washington DC, and interact with lawmakers and their staff during a Hill



Day. We are proud of Will and his passion for advocating for ALL of our children!

Will Wiese in DC

Missouri PTA announced our 2019 Legislative Platform at the October Board of Managers Meeting. Kristina Wilmoth, Vice President of Legislation and Advocacy spoke to the changes which include the addition of stated support of legislation that protects all children and youth from gun violence and promotes safer schools and communities. “It’s vital that we are clear about PTA’s position that our children deserve safe schools free from gun violence and the devastation that brings. I’m happy to be an advocate for our children’s safety!”



Kristina Wilmoth

These legislative priorities are based on the issues that the Missouri PTA Legislative Department expects to target for the 2019 legislative session. As unexpected issues emerge, Missouri PTA will act in accordance with the resolution and position statements that have been approved by the membership. A complete list of resolutions and position statements are available on our website (www.mopta.org).

Missouri PTA supports:

- * Legislation that protects and calls for local control of schools.
- * Legislation to strengthen laws designed to protect minors from abuse and increase funding for programs and services aimed at the prevention of child abuse, neglect and maltreatment.
- * Legislation that supports increased access to mental health services for children.

- * Opposition to tax credits or tax deductions for tuition paid by a parent or sponsors for non-public elementary or secondary school children.
- * Enforcement of legislation requiring school districts to have policies that promote increased parental engagement in their children's education.
- * Legislation that will maintain or generate local and state funding for public education.
- * Legislation that will safeguard the educational and personal records of students.
- * Legislation that would protect children and youth from being discriminated against based on race, religion or sexual orientation.
- * Legislation that protects all children and youth from gun violence and promotes safer schools and communities.

Personal Experiences

by **Christine Kent**

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I have been involved with PTA for 9 years now and have met a lot of diverse individuals. For me, the journey has changed and grown over the years. From wanting to be involved at my son's school sorting papers or volunteering for an event to finding a leadership position on the local unit board to council board and now the state board. Each year and each position held has been a learning experience from advocating for children to getting more involved in activities I knew nothing about. I recently learned about Special Education PTA's [SEPTA] units. You can find more information on SEPTAs at ([Start a Special Education PTA](#)). At the beginning, I even thought PTA and PTSA were two separate organizations.

The hardest part for me, was asking questions. I know I wanted to look smart, informed, and know everything there was to know about PTA, but really a lot of individuals around me didn't know either. It took me awhile to approach people and learn to ask questions, even if I thought I was the only one who didn't know, it was "okay" to ask questions. The more I learned, the more questions I had. I am so thankful to all of those PTA leaders who took time to explain more to me and show me all of the really good things PTA has done over so many decades. PTA.org and MOPTA.org provided a mountain of information for me and are still good resources.

Sometimes, it comes down to what to ask? For me, I started with some eLearning courses ([National PTA eLearning Courses](#)). These courses take 10

to 40 minutes to complete and will have you thinking about ways to utilize the knowledge to help strengthen your unit, provide insight on what your board could be doing a little better, or gaining leadership skills. And, by completing just 5 of these courses, you are one step closer to being able to apply for the Individual's Advanced Leaders Project Award ([List of Available PTA Awards](#)).

In summary, I am thankful to those who volunteer a little or a lot. I am grateful to those who become members of PTA, because they see the value and it keeps me going everyday to be involved and engaged a little more. And I am blessed to be given an opportunity to do for children everywhere and not just for my own.

Save the Date



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