

Vote NO School Take Over

What is the Opportunity School District Constitutional Amendment and why is it not good for Georgia's children?

#noGAschooltakeover

ALSO INSIDE
THIS ISSUE

MESSAGES FROM:
Georgia's PTA President &
President Elect and National
PTA's Immediate Past President

ARTICLES ABOUT:
Health & Wellness, Literacy,
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Male Involvement

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:
Leadership Development
Opportunities, Financial
Red Flags and much more!

Message from the Georgia PTA President



The school year is now in full swing for all of us! The hectic and frantic pace of adjusting to early morning bus rides and juggling afternoon extra-curricular activities is beginning to feel manageable to all of us again. Open houses and curriculum nights are upon us, and we as leaders are called on to look collected, helpful and informed. We trained and prepared all summer for this chance to shine. I always love this time of year, sporting new spirit wear, collecting membership dues, having a first general meeting, and being helpful for the wide-eyed brand new parents embarking on the journey with us. This is what we are called and trained for, and I know you are all ready for the task — but wait!! We have another big job this fall, and it will require all hands on deck.

In November, we will go to the polls to elect our next president, but Georgia has even more at stake in this election. The Opportunity School District Constitutional Amendment will be a ballot initiative you will face this fall as well. If you are really honest with yourself, most of us are not well versed on the amendments, done our homework and learned what is at stake, and quite often read the amendments for the first time while standing in the voting booth. If the amendments sound good, we vote for them. Be careful! There is tremendous danger in that method of voting this year. There is one amendment that sounds good but has dangerous consequences for Georgia's schools.

“Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to allow the State to intervene in chronically failing public schools in order to improve student performance”?

This sounds lovely when you read it, doesn't it? That is exactly what they are counting on. You see, the enabling legislation allows the Governor to appoint a School Superintendent who will take over up to 20 schools per year for up to 100 total schools. The Superintendent takes the federal, state, and local tax dollars for said school, and worse the locally elected school board for takeover schools will no longer have a say in the governance of those schools. Your State Board of Education and State Superintendent will no longer have a say either. Most sadly of all, parents will no longer have a say in these schools. The reality is the school districts will still have the responsibility to maintain the schools while someone else runs them. Today, Georgia laws allow the State Department of Education to take over failing schools, and they are showing a great deal of success with this model. So, if we can **already** take over failing schools, why would we need to amend the Constitution to do it? And why the need to appoint a separate Superintendent? There is one simple answer. Follow the money.

This takeover model has been tried and failed several times in the United States — New Orleans, Detroit, Tennessee. Many of these schools are being investigated for fraud and embezzlement and are now being returned to local control. This is exactly why we must inform voters about the perils of this legislation.

Now is the time for our PTA leaders to become informed advocates. At the very heart of what our mission is about is advocacy. There is no better time than now to make our voices heard, educate our friends and colleagues, and make sure this amendment goes down in defeat. We have the tools to help you be successful. Our OSD Toolkit (<http://www.georgiapta.org/issues-action/opportunity-school-district-legislation/>) will easily walk you through an OSD educational video. That same video has a downloadable power point for you to use to educate your members at your local unit PTA meetings. The OSD Toolkit also has links to printable materials to share as well. *Please be advised: do not use school resources to share Vote No resources.* If you have any questions, please feel free to call the state office for clarification.

You are part of a large grassroots advocacy network, and your willingness to inform others is what will defeat this unnecessary Constitutional Amendment.

I know this season of the year is very busy for all of us. Please know we appreciate your efforts and are here to serve you. We look forward to watching you all grow your membership, and serve your parents, teachers, and students to ensure every child's potential is a reality.

Lisa-Marie Haygood, Georgia PTA President, lmhaygood@georgiapta.org

Do You Want to Be a National PTA Leader?

National PTA's Nominating and Leadership Development Committee (NLDC) is seeking candidates to stand for election in June 2017 for the following national leadership positions:

- President-Elect (2017-2019 term)
- Vice President for Advocacy (2017-2019 term)
- Vice President for Membership (2017-2019 term)
- Secretary-Treasurer (2017-2019 term)
- Eight member representatives for the National PTA Board of Directors (2017-2019 term)
- Two members for the Nominating and Leadership Recruitment Committee* (2017-2020 term)

National PTA elections are held at our annual convention. The next elections will be in Las Vegas, June 22-25, 2017. NLDC Letter of Interest Applications will be accepted August 15 through October 1. You **MUST** be a PTA member at the time of submission.

PLEASE NOTE: You can also use this application to be considered for appointment to a National PTA committee.

Completed Letter of Interest Applications must be submitted online on or before 11:59 p.m. PDT (3 a.m. EDT), Saturday, October 1, 2016. Emailed and faxed documents will not be accepted. Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted. Apply via this link (<http://www.questionpro.com/a/TakeSurvey?id=4775738>).

Need more information?

For a description of leadership responsibilities, visit PTA.org/LeaderRoles. For more info about the National PTA leadership, visit PTA.org/Governance.

Questions?

Contact the NLDC at LeadershipDevelopment@PTA.org or (703) 518-1251.

Message from the Georgia PTA President Elect

Dear PTA Advocate,



I would like to personally wish each of you a successful 2016-17 term. I am so excited that you have joined PTA, the oldest and largest volunteer child advocacy association in Georgia. It's an exciting time for our membership as we engage to empower families and communities to advocate for all children.

This is an important and critical time for us to work together; our actions will make a difference for the future of our children. Georgia PTA is over 100 years old because PTA advocates strived to make every child's potential a reality. Today, Georgia PTA's mission continues to drive our efforts to make this association much greater by creating solutions to solve the most pressing and relevant challenges

impacting children. This summer National PTA delegates passed resolutions addressing issues such as "Homework: Quality Over Quantity", "Electronic Cigarettes and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) and Youth", "Recognition of LGBTQ individuals as a Protected Class", and "Water Safety and Instruction." In addition, Georgia PTA passed the "Georgia Constitutional Amendment, Opportunity School District" resolution at our annual Convention Leadership Training in June.

Georgia PTA has built a strong foundation of advocacy and remains a powerful voice for all children.

Moving forward, this November, you will make the choice to vote for candidates and issues that are most important to you. In addition to your personal beliefs, I encourage you to consider values that honor and support children and their families, and the quality of public education. Georgia PTA does not support the constitutional amendment (Amendment 1 on the ballot) to allow the state government to intervene in chronically failing schools, and we need your help to share this message with every voter in the state of Georgia because it is obvious that for-profit business interests are seeking to take over Georgia schools without a proven, result-driven plan to improve public education.

We need your help to share this message with every voter in the state of Georgia because there is no secret that businesses are seeking to take over Georgia schools without a proven, result-driven plan to improve public education.

In addition to our legislative voice for children, Georgia PTA provides many other benefits and value to our advocates. We provide legal and liability protection for PTAs, professional learning opportunities for leaders, and valuable benefits and resources for members. I urge you to take advantage of our various student programs and scholarship opportunities. Also, please save the dates to attend Georgia PTA's Advocacy Day, PTA Day at the Capitol, Student Advocacy Day, and Convention and Leadership Training (CLT), including workshops and other learning opportunities, dynamic guest speakers, valuable resources from corporate partners, and engaging networking possibilities to advance you and your PTA to the next level.

So whether you're a first timer or experienced PTA advocate, again I am truly excited to work with you as I prepare to transition into my role as your next State PTA President at CLT in 2017. I look forward to connecting, collaborating, and sharing our passion to make Georgia PTA the most relevant child advocacy association in Georgia. Together, we will achieve excellence!

Tyler L. Barr, Georgia PTA President-Elect, tbarr@georgiapta.org



Sunday, September 11 at 1:30PM
Atlanta Braves vs. New York Mets

Georgia PTA and the Atlanta Braves are teaming up once again to celebrate Family Day on Sunday, September 11, 2016 for a 1:30 p.m. ballgame against the New York Mets. Your PTA/PTSA participates by selling the General Admission tickets for \$10 each and your PTA retains \$3 per ticket. In addition, \$2 of the \$7 you're sending the Braves per ticket sold will go to the Georgia PTA Educational Scholarship Fund. Arrive early - Georgia PTA families will have the opportunity to walk the bases before the game starts. Parade lineup begins at 12:00 p.m. at the Hank Aaron Ramp-across from aisle 129. Game starts at 1:30pm. Bring your school banners, wear your school colors to proudly represent your school in the parade.

Ticket order forms are available on the Georgia PTA website. Orders must be received by August 31.

ShopPTA.com

Apparel, awards, gifts, supplies and more!

Order PTA products online and have them delivered right to you! Fast, easy and convenient way to get your PTA promotional items.

Get National PTA's New Back-to-School Kit Online!

www.ptakit.org

Includes valuable resources for PTA President, Finance, Membership, Programs, Fundraising, Advocacy and Communications.

Let's get social!

Georgia PTA wants to connect with you!

Georgia PTA

everychild.onevoice.®

Follow Georgia PTA on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter!



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President Elect, Tyler Barr
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3rd District Director, Vacant
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6th District Director, Sandra Narcisse-Jones
7th District Director, Shanda Ross
8th District Director, Sheila McCants
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10th District Director, Lisa Martin
11th District Director, Jesse "Jay" Cunningham
12th District Director, Dee Dee Jackson
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Student Advisor, Daniel White
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Make Your Voice Heard on November 8 – Vote No on Amendment 1

On November 8, 2016, most people will head to the polls to vote for their Presidential candidate as well as other candidates that are up for election. We ask that after selecting your favored candidates, please continue to read your ballots. There is a very important Constitutional amendment that will negatively disrupt the education system for our children. It is basically a state takeover of our schools. Locally, your vote, your voice will be taken away for you and given to the Governor and his appointed Superintendent. You will not be able to elect the Board for the schools in the Opportunity School District. The Superintendent and his Board will only be accountable to the Governor. Where is *your* voice?

While this state takeover plan is currently being called the "Opportunity School District," you will not see that name anywhere on the ballot. Both the preamble and the wording of the ballot initiative are flowery and misleading. The public must know the real implications of what they will be voting for on Amendment 1. Additionally, we must be aware that if this amendment passes, we could be opening the flood gates to future changes in our State Constitution. Is this something we want to happen?

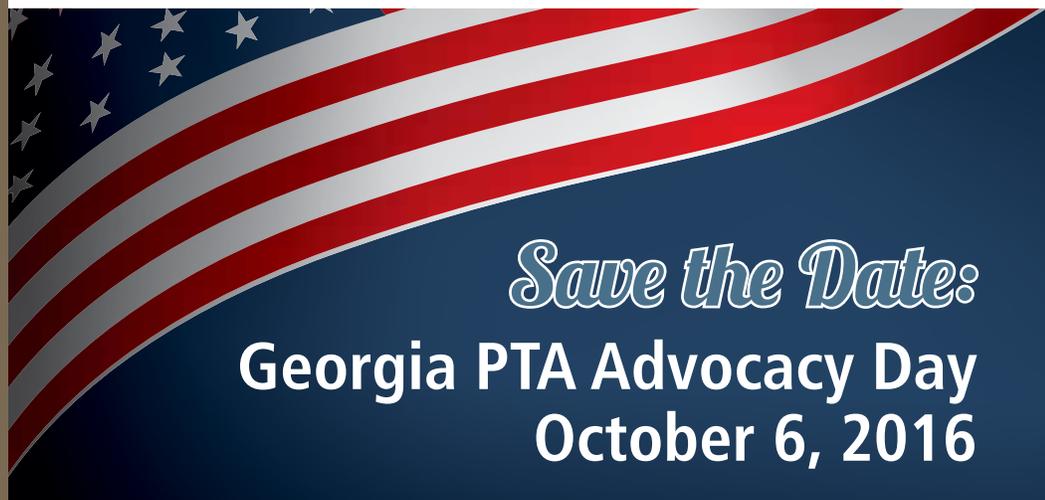
Georgia PTA strongly opposes this amendment as it goes against what we support and advocate for. We support efforts to increase state spending in education and use of public funds for public schools only, and we support constitutional authority of local school boards of education to control or manage schools in their system.

Our mission is to engage parents in the education of their children. We are asking you to be engaged NOW. The only way to beat this Constitutional amendment is through a grassroots effort. We need you to spread the word! How do you do this? Talk to your neighbors, friends and colleagues, share information via social media, write letters to the editor of your local papers – everyone in your community needs to understand what they are voting on in November. This will not only affect children and schools, it will affect the housing market and local businesses in the areas where the schools have been taken over. No one is safe from the downfall if this passes.



Georgia PTA strongly encourages you
to VOTE NO on Amendment 1!

Tynettia Elrod,
Georgia PTA Legislative Chair,
telrod@georgiapta.org



Oppose A State Take-Over of Public Schools

This November, voters will vote on an amendment to the Georgia Constitution, which if passed, would create a special state-run school district known as the “Opportunity School District” (OSD). This change to our state constitution would grant the Governor and his OSD Superintendent the power to seize control of Georgia schools and supplant their elected local school boards. This OSD Superintendent would be appointed by the Governor and have the power within these OSD schools to control the curriculum; to hire, transfer, or fire the principals; and even to close the school. Each of these actions could be taken without any input from educators, school board members, State Department of Education officials, or parents.

Having Washington dictate a top-down approach for Georgia’s local schools doesn’t work, and it won’t work coming from Atlanta, either. Every school within every district has its own unique student and parent populations with individual needs and issues. Communities will understand these needs better than an Atlanta bureaucrat. State take-overs of schools have been tried in Louisiana and Tennessee. These states, often cited as models for Georgia’s OSD legislation, have decided this approach does not work and have recently ended their programs.

The state already has the power to assist students in struggling schools if necessary (Georgia Code O.C.G.A. 20-14-41), and the Charter School Commission may approve charter schools that cannot get approval from local districts. The OSD amendment does nothing to address the root causes of struggling schools: poverty, lack of parental involvement, and low student engagement, none of which will be fixed by the state seizing control of these schools. The only programs that have helped turn these struggling schools around involve engaging all stakeholders in programs designed by those same stakeholders. This requires time, energy, and funding – none of which are addressed in a state take-over.

..... **This amendment would give the governor and his appointed OSD Superintendent the means to use opaque measures to declare a school “failing,” the power to close that school, and the legal authority to transfer the entire facility and materials to a for-profit charter management corporation.**

When the state takes over a school, the state takes control of all funding for that school and can use it however the OSD Superintendent sees fit. The local school board would have no control of the facility, the funding, or anything else regarding the school. Any school deemed failing for three consecutive years may be closed and may have their building shuttered for three years: no classes, no school—the facility is closed. However, the state can then give control of that taxpayer-funded building to a for-profit charter management company free of charge, handing property purchased with taxpayer dollars over to private, for-profit companies. Some of these private charter companies are not even based in Georgia. How then will they know what is best for Georgia’s students?



The charter school doesn’t just gain free access to the building; everything within the school building “including, but not limited to textbooks, technology, media resources, instructional equipment, and all other resources” shall “remain within the facility and be available for use by the opportunity school” (Senate Bill 133, pg 15, lines 239-242). This clause legally allows the OSD Superintendent to declare a school failing and then to hand over the entire building and facility to a charter school and for-profit management company, transferring real estate, equipment, and materials purchased with public funds over to private companies.

No governor of Georgia should have the power to be judge, jury, and executioner of public schools. This amendment would give the governor and his appointed OSD Superintendent the means to use opaque measures to declare a school “failing,” the power to close that school, and the legal authority to transfer the entire facility and materials to a for-profit charter management corporation.

Governor Deal, who failed to put current educators or parents of public school children on his Education Reform Commission, should be seeking input from all stakeholders, educators, parents, and community leaders to find solutions to helping schools with struggling students succeed. Instead, he is asking the voters of Georgia to approve a constitutional amendment to grant him extraordinary powers to take over our local schools.

Educators and parents have had enough of these attacks on our public education system, and we must educate ourselves and our communities about this amendment that would take control of our local schools and hand them and the facilities citizens have paid for over to for-profit corporations. When we educate our children, we are investing in the future, not some private charter management company’s profit margin.

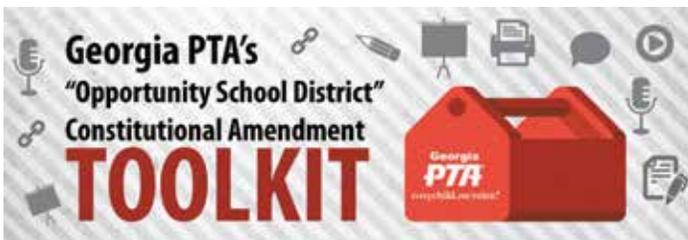


John Palmer, Georgia PTA Teacher Liaison, jpalmer@georgiapta.org

What You Can Do to Defeat the Opportunity School District Constitutional Amendment

The Opportunity School District ballot initiative will appear on the 2016 November ballot. We all must do our part to bring awareness of the dangerous consequences that face our schools if this Constitutional amendment passes. Below are several examples of what you CAN do to help advocate against this amendment.

- ✔ Host informative meetings with your local PTA/PTSA to educate parents and teachers about Opportunity School District.
- ✔ Don't stop at PTA meetings – host informative meetings with your Homeowners Associations, Booster Clubs, and in your community.
- ✔ Use your social networks to spread the word. Share Georgia PTA's and your own messaging about OSD on your Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts.
- ✔ Use visual reminders! Yard signs, car magnets, buttons on your clothing – these items spark conversation with those who may not be aware of the dangers of OSD.
- ✔ Write op-eds and post articles in your local neighborhood magazines and newsletters.
- ✔ Write and post articles in your PTA newsletters. Share information from Georgia PTA on OSD in your PTA newsletters as well.
- ✔ Make sure all Georgia residents 18 and up are registered to vote. Hold a voter registration drive at your school reminding students that they can register once they are 17 ½ years old.
- ✔ November 8, 2016 – Go vote and take someone with you to the polls!



Please visit Georgia PTA's website and take advantage of the following information:

ABC's of OSD Educational Piece (English and Spanish)

Help others gain an understanding of what the Opportunity School District Constitutional Amendment would mean for Georgia. Learn about the ballot language and how the OSD and its superintendent would govern. Share and distribute to your parents, teachers and community at large!

What Your School Can Do to Defeat OSD (English and Spanish)

It's going to take a grassroots effort to defeat OSD, this flyer offers ideas of how to educate and advocate against OSD beyond a typical PTA meeting.

Georgia PTA's Opportunity School District PowerPoint Presentation and script

PTA leaders, have the confidence to lead your own training session on OSD! Lead a training session for your parents and teachers on OSD with this PowerPoint presentation and full script already prepared for you.

Want to learn more? Do you have questions about the proposed Constitutional Amendment?

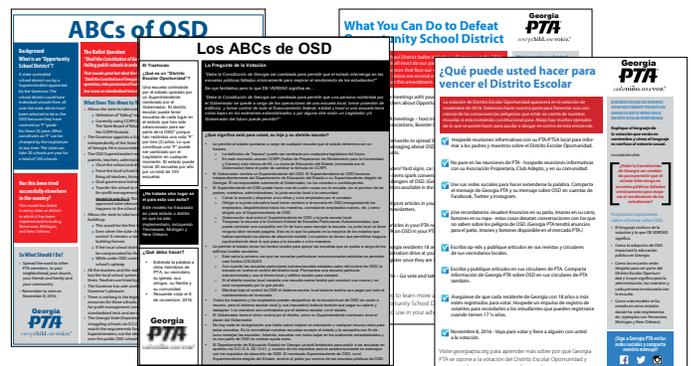
Attend one of three PTA Universities on the topic: Understanding the Opportunity School District Constitutional Amendment

September 14, 2016 from 10:00am – 11:30am

September 17, 2016 from 10:00am – 11:30am

October 19, 2016 from 10:00am – 11:30am

These PTA Universities are held at the Georgia PTA state office at 114 Baker Street NE, Atlanta, GA 30308.



Local Control Rules

Opportunity School District Ruler Campaign

Georgia PTA supports constitutional authority of local school boards of education to control or manage schools in their system and use of public funds for public schools. The Opportunity School District Constitutional Amendment will take away local control and put it in the hands of the Government. We are asking you to get engaged now and engage your communities to help with this grassroots effort.

Georgia PTA is kicking off our **Local Control Rules Campaign** and we need your help. The goal of this campaign is to raise awareness of the effort to defeat the Opportunity School District Constitutional Amendment and to further our grassroots efforts. We also want the Governor to know that we are not in favor of his initiative and we will not be silent. We will advocate for the educational well being of our students. With your help, we will flood the Governor's office with our campaign rulers. We want to saturate social media with photos and captions of people creating and submitting the campaign rulers which will bring more attention to our cause.

We will keep track of the amount of rulers submitted.

Let's see how many miles our efforts can reach!

Attend Georgia PTA's Advocacy Day on October 6, 2016 at the Capitol where we will walk our Local Control Rules campaign rulers into the Governor's office!



HOW THE CAMPAIGN WORKS

LOCAL UNITS

Local units, please encourage your members and community to purchase rulers and write the **Georgia PTA Local Control Rules** slogan on them. Additionally, they may affix a message of their own to the ruler. Please keep a count on the amount of rulers submitted and deliver to your Councils or directly to the state office before October 5.

COUNCILS

Councils, please work with local units to encourage participation and to aid in the delivery of the rulers. Remember we are keeping track of the amount of rulers submitted. You may have your local units deliver to you so that you can deliver them to your District at your Fall Conferences. Alternatively, the rulers may be dropped off at the state office or mailed to the state office by October 5.

DISTRICTS

Districts, if you will be having your Fall Conference prior to October 5, please have your Councils deliver their collected rulers to you during the Conference and then bring them to Advocacy Day with you.

Opportunity School District (OSD)

The Privatizing of Georgia's Public Schools – November 8, 2016

Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to allow the state to intervene in chronically failing public schools in order to improve student performance?

() Yes (✓) No

This is the language that you will see on your ballot when you vote during the November general election or advance voting. The language in this ballot initiative is intentionally very deceptive and misleading. VOTE NO. You have the power to ensure that all of our state's children and school systems are not defrauded of resources based upon a legal fleecing that has not worked in New Orleans, Michigan, Ohio, and other states around our country. The waste, fraud, abuse, and future litigation that the Opportunity School District (OSD) will create will make it easier to continue to siphon our taxpayers' dollars out of Georgia's public school system. If this ballot initiative passes, you will be agreeing to be taxed without representation, giving up local control to the state of Georgia if your school fails to meet subjective standards set by the state, and giving unlimited power to the state to take over school properties in your local school districts.

Please consider the facts below:

The unspoken purpose and intent of the Opportunity School District is to privatize our state's public school systems.

The Georgia Constitution in Article VIII (Education Code) Paragraph I. reads: Public education; free public education prior to college or postsecondary level; support by taxation. The provision of an adequate public education for the citizens shall be a primary obligation of the State of Georgia. Public education for the citizens prior to the college or postsecondary level shall be free and shall be provided for by taxation.

The Georgia Assembly from January 2003 to present has underfunded public schools every year by cutting a cumulative \$8.8 billion dollars from its Quality Basic Education formula. (Source: 2016 Georgia Budget and Policy Institute Primer).

Georgia's rankings for well-being is 43rd in the nation and 49th and 51st on 4th and 8th grade reading and math scores. (Source: Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count and the National Assessment of Educational Progress Report).

The Opportunity School District will have a disproportionate and disenfranchising impact on school districts with minority student populations and voters -Albany, Atlanta, Augusta, Columbus, DeKalb, Fulton, etc. (U.S. Census Report and Opportunity School District- Eligible Schools List)

Leading up to the election in November, voters will be targeted and bombarded with millions of dollars of pro Opportunity School District commercials featuring children of color, elected officials, and ministers from the African-American community. These knowing and unknowing participants are working for financial gain and demonstrate a lack of understanding of the impact on children and communities most impacted.

The New Orleans Recovery School District Model that is being marketed to Georgians is ranked in the bottom 20% of Louisiana's state education system. This model is being turned back over to local control this school year due to failure of the state to turn the schools around after a decade of experimentation. A similar model in Detroit, Michigan ended last school year. The state of Michigan is turning those schools back to the Detroit Public School System in a worse condition than when the state took them over.

With the above facts, I would like to believe that our elected officials are seeking the best for our state's 1.7 million students in our public school system. Education should be nonpartisan and instead of each party walking in lockstep to their party ideology, they should walk in lockstep with what is best for our children in the state.

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OSD Amendment #1 on November Ballot

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I was born, raised, and educated primarily in Elberton, Georgia and spent a few of my childhood years living in Augusta and Savannah. I attended and graduated from Morehouse College in Atlanta. I was stationed at Hunter Army Airfield and Fort Stewart as a young Army Captain and now work every day in supporting our nation's military on Fort Stewart. Georgia has some great schools, teachers, students, and stakeholders that support its children and its school systems. So, I am very familiar with our state and want the very best for its children and our future. The ultimate responsibility for a child's education resides with his or her parents or caregivers followed by teachers, administrators and the community. There is a supporting cast of stakeholders- encouraging grandparents, school custodians, bus drivers, and the list that goes on- that also makes a difference.

After 21 years of military service, living in six different states and two foreign countries, I relocated to my home in Georgia with the purpose of making a positive difference in our state, especially with our state's education system. In 2010-2011, I worked as Georgia Parent Teacher Association's (PTA) Legislative Chair at the state Capitol which was a rewarding, but eye-opening experience on the state of affairs with our elected officials inside Georgia's General Assembly regarding our children's education and wellbeing. I was concurrently serving on the National PTA's Legislative Committee and had served as a National Board Director from 2007-2009, advocating for all children. These positions provided great insight and experience on best practices from around the nation and the world.

As the Legislative Chair for the oldest child advocacy group in Georgia, I served amongst state representatives and senators. I worked with the State Superintendent, local superintendents, their staffs, and other stakeholders that advocated for education and children in Georgia. During this time, I saw the legislative movement of Senate Bill 84, providing the Governor the legal authority to remove elected school board members. I saw the beginnings of House Bill 1162 that eventually went through after the Georgia Supreme Court had declared that the previous laws pertaining to Georgia Charter School operations were unconstitutional. After serving in our nation's Capitol in a nonpartisan military role with both President Bush and President Obama's administrations along with the National PTA, I immediately noticed the entrenchment and influence of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC) within Georgia's Assembly. This is a key fact, because this ballot initiative to establish an Opportunity School District is not new and is similar to legislation passed in several other states – Florida, Kansas, Louisiana, Michigan, and Oklahoma- with unsuccessful results for school children. Georgia has been one of the model ALEC controlled states. ALEC's intent with this legislation is for the privatization of our public schools under the guise of choice.

I encourage Georgia citizens who care about the future of our state to research the status of public education in these other states and the similar type legislation that passed or is moving along in their assemblies. I regularly attended the published Georgia House and Senate Education meetings with our elected officials who are

active members on national ALEC committees and writing and moving their legislation forward. At the national level, I witnessed ALEC's well-oiled organization in funding, marketing, and pushing legislation through state assemblies. This organization's commitment is to profit, not to the children of Georgia. The message that we hear from the majority party in Georgia is state rights and local control. This OSD ballot measure and legislation is equivalent to the federal government taking over the state education system and appointing a Superintendent of Education and opening up contracts from around the world to come in set up schools to educate our children. This OSD ballot measure violates every principle that they stand for except where there is a profit. The bottom line intent of the proposed Opportunity School District is the systematic privatization of our school districts, taxing Georgians without representation, and the disenfranchisement of local communities.

There have been solutions offered for failing schools, but it does not meet the state's and profiteer's intent. The Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education provides best practices from great schools around the state. The National PTA has its School of Excellence program which has been very successful in some states. The Governor's Office of Student Achievement can be used to serve as a resource to struggling schools rather than a shadow organization that would be officially integrated with the passage of the OSD. So, why, with all of the talent and resources that we have, do we have to go outside our state to private companies to run our public schools? Again the larger picture and impact is privatization and profit – not the betterment of communities and schools. The voters will continue to lose control of their school districts, their tax dollars, and their voice. If this OSD measure passes, once a school enters, there is no guarantee that the school will ever come out. And in the year 2027, after a decade of its implementation and hundreds of millions of dollars sunk into the OSD experiment with the same results as New Orleans Recovery School District, the OSD leaders and supporters of Georgia will say, "We tried", while millions of Georgian children suffered and hundreds of millions of our tax dollars were wasted. Vote No.

Otha Thornton, National PTA Immediate Past President



Otha Thornton is a native of Georgia. He is a retired Lieutenant Colonel that served 21 years in U.S. Army and is a decorated combat veteran from Operation Iraqi Freedom. He has lived in six states and two countries. He was appointed by Governor Robert Erlich (R) to serve on the Education Task Force while stationed in Maryland. He also served on other Middle and High School Education Task

Forces around the country. He serves on the Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education Advisory Group, Immediate Past National PTA President and served on the Georgia PTA Board from 2010-2015. This opinion piece is the opinion of Mr. Thornton and is not official position of any organizations mentioned.

Every Student Succeeds Act – Input Needed

Depending on if your child has been in school one day or about to graduate, contributing to providing a high quality education for your child(ren) is probably one of the many reasons why you joined the PTA. PTA advocates for all children to have access to high quality schools through advocacy at the local, state and federal level. National PTA has a team of professionals that monitor and lobby for beneficial federal educational legislation and then report to our state PTA and advise on how our membership can contribute to the process. Recently, National PTA hosted a webinar which discussed the implementation of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act – the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) (this replaces No Child Left Behind). As a parent that saw the missteps of No Child Left Behind, I know if we as PTA leaders don't stay involved, ESSA can be derailed and fail children. ESSA allows states much more flexibility in implementation than NCLB did; in the coming year, Georgia will be discussing and implementing policies to transition from NCLB to ESSA. I urge you to understand what ESSA will change, how it can truly benefit students, and how you can become involved in the process. We as both parents and PTA members can offer ideas and solutions that are different from educators, business leaders and government officials. We know our children, their friends both inside and outside the classroom and their success is personal. Make a difference! A great place to start is with the National PTA webinar found here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wj-wE-XlfOQ&feature=youtu.be>

Next, review the timetable that Georgia's DOE has scheduled for implementation found here:

<http://www.gadoe.org/ESSA>

Finally, ask questions of both the state school board and your school system school board. The new law references increased family engagement, ending high-stakes testing, and requires for students to receive a well-rounded education. These all sound wonderful, but if you have lived in more than one state you know each state's implementation can be very different. By staying involved and asking informed questions and offering thoughtful suggestions to key decisions makers, you will make an impact for students in your school, system, and across Georgia.

*Lisa Martin, Georgia PTA District 10 Director,
lmartin@georgiapta.org*

Be a Part of the Solution

The Georgia Department of Education and State School Superintendent Richard Woods are urging anyone interested in the future of Georgia's public education system to attend one of eight public feedback sessions on the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

ESSA is the replacement for the law commonly known as No Child Left Behind, and offers an enormous opportunity for Georgia's students, teachers, parents and communities because it replaces the top-down federal approach required by NCLB. The new law allows states and local schools/districts to make education decisions that are best for their students, and requires states to develop plans that address standards/assessments, school and district accountability, and special help for struggling schools and students.

"For all those invested in the future of Georgia's education system - and those interested in a more holistic approach for students - whether you're a parent, a student, an educator, or a community member, I strongly encourage you to offer your feedback as we develop our ESSA state plan," Superintendent Woods said. "If you can, please attend a meeting - you'll invest two hours of your time in exchange for many years of education policy. If you're not able to attend in person, there will be opportunities to offer your feedback online and via email. Again, I urge you to join us as we shape the future of education in our state."

Meeting Details

Each ESSA feedback session will include a welcome from Superintendent Woods and an introduction to the Every Student Succeeds Act. Participants will then choose specific topics to discuss in working groups. The public will also be informed of next steps and additional opportunities to provide feedback. Before attending the meeting, we encourage you to review this one-page overview of ESSA topics. For those unable to attend an in-person meeting, a survey opportunity will soon be announced and posted at gadoe.org/ESSA. Feedback can also be emailed to essa@doe.k12.ga.us.

August 24: Columbia County, Columbia County Board of Education, 4781 Hereford Farm Road, Evans, GA 30809

August 29: Habersham County, Piedmont College (Student Commons Building), 375 Georgia Street, Demorest, GA 30535

September 1: Dougherty County, Dougherty Comprehensive High School, 1800 Pearce Ave, Albany, GA 31705

September 14: Fulton County, North Learning Center, 450 Northridge Parkway, Atlanta, GA 30350

September 19: Muscogee County, Northside High School, 2002 American Way, Columbus, GA 31909

October 12: Laurens County, Old West Laurens (OWL) Training Center, 338 West Laurens School Road, Dublin, GA 31021

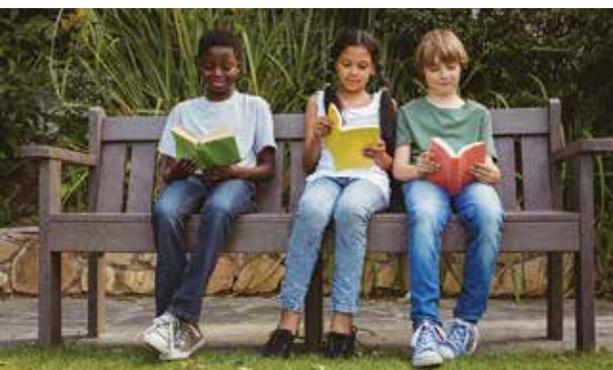
October 13: Chatham County, Pulaski Elementary School, 1001 Tibet Avenue, Savannah, GA 31419

October 17: Gordon County, Gordon County College & Career Academy, 305 Beamer Road, Calhoun, GA 30701

Learn more about the Every Student Succeeds Act and the development of Georgia's state plan at gadoe.org/ESSA.

Reading Resources Available for Families and Teachers

Hello PTA family – My name is Caroline Harris, and I have some information to share with you. As Georgia PTA's Early Childhood Literacy Chair, I recognize the vital role that reading plays in setting young children up for success in the classroom and beyond. I am always seeking opportunities for our membership to secure free books. I have been in the teaching profession myself for many years. Along with my fellow colleagues that serve on the Georgia PTA State



Board of Directors, we are proud of the fact that the letter 'T' in "PTA" stands for the word, "Teacher." We continue to encourage more and more teachers to join the local PTAs in their respective schools. Our state PTA is focused on actively supporting teachers throughout our state. With that said, I have identified some opportunities for **FREE BOOKS** for teachers. I was particularly excited about the

Reading Resource Project because it offers free books for Pre-K - 2nd grade.

Yes, teachers are a hard-working and selfless group of individuals, often spending their own money on supplies for their classroom. Fortunately, there is a way for them to stretch their budget by getting free books for their students. I am pleased to be able to share this list with Georgia's community of teachers! It is my hope that some of these offers will benefit the Pre-K through 12th grade students that we serve each and every day. The list is as follows:

Reading Resource Project - An initiative from the Literacy Empowerment Foundation, the Reading Resource Project offers free softcover books for Pre-K through second grade. The only out-of-pocket cost is shipping.

Barnes & Noble – This bookseller's Summer Reading Triathlon program rewards kids from grades one to six with a free book after they read and write about one of their existing favorite books. This program is ongoing through September 6.

Library of Congress:

Through its surplus program, the Library of Congress makes a range of books available for free to teachers. One caveat: You must pick the books up in person either yourself or through an authorized representative. If your school is already planning a trip to Washington, D.C., put this stop on your itinerary!

Kids Need to Read: Program requirements for Kids Need to Read include a requirement that you must serve a school population with at least 50% of children living at or below the national poverty level. There is a rigorous applicant process but no guarantee of acceptance.

National Book Bank: If you teach at a Title I school where at least 70% of the students come from low income families, you're eligible for free books from **First-Book.org**. Publishers donate large quantities of free books on a monthly basis. The only out-of-pocket cost is shipping.



Caroline Harris, Georgia PTA Early Childhood Literacy Chair, charris@georgiapta.org



Breakfast in the Classroom

The Georgia PTA has been very involved in promoting Breakfast in the Classroom (BIC). As a state partner in the Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom, we believe that this type of program can impact schools in many positive ways, including increases in academic achievement, improving absenteeism rates and decreasing discipline issues.

The Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom grant program has enabled more than 6,000 additional students in Georgia to have breakfast every day.

Counties that benefited from the grant include Bibb, Butts, Crisp, and Houston.

In Crisp County, the Food and Nutrition Services team has always strived to increase the number of students that eat breakfast. When Principal Brandon Williams from Crisp County Middle School approached the school nutrition team about bringing BIC to his school, they teamed up right away. Based on the layout of the school they determined that the best model for breakfast would be a Grab N Go. The school purchased three breakfast carts with grant money so students could grab breakfast in the hallway on their way to class. Breakfast participation has increased more than 25% in less than one year. Some students grab the meal for their afternoon snack before they start their sports, clubs, or homework.

School Nutrition Director Lisa Leggett indicated that some teachers were skeptical when they heard about the program, but with strong support from the principal, the program has been a big success. In an interview that Principal Williams recently conducted, he indicated that BIC has helped to decrease discipline issues in his school. He has become a big champion for BIC. According to Leggett, "Breakfast in the classroom gets kids ready to learn earlier in the day and more settled in to be ready to go. The grant money (from the Partners for Breakfast in the Classroom) was instrumental."

JoAnne Hammermaster, Georgia PTA Health & Wellness Chair, jhammermaster@georgiapta.org



National PTA Webinar: Supporting Hispanic Students' Success

Join us for the following webinar:

September 15, 2016

In Spanish: 1 p.m. EST

In English: 7 p.m. EST

Twenty-five percent of students today are Hispanic, and Hispanic children and youth are the fastest-growing population in America. We know that Hispanic and Latino parents want the best for their children and want to be engaged, but there are cultural and language barriers that make it challenging.

As Hispanic families head back to school, it is important they are equipped with tools and resources to help their children start strong and stay on track to success.

In this webinar, you will:

Gain knowledge of the impact of family engagement on student success and ways to support Hispanic and Latino children's learning and development in school, at home and in the community.

Learn how to advocate for a quality and equitable education to ensure that every child has the opportunity to reach his/her full potential.

Moderator:

Geronimo M. Rodriguez Jr., 2015-2017
National PTA board member

Speakers:

Margaret R. (Peggy) McLeod, Ed.D, deputy vice president, education and workforce development, National Council of La Raza and White House appointee as a member on the board of directors of the National Board for Education Sciences

Jo-Ann Rullan, director, community empowerment initiatives, Univision Communications Inc.

Adriana Flores-Ragade, partnership director, social impact, Univision Communications Inc.

To register for Spanish webinar:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/6376775290688949506>

To register for English webinar:

<https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/2619031575043575554>

Resourceful Tools for Hispanic/Latino Parents

There is nothing more important than family for Hispanic/Latino parents. However, becoming involved in their children's schools for these parents has not come easy and has been somewhat challenging in many instances. We are convinced beyond a shadow of a doubt that Georgia PTA's Statewide Community PTA will continuously help parents break through some of the monumental barriers that they had previously been faced with in their efforts to become involved in the educational success of their children.

Georgia's Hispanic/Latino PTA has the National PTA to thank for helping us to help more parents become motivators for their children to be successful in school. National PTA is helping us achieve our goal of significantly increasing the number of Hispanic/Latino parents that benefit from PTA resources. We want to bring your attention to some resources that National has provided that will prove to be extremely beneficial for the Hispanic/Latino families in Georgia.

One of the tools that they have shared with us is the "Three For Me" program which was designed as a simple way that parents can demonstrate support for the education of their children both at home and at school. The program is offered in Spanish and the three hours per school year that is required for the program can be completed in the home and in the community.

Three for Me Promesa	
Yo prometo ser voluntario Tres Horas de mi tiempo para mi niño durante el _____ año escolar en _____	
Nombre del padre: _____	_____
Teléfono: _____	_____
Nombre del niño: _____	_____
Grado: _____	Maestro: _____

In this new school year, we are escalating our efforts to increase familiarity with this program in the Hispanic/Latino community. Be on the lookout for more information on this exciting program.

The National PTA is also pleased to announce that www.pta.org is now available in Spanish, through Google Translate. To translate the website, select "Spanish" in the dropdown bar at the top right of the screen anywhere on the website. The following are among information and documents now offered in Spanish:

- 1) Safety Toolkit;
- 2) Three for Me;
- 3) Parents Guide to Success
- 4) Every Child in Focus: The Hispanic Child
- 5) Family Reading Experience:
 - a) Event Activities;
 - b) On a Safari;
 - c) Under the Sea;
 - d) Out of This World; and
 - e) Around the World

I hope that you will find the information and new opportunities contained in this article to be very helpful. I know that you are as excited about all of this as we are. We just cannot express how happy we are to serve the needs of Georgia's Hispanic/Latino community as we continue working together towards helping all children fulfill their potential.

Mercedes Cerrato, Georgia Hispanic/Latino Statewide Community PTA President,
mercedescerrato@aol.com

Diversity in PTA – One of Our Strengths

Greetings to PTA leaders, teachers, school system administrators and all others that have a vested interest in the well-being of a very *diverse* body of children in our great state of Georgia. My name is Tammie Jenkins, and I serve on the Georgia PTA Board of Directors as the Diversity and Inclusion Chair for our state. I felt that this introduction was essential because many of our local unit PTAs/PTSAs and Councils have elected new 2016-17 officers and committee chairs. Most of the schools in our state have re-opened their doors to begin the new year. I wanted all of our PTA leaders to know that Georgia has a Diversity Chair that is tasked with the job of providing leadership, support, and encouragement for local, council and district diversity and inclusion initiatives. I think that you will all find that having a point of contact to provide guidance and assistance for programs throughout the state is beneficial and results in cohesion and consistency of diversity initiatives.

We could not help but be deeply saddened and perhaps even somewhat confused by the series of events that have taken place over the summer right here in our own country. The need to recognize the importance of diversity and inclusion is something that we *all* must carefully consider now more than ever. Diversity transcends age, language and culture, race, marital status, gender and socioeconomic status. We must each take a close look at ourselves (“I,” not “they”) because at the end of the day, it is going to take *all* of us continuously working together towards the ultimate goal of truly embracing *diversity* and *inclusion*. Diversity and Inclusion is in fact one of the seven Strategic Initiatives for the Georgia PTA Strategic Plan. It happens to be one of those Initiatives that must take a front row seat in the business of advocating for every child.

During the month of June, I had the privilege of attending the National PTA Convention in Orlando, Florida. Some of you were there and witnessed the presentation and adoption of four resolutions by PTA members from across the country. One of the resolutions passed by the delegates was: **“Recognition of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Queer/ Questioning (‘LGBTQ’) Individuals as a Protected Class.”** Please read the entire Resolution which can be accessed by going to the NPTA website (www.pta.org) home page. Then, scroll down to bottom of page to **“Advocacy”** section. In that column, click on **Resolutions and Position Statements**. After that page is up, scroll down to the subsection entitled, **“School Safety,”** and you will find this entire Resolution by clicking on it. In recognition of **National PTA’s Every Child in Focus** campaign, the month of October has been designated as **LGBTQ History Month**.

For those of you that were in attendance at Georgia PTA’s state convention in Athens in June, you more than likely visited the **Georgia PTA Hispanic/Latino Statewide Community PTA** table located right next to the escalators. Also, Jose Cerrato, Georgia PTA’s Hispanic/

Latino Outreach Chair and Mercedes Cerrato, President of the Hispanic/Latino Statewide Community PTA were formally introduced. This Community PTA was also formally recognized and presented with the **Jan Harp Domene Diversity and Inclusion Award** at the Awards Banquet and again at the Diversity and Inclusion Breakfast at the National PTA Convention. Diversity and Inclusion initiatives are up and running within Georgia PTA. Please be on the lookout in the coming weeks for a separate article which will also include photographs of the event.

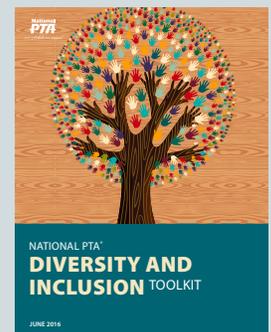
In recognition of the nationwide **Every Child in Focus** campaign, the month of September has been designated as **National Hispanic Heritage Month**.

National PTA has an online **Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit** (www.pta.org/diversitytoolkit) that provides year-long resources and is downloadable. Additionally, you will find information on the following topics:

- a) Diversify Your PTA
- b) Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives: Frequently Asked Questions
- c) Overview: How to Engage Underrepresented Groups
- d) Key Strategies for Specific Groups

I wish you a very successful year as you continue incorporating one of Georgia PTA’s Strategic Initiatives, Diversity and Inclusion, in all of your child advocacy efforts and initiatives.

Tammie Jenkins, Georgia PTA Diversity and Inclusion Chair,
tjenkins@georgiapta.org

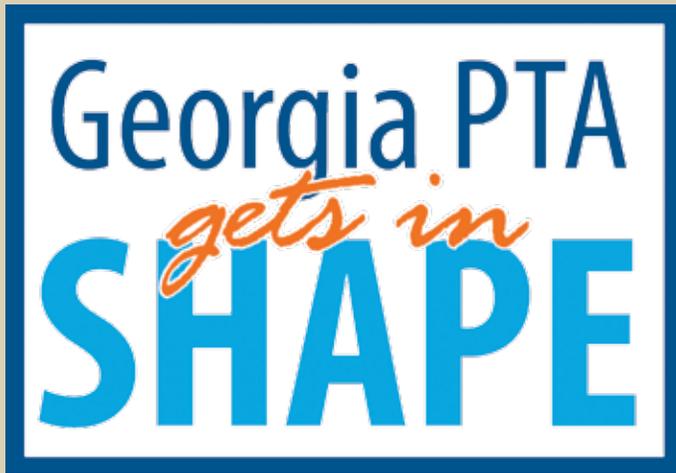


GEORGIA DISTRICTS!

HAVE YOUR **JUNIORS** LINK THEIR COLLEGE BOARD AND KHAN ACADEMY ACCOUNTS TO BEGIN PERSONALIZED PRACTICE FOR THE OCTOBER ADMINISTRATION OF THE PSAT/NMSQT!


+


DISTRICTS WHO HAVE THE HIGHEST PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS LINKED AND PRACTICING BY **OCTOBER 1, 2016** WILL RECEIVE RECOGNITION FROM THE COLLEGE BOARD SOUTHERN REGIONAL OFFICE!



Georgia PTA Gets in Shape!

On Saturday, September 17, 2016, head out with your family, your PTA, your school club, or scouts troop, etc. and make fitness fun! We have partnered with Georgia Shape, Walk Georgia, and Stone Mountain Memorial Association for this fun event.

Hike up Stone Mountain with your group and take a selfie or video. Or visit your local park and send in your pics to our hashtag: **#PTAinShape**. Download a flyer from the Georgia PTA website that you can use on your photo or video to let us know where you are. Prizes to the top submissions!

Stone Mountain Theme Park is offering discounted tickets to the park when you are done. For full details, click here. Parking at the Theme Park is \$15.

Georgia PTA Hispanic/Latino Statewide Community PTA

We have been working very hard to educate everyone that has a genuine interest in all children about Georgia's Hispanic/Latino Statewide Community PTA. We will continue without letup to spread the word to all PTA leaders, teachers, school district administrators, parent involvement coordinators and community leaders. We felt that it was vital for us to prepare this article particularly for the many new PTA leaders for 2016-17 and new employees within various school districts, etc. that quite likely did not know that the Hispanic/Latino PTA even existed.



This Community PTA was chartered in April of 2014, and Georgia is the only state PTA in the nation to charter a PTA of this nature. We understood and appreciated the fact that Hispanic/Latino parents have the very same concerns as any parent: *to become even better advocates for their children and more knowledgeable about the process of navigating through the educational system so that their children can become college and career ready.* School enrollment for Hispanic and Latino students is about 12% in our state, but there remains a significantly low percentage of Hispanic and Latino parental participation and leadership on all levels of PTA. We are therefore extremely excited about the wide window of opportunity that has been opened. The

intent and vision for this PTA is simple: Wherever there are schools that have a population of Hispanic/Latino parents that feel more comfortable developing their own local unit that speaks their language (both *figuratively and literally*), we will be right there to charter these new PTAs. These local units will fall under the umbrella of the Statewide Community Hispanic/Latino PTA. Not only will we grow membership in our state, but at the same time, we are demonstrating the courage to "walk the talk" by truly reaching out and *meeting people wherever they are*. This was not ever a "moment" for us but instead a "movement" of change for the better for "every child" in our great state.

This Community PTA is on the move, but we need your continued support and assistance with the fast-paced interest and growth that is developing. Please reach out to us if you are aware of a need for this type of PTA in your school community, and we will be there!

We are pleased to announce that on June 18, 2016, a meeting of the Hispanic/Latino Statewide Community PTA was held, and new officers were elected. We have provided the list below of our new officers, as well as committee chairs that have been selected to serve on their Board of Directors [see photos of new officers]. Please do not hesitate to reach out to them at any time. Jose Cerrato (josecerrato@aol.com) is the Georgia PTA Hispanic/Latino Outreach Chair, and he plays a vital role in supporting this amazing initiative. Rita Erves (rerves@georgiapta.org) is the Immediate Past President for Georgia PTA, and she is working closely with this Community PTA. Tammie Jenkins, Georgia PTA's Diversity and Inclusion Chair (tjenkins@georgiapta.org) has been continuously extending her service to this unit. In addition to the Hispanic/Latino Community PTA Board of Directors, you can also communicate with Jose, Tammie or Rita.

Rita Erves, Georgia PTA Immediate Past President, rerves@georgiapta.org

Hispanic/Latino Statewide Community PTA Board of Directors:

Mercedes Cerrato

President

mercedescerrato@aol.com

Elizabeth Maldonado

Vice President

elizabethmpta@aol.com

Sandra Delgado

Secretary/Treasurer

sandracano97@yahoo.com

Liliana Delgado

Family Engagement Chair

gitanazizi@aol.com

Juan Delgado

Membership Chair

jdelgado23@yahoo.com

Lezlie Osorio

Communications Chair

lezlie.a.osorio@gmail.com

Serving Our Youth in PTA

Greetings to my fellow child advocates. I am Sophronia Qualls, and I am now serving on the Georgia PTA Board of Directors as the Youth Services Chair. I absolutely love working on projects that relate directly to a group of people that I dearly love, "CHILDREN." I suppose the fact that I am also a 30+ years teacher by profession also has a little bit to do with my unwavering commitment to improving the lives of children. I would like to extend a huge "Welcome Back to School" to everyone. Now that school doors have reopened from summer break, I know you will be interested in receiving information related to beneficial resources.

We have all no doubt been asked this question: "What does a person get from PTA membership?" Our response has probably been that along with PTA membership comes a multitude of benefit and privileges. One of the primary benefits that we receive from carrying the "card that counts," a Georgia PTA membership card, is the support we automatically get from the National PTA. Indulge me for a few minutes as I share some AWESOME updates from National PTA that relate to services for our youth:



STEM ("Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math")

professionals. National PTA's STEM Plus Families initiative increases access to STEM education and careers, especially among young girls and under-represented youth, by developing, evaluating and sharing effective ways to engage families in STEM experiences, while working with partners to improve access to STEM school and community learning environments. PTA's vision has always revolved around ensuring that *all students* have the family and community support needed to access and pursue STEM opportunities and careers. National PTA would like to foster passion for science, technology, engineering, and math through fun activities and by involving families in these experiences together. Their STEM initiative will engage students, families, and communities in opportunities to explore and educate them on STEM possibilities. You can receive the latest updates on NPTA's Twitter via #PTA4STEM and also by visiting their brand new web page: PTA.org/STEM.

Resolution Passed at 2016 National PTA Convention – I had the privilege of attending the 2016 National PTA Convention in Orlando, Florida. I was particularly excited about a resolution that was presented and adopted by the convention delegates. "**Electronic Cigarettes and Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems ("ENDS") and Youth.**" Through this Resolution, the PTA resolved that: "*the National PTA and its constituent associations support legislation, regulation and/or other national, state and local measures to address the manufacturing of and ingredients in e-cigarettes and other ENDS 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,*" and further that: "*The National PTA and its constituent associations educate youth, parents, school boards and local officials on the dangers of e-cigarettes and other ENDS.*" Please read the entire Resolution on the National PTA website.

How to be a Good Digital Parent

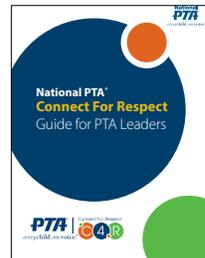
– The How to be a Good Digital Parent program was designed to educate parents, grandparents or all other caregivers on how

to navigate the web with their children. The program includes a comprehensive toolkit with a very informative PowerPoint presentation, presenter's guide and audience handouts that can actually be used to host an event at a local unit, council or district event. Access pta.org/SmartTalk for Digital Safety Event Toolkit. You will also want to go to the following website for more insight: Fosi.org/GDPpresentation. You will find some extremely helpful categories discussed such as: a) Exercise Safety When Taking Selfies; b) What is Pokemon [3 Knows for Pokemon Go]; c) When Can Geotagging on Instagram be a Good Idea? d) What Parents Need to Know about Live Streaming Apps; e) Advice for Teaching Etiquette to a Tech Savvy Kid."

I am happy to announce some very recent news from the **U. S. Department of Education** that will definitely have a bearing on youth in our state. On August 5, 2016, the U.S. Department of Education Secretary, John B. King, and Deputy Assistant to the President for Education, Roberto J. Rodriguez, announced that nearly \$9 million in grants will be awarded to states to help empower them with the resources they need to innovate and improve the quality of assessments; reduce redundant, unnecessary and ineffective tests; and enhance the reporting of assessment results for parents, educators and other stakeholders. National PTA issued this statement on the announcement of the grants.

Connect for Respect

– October 2016 is "Bullying Prevention Month," and I encourage PTAs/PTSAs across Georgia to host a "Connect for Respect" Forum during the month of October. Connect for Respect is a National PTA initiative to help students, parents and educators to create school climates full of safe and supportive peer relationships. Positive school climates exist in schools where students, families and educators all work collaboratively to build a culture of respect. You will find



that the Connect for Respect ("C4R") Toolkit is just what the doctor ordered as guidance for the PTA/PTSA on ways to engage students/youth to improve the school climate thereby reducing bullying. You will be pleased to know too that National PTA adopted a Resolution Against Bullying supporting policies and programs that address the *prevention, intervention and elimination* of bullying. I would also like to encourage you to watch the recorded Webinar "*How to Tell When Your Child is Struggling Emotionally,*" presented by National PTA and the American Psychological Association. Download the free app, "KnowBullying" published by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. Please also make sure to use the tools at pta.org/Bullying to Access School Climate.

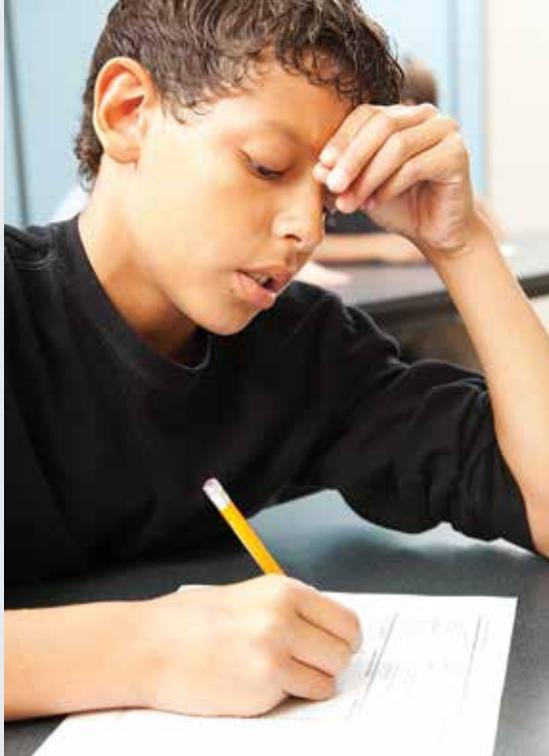
Please do not hesitate to reach out to me directly with any questions, comments or ideas related to services for Georgia's **Youth**. Be on the lookout for e-blast messages from me in the coming months regarding your PTAs/PTSAs hosting "Connect for Respect Forums" during the month of October.

Sophronia Qualls, Georgia PTA Youth Services Chair, SophroniaQ@me.com



continued from page 16

- Use your resources: talk to other parents, doctors, education professionals, and the International Dyslexia Association.
- Remember that “dyslexia” can be a catch-all term defined by Webster’s as “difficulties in acquiring and processing language that is typically manifested by a lack of proficiency in reading, spelling, and writing.” Your psychologist’s report will tell you and your educators exactly how your child processes information including strengths and weaknesses.



Parents may contact the International Dyslexia Association, Georgia Branch (IDA-GA) at 404.256.1232 or www.idaga.org, for more information about diagnosis and intervention. The IDA-GA is a 501(3)c organization and does not sell products or services, but can offer authoritative information to help parents when seeking qualified professionals. Read the International Dyslexia Association’s Dyslexia Handbook at www.dyslexiaida.org/ida-dyslexia-handbook/.

Dyslexia can present itself in a child along with other learning disabilities including ADHD, dyscalculia (math), dysgraphia (handwriting), dyspraxia (motor skills), and/or challenges with executive function or organization. Qualified testing can identify the kinds of intervention and support children need.

Our son has gone on to graduate with honors from Florida State with a minor in English and is working as a social media strategist in California. He’s become a prolific writer and successful, independent adult. We’re tremendously grateful we were able to find the appropriate instruction to help him learn to read.

Cameron’s sister, Rachel, is also dyslexic. She benefitted from lessons learned finding answers for our son. We were able to have her tested earlier, request assistance sooner and avoid letting her fall behind academically. Her successes have included being selected to present one of her college freshmen English papers at an undergraduate writing conference and she is now employed as a Marketing Director in North Carolina. Both our children benefitted by receiving instruction targeted to how they learn. Dyslexic individuals are often highly intelligent and very creative. They deserve every chance to succeed.

Karen Huppertz is a freelance writer, and reporter and columnist for the Atlanta Journal-Constitution. She is a volunteer and President of the International Dyslexia Association Georgia Branch. Contact her at khuppertz.ida@gmail.com.



Georgia PTA Bylaws Amended at State Convention

The bylaw amendments below were voted on and passed at the 2016 Convention Leadership Training. **Local units do NOT need to vote on these amendments at a general membership meeting as they were approved by the membership body at convention and automatically take effect.**

ARTICLE VIII: OFFICERS AND THEIR ELECTION

Section 4. The following provisions shall govern the qualifications and eligibility of individuals to be officers of the Georgia PTA:

- a. Each officer shall be a member of a local PTA/PTSA chartered by the Georgia PTA;
- b. All nominees must be current or former members of the Georgia PTA Board of Directors;
- c. No officer may be eligible to serve more than one (1) full term in the same office;
- d. A person who has served in an office for more than one-half (1/2) of a term shall be deemed to have served a full term in such office; and
- e. No person shall hold more than one (1) state PTA position simultaneously.

f. “Be a natural person who is 18 years of age or older”.

Rationale: If anyone 17 years or younger is elected as an officer of a PTA local, council, district or community PTA, this action will result in the PTA being in conflict with state code. They cannot serve as an officer due to Georgia Code for Non-Profits § 14-3-802.

ARTICLE X: BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 2. Each board member shall:

- a. Be member of a local PTA/PTSA chartered by the Georgia PTA;
- b. Not hold more than one (1) state PTA position simultaneously; and
- c. Not serve simultaneously as a council or local unit president

d. “Be a natural person who is 18 years of age or older”.

Rationale: To be in compliance with Georgia Non-Profit Code

ARTICLE XIV: COUNCILS

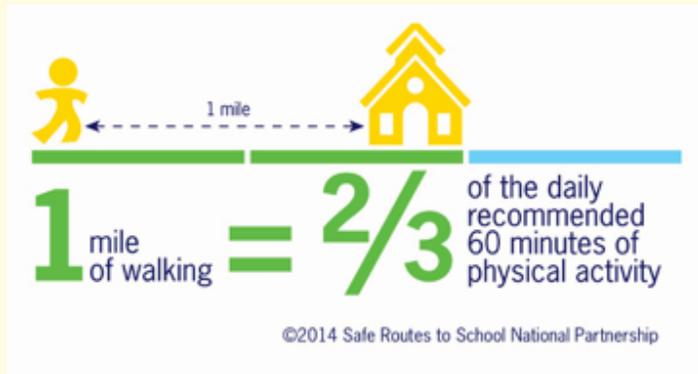
Correction: *Footnote: For an explanation of local association “In Good Standing”, please reference ARTICLE VI, Section 1. For an explanation of council “In Good Standing”, please reference ARTICLE XIV, Section 1



Active Kids and PTA's Earn Awards with Fire Up Your Feet

Walking is one of the best things kids can do for their health, emotional well-being, and academic success. Yet between 1969 and 2009, the number of kids walking to school dropped from 48 percent to just 13 percent. During the same time period, childhood obesity tripled and traffic congestion grew around schools, negatively affecting air quality and snarling nearly everyone's morning commute.

The good news is that over the past ten years, there has been a surge in demand for safe, walkable schools and neighborhoods, something that Fire Up Your Feet (<http://fireupyourfeet.org>), a core program of Safe Routes to School National Partnership (<http://saferoutespartnership.org>), has been actively working to change. Last September, the U.S. Surgeon General issued a call to action for Americans to work together to make our communities more walkable for people of all ages and abilities. Ensuring that kids and families have safe routes to walk or bicycle to and from school is critical to making our communities more walkable for everyone.



...The benefits of walking extend beyond health. Studies show that active kids do better. Research has shown that there are links between physical activity and academic achievement.

Walking is one of the simplest, most effective, and most affordable strategies for kids AND adults to build physical activity into their lives. One mile of walking translates to 2/3 of the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day. And the benefits of walking extend beyond health. Studies show that active kids do better. Research has shown that there are links between physical activity and academic achievement. (<http://saferoutespartnership.org/resources/academic-research>)

BURGESS AMUSEMENTS
and Special Events
770-788-9109
www.burgessamusements.com

PTA's, teachers and parents can speak to the advantages of making sure students have opportunities to walk and be physically active by participating in the Fire Up Your Feet Activity Challenges, taking place in the Metro Atlanta this Fall and Spring. From 10/1/16 – 10/31/16 and again in Spring 2017 (dates TBD), schools in the Metro Atlanta area can earn up to \$7,000 in cash awards. There are three simple steps to participate in Fire Up Your Feet:



1. **Click it!** PTA's can register their school online today at fireupyourfeet.org and recruit teachers, families and students to participate at no cost. Be sure to register soon for our next Activity Challenge that starts on 10/1/16!
2. **Track it!** Track your physical activity using our easy online Activity Tracker. Fun Runs, bicycling, walking, recess — all activity counts!
3. **Earn It!** The more participants, the better your school's chances of winning awards that can be used for physical activity, wellness and Safe Routes to School programs!

For more information about Fire Up Your Feet, contact Julie McDonald, Senior Manager, at juliem@fireupyourfeet.org or (510) 684-0051, or visit www.fireupyourfeet.org.

Bring
Builder Bunch
LEGO®-based programming to your school this Fall!!!

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM
IN-SCHOOL FIELD TRIP
- 2016 - SPIRIT NIGHT
2016

Builderbunch.com/bricksforgeorgia

The Builder Bunch program is not affiliated, sponsored, or endorsed by LEGO® Education of the LEGO® Group.

Advocating for Tobacco Free Schools: Is YOUR School on the Map?

Did you know that smoking rates in Georgia have been on the decline for several years? But did you also know that a recent CDC study found alarmingly that E-cigarette use had increased from 1.5% in 2011 to 16% in 2015 among high school students? Did you also know that the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH) has reported that more than 10,000 Georgians died every year due to smoke-related illnesses?

The Georgia PTA has been actively working with DPH to encourage school districts around the state to adopt a 100% Tobacco Free Schools policy. We are proud to work with State Superintendent Woods and the Georgia Department of Public Health Commissioner Fitzgerald to promote this policy. Click here to see the letter (<http://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/letter%20for%20superintendents.pdf>). Note that all school districts have a policy in place to prohibit the use of tobacco during the school day. However, we want to ensure that all districts have a policy that would more clearly define that no student, staff members or visitors are permitted to use any tobacco products including Electronic Cigarettes at any time 24 hours/ 7 days a week:

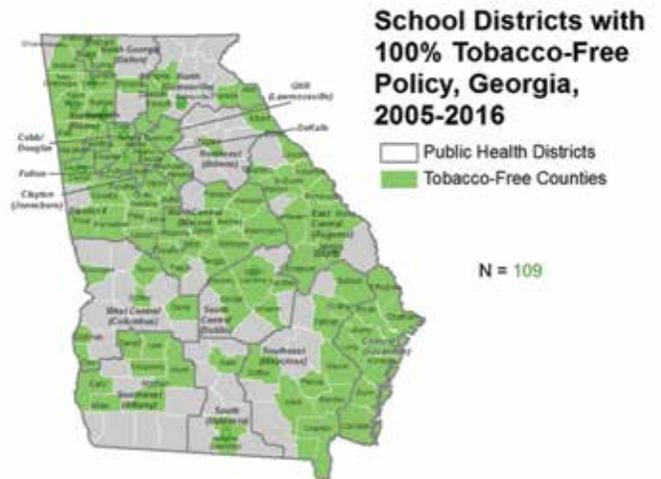
- In any building, facility, or vehicle owned, leased, rented or chartered by a school district
- On any school grounds and property; – including athletic fields and parking lots- owned leased, rented or chartered by a school district
- At any school- sponsored or school- related event on-campus or off-campus

How can you help your school district? Look at the map to see if your school district has adopted the comprehensive policy. Or click here to see a full list (<http://dph.georgia.gov/sites/dph.georgia.gov/files/tobacco%20list.pdf>). If your school is not on the list, take an active role in getting this adopted in your district. One of the most effective ways is to work with students to advocate for changes. This helps students to learn important skills as they grow to have a huge impact in their own school and district.

DPH is forming a state **Tobacco Youth Council** this fall. *Do you know a student that may be interested in having impact in the state?* Please contact JoAnne Hammermaster, Georgia PTA Health & Wellness Chair at jhammermaster@georgiapta.org for more info.

Tobacco use is a danger to everyone. Tobacco-free school policies can prevent youth from starting to smoke, and encourage youth to quit smoking. Join in this great advocacy cause today! For more information, see the DPH website at: <http://dph.georgia.gov/schools>.

JoAnne Hammermaster, Georgia PTA Health and Wellness Chair, jhammermaster@georgiapta.org



Leaf it to Spinach: #LeafittoSpinach Georgia Celebrates October Farm to School Month

Georgia PTA is proud to partner with Georgia Organics and its Farm to School program. Learn how you can easily integrate fun educational programs into your school.

Farm to School is a national movement to connect children from early care to higher education to healthy, local food in the cafeteria and classroom through educational opportunities such as school gardens, classroom food activities, and farm field trips. A broad array of activities encompass farm to school, like planting seeds, using garden-based learning for curriculum lessons, visiting a local farm, and taste testing local food in the cafeteria. Farm to school activities have been shown to not only increase student's acceptance and preference for fruits and vegetables but also to increase academic achievement and improve student behavior.

Each year, Georgia Organics selects a vegetable to celebrate October Farm to School Month and encourage kids across Georgia to try new things and make healthy choices. This year it's all about spinach with the theme of **Leaf it to Spinach!**

Individuals who sign up to participate in Leaf it to Spinach will receive access to an electronic toolkit that includes spinach infused easy activities and recipes, pre-k to 8th grade standards-based lessons, cooking videos, and much more! The first 300 people to sign up will also receive a packet of spinach seeds and a Georgia planting and harvesting calendar.

Georgia Organics will have weekly social media contests with prizes throughout October so make sure to use **#LeafittoSpinach** to showcase all of your activities!

To sign up for Leaf it to Spinach resources, visit <http://georgiaorganics.org/for-schools/leafittospinach>.

Making plans to Leaf it to Spinach in your school or community during October? Let us know what you have planned so we can highlight your activities on our social media by contacting abbie@georgiaorganics.org.

For more information on farm to school in Georgia, visit www.georgiaorganics.org/for-schools.

Four Simple Tips to Grow Your PTA

Many schools have a base of “die-hard” PTA fans. These are the parents who keep renewing their membership in the PTA year after year, with little or no prompting. But the base of die-hard fans simply isn’t big enough to sustain your PTA membership. The good news: If you provide enough value, many more people would join your PTA.

Tip #1: Provide financial benefits for joining the PTA.

Try to arrange discounts from local businesses (e.g., pizza parlor or ice cream shop) for PTA members.

Set up discounts on your online store for your PTA members.

Create small “perks” for PTA members at every school or PTA event (free popcorn at a movie night, an extra free scoop of ice cream at a school carnival, etc.)

Tip #2: Provide non-financial benefits such as information and feeling of belonging.

Keep your school community informed and “in the loop”:

Post a school calendar online.

Provide information about school-wide events such as concerts, sporting events, fundraisers.

Invite everyone to general PTA meetings.

Publish a monthly newsletter with updates on past and upcoming events.

Instead of using an email distribution list, consider using an online communication portal such as SimplyCircle to keep the communication flow going. It sends your communications via email, but also creates a calendar of all the events (complete with automatic reminders to maximize participation), and a permanent and private archive of all updates, documents and photos that you share.

Tip #3: Make everyone feel included and feel like part of the community.

If you have a large Spanish-speaking community, make sure to provide all of your information both in English and in Spanish.

Sponsor events such as New Family Orientation or Ice Cream Social—let people get to know each other in a casual, fun setting.

Organize Community Service events and give back to your broader community.

Emphasize that by becoming a member of the PTA, they get a voice and voting rights in decisions affecting their school and their children.

Tip #4: Make people feel valued and appreciated, and let them express their appreciation of others.

Thank your school volunteers in a creative and unique way, like calling them out by name in a school newspaper or sending them handwritten thank you notes from the students.

Don’t forget to organize a Teacher Appreciation event, which gives parents an opportunity to thank their child’s amazing teachers for all the great work they do.

Happy growing!

Dr. Elena Krasnoperova is the Founder and CEO of SimplyCircle, a popular parent portal for classrooms, PTAs, schools and other parent communities. She is a mother of two children in elementary school, and an active member of the PTA.

National PTA does not endorse any commercial entity, product or service, and no endorsement is implied by this content.

Source: National PTA / One Voice Blog



Membership Update from your State Membership Chair

And the winner is...Morrow High School PTSA! For those of you who were following the Membership Madness contest for 2016, you know we had quite an exciting competition going on. We are excited to announce our first place winner is Morrow High School PTSA. They worked diligently to increase their membership to become the ultimate champion.

Let’s get ready for more Membership Madness! Georgia PTA will kick off the 2017 campaign in a few short months. Look for complete details coming soon!

Congratulations to the Spring Fling Membership Winner – Cary Reynolds Elementary School in District 11!

Congratulations to Glynn County Council on their fantastic Membership Bowl event. All schools in Brunswick and St. Simon participated. It was a fun event with lots of school spirit! A large bowl trophy was presented to the school that reported the most membership during the two hour campaign.

If you were in Athens with us this summer, we sure hope you made time to attend a membership workshop! They were well attended and we had great discussion in all of them. I would like to thank Heather Held, District 9 Membership Chair, for her outstanding work delivering membership workshops with me.

As we begin our campaigns for 2016 -2017 school year, let’s make it known that we “carry the card with super power.”



Margie Ringfield, Georgia PTA Membership Chair,
mringfield@georgiapta.org

Family Engagement – A Top Priority for PTA

Greetings PTA Family, my name is Kym Evans, and I am so excited about joining the Georgia PTA Board of Directors as your new Family Engagement Committee Chair for the duration of this administrative term. Family Engagement is one of Georgia PTA's seven Strategic Initiatives. Therefore, we will be laser focused on keeping you informed about all of our many efforts that pertain to this most important Initiative. I am sharing with you a few Family Engagement Resources that I think you will find of interest:

Kindle E-Reader Giveaway and PTA Family Reading Experience!

Reminder words of wisdom to the throngs of mothers/father/grandmothers/foster parents or other relatives and/or caregivers: The basic fundamentals of the core skills of literacy revolve around one word, "Reading." Our kids cannot succeed in today's society if they do not become not only strong readers, but avid readers. Children learn by example, do they not? Oftentimes, they do or do not do what they see us doing OR not doing. In March 2017, schools across the nation will transform their National Reading Month event into a PTA Family Reading Experience. This is a very engaging, interactive event that brings the whole family together for a wide array of reading activities. The PTA Family Reading Experience helps families grow children who LOVE to read. Go to the National PTA's website (www.pta.org) to gain more insight on this program and how you can get started now in preparation for March 2017. You will also want to get the "Family Reading Experience Toolkit."

In August, all PTAs/PTSAs are eligible for Kindle E-Reader Giveaway! Another opportunity has been released for all PTAs/PTSAs to receive Kindle e-readers. PTAs/PTSAs that register their PTA Family Reading Experiences for National Reading Month, which is in March 2017 will receive an entry to the giveaway, which will also occur in March 2017. Do NOT forget to register before this month is out!



National PTA School of Excellence

Most of you are familiar with this prestigious program that formally recognizes partnerships between PTAs/PTSAs and schools to enrich the educational experience and overall well-being of students. Through participation in this program, your school will gain new ways to engage families in school decision-making, such as program improvements, practices and policies related to education, health, safety or the arts. **You must enroll before October 1 for the 2016-2017 school year.** You will then receive the "Getting Started Guide," which will detail all of the program's essential components. The next mandatory step will be to submit the Family School Partnership Scan by December 1. Find more info on the PTA website.

Take Your Family to School Week

During the week of February 13-17, 2017, National PTA will celebrate PTAs, families and schools working together to support your student rock star. Go to the National PTA's website (www.pta.org) to find more information on "Take Your Family to School Week" with ideas on how this event can be promoted, like promotional flyers, letters and social media messages, to generate awareness and excitement for this family engagement initiative.

Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)

As a new member to the Georgia PTA Board in the capacity of Family Engagement Chair and also as a School District employee registered nurse, I was beaming proudly when President Obama signed the Every Student Succeeds Act into law on December 10, 2015. We want every child to be afforded an equitable opportunity to fulfill his/her full potential. This law creates a way in which family engagement in the area of education can assure that children are successful in attaining the goals that they set for themselves in life. This new law also greatly-needed improvements to K-12 education and acknowledges the vital role that family engagement plays in student achievement.

I had the privilege of attending a National PTA-sponsored webinar on ESSA a few weeks ago. I hope that many of you were able to join. If you missed the webinar, you can view it on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wj-wE-XlfOQ&feature=youtu.be>.

Tips for Communicating with Teachers Effectively

Student success is enhanced through family engagement. A primary step towards engagement/involvement is developing open communication lines with your child's teacher. Learn more about how to become a positive partner in your child's learning experience by accessing National PTA's website (www.pta.org) and selecting this topic ("Tips for Communicating with Teachers Effectively").

Miscellaneous Essential Family Engagement Tools To Help Your PTA/PTSA During 2016-17 School Year

To attain a plethora of family engagement tools, please go to the National PTA website and scroll down to bottom of page:

- Now, go to the "**Advocacy**" section. In that column, click on "**Family Engagement in Education Act.**"
- Next, you can go to "**At Schools**" section. In that column, click on click on "**Family Engagement Tools.**"
- Then, check out the "**For Families**" section. In that column, click on click on "**Parents' Guide to Student Success.**" This Guide was developed by teachers, parents and experts in the field of education. It was created for grades K-8 and high school English, language/arts literacy and mathematics. You will find a detailed and concise list of what our children must comprehend at each of their respective grade levels in order for them to college and career ready.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns please feel free to contact me.

Kym Evans, Georgia PTA Family Engagement Chair,
kevans@georgiapta.org

Resource Development – Maximize Your Fundraising



Hi there PTA/PTSA, Council and District leaders from around our great state. I am Evelyn Cunningham, the Georgia PTA Resource Development Chair. We all know that our work as PTA leaders never stops, does it? Not even in the summer months. However, it seems that when school is back in session, activities rev up, don't they?

I am hoping that all of you had a chance to place your order for National PTA's Back to School Kit! If you received your kit, you may not have had a free moment to check out all of the resourceful information contained in it. With regard to generating/developing needed revenue for PTA, the Kit includes a very helpful fundraising segment. It will serve as the PTA leaders' guide to *responsible* and *effective* fundraising. This segment will quite likely answer some of the many questions that we have all asked ourselves from time to time regarding *fundraising; sponsorship and/or charitable contributions*. You will be particularly interested in the following topics discussed in the fundraising segment:

- 1) Fundraising and Purpose of PTA;
- 2) Select Appropriate Fundraising Activities;
- 3) Seeking Corporate Sponsorship;
- 4) Substantiation Requirements for Charitable Contributions; and
- 5) Legal Implications of Fundraising

I would like to also encourage you to go to the National PTA website (www.pta.org) and scroll down to bottom of home page and click on **"Fundraising Marketplace."** You will be pleasantly surprised to see how this resource can be used to find vendors and services to help make your PTA/PTSA fundraiser a success. You will find a host of company names that can be considered for fundraising opportunities, such as "0 Calorie Fundraiser; Angel Bins; Race for Education to name just a few. You will see that one of the company names listed is the Children's Bookstore.

Please note that Georgia PTA has already entered into a partnership with Children's Bookstore. For those of you in attendance at our state convention in Athens in June, you heard Jake Ball/Proprietor speak from the stage and probably visited his booth. You will be receiving more information in the coming months about Children's Bookstore initiatives with Georgia PTA, as well as other opportunities that we hope to create that will benefit your school.

I would also like to encourage everyone to take advantage of the upcoming Georgia PTA Day with the Atlanta Braves, the Atlanta Falcons, and the Atlanta Hawks.

In the event you still have any comments or questions about this topic, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

Evelyn Cunningham, Georgia PTA Resource Development Chair, eves@bellsouth.net

Protect Your PTA with Insurance

Georgia PTA strongly encourages units to obtain adequate insurance protection against liability and financial loss due to fraud, embezzlement or dishonest acts. Operating a PTA unit is much like running a small business. Businesses need insurance to protect their investments; the same is true for PTA units. Having insurance protection makes good business sense, especially when the cost is relatively small for the peace of mind of knowing you are protected. The following options are offered to all Local PTAs through Association Insurance Management (AIM):



General Liability Insurance protects local PTA members and volunteers against lawsuits arising from an injury during PTA sponsored activities, such as bounce houses, fun runs, silent auctions, monthly meetings, etc.

Accident Medical Insurance complements your General Liability policy. This policy provides medical coverage for activities that are excluded from the General Liability policy. This is not a replacement of your liability policy!

Fidelity Bond Insurance replaces your missing funds and avoids having you turned over to a collection agency should your money be embezzled, robbed or stolen.

Property Insurance replaces personal property of the PTA such as popcorn machines, auction items, spirit wear and school supply store items. The property insurance will replace PTA property damaged or lost due to theft or natural hazard.

Officer's Liability Insurance protects the PTA Officers against personal liability arising from alleged mismanagement, wrongful acts and misrepresentation of the PTA.

Crime and embezzlement doesn't affect only the PTA, but also the people that the PTA has been working so hard to support... the children. In today's tough economic times, it's more important than ever to secure and safeguard your PTA's funds.



Enroll your school in the National PTA School of Excellence program by October 1, 2016.

Learn more at <http://www.pta.org/excellence>

Beware: Wire Transfer Phishing Scam!

Recently, a local PTSA treasurer received a suspicious email requesting funds to be transferred via wire. The email was sent to the treasurer and utilized what appeared to be the co-president's email address. Luckily the treasurer contacted the co-president directly before any funds were transferred. This activity is most commonly referred to as phishing. In the fraudulent email, there may be links to spoof websites or even spoof email address that imitate a reputable company's website. The emails will often state that there is an urgent need for you to update your information immediately or a need to communicate with you for your own safety or security. Once obtained, your personal information can be used to steal money or transfer stolen money into another account. The fraudsters will often find your information from local websites to help authenticate their request for information.

Use caution if you receive an email expressing an urgent need for you to update your information, activate your online banking account, transfer money or verify your identity by clicking on a link. These emails may be part of a phishing scam conducted to capture your confidential account information and commit fraud. Never open attachments, click links, or respond to emails from suspicious or unknown senders.



Reminder: Checks written by PTAs require two signatures, automatic debits from the checking account, including wire transfers, are not permissible means of payment. Any request to do so is a huge red flag!



Bring The "How To Be A Good Digital Parent" Program To Your School

Today our children have an incredible opportunity to learn, create and communicate through the use of technology. It is important that parents are confident in their understanding of digital devices, apps, games, and their ability to help guide their children at every age to ensure a positive experience online.

'How to Be a Good Digital Parent' program was introduced to PTA leaders at the National PTA Convention in Orlando, FL. The program is a free resource for PTA leaders and is designed to teach parents and other caregivers to confidently navigate the web with their children. The program consists of a comprehensive toolkit with a PowerPoint presentation, presenter's guide and audience handouts that PTAs can use to host an event at their school.

Learn more about the program at <https://www.fosi.org/gdppresentation/>.

Membership Awards

Submit the Membership Awards Form to Georgia PTA if your local unit achieves any of the following:



The Visionary Pin and Certificate: 400 members to Georgia PTA by last business day of August.

The Pacesetter's Certificate: 300 members to Georgia PTA by last business day of August.

The Early Bird Certificate: 200 members by the last business day of September.

The Platinum Membership Award: Target Membership achieved and dues sent to the state PTA office no later than the last business day in September.

The Gold Membership Certificate: Target Membership achieved and dues sent to the state PTA office no later than the last business day in October.

Oak Tree Award: 100% Staff Membership dues sent to the state PTA office no later than the last day in October.

Community Partnership Award: 30 Community Partner Members dues sent to the state PTA office no later than the last day in October.



Financial Red Flags

One of the most important things we do as PTA board members is fundraise so that we can provide educational support to our schools. With that comes the handling of money — often large sums of money. It is important to always stay aware of what is going on with your PTA funds and to catch any financial red flag. To protect your PTA, be aware of the following things:

- No treasurer’s reports at executive board or association meetings;
- Reports are given orally with written information to be provided “later;”
- Treasurer’s reports list only general categories without sufficient detail;
- Treasurer misses meetings;
- Audits not performed as scheduled;
- No one from unit attends any council/district meetings or workshops;
- Board members not turning in correct amount of money; accounting irregularities in their own fundraisers/ activities;
- Inability of treasurer or chairman to say how much money the fundraiser made;
- A PTA mom offers to “do” the fundraiser with her own business;
- No monthly financial reports; no audits;
- Board unfamiliar with unit bylaws;
- Banks that do not return processed checks (or copies of such);
- Unapproved meeting minutes;
- Unapproved budgets or yearly calendars;
- President (or other officer) not reviewing bank statements;
- School staff member as treasurer;
- School staff the greater percentage of the board;
- Demands from staff/principal for “gifts” to school;
- Inquiry calls by concerned parents, teachers, or principal;
- A treasurer who is disorganized and can’t get reports ready for meetings;
- A president who writes the checks because the treasurer has no experience;
- President, treasurer or committee chair taking funds home. Deposits not made in a timely manner;
- Calls on the same matter from two different sources;
- Failure to provide a year-end audit on request;
- Providing skimpy or misleading information;
- Subsidizing memberships for anyone (students, etc.);
- Lack of or incomplete minutes, particularly in matters involving use of funds;
- PTA paying for aides or specialists one year and expecting/ obligating next year’s board to do the same;
- Getting involved in supporting petitions for more teacher hours, etc. Boards are not obligated to take either side of a dispute;
- Anxious principal who wants projects funded without going through the process set up by the PTA;
- Overbearing principal who wants the PTA to do what he/she wants regardless of the proper procedure;
- Fundraising project that will benefit a board member financially;
- Unit board not following financial procedure because they “never did before”; board that claims it “didn’t know;”
- Only one person counting money;
- Only one person signing checks; only one person on bank signature card;
- Signing of blank checks; and
- Receipts not attached to Requests for Reimbursements.

For detailed steps on how to handle suspected theft, download the Preventing Theft, Fraud and Embezzlement document from the Georgia PTA website.



Educator Appreciation Day

Saturday, September 17, 2016

Zoo Atlanta is offering one FREE admission for active PTA members (must show membership card) and a \$2.00 discount for family and friends.

Members must present proof of membership and the free admission may not be combined with a free educator admission. One free admission per family.

**Register online at
zooatlanta.org**

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PNC BANK



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PTA®**
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The biggest mountain in Georgia: Is it blocking potential PTA members?

Another summer has come and gone. We are now settling into another school year. Friday night lights will draw crowds of screaming fans in every community of our state. We are settling into our school-time routines.

The 2016-2017 school year is now underway. We have to ask ourselves, "Are we doing everything that we can do to support the future of our state – our children"? We have a lot to think about. We have some serious challenges ahead of us in this school year.

We have a lot of work to do in giving our state's children the chance to be successful. We know that when a child's education is supported by a father or father figure, that the child is more successful and more likely to graduate high school.

We also know that in father-absent homes those children are five times more likely to be poor, achieve lower grades, have higher risk of delinquencies, have a 7 times higher teen pregnancy rate, and the horrible list goes on and on.

Moms have carried the flag in raising children and in education for many years. It's what moms do. The educational field is dominated by amazing female educators. We would never want to undersell the amazing and significant accomplishments and sacrifices that women have made to make our country, our educational system and our PTA organization great.

Unfortunately, our culture has created an environment where men feel like they don't have a place in their children's lives unless it's on the field. Men are allowed on the field at the school, but we are scrutinized if they want to cheer their child on in the classroom with the same gusto that they cheer on the field. Many men feel unwelcome and unwanted when it comes to supporting education.

The truth of the matter is what goes on in the classroom will last an entire lifetime. Even the few school athlete that do make it to the college level, only a very slight few of those will actually make a living out of athletics. On the other hand, every student in the classroom will make it into the BIG TIME - of life.

Not all students are athletes, anyway. Don't these students have the right to have dad cheering them on as well? I believe that they do! Our students need to be cheered on in every and any way possible!

Here's a question: What is the highest mountain in Georgia? This

mountain is so insurmountable that many men cannot even dream of conquering its summit. The men who have conquered it have found an amazing reception that they could never have dreamed of. Conquering that massive summit brings the realization of what it truly means to be a leader. For some men, the conquering of this summit has meant a radical and positive impact on their life and the life of their family. The journey over this summit has changed them from being indifferent and disconnected, to fulfilling self-actualization. Many have found an understanding of their mission in life.

The mountain that I speak of is – (wait for it...) the threshold of your school building. Some men see it as a mountain that they will never conquer. They have no idea what is beyond the summit. They have many misconceptions of what they might find.

We have to give them hope and a pathway to get there. This is why I refer to the Georgia PTA recognized Male Involvement programs such as Watch D.O.G.S. and All Pro Dad as "threshold programs". These simple programs are effective in getting men over that huge mountain known as the threshold of your school.

If we are serious about parent engagement and membership, we simply have to give these people the chance to get in the door of the building before we can engage them. Believe it or not, men want to be engaged in their children's lives and education. We just have to give them an onramp.

As much as we love PTA, our message falls on many deaf ears simply by the stereotypical image of our name. We have to appeal to men to get them in the building in a way that is appealing to men. We have to give them something that they can buy into. Watch D.O.G.S. and All Pro Dads do that. When your PTA brings in one or preferably BOTH of these programs, men have something that they can buy into. They will finally have a place in your school. Once we engage them, then you can develop them as PTA members and possibly PTA leaders. BUT, we HAVE to get them over the mountain, first.

Please go to www.fathers.com/watchdogs and www.allprodad.com to learn how easy it is to engage parents in your PTA through these simple programs. Just check it out! There is no obligation in just looking...

**Contact: MEN@GeorgiaPTA.org for more information.
#DadsRWaiting4U**



2016-2017 Reflections Theme "What Is Your Story?"

**Dance Choreography | Film Production | Literature
Music Composition | Photography | Visual Arts**

The Model PTA - Ten Years Strong!

Friday - June 24, 2016 was a very special day at CLT 2016. Friday late afternoon was the time of The Model PTA Reception, hosted by President Lisa-Marie Haygood. Both of the program's authors, Dr. Thomas Lockamy, Superintendent of Savannah-Chatham County Public Schools, and Donna Kosicki, President of Georgia PTA 2011-2013, were present and had an opportunity to speak to the excited audience of winners and colleagues. While The Model PTA winners are celebrated every year at CLT, this year marked the program's ten year anniversary celebration!

Dr. Lockamy and Ms. Kosicki met in the fall of 2005, when the program was first introduced to Georgia PTA. Ms. Kosicki, Parent Involvement Chair (at that time), "Georgia PTA-ized" the program and submitted the final version to the Board of Directors, whose members unanimously adopted The Model PTA in January 2006. The administrative criteria was established to mirror the requirements identified by Georgia PTA for a Local Unit PTA/PTSA to be "in good standing". The operational criteria provided an outline for Local Unit PTA/PTSAs to follow that strengthens parent involvement efforts and goals.

While this program has seen minor changes throughout the years, The Model PTA is the longest running parent involvement / family engagement program in the history of Georgia PTA. Many Local Unit PTA/PTSAs have received this annual award and celebrate the success of the program. Parents and families work collaboratively with school staff and students are more engaged in the classroom — just primary benefit PTA/PTSAs and schools see as a result of the work that is focused on effective engagement and its connection to learning — for all students.

Congratulations to all of The Model PTA award recipients!



**Dr. Thomas Lockamy,
Superintendent
of Savannah-
Chatham County
Public Schools and
Donna Kosicki,
President of
Georgia PTA 2011
- 2013**

Model PTA

The following schools were recipients of the Model PTA certificate at the 2016 Georgia PTA Convention Leadership Training in June.

DISTRICT 6

Carrie E. Gould Elementary PTA
Charles Ellis Montessori Academy
E. F. Garrison K-8 Visual Performing Arts PTA
Gadsden Elementary PTA
Godley Station K-8 PTA
Hubert Middle PTSA
Jacob G. Smith ES PTA
Lee Roy Myers Middle PTSA
Marshpoint Elementary PTA
Pooler Elementary PTA
Rice Creek PTSA
Shuman ES PTA
Spencer Elementary PTA
The Stem Academy at Bartlett Middle PTSA
Windsor Forest High PTSA

DISTRICT 8

Deer Chase Elementary PTA

DISTRICT 9

Bryant Elementary PTA
Cheatham Hill Elementary PTA
Dickerson Middle PTSA
Dodgen Middle PTSA
Eastvalley Elementary PTA
Garrison Mill Elementary PTA
Hightower Trail Middle PTSA
JJ Daniel Middle PTSA
Kincaid Elementary PTA
King Springs Elementary PTA
Lassiter High PTSA
Lockheed Elementary PTA
Moses Middle PTSA
Mountain View Elementary PTA
Mt. Bethel Elementary PTA
Murdock Elementary PTA
Pine Mountain Middle PTSA
Pope High PTSA
Powers Ferry Elementary PTA
Rocky Mount Elementary PTA
Shallowford Falls Elementary PTA
Sope Creek Elementary PTA
South Cobb High PTSA
Sprayberry High PTSA

Timber Ridge Elementary PTA
Tritt Elementary PTA
Wheeler High PTSA
W. C. Abney Elementary PTA

DISTRICT 10

A. P. Randolph Elementary PTA
Crabapple Middle PTSA
Feldwood Elementary PTA
Hillside Elementary PTA
Hopewell Middle PTSA
Johns Creek High PTSA
Woodland Middle PTSA

DISTRICT 11

Arabia Mountain High PTSA
Briarlake Elementary PTA
Stephenson High PTSA

DISTRICT 12

J. G. Dyer Elementary PTA
K. E. Taylor Elementary PTA
Peachtree Ridge High PTSA
Walnut Grove Elementary PTA

DISTRICT 13

Bascomb Elementary PTA
Brookwood Elementary PTA
Clark Creek Elementary PTA
Dean Rusk Middle PTSA
F.D. Johnson Elementary PTA
Freedom Middle PTSA
Hickory Flat Elementary PTA
Holly Springs Elementary PTA
Indian Knoll Elementary PTA
Kleven Boston Elementary PTA
Little River Elementary PTA
Macedonia Elementary PTA
Matt Elementary PTA
Mill Creek Middle PTSA
Mountain Road Elementary PTA
Oak Grove Elementary PTA
River Ridge High PTSA
Sequoyah High PTSA
Silver City Elementary PTA
Sixes Elementary PTA
Woodstock High PTSA



Congratulations to our Award Recipients!

OUTSTANDING LOCAL UNIT

Elementary 750 and below

1st place – Shallowford Falls Elementary PTA

2nd place – Silver City Elementary PTA

3rd Place – Garrison Mill Elementary PTA

Elementary 751 and above

1st place – Brookwood Elementary PTA

2nd place – Mt. Bethel Elementary PTA

3rd Place – Macedonia Elementary PTA

Middle School

1st Place – Mill Creek Middle PTSA

2nd Place – Dickerson Middle PTSA

3rd Place – Dodgen Middle PTSA

High School

1st Place – Johns Creek High PTSA

2nd Place – Woodstock High PTSA

3rd Place – Wheeler High PTSA

OUTSTANDING ADVOCACY AWARD

Garrison Mill Elementary PTA

Mt. Bethel Elementary PTA

OUTSTANDING NURSE

Laure Carroll, F.D. Johnston Elementary School

OUTSTANDING PRINCIPAL

Elementary – Felecia Angelle, Shallowford Falls Elementary School

Middle – Peter Ulrich, The STEM Academy at Bartlett Middle School

High – Dr. Edward Spurka, Cambridge High School

BIRNEY BUTLER OUTSTANDING EDUCATOR

Elementary – Jennifer Shroter, Indian Knoll Elementary PTA

Middle – Karen Garner, Couch Middle PTSA

High – Giselle Kurth, Wheeler High PTSA

VISIONARY AWARD

Nicole Ponziani, District 13

Chandra Williams, District 7

School Safety Committee of Charles Ellis Montessori Academy PTA,

District 6

HEARST FAMILY SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

Standard 1 – Indian Knoll Elementary PTA

Standard 2 – Hillside Elementary PTA

Standard 3 – Macedonia Elementary PTA

Standard 4 – Lassiter High PTSA

Standard 5 – Mountain Road Elementary PTA

Standard 6 – South Cobb High PTSA

Overall – River Ridge High PTSA

KEYS TO LEADERSHIP

Sandra Narcisse-Jones and Nicole Ponziani

EXEMPLARY COUNCILS

Savannah-Chatham Council, District 6

East Cobb County Council, District 9

Marietta City Council, District 9

Paulding County Council, District 9

South Cobb Council, District 9

Tom Mathis, Sr. Council, District 9

North Fulton Council, District 10

Cherokee County Council, District 13

Forsyth County Council, District 13

OUTSTANDING COUNCIL

East Cobb County Council

OUTSTANDING DISTRICT

District 9

PRESIDENT'S LOCAL UNIT AWARD

Pooler Elementary School PTA

PRESIDENT'S DISTRICT AWARD

District 6

OUTSTANDING GEORGIA PTA BOARD MEMBER

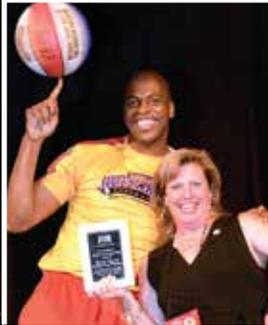
JoAnne Hammermaster, Health & Wellness Chair

2016 Convention Leadership Training



2016 Convention Leadership Training

Photos Provided Courtesy of Lifetouch Photography





Georgia PTA Scholarship Winners

\$2,000 Scholarship Winners

Jasmin Johnson « South Cobb High School, District 9

William Schaffer « Islands High School, District 6

\$1,000 Scholarship Award Winners

Divon Brown « Clarkston High School, District 11

Yvelavre Olivier « South Cobb High School, District 9

TERRIA PATRICK « Morrow High School, District 7

Michaela Plotner « Savannah Arts Academy, District 6

\$200 Scholarship Award Winners

Nathan Brown « Morrow High School, District 7

Jacqueline Cason « Hershel V Jenkins High School, District 6

Malaysia Kirkland « New Hampstead High School, District 6

Christy Kong « Discovery High School, District 12

Gabrielle A. Latimore « Southwest DeKalb High School, District 11

Alexander Lopez « Kennesaw Mountain High School, District 9

Marcus Lovelace « Morrow High School, District 7

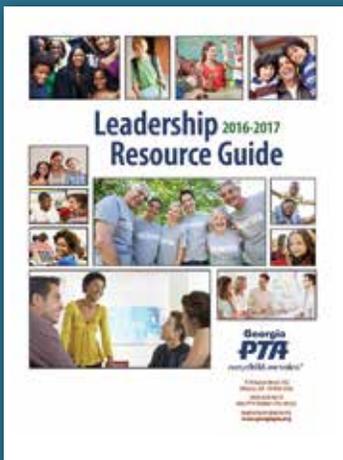
Aarati Shah « Cambridge High School, District 10

Paul Shorter « Collins Hills High School, District 12

Kia A. Smith « Redan High School, District 11

Xuan Tran « Clarkston High School, District 11

Cierra A. White « Savannah Arts Academy, District 6



2016-2017 Leadership Resource Guide

Want to know the specific duties of officers? Have a question about policy or procedure? The newly updated **Leadership Resource Guide** is a great place to find those answers. You can access the Leadership Resource Guide online at www.georgiapta.org.

Know the Local Unit “In Good Standing” Requirements

During the 2014 Convention Leadership Training the convention voting delegates approved to amend the Georgia PTA bylaws to include “A local unit in good standing is one that...**f. Shall pay annual membership dues as assessed by the affiliate council PTA per Article VI, Section 5 of council bylaws, if applicable.**”

Local units should receive an invoice to pay their councils dues from their council treasurer. The council treasurer will notify the state PTA office on a monthly basis of those units having paid council dues.

A local PTA/PTSA in good standing is one that:

- a. Adheres to the purposes and basic policies of the PTA;
- b. Remits the state and national portion of the dues, on a monthly basis, to the state PTA. The state shall remit the national portion to reach the national office by dates designated by the National PTA;
- c. Has bylaws approved according to the procedures of each state;
- d. Submits an annual audit report to the state office by the last business day of September;
- e. Shall submit annually to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), the appropriate Form 990 by the applicable IRS due date; and
- f. Shall pay annual membership dues as assessed by the affiliate council PTA per Article VI, Section 5 of council bylaws, if applicable.

Payment of your Council dues is a requirement to be In Good Standing.

PTA News from Around the State

School Success Spotlight Bascomb Elementary PTA Receives Shade Structure Grant

Bascomb Elementary PTA has been named the recipient of a 2016 Shade Structure Program Grant by the American Academy of Dermatology (Academy). The grant will provide \$8,000 for the purchase and installation of a permanent shade structure over the back playground. Bascomb Elementary PTA is one of 19 organizations to receive a 2016 Shade Structure Program Grant from the Academy.

Bascomb Elementary School and the PTA promote sun safety as a way of life. Educating children on ways to minimize the sun's damage by seeking shade is an important way to reduce the risk of skin cancer, as well as, wearing sun-protective clothes and a broad-spectrum sunscreen with an SPF of 30.

Atlanta North Dermatology dermatologist Jihyun "Ellen" Koo, M.D. a member of the Academy, sponsored the grant application.

"Without this grant, which will cover more than half the cost, this project would not be possible. We are extremely thankful to the American Academy of Dermatology, and Dr. Koo, for their help and generosity," said Heather Shaw, Bascomb PTA President.

Since the Academy founded the Shade Structure Grant Program (www.aad.org/public/spot-skin-cancer/programs/shade-structure-program) in 2000, more than 300 shade structure grants have been awarded to organizations across the country. These structures provide shade for more than half a million individuals each day. The 2017 application will open on September 1, 2016.

The Shade Structure Grant Program is part of the Academy's SPOT Skin Cancer™ campaign to reduce the incidence of skin cancer by educating the public about effective skin cancer prevention tips. To learn more about the Shade Structure Grant Program or for ways to prevent and detect skin cancer, visit www.SpotSkinCancer.org.

Article submitted by Amanda Weber, Bascomb Elementary School



Kudos to Our Outstanding Board Members

Congratulations to **Margie Ringfield**, Georgia PTA Membership Chair, who was honored by Midtown Rotary Club at the 10th Annual Barbara B. Rose Volunteer of the Year awards. In addition to being recognized as Georgia PTA's Volunteer of the Year, Margie was chosen from the twenty-one other nominees to be the 2016 Barbara B. Rose Volunteer of the Year. This award was presented by Ms. Rose herself. Margie received a beautifully engraved crystal clock, a check for \$500 and Georgia PTA receives a check for \$1,000 – talk about non-dues revenue!



Neatie Green, Georgia PTA Treasurer, was recently honored at a gala in Miami, FL as a Living Legend of Booker T. Washington Alumni Association for her outstanding career in education.

Sandra Perrino, Georgia PTA Bylaws Chair, was named the Educator of the Year at Harper-Archer/APS.

Irene Barton, District 9 Director, along with North Fulton former co-president Diane Jacobi, have been chosen to be a part of the 2017 Georgia Partnership for Excellence in Education Policy Fellowship Program.

Evelyn Cunningham, GA PTA Resource Development Chair was recently appointed to the Board of Governors of National Association of Nonprofit Organizations & Executives.

Glynn Council Membership Bowl

Glynn Council hosted a membership bowl event in August for the entire community to participate in. The concept was born about four years ago by Amanda Kirkland, then Council president. The idea is for families to come out to a local football stadium and meet teachers, school level, and school system level administration and sign up to become PTA members at their schools before school even begins. This year, all 16 schools in the school system were present!

Everything was absolutely free to the families, except for signing up to become members of PTA. Food was donated by Chick-fil-A and McDonalds, with hot dogs grilled being by a local church and given to everyone. Coca-Cola sent a truck full of fountain drinks to disperse for free as well!

The event was a competitive one, with the PTAs competing against each other to see who could sign up the most PTA members in one day.



Important Dates to Remember

August

- 24: PTA University – Reflections – 10am
- 25: PTA University – Membership – 10am
- 27: PTA University – Secretary – 10am
- 27: PTA University – Treasurer – 12:30pm
- 31: Membership Visionary Award – dues for 400 members to state office
- 31: Membership Pacesetters Certificate – dues for 300 members to state office
- 31: PTA University – What does it mean to be a Health & Wellness Chair? – 10am
- 31: Committee Chairs due online

September

- 7: PTA University – Vice Presidents – 10am
- 10: PTA University – Vice Presidents – 10am
- 10: PTA University – How to Attract and Keep Volunteers – 12:30pm
- 11: PTA Day at the Atlanta Braves
- 13: PTA University – Reflections – 10am
- 14: PTA University – Understanding the Opportunity School District Constitutional Amendment – 10am
- 15: PTA University – Conflict Resolution – 10am
- 17: PTA Get in Shape Day
- 17: PTA University – Understanding the Opportunity School District Constitutional Amendment – 10am
- 30: PTA Audit/Financial Review due to state office
- 30: Membership Early Bird Certificate – dues for 200 members due to state office
- 30: Platinum Membership Award – Target membership form and dues to state office

October

- 6: Advocacy Conference, State Capitol, Atlanta
- 8: PTA University – Family Engagement – 10am
- 12: PTA University – Family Engagement – 10am
- 15: If your PTA's fiscal year end was May 31, IRS 990 Filing Verification Form is due.
- 19: PTA University – Understanding the Opportunity School District Constitutional Amendment – 10am
- 31: Gold Membership Award – Target membership form and dues to state office
- 31: Membership Oak Tree Award – form and school staff list due to state office
- 31: Membership Community Partnership Award – form and community partners list due to state office



Online Training

www.vimeo.com/georgiaptatraining

We understand that it isn't always possible for our PTA leaders to attend in-person training sessions at the state office or at Council or District meetings. Georgia PTA has created a series of online training videos for PTA leaders to watch from the comfort of their homes.

Georgia PTA's Training Videos

President (also in Spanish)	Trouble on Board –
Treasurer (also in Spanish)	How to Deal with Conflict
Secretary	Keys to Successful Family Engagement
Membership	Report Writing
Reflections	Understanding the
New PTA Officers –	Common Core State Standards
Jump Start Your PTA Success	Grassroots Advocacy
Build a Better Board	Opportunity School District –
Developing Your PTA	Georgia PTA's Position
Communications Plan	Council Leadership Training
How to Fill an Officer Vacancy	Nominating Committees
Why PTA?	& Elections
Best Ideas	Transitioning Your Team

The Voice

Official publication of the Georgia PTA
A Branch of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers

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Editor: Susan Hayes, Leadership Development Chair

Information from this newsletter may be excerpted for other PTA publications at the local, council and district levels as long as credit is given to Georgia PTA and any byline that may appear with the item must be included.

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