Greetings from Kansas PTA President

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all of the PTA units, Leaders, Members, Teachers, and Students across our great state a Happy Holiday Season, a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! I wanted to personally thank you for all that each of you do in your schools, regions, and councils in your area of our State for “Our Kids”! I know that we are all volunteers and that we sometimes put our own families wants and needs on the back burner, so this holiday season I would like you to take some time to reconnect, recharge and rejuvenate. Watch those favorite holiday movies, eat way too many treats and spend that quality time with all of those loved ones.

When school starts back up we all know there is still more to do, winter membership drives, book fairs, skating parties, spring fundraisers, getting ready for convention, and of course, end of year events. That is what PTA volunteers do, and we do it well!

The best part is that it helps all of “our kids” in ways you might not think. Recently I ran into a young lady who went to school with one of my kids. She is now married, has a couple of kids, and her family has a small farm. She said she has gone to the schools closest to her farm and spoke with the principal about having groups visit so they can learn about the different animals they have, they even offer horseback riding lessons. She has also opened her home to students who need a place to stay. I told her how proud I am of her and she said that she remembers all of the PTA moms who took time to be involved at her school. She said she wanted to pay it forward.

From my House to yours, Happy Holidays and cheers to a Wonderful New Year ~

Monica Crowe

Qualities of Effective Officers

Effective officers are those officers who:
- Have a knowledge of and promote the objects and basic policies of the PTA;
- Perform all the duties of the office as outlined in the bylaws;
- Cooperate with the school administrator and staff;
- Study the material distributed to local PTA units by the State PTA and National PTA;
- Become familiar with Local, Council, State and National Bylaws;
- Attend Council, Region, State and National Meetings;
- Make reports promptly as required and file annual reports as part of the records of the association;
- Answer correspondence promptly, and keep informed by reading publications of the association;
- Transmit records, reports and other material promptly to succeeding officers;
- Return to treasurer, without delay, all funds pertaining to the office;
- Keep a procedure book to pass on to succeeding officers
Citizenship and Diversity in Special Education

The way to promote anything is to first be cognizant and knowledgeable. The 1) Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines citizenship as “...membership in a community” and “…the quality of an individual's response to membership in a community”. Diversity means “the condition of having or being composed of differing elements, or the inclusion of different types of people such as people of different races or cultures in a group or organization.

The diversity in the population of students in the United States is ever-changing. Whether the diversity is due to cultural, religious, and/or learning barriers, there is a true need to embrace this multiplicity and to proactively manage it in ways that create environments for success for every student.

So how do we encourage citizenship for special education students? We must be involved on every level and work with educators to create strategies that work with as few restrictions as possible. Students with individual education plans (IEPs) are important to our communities, just as every student is important. Irrespective of the set of services these students receive, they are members of our community and need to have the same opportunities to see to their civic responsibilities as much as possible.

PTA’s involvement includes advocating for those strategies and helping to create partnerships to bring families together. Additionally, PTA’s can help communities to overcome stigmas and remove fears over someone being ‘different’ through hosting events and being ‘inclusion ambassadors’, showing that we truly are ‘all in this together’.

Submitted by Cindy Villa – Special Education Chair – Kansas PTA


7 BEST TIPS WHEN APPLYING FOR A GRANT

DARRELL ROBINSON, NATIONAL PTA

1. Know what grants exist and when to apply. Sign up for National PTA’s newsletters and bookmark our grants page.
2. Tell a compelling story. Make sure all your answers work together to highlight your PTA’s strengths.
3. Share how the grant would impact your school community. Identify an existing need in your school community and explain how the grant will address that need.
4. Show your enthusiasm. Describe how the grant will provide an exciting opportunity for your school and PTA.
5. Answer all parts of the question. Include concrete, detailed examples and explanations that completely answer the questions asked.
6. Promote family engagement. Demonstrate how this grant will help you build stronger families in your community and how you will encourage all families to attend your event.
7. Get a second set of eyes. Ask someone to proofread your work for spelling, grammar and clarity before submitting the application.
Kansas Capitol building, Topeka, Kansas

**Why Join PTA?**

The number one reason to join your Parent Teacher Association is to benefit your child. In doing so, you also help your school. But there are many more PTA advantages:

- **Get Connected:** There’s no better way to know what’s happening in your school.
- **Discover Great Resources:** The PTA offers a variety of programs designed for parents as well as students.
- **Tap into a Network:** PTA functions are opportunities to meet other parents and teachers, building rapport and discussing issues that are on your mind. You can share ideas, concerns, and experiences.
- **Watch Yourself Grow:** By volunteering with your PTA, you put your skills and hobbies to use for a cause—your child and all children in the community.
- **Speak Up:** PTA can be a way for you to more effectively suggest change at your child’s school.
- **Witness Improvement:** By getting involved at your child’s school you’ll be part of the solution, helping make positive changes. Local PTAs play an important role by supporting building improvements through advocacy and play an important role in fundraising for curriculum based programs and child-centric events.
- **Be a Role Model:** By becoming a PTA member, you’ll be demonstrating to your child the importance you place on education.
- **Enjoy Substantial Benefits:** Individuals and local units can take advantage of a host of benefits from PTA membership including discounts and offers from member benefit providers, sponsors, magazine subscriptions, leadership training, e-learning, e-newsletters and much more. For less than 2 cents a day, you can become a PTA member, joining more than 4 million other people who share your interest in issues affecting children. Everyone—parents, educators, students and other citizens active in their schools and communities—is invited to join our not-for-profit parent association.

**Kansas PTA Legislative Update**

November 6th was the general election. According to the Kansas Secretary of State, voter turnout was just over 56% which is actually considered good for a midterm election. The elections resulted in a Governor-Elect who better supports education issues, but a House Chamber that appears to be more conservative and we anticipate less-willing to support our PTA platform and legislative priorities.

These next two years may prove to be more challenging, as bad bills may be more frequent. We will be investing more time and effort into following the new legislature and various committees in the Statehouse. We will be providing testimony in committees and sending out calls to action to contact elected officials in Topeka. Go to openstates.org and find your Kansas Statehouse Representative & Senator and get to know them. The next legislative session begins mid-January. It is critical that you hold your elected officials accountable!
If you are no longer a PTA president, please notify the Kansas PTA State Office.

Forward this and all mailings immediately to your successor.