

North Carolina Parent-Teacher Bulletin

North Carolina
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Continue the PTA Legacy... Take Action for Children

The PTA legacy lives on by taking action for children. Whether it was the "National School Lunch Act in 1946;" the "Local Public Health Services Act of 1948;" the

"National Child Nutrition Act in 1966;" or more recently the "No Child Left Behind Act in 2002," PTA has always championed education legislation for children. **That's why the week of February 19 has been designated as PTA Advocacy Week.** It's a time for PTA members to meet with their federal, state, and local lawmakers and tell them that children and education should be their highest priorities! The week is scheduled to coincide with federal legislators' district work period, when they will be in their home offices to talk to their constituents.

On February 21, NC PTA will join other child advocacy organizations in North Carolina to sponsor a Legislative Day in Raleigh. The focus of this day will be to support the statewide school bond proposal that is being discussed in our General Assembly. (*See page 4 for the NC Public School Facility Needs Fact Sheet*) The day will begin at 8:30 a.m. with a brief orientation session to give attendees their materials for distribution to legislators, review the talking points, and explain logistics. A second orientation session will begin at 9:30 a.m. for those who are not able to make the 8:30 session. These briefings will be held in Room 150 at the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, 301 N. Wilmington Street, Raleigh, NC 27601. During the afternoon, we will be observing the House and Senate sessions when they convene.

The goal of this day is to let our legislators know that PTA IS an advocacy organization and we ARE going to be fighting for the children and youth of North Carolina. This is just the first of many steps in making our presence and priorities known to our legislators.

If you can be a part of our Legislative Day, please register by sending an email to office@ncpta.org and let

us know the names of the participants along with the name of the PTA being represented. Please register by Monday, February 19.

Other Ways to be an "Advocate in Action"

How can you become an advocate? One easy way is to invite local elected officials to visit your school. Invite all elected officials to come and have lunch, read to a class, sit in on classes, speak to classes, speak to your PTA Board and speak at a PTA meeting. You can get information on "Elected Officials Go to School" on the NC PTA website at www.ncpta.org.

While our General Assembly is in session and while Congress is in session, you will be receiving email alerts from National PTA and NC PTA about important issues regarding education and children that are being discussed. When you get these alerts, please pass them along to your school family. You will be amazed at the difference we can make just by our emails.

In 2003, NC PTA passed a resolution regarding Arts Education and the importance of Arts Education in our schools. Within this resolution we urged that there be a requirement for an arts credit for high school graduation. During February and March, the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction will be holding meetings across the state to discuss the new high school graduation requirements. Despite the fact that statistics show that arts education can improve achievement, there is no arts credit requirement in these new standards. If you can attend these meetings, you will find many people there supporting the arts. Please let your support be known.

National PTA has a great e-learning course on advocacy at www.pta.org. The course shows the importance of advocacy and how easy it is to be an advocate.

You are already your own child's greatest advocate, now is the time to become an advocate for ALL children and continue the PTA legacy.

News from the N. C. Department of Public Instruction . . .

June Atkinson, State Superintendent

Keeping Safe in Cyberspace

“Don’t talk to strangers.”

“Look both ways before crossing the street.”

“Hold hands and stick together when you’re out in the neighborhood.”

These old-fashioned bits of advice are still relevant for parents trying to keep children safe today, but the Internet and the World Wide Web represent a new dynamic to safety for children.

The Web, with its vast resources of information, entertainment and opportunities, brings the world – both good and bad - to you wherever you are. Part of good parenting and educating in the 21st century involves helping children and teens stay safe in cyberspace as well as in the neighborhood outside their home.

The NC Department of Public Instruction focuses on Internet safety in the Standard Course of Study, the curriculum that is in place for all students in kindergarten through grade 12. Both the Healthful Living and the Computer/Technology Skills curricula include components about safe, responsible and ethical behavior online. But even the most conscientious child can easily stumble into offensive or dangerous online material by accident. Educators at school help guard against this by directing students to child-friendly search engines. There are a number of family-friendly search engines that only list wholesome Web sites suitable for younger children, including Ask for Kids (www.askforkids.com) and Yahoo!igans (www.yahooligans.com). NC WiseOwl (Online Windows for Learning, www.ncwiseowl.org) is a curriculum-based Web resource that enables North Carolina public school students to interact with and explore the world, bringing a wealth of information and experiences into the classroom. This site has a Parents’ Zone with links to information about Internet safety and how to help your children use the Internet wisely.

Other technical options include using Content Advisors in your Web browser software and Internet filtering software, such as Cyberpatrol or Netnanny. No technical option is a fail-safe option, however. Protecting yourself and your children also means

following some important tips for Internet use and paying close attention to how your children use the Internet. You may choose to place the Internet-connected computer or computers in your home in a more public place, such as the family room or den. In that way, you as the parent may have more opportunities to oversee what your child is viewing and doing on the Internet. Here are some other important tips to consider:



- As a parent, you set the rules about Internet use in your house. Make sure that your children understand this and know that you are trying to help them stay safe.
- Personal information should remain confidential. Don’t share names, ages, home addresses or telephone numbers. Do not provide financial information or other details such as Social Security numbers or credit card numbers.
- Avoid chat rooms.
- Remember that people online can easily pretend to be someone that they are not in real life.
- Just because something is “on the Internet” does not make it true.
- Do not respond to emails from someone you don’t know.
- Encourage your child to tell you if they encounter anything online that is suggestive, obscene, threatening or that makes them feel uncomfortable.
- If your teen-ager does have online friends, make sure that you know who they are. Parents should have a list of their child’s online friends and email addresses, just as you would want to know your child’s school or neighborhood friends.
- Monitor, monitor, and monitor again your child’s use of the Internet.

State Attorney General Roy Cooper and his staff at the Department of Justice also have developed Internet safety materials for parents to use, particularly from the perspective of Internet crimes against children. You can view these at www.ncsbi.gov.

News from National PTA . . .



Strengthen Your PTA with Sound Nominations

By Anna Weselak
National PTA President

Most PTAs are kept very busy all year with membership campaigns, programs, fundraisers, and many other events. These activities are fun and highly useful, but they need strong leadership and direction to be successful. That's why the work of your PTA's nominating committee in proposing new leaders is one of the most important aspects of running your PTA.

Every PTA should follow the bylaws that describe the roles and responsibilities of the nominating committee which should include:

1. Identify the characteristics and skill sets of potential PTA leaders that are needed to meet the needs of the organization.
 - Interact with the board to identify needs and potential leaders.
 - Perform a gap analysis of board needs (current vs. future).
 - Be sure to evaluate the level of diversity among the PTA leaders.
 - Provide input into the development of job descriptions, qualifications, and criteria.
 - Establish that applicants for elected positions have qualifications as outlined in the bylaws.
2. Find the best, qualified people to lead your PTA:
 - Develop a process to recommend nominees with the following qualities:
 - *Vision and leadership*: The ability to see the big picture and the courage to set direction to achieve the PTA mission.
 - *Stewardship*: The integrity to serve the interests and pursue the goals of the organization.
 - *Knowledge*: Knowledge of PTA, its operations and organization.

- *Diligence*: Dedication and commitment to the PTA's goals.
- *Collegiality*: Possessing a sincere and respectful attitude toward fellow PTA members and their views.

- Communicate with all members within the PTA to identify a diverse and representative group of potential leaders.
 - Continue to establish the pool of potential leaders from inside and outside the PTA.
 - Create a pipeline for future leaders by being forward-thinking.
 - Be well-versed in the responsibilities and skill sets required for all positions.
3. Screen, evaluate, and select potential leaders.
 - Screen and interview potential leaders prior to putting them on the slate.
 - Determine the slate and seek the consent of each candidate.
 - Announce the slate of candidates according to the procedures described in your bylaws.
 4. Recommend opportunities for training to enhance leadership development for the newly elected officers and board members.
 5. Advise the president on committee member selections and appointments.
 6. The work of the Nominating Committee is not complete until all officers are elected and all board positions are filled.

Consider this description a guide for managing your nominating committee and bringing the best people into leadership roles in your PTA. Additional information about managing the business of your PTA can be found in our national governance guide at <http://www.pta.org/Leader/governanceguide.doc>.

Save-the-Date for St. Louis!

Mark your calendar for **June 28 – July 1** to join thousands of PTA leaders, members, and supporters in St. Louis for PTA's 111th Annual Convention and Exhibition. As always, the convention provides ways to network with other PTA members, attend workshops designed to help you be a better parent, hear dynamic keynote speakers and participate in the business of the PTA as we elect new leaders. The event will be held at the Renaissance Grand Hotel, 800 Washington Avenue. Look for and advance registration brochure and register online in March 2007.



North Carolina Public School Facility Needs Fact Sheet

North Carolina's public schools need \$9.8 billion over the next five years to replace deteriorating facilities and modular classrooms and meet the demands of explosive growth in the K-12 student population.

Driving Forces

- **Population Increase** – North Carolina has experienced a 31% increase in population since 1995 and is now the 10th most populous state in the nation. Public school enrollment has increased by 91,181 students since 2000-01 for a current enrollment of 1.43 million and is projected to reach 1.62 million by 2014-15.
- **New State and Federal Initiatives** – Class size reductions in Grades K-3 since 2001-02 have added 3,118 teachers requiring commensurate space at existing school facilities. Many public schools also have made space for the state's expansion of the More at Four and Smart Start pre-kindergarten initiatives during the same time period and expect to add more than 200 additional classrooms for these efforts in the next five years. Federal mandates from the No Child Left behind (NCLB) Act and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), both of which call for more individual and small-group instruction, are placing additional burdens on public school facilities in North Carolina.
- **Explosive Growth** – Population growth in some North Carolina counties is occurring so fast that local school boards and county commissioners cannot keep pace, either with funding or classroom space. Fifteen school districts currently have 50% of the state's total K-12 enrollment. As a result of these demands, school districts statewide have added 1,506 mobile units (a 26.8% increase) since 2001 and now educate 178,325 students (13% of the total K-12 population) in 7,133 mobile units. Teachers and students assigned to these units often are exposed to the elements, traffic, and other potentially dangerous situations during daily transitions.
- **Deteriorating Facilities** – Public school facilities dating back to the 1920s or earlier are still used on a daily basis for many North Carolina public school students, and many of these facilities pose health and safety hazards for

the students and personnel. Leaking roofs, dilapidated boilers, and cramped classrooms are just some of the problems facing school districts, which in many parts of the state do not have sufficient growth in the local tax base to support replacement and/or repairs.

- **Construction Cost Increase** – Construction cost for public schools have increased by 47% since 2000-01 and continue to climb along with the needs for facilities.

The Need

- **\$9.8 Billion to add 4,941 new classrooms across North Carolina in 2,616 public schools.**
 - New Schools - \$4,327,137,980 for 268 total schools
 - Renovations - \$2,281,415,049 at 1,038 schools
 - Additions - \$2,256,214,566 at 1,116 schools
 - Furnishings/Equipment - \$760,759,206
 - Land - \$194,332,411
- **This investment in public school facilities will:**
 - Replace or repair deteriorating buildings.
 - Accommodate growth and decrease the need for mobile units.
 - Retrofit facilities for 21st Century technologies.
 - Improve working condition for teachers to help address the state's teacher shortage.
 - Provide a better and safer learning environment for public school students.

State Action Requested

The 2007 General Assembly should approve a \$2 billion public school facilities bond referendum to put before North Carolina voters at the earliest possible date.

—Compiled by Education Everybody's Business Coalition

Don't Worry About It... We Trust Him/Her



Famous last words, at best. Did you know that 100% of the embezzlement claims that PTA's files are because someone they trusted with the organization's money broke that trust? More and more PTA's are finding that merely trusting someone isn't good enough. Simply stated, there are certain things that PTA's must do to protect themselves against embezzlement claims.

1. **Have A Two Signature Check System** – This helps to prevent one person from signing checks for non-PTA approved expenses.
2. **Have Someone Who Does Not Have Check Signing Authority Review The Monthly Bank Statement** – This is not the reconciliation. This person would be looking for inconsistencies such as checks written in non-sequential order, non-approved PTA expenses, as well as to non-approved PTA vendors.
3. **Conduct An Annual Financial Review** – This can be done by either a CPA or a qualified audit committee appointed by the PTA board. If money is being taken from your PTA, this is the perfect time to nip it in the bud. PTA's who do not conduct an annual audit could have money taken for years by the same person and not know the difference. This is also a requirement of most insurance companies who supply bond policies.
4. **Consider Purchasing A Blanket Fidelity Bond Policy** – This would cover *anyone* who you trust with PTA money. Most PTA's are concerned with liability only (bodily injury occurring at one of your PTA's events). There is just as much, if not more, exposure to embezzlement risks as there is to liability. A bond policy, if all requirements are followed, could replace your stolen funds in the event that someone you trust has taken your organization's funds.

Provided by AIM Association Insurance Management
www.aim-companies.com

Happy Birthday NPTA!
Celebrate NPTA's 110th Birthday on
February 17, 2007

Healthy Schools Grant Recipients Announced

NC PTA and NC Department of Public Instruction, Healthy Schools Initiative are pleased to announce the recipients of the 2006-07 Healthy School Mini-Grant.

The goal of North Carolina Healthy Schools is to create a working infrastructure between education and health to enable schools and communities to create a Coordinated School Health Program. A model school health program includes eight components:

- Health Education
- Health Services
- Safe Physical Environment
- School Counseling, Psychological and Social Services
- Physical Education
- Nutrition Services
- Health Promotion for Staff
- Family and Community Involvement

Healthy Schools focuses on improving the health of students and staff by providing coordination and resources in eight component areas of school health. With all of these components in place and working together, students will be healthier in school, in class, and ready to learn. In healthy schools, children are more alert, more focused on learning, and miss less school. They not only learn better, but also learn lifelong healthy behaviors to prevent the leading causes of death in North Carolina: heart disease, stroke, and cancer. Healthier schools lead to healthier students which lead to healthier communities.

The PTAs that received funding are:

1. Bethesda Elementary, Durham County
2. Charlotte/Mecklenburg PTA Council
3. D. H. Conley High, Pitt County
4. Green Hope High, Wake County
5. Mary Scroggs Elementary, Orange County
6. Merrick Moore Elementary, Durham County
7. Southeast Elementary, Lenoir County
8. Southeast Raleigh High, Wake County
9. Wake County PTA Council
10. Zebulon GT Magnet Middle, Wake County

We congratulate these PTAs and know their schools and students will benefit greatly from having a coordinated school health program. If you would like more information about Healthy Schools, contact Sherry Lehman, Section Chief, 919.807-3859, slehman@dpi.state.nc.us or visit www.nchealthyschools.org.

Guilford County Council of PTAs

Supporting Exception Children and their Families

About the Program

Students with learning differences and special needs in Guilford County now have more support than ever. The Guilford County Council of PTAs (GCC PTAs) have been working hard over the last three years to develop a unique program and partnership with the Guilford County Schools (GCS) Exceptional Children's Department and the Guilford County Schools Exceptional Children's Parent Advisory Council (ECPAC). In 2004 GCC PTA Exceptional Children's Chair, Ruth Schallert began writing a training manual and recruiting for PTA volunteers to represent and advocate for exceptional children (EC) in each PTA unit in Guilford County. In the beginning fifteen advocates were trained. Today, there are sixty-three trained PTA volunteers serving as Exceptional Children's advocate in their schools. Since 2004, the GCC PTAs Exceptional Children's Program has expanded from one to three chairpersons – Education, Communication and Advocacy, who serve at the council level. The GCC PTAs EC Program produces a monthly newsletter, the EC Voice, for GCS EC students and their families. EC Advocates help to distribute the newsletters at their schools.



Program Initiatives

One of the first initiatives the GCC PTA's EC program supported was ECPAC's effort in advocating for GCS to hire a part-time paid EC parent liaison. The first GCS EC Parent liaison was hired in August 2005. A second accomplishment of the partnership was the production of a sixty-four-page community resource guide for Exceptional Children and their families. The guides rolled off the press this October. The booklets not only include agencies and organizations that serve students with special needs and their families, but also contain frequently asked questions, commonly used EC and No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) abbreviations and explanations, tips on how to choose a tutor for your child, names and numbers of key GCS personnel, articles on understanding Community alternative Program for persons with Mental Retardation/Developmental Disabilities (CAP-MR/DD) as well as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR). The Learning Disabilities Association of Greensboro and the Association of Retarded Citizens (ARC) of Greensboro generously provided funds to produce the guides. Future plans include printing the guides in Spanish and updating them every two to three years.

Volunteer Resources

The school's EC PTA volunteers serve as a resource, support, and advocate at their school. These amazing volunteers direct families to appropriate sources of information, lend an ear to parents, and consult with their PTA's on how to better include students and families in PTA and school activities and events. Many of the PTA Advocates have sponsored programs on EC topics at their schools for parents, teachers and/or students. While PTA volunteer advocates are not professional advocates that often attend IEP meetings, they do receive training in community resources, GCS EC services and administrative structure, maintaining confidentiality, how to listen and direct parents to appropriate resources. Quarterly meetings are held during each school year. All of the EC PTA school advocates come together to share their experiences or information, learn from a guest speaker, or discuss current issues, brainstorm, and plan a course of action.

Internet Resources

The partnership is also working on an Internet link to connect ECPAC, GCC PTAs, and GCS websites to specific information that parents may be seeking in the resource guides.

This program and partnership is successful because we have worked together to meet a strong need in our school system and community. We all believe in our children's strengths and want to maximize those strengths. We cannot do this without family, school, community, and legislative support. If you are interested in replicating this program in your community or school please contact Ruth Schallert at 336-812-9063 or aschallert@earthlink.net. Information can also be found on GCC PTAs website at www.guilfordcountyppta.org. We will be presenting the GCC PTAs EC Program and Partnership at the NC PTA convention in Asheville this April. For conference information visit www.ncpta.org. We hope you will join us.



Simplified Summer Food Program for Children Now Enrolling Providers

Summer programs that operate in low-income areas or serve primarily low-income children can receive federal funds to provide meals through the new Simplified Summer Food Program.

Schools, local government agencies and private non-profits can participate in the program, which helps ensure that children do not go hungry while out of school during the summer. Other places where children congregate during the summer, such as parks, swimming pools, and low-income housing complexes, can also participate.

The Simplified Summer Food Program removes complicated accounting rules still required in the traditional summer food program. This dramatically cuts paperwork and provides sponsors with the full federal reimbursement for each meal they serve.

To qualify, a site must either be located in a low-income area where 50 percent or more of the children in the area are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals, or must serve primarily low-income children, at least half of whom are eligible for free or reduced-price school meals.

Most sites can provide up two meals a day through the program. Camps and sites serving primarily migrant children can provide up to three meals a day, but they qualify under slightly different rules.

“We know that children from low-income families will be hungry when their schools are closed, because there is not enough food for them at home,” said Cynthia Ervin, coordinator of the program in North Carolina. “During those long summer months, the Summer Food Service Program serves what is too often their only nutritious meal of the day.”

“We need more providers to offer this program in their local communities. In a typical year, over 600,000 North Carolina children are eligible for these free meals, but only one in six of those children actually get them. We are hoping to expand the program so that children can continue to get the nutrition they need to grow, play and learn throughout the summer, when they don’t have access to regular school lunches and breakfasts,” she said. “The new simplified SFSP makes it easier for providers to participate than in the past.”

Participating sponsors need to be trained by the middle of April; final applications are due by June 15.

For the training schedule or to find out how to apply to be a provider please visit www.nutritionnc.com/snp/sfsp.htm or contact the N.C. Division of Public Health’s Special Nutrition Programs office at (919) 707-5799.

NC PTA Awards Program Deadline is Approaching



The Awards Program of North Carolina PTA provides us with the opportunity to recognize and celebrate the exemplary efforts of PTA/PTSA units, councils, and individuals throughout our state. Your participation in our awards program will give us the opportunity to share you outstanding accomplishments with other PTAs during our Annual State Convention in Asheville, April 27-28, 2007.

You may now apply online for all of NC PTA's awards. Please refer to the Awards section on our website (www.ncpta.org) for the numerous ways to honor an outstanding teacher, principal, school administrator, volunteer, or your PTA. We encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity to say "thank you" to deserving people who have contributed greatly in improving the lives of children and youth. **The deadline for applying is March 1, 2007.**

The State Office membership records, based on dues paid and postmarked by March 15, determine the number of Membership Awards. It's not too late for your PTA to be recognized. Remember, PTA is a year-round effort. Please continue to enroll members in your unit and submit dues to the State PTA Office by March 15.

Reminders . . .

PTA has launched the second annual **Unit Recognition Program** for the 2006-2007 membership year, and your local unit may be eligible to receive an award. The application process is fast, easy, and free! Simply go to the PTA website, http://www.pta.org/local_leadership_subprogram_1157664409109.html and fill out the application, and either fax it to (312) 670-6783 or email it to info@pta.org. **The application deadline is March 15, 2007.**

January 8 marked the kick-off of the second **Picture PTA** photo contest. Here's your chance to win a \$50 gift card and have your photos used in PTA publications, on PTA websites, and in other PTA materials. [Click here](#) to get all the contest rules, application, and model releases. Consider photographing your PTA Take Your Family to School Week and PTA Advocacy Week events. **The contest ends this February 28.**

**DON'T MISS OUT!!!!
MARK YOUR CALENDARS
NOW!!!!**

The 2007 NC PTA Convention will be held on April 27 & 28 in beautiful Asheville, NC. It will be two days of great workshops, good food, sharing of ideas, meeting new people and having fun!!!!

You will have the opportunity to attend four amazing workshops sessions. Topics for the workshops include the "how to" of being a PTA President or Treasurer, boardmanship, leadership development, the standards of parent involvement, health and safety issues, advocacy, etc.

Convention is also your opportunity to participate in the business of NC PTA. It is important for you to be a part of the decisions being made regarding the future direction and vision for NC PTA.

Detailed information and registration instructions will be available on our website (www.ncpta.org) beginning March 1st.

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU IN ASHEVILLE!!!!!!!

Mark Your Calendars



March

- Parenting Awareness Month
- 1 — Deadline for State Awards and Citizenship Essay Contest (apply online at www.ncpta.org)
- 2 — Read Across America (www.nea.org/readacross)
- 11 — Daylight savings time begins
- 15 — Deadline for final dues remittance for the 2006-07 membership year
- Register to attend the State PTA Convention

April

- National Child Abuse Prevention Month
- 12 — Drop Everything and Read Day
- 14 — Healthy Kids Day
- 15-21 — National Volunteer Week
- 23-29 — TV Turnoff Week
- 27-28 — State PTA Convention, Asheville, NC



“Get to Victory Lane” by increasing your membership by 3%.

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