

Contact



JANUARY 2022

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Why We Advocate

BY CARLA WIESE, *Missouri PTA President*

I was recently asked why advocacy is so important to us. Why should local Councils or Units care about advocacy at the state level and beyond? To be honest, the question took me by surprise. **Advocacy** is what sets us apart from other parent organizations. It makes us **PTA**. It is the PTA's collective work, for all children regardless of whether they are in our school, community, or even state that sets us apart. **Do you know you are part of the largest parent volunteer led child advocacy organization in Missouri and the US?** I think that is Amazing! Our voice is a trusted, valued voice in Washington DC and Jefferson City. We were instrumental in the creation of Kindergarten, school lunch programs, safe drinking water, Every Child Succeeds Act, and mental health reform. Now we are working to create legislation that will place a licensed social worker in every school in Missouri, addressing the opioid epidemic in our youth and advocating to increase funds for treatment, educating our families and legislators on the dangers of nicotine and THS vaping products and creating laws banning these products for youth. This is a very small sampling of all the issues PTA is working on.

This year, our advocacy work is more important than ever. The support for public education with our Missouri legislators is at an all time low all while donations from groups against public education is at an all time high. Last session, our legislators masterfully used the pandemic and the frustrations of many to pass the voucher system in Missouri. This session, our legislators are again using the pandemic to push for legislation that will seek to reform and change education in Missouri. They do not believe that our education system works. I know that is not true! Our educators are doing amazing things in classes throughout Missouri. We cannot allow our schools, teachers and students to be marginalized.

Advocacy does not have to be hard, but it does have to be intentional. We are the voice for our schools. We are the voice for our students. My challenge for you this month is to speak to your council or unit about advocacy or a common topic to rally behind for change. Encourage each of your members to join JC/DC (located on our website). Send an email or call your legislators and let them know **how public education IS working** in your community. Advocacy is the heart of PTA. If you need more information, or would like us to present the importance of advocacy to your members, let us know.

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Your Vote MATTERS

BY VIRGINIA PENNINGTON, *Advocacy Chair*

Today, most American citizens over the age of 18 have the right to vote in federal, state, and local elections. This default right was not always the case for all Americans. The United States Constitution did not initially define who could or could not vote, and because of this, the decision of who could vote was largely left up to states in the 1800s. In general, land-owning white men were allowed to vote while white women, black people, and other disadvantaged groups of the time were not allowed to vote. The year 1869 is when Black men were allowed to vote with passage of the 15th Amendment, but even then obstacles were in place to discourage them from voting. It wasn't until 1920 when women earned the right to vote with passage of the 19th Amendment. Later, the 24th Amendment was passed in 1964 eliminating the poll tax and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 ended Jim Crow laws(1). With this evolution of voting rights in mind, this privilege is something **we should not take for granted**.

Presidential and other national elections tend to have a significant voter turnout. Even some state elections have high voter turnout compared to local and school board elections, which tend to be light. A Portland State University study found that fewer than 15% of eligible voters were turning out to vote for mayors, council members, and other local offices(2). What this leads to is important local issues being decided by a small number of voters that will be effected by the election outcome. Statistically, a single vote has a more meaningful impact when turnout is low.



Here are some examples where just a few votes have made a significant impact:

- 2006 US House of Representatives, Connecticut's 2nd district (Courtney vs Simmons) – Won by 83 votes, the closest House race of 2006
- 2008 Minnesota US Senate (Franken vs Coleman) – Franken won by only 312 votes after recounts, in a hotly-contested election
- 2013 Virginia Attorney General (Herring vs Obershain) – This race was decided by 907 votes – a 0.01% margin of total votes
- 2012 New Mexico House of Representatives. District 37 – Won by 8 votes following a recount
- 2004 Washington Gubernatorial (Gregoire vs Rossi) – Won by 133 votes, following two recounts(3)

So go out and exercise this great privilege we have to vote every time an election is held, know that your one vote does matter and can have a significant impact on issues in your community and those who will lead and represent and make key decisions that will impact your community, state, and nation.

(1) - Material gathered from "Why Voting is Important" <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/why-voting-important>

(2) - "Why Voting is Important" <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/article/why-voting-important/>

(3) - "Does Your Vote Really Make a Difference?" <https://yourvotematters.org/does-your-vote-make-a-difference/>

Missouri PTA Legislative Platform 2022

PTA defines advocacy as the act of supporting and speaking on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children.

Advocacy stands alone as the most important job of the PTA.

Missouri PTA supports:

- Legislation that will maintain or generate local and state funding for public education. Missouri PTA supports increased COVID funding to be earmarked for public education addressing food, infrastructure and equal access to technology and the internet.
- Legislation that supports increased access to mental health services for children. This includes increases in funding due to the mental health crisis created by COVID and the hiring of additional therapist and counselors within the school districts.
- Legislation to address the manufacturing of and ingredients in e-cigarettes and other ENDS (Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems) as well as to prohibit the advertising, marketing and sale of e-cigarettes and other ENDS, to youth (18 years or younger) and to prohibit the use of e-cigarettes and other ENDS in public places and school grounds.
- Legislation for Juvenile Justice Reform supporting community-based alternatives, implementation of policies to reduce ethnic and socioeconomic disparities within the system, and ensuring juvenile offenders are seen by a juvenile judge and housed in appropriate facilities.
- Legislation that would protect children and youth from being discriminated against based on race, religion or sexual orientation.
- Legislation that will safeguard the educational and personal records of students with special emphasis on data privacy and security.
- 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 protects all children and youth from gun violence and promotes safer schools and communities.
- Legislation that promotes college and career-ready high school graduates.
- Legislation to protect child well-being through access to federal and state nutrition programs, nutrient-rich food, and education focused on healthy habits

These legislative priorities are based on the issues that the Missouri PTA Legislative Department expects to target for the 2022 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).



MEMBERSHIP MATTERS



HOW EFFECTIVE BRANDING & MARKETING CAN BOOST YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

A new year means a new opportunity to boost PTA membership. It is up to the unit to make sure the school community understands the value and impact of the incredible things PTA is doing. Taking credit for the events and programs the PTA is sponsoring raises PTA brand awareness and increases membership.

- Educate the school community on the [historical impact of PTA](#) and its importance in advocacy for our children. Help them to understand that their membership increases our voice, on both a state and national level.
- Be visible at school events. Ask to have a PTA table at any event and have membership forms available. At PTA-sponsored events, have a banner that reads, **"123 event powered by abc PTA Unit"**.
- Update the membership form to list the events and programs that the unit sponsors.
- Brand all fliers, both digital and paper, and official communication with the unit's PTA unit logo. National PTA has a [complete toolkit](#) that can be customized for your PTA unit.
- Use [social media to your advantage](#). Make sure any platforms used are clearly branded with the unit's PTA logo. Links or QR codes for the membership form can easily be shared on social media.

Branding for your PTA is key. Creating a logo for your unit is easier than you may expect - visit [this link](#) for some helpful tips and guidelines to get you started

**ENGAGE FOR
YOUR CHILD**

National
PTA
empowering families

A Mindful Minute

BY JESSICA BROADWAY

Programs & Resource Development

a monthly reminder to take a minute

It's January! The month that most resolutions are set and broken. Some people are not even bothering this year to set new goals because the last couple of years have been full of frustration and unexpected changes. This year I would like to suggest to you that instead of fixed goals, you embrace **growth** - both personally and within your PTA.

Growth says: *some is better than none*. Growth is a journey and it can occur with or without others. The ability to grow is within you all the time. In the field of Psychology there is a well-known process known as:

Four Stages of Competence

*Unconsciously Competent: Things you're good at without giving it any thought (natural talent)

*Consciously Competent: Things you're good at because you developed the skill

*Unconsciously Incompetent: Things you think you're better at than you are

*Consciously Incompetent: Things you know you are not good at

Understanding these levels of awareness are particularly helpful in leaning into our growth journey. This year I picked the third area to grow in: **the things I think I'm better at than I actually am**. This may appear an odd place to start. However, it's the place the most impactful growth can occur. "My area I think I am better at than I am," is familiar. I know the basics and I will gain quick wins if I approach it with humility and a learning mindset. Consider grabbing a piece of paper and mapping out your levels of competence and strength within your units.

What is your third level? Once you have it, gather a few people you trust and pick some pain points to review. This can be a good Board activity as well. Pain points are areas that when challenged might bruise your ego a little. It's OK. You are growing. Another option is to read a book devoted to the topic you are trying to improve on.

Cheers to growing this year! I'd love to hear how you choose to grow and if you need reading recommendations, email me at jessicab@mopta.org.

Scholarships

Don't let our future educators miss out on an opportunity for money to attend college!

MOPTA offers multiple \$500 renewable scholarships to high school seniors who plan to major in Education at a Missouri college/university. To apply, students must attend a school district with at least one PTA unit in good standing. One application per high school will be considered. Applicants will be selected based on character, academic record, volunteerism, and financial need. Application deadline is February 15th.

With the rising cost of higher education, any amount of extra funding can be quite helpful for students. For more information and to download the scholarship application, [please click here](#). Donations are welcomed to continue the support of our future teachers and can be made at the same link above.

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NO ENDORSEMENT IS IMPLIED.

My PTA Why

My "Why" is because ALL kids deserve an advocate

I was just at a doctor's appointment today and heard a group of staff complaining about issues in the local public school. We had a great conversation and talked in detail about the issues as well as some awesome solutions to propose. I asked them if they've ever proposed solutions at their local PTA or advocated on a bigger scale for public schools? I love it when parents and teachers work together with schools to create real solutions to build stronger communities, families, and kids! They felt their hands were tied when the truth is, **parents have a big voice** to advocate for all kids! *It's not only our privilege, I feel it's our duty.*

I have kids in elementary, middle, and high school. I advocate for them and ALL students in those grades. I have kids with special needs including 504 plans and IEPs. I advocate for them and all students with special needs.

I have kids that experienced the foster care system and have moved from school to school many times. I advocate for them and all children who have experienced instability and insecurity.

I have children that have experienced gun violence, I have children that experienced domestic abuse, I have children that I've experienced hunger and food insecurity, I have children that are gifted, I have children that love school and find security there, and I have children that don't.

I advocate for them and ALL children because they all have a voice and my job is to advocate for them! PTA gives that platform.
I am Kristina Wilmoth-a PTA advocate.



2022 VIRTUAL
STUDENT ARTS
SHOWCASE

JAN. 25 ★ 7 P.M. EST

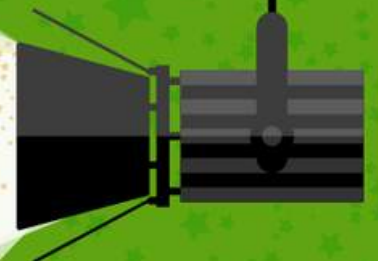
WITH
SPECIAL
GUESTS



Dr. Miguel Cardona
U.S. Secretary of Education



Anna King
National PTA President



JOIN US ON YOUTUBE | [YouTube.com/NationalPTA](https://www.youtube.com/NationalPTA)

National
PTA
everychild.onevoice.®

It's school board election season!

Remember, PTAs cannot endorse any candidate for office!

Units and Councils can host candidate forums inviting all candidates to attend

Why?



- PTA is a 501(c)(3) organization. 501(c)(3) organizations may not support or oppose any candidate for public office. This means PTAs may not endorse candidates, rate candidates, contribute to candidates, or do anything else that might be seen as promoting or diminishing to a candidate
- PTA is a non profit organization, violating the rules could cause your organization to lose your 501 status. If in doubt, contact Missouri PTA

RIDING THE WAVES
TO PTA SUCCESS

Save the Date!

2022 MOPTA CONVENTION

OCTOBER 21-23,
2022

CAMDEN ON THE LAKE
LAKE OF THE OZARKS, MO

Thank you again

to our amazing 2021 MOPTA Convention sponsor, AIM insurance and exhibitors featured on the following pages. Look for information about being a sponsor or exhibitor at the 2022 Convention in the coming months!

AIM Insurance specializes in providing insurance to PTAs. With a focus on helping PTAs for over 30 years, AIM understands the risks involved in running your organization and can help you choose the right coverage for your PTA. We have an excellent customer service team providing everyday support and guidance on best practices and clear answers to all the questions that come up around protecting your PTA.



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INSURANCE
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NATIONAL PLAYGROUND

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