

**SPECIAL
POINTS OF
INTEREST:**

- What's Your Story?
- Timing is Everything
- Here Comes the Judge!

**INSIDE
THIS ISSUE:**

- Legislatively Speaking 2
- A Key to Success 3
- Eating it Op-Ed 4
- Saying Thank You 5
- The OC 6
- A Second Look 7

President's Perspective

PTA Membership is up in Wisconsin this year.

Congratulations!

Thank you for your efforts thus far.

There is a lot going on in education in Wisconsin and we need everyone's voice to speak out for children. Membership is a year-round effort, so keep working on increasing your membership numbers.

Do you know the number one reason people do not join PTA? They were never asked.

Try to personally invite new members to join your PTA. Ask each member to ask one new person to join your PTA and you could double your membership. Membership also does not require volunteer hours. Many people don't join PTA because they are afraid they will be asked to do a lot. Make sure you have volunteer jobs of all sizes, and welcome members that don't volunteer but want to join their voice with yours in behalf of Wisconsin's children. Also don't forget PTA is not limited to parents. Teachers, school and school district administrators, neighbors, grandparents, business leaders, religious leaders, and community members all care about the kids

at your school. Ask them to join.

PTA also offers an Associate Business member program, where local businesses can support your PTA. Visit our website www.wisconsinpta.org for additional information about this program that can benefit everyone in your community.

You should have received our Fall mailing in the last few weeks. Take time to look at everything included there and forward those items to other board members that relate to their positions. Also review the award applications and programs so we can recognize the wonderful people and programs of your PTA.

If you did not receive this mailing, make sure our office has the correct mailing address for your president and that your unit is in good standing. A unit in good standing has membership submitted by November 1st of at least 10 members (continue to submit membership as you receive it throughout the year), a copy of your annual audit turned in and your bylaws have been reviewed within the last three



years.

It is the holiday season. I hope all of you had a great Thanksgiving and take the time to enjoy the upcoming holidays. It is a great time to learn about other cultures and traditions.

Join us on Facebook at:

<http://www.facebook.com/#!/WisconsinPTA>

and let us know how you celebrate the holidays. Also update us on your membership efforts and the other wonderful things you accomplish in your PTA.

Creating waves of change,

Kim Henderson

President,
Wisconsin PTA



Legislatively Speaking

Jill Gaskell, WI PTA BOD, State Legislative Chair

To receive
Legislative
Alerts
send your
email address
to:

[wi_office@
pta.org](mailto:wi_office@pta.org)

The proof is in. The drastic cuts to Wisconsin' schools, second largest in the nation, had a huge impact. The annual survey of School Administrators conducted by WASDA confirms the loss of nearly 4000 jobs in education in Wisconsin last year. These staff cuts affected the quality of education for the 90% of the students in the state.

Retirements in 2011 were 2.5 times higher than in previous years. The replacement teachers are younger and less experienced. While less experience is not necessarily a bad thing, many of these young teachers are facing a higher student to teacher ratio with no mentors, making the classroom more stressful. Smaller class sizes lead to better



post-secondary and life outcomes based on a large body of research. A recent report finds

that small class sizes increase the likelihood that a student will complete college and tends to shift students toward Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields. The SAGE program has seen decreased participation in the 2011-12 school year. Four out of ten students in Wisconsin attend school in a district with larger class sizes in the elementary grades.

Along with cuts in staff come cuts in programs or course offerings. Half of the students in Wisconsin have fewer selections in Art, Music or Physical Education. While these are not core subjects, they contribute to a well-

rounded education. Even in core subjects, 40% of students have fewer courses from which to choose. One-third of students have had cuts in foreign languages which many colleges require for admission.

Half of all districts reported that they used one-time federal funds to offset even deeper cuts—funds that will be unavailable next year. Two out of three districts reported that they expect to have as deep or even deeper cuts next year. Only one out of 10 expect to have fewer cuts next year. Finally, there was no significant difference in the cuts made in districts that still had Union contracts to those without Union contracts.

More information can be found at:

[http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/
wasdasurveyresults.pdf](http://dpi.wi.gov/eis/pdf/wasdasurveyresults.pdf)

Call for Reflections

Kirsten Knickrehm, WI PTA BOD Reflections Chair

Thank you to all of the students who worked on and submitted entries for the Theme Search Contest. The top five choices at the State level are being submitted to National PTA for consideration at this time. National PTA will notify you directly if your entry is selected as the winner and they will mail you your \$100 prize.

If your school is planning to participate in the Reflections program this year, be sure your local unit chair has registered on the WI PTA website, and the

State chair has received the information for your school. This enables the State chair to provide valuable updates and streamlined information related to State and National guidelines.

Reminder...Student Entries must be received by the State category chairs **no later than January 13, 2012**. The listing of Category Chairs is available on the website as of December 1st and will also be emailed directly to all local chairs



who have registered with the Wisconsin State PTA.

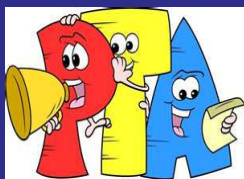
If you have questions regarding Reflections

please contact *Kirsten Knickrehm, Wisconsin PTA Reflections Chair* via email at:

wi_reflections@yahoo.com

or by calling 218-310-8825.

Just
Ask!



Success for Students

Roxanne Starks, WI PTA BOD Education Commissioner

As we look at our educational system today and the lost of dollars in our various school districts, the question becomes how can we provide a quality education and resources needed for all children. We must recognize that we have to look at the African proverb, "It takes a whole village to raise a child".

In Milwaukee the Greater Milwaukee Foundation has formed a partnership with Milwaukee leaders at all levels of the education, nonprofit, community, civic, and philanthropic sectors that are working together as part of Milwaukee Succeeds.

Members of the Milwaukee Succeeds Leadership Council believe that education is the most critical issues facing our community. Not only is it an issue from a moral per-

spective, but also it is the primary determiner of our future economic viability and success.

Milwaukee Succeeds has four goals:

- All children are prepared to enter school
- All children succeed academically and graduate prepared for meaningful work and/or college
- All young people utilize post-secondary education or training to advance their opportunities beyond high school and prepare for a successful career
- Recognizing the difficult economic realities facing our families, all children and young people are healthy, supported socially and emotionally, and contribute responsibly to the success of the Milwaukee community

Along with these goals they have also determined measures specifically for each goal.

This initiative has provided an opportunity for each member to put aside their own agenda and come together for the common good of all the children in the city of Milwaukee.

While it has to be recognized that at the end of the day, regardless of your affiliation, we all want the best for our children.

Perhaps the time has come for other cities should look at what they can do collectively for all children and young people to be successful. After all this is our future. Until next time.....

"...leaders at all levels of the education, nonprofit, community, civic and philanthropic sectors..."

Why PTA? My Story

Heather Leckey, WI PTA President-Elect

I was at a meeting of about 20 people and we were brainstorming answers to the question "Why PTA?" I sat back fairly convinced that there would be several answers brought forth from the group. We were an experienced group after all. I sat back and answer after answer did not match mine. Why I am involved with PTA now is not entirely the same as why I got involved way back when but it all started out because I was clueless.

My first child was in school and I couldn't get anything out of him. I had been used to having him home with me all day except for when he was at preschool for a few hours.

Now I was sending him to school 7 hours a day and I wasn't finding out about anything that he was doing all day. The kernels I was getting weren't terribly satisfying. They had "disgusting pink pudding" for lunch on the first day of school and they had Show and Tell once a week. After much investigation I found out later it was strawberry yogurt and Show and Tell was on Tuesdays.

A few newsletters into the year I saw that the PTA needed a treasurer. I could balance a checkbook and keep some financial records so I signed up sight unseen and the doors opened up. I met the principal, found out that we had an upcoming book fair and

got to attend my first PTA convention. For me being part of PTA was, and still is, all about access. It's how I find out what's going on. I know my son's administrators. I know about upcoming events, school goals and test results.

Why did you become a PTA member? Why are you a PTA leader? Why do you volunteer at your children's schools? There are as many answers to those questions as there are PTA members. The reason you joined may be what makes a potential PTA member want to join.

What's your story? Share it.

Op-Ed on Child Nutrition

Congress Must Put Children First

Last week, the U.S. Congress missed an opportunity to unite our nation in the fight against childhood obesity and hunger when they passed an agriculture appropriations bill that included language to weaken the USDA's school nutrition standards. Unfortunately, while engaging in partisan wrangling over whether tomato paste constitutes a vegetable, Congress missed the big picture—the health of America's children.

Unless we take action and put our children's health first, our children will be the first generation in American history with a shorter life expectancy than their parents.

As adults, we have a responsibility to all the children of our nation to give them the same chance at a long, bright future that we had.

Our nation's school lunch program has not changed significantly in 15 years. Meanwhile, childhood obesity has reached alarming proportions: One-third of American children are overweight or obese. More than 12 million adolescents suffer from obesity. National PTA is disappointed with the process and the politics involved in doing what we all know is right for our nation's children.

The work did not stop when National PTA advocated for the passage of the Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010, a law that improved the nutrition quality of all

foods served in schools as well as increased access to vital anti-hunger measures.

National PTA, the oldest and largest volunteer child advocacy association, has worked to improve child health outcomes since its inception in 1897. These advocacy efforts have led to the creation of the U.S. Public Health Service, the enactment in 1946 of the National School Lunch program (NSLP) and implementation school milk programs. For decades, National PTA has consistently provided results as well as a platform for parents to advocate for children and work together to protect the health of our children.

Betsy Landers
National PTA President



Wisconsin Adult
School
Crossing Guard
Recognition Week

January 9-13

Now? A Nominating Committee?

The nominating committee has the task of seeking out qualified nominees for officers' positions in your PTA. One should recognize that being selected as a member of the nominating committee is quite an honor. The membership is entrusting you with the ability to make decisions that will have a huge influence on your PTA's future.

Since this is such an important decision-making process members of the committee should be chosen carefully. Elect people who can devote an adequate amount of time to the task. They will need to seek out potential nominees, do some information-gathering, seek acceptances of nominations and have vigorous discussion. It's okay if committee members don't have prior knowledge of details re-

garding necessary qualifications and responsibilities of the elected positions as long as they can be provided to committee members. They will need to use good judgment, objectivity, tact, discretion and confidentiality.

What would be easiest? Look at the current officers, determine who is eligible to return for another and ask someone else at the table to step up to fill a vacant position. If that doesn't work you can track down the regular volunteers at your school and ask them. Track down only experienced leaders or pounce on all those new parents with little kids who haven't had a turn yet. "Done!"

Instead consider what might result if you do the following: Elect a committee early. A nominating committee is elected at least two

months prior to elections which means that you can start now. This would allow time to observe, train and put the word out throughout the year. Look everywhere. Consider experienced leaders but also consider those who are inexperienced. Running a PTA is done as a team and inexperienced people can be trained in the ways of PTA. Consider parents who are new with little kids but also consider parents of older kids who may have all their kids in school now and weren't able to help out when their kids were younger. Don't rule out grandparents, school volunteers, staff or teachers. Everyone can be a potential leader.

An exhaustive search can be a huge task but it will serve you well as it will result in the best possible officers for your PTA.

What Is PTA Up To?

Cyndi Barbian, WI PTA BOD Membership Chair

No one gets involved in PTA for the glory, we do it because we care about children, all children. Wisconsin PTA is offering PTAs the opportunity to share ideas and thank the volunteers who work so hard.

Lake Geneva will be the site for congratulating hard working PTAs, parents, teachers and students at the annual convention. We will bestow many awards and scholarships to well deserving people as we celebrate another year of being the voice of all children. But, we cannot possibly present awards without your help. The basics for the awards presented during our convention are here, you can find the specific details at the Wisconsin PTA website, or in the mailings, sent to PTA presidents.

Think of this not so much as a pat on the back, but as a way to share what worked for your PTA! Please look over the requirements and submit applications early so we can recognize all of the great things that are going on in your PTA. **PTA's must be in good standing for applications to be considered. Pay careful attention to award deadlines.**

The following are available:



Achievement Awards for PTA/PTSA's

- Local Unit Outstanding Program of the Year Award-Traditional
- Local Unit Outstanding Program of the Year Award-Non Traditional
- Council Program of the Year Award
- Local Unit Elementary Newsletter Award
- Local Unit Secondary Newsletter Award
- Council Newsletter Award
- Council of the Year Award

Brookmire-Hastings Scholarship Two \$1000.00 scholarships awarded annually by to seniors enrolled in a Wisconsin PTA/PTSA school. Applicants must plan to pursue a career in the field of education at a four year college or university.

Honorary Life The highest honor that can be bestowed by Wisconsin PTA. Recipients are strong advocates for children and may be from a local unit, council or other health, welfare or educational agency.

Katzer-Smith Award The Katzer-Smith Volunteer Service Award recognizes outstanding efforts of PTA/PTSA volunteers who go above and beyond the call of duty to PTA/PTSA and the community.

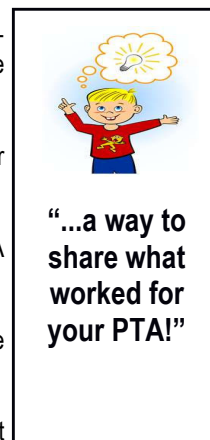
Kim Schwantes Award An award is for a non-teaching position (i.e. secretary, custodian, aide, etc.) who have given above and beyond to help the children in your school bloom in a special way.

Teacher of the Year Presented to a classroom teacher, special area teacher, media specialist, reading specialist or IEP teacher at each the elementary and secondary levels.

Ronald Dunlap Administrator of the Year This is the first year WI PTA will be presenting an award designed to recognize your school and district administrators. The perfect way to thank those in charge for all that they do for families and staffs.

Joan Dykstra Alumni Scholarship This scholarship, provided by the WI Alumni PTA will fund the attendance of the recipient to the annual Wisconsin PTA Convention.

Applications can be found in several places including the mailing sent to all presidents over the summer, the fall mailing that should have been received a few weeks ago and online at wisconsin_pta.org.



From the West Coast

Early in the 2011-12 school year, California PTA President Carol Kocivar wrote this article. After reading it, it was decided that it should be shared.

When my son was a junior in high school, he put a song on my computer that reminds me why I am a PTA volunteer.

Whether it is writing an agenda for a meeting or calling PTA parents, or just clearing e-mails, it always makes more sense listening to Eric Cpaton singing, "If I Could Change the World.)

I'd like to think it was my son's subtle way of telling Mom, "I understand what you are doing."

The school year, now more than ever...our children need PTA to change their world.

Improving the lives of children has a new urgency. Pundits are now saying that this may be the first generation of children in America to grow up less healthy and less educated than their parents.

Stop right there.

Less healthy and less educated?

We need to write a new script. It is not *Waiting for Superman*. It is *The PTA is Here!*

And it's time for PTA to turn up the heat.

Imagine, just imagine, the power of almost 1 million PTA parents working to improve the lives of children. This Great Recession makes the work of PTA in our schools and our communities even more valuable. If there were ever a time for PTA to speak loudly and clearly for the rights of children, it is now.

We want our children to be healthy, to live in a safe community, to attend quality schools. We want our children to have the skills they need to support themselves and their families. We want our children to be responsible citizens in a democratic society.

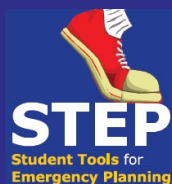
These are the dreams we have for every child. This is not something we leave to chance, or leave for someone else to do. We know as PTA that every day we can improve the lives of children.

We need to remind our elected officials, whether on the school board, or they city council or in the California Legislature, that meeting the needs of children is the responsibility of all of us. That means investing in children. Investing in children is not an issue of Republicans versus Democrats. It is not an issue of right versus wrong. As we begin a new school year, the planning you do today will pay off for our children. As Diana Scharf Hunt once said, "Goals are dreams with deadlines."

So take a few moments to dream. Imagine.

What can I do each do to improve the lives of children?

How can I change their world?



**Student
Tools for
Emergency
Planning**

[http://
readywisconsin.
wi.gov](http://readywisconsin.wi.gov)

Up-to-Date Bylaws

Ellen Chicka, WI PTA BOD Bylaws Chair

Bylaws are the document that governs the structure of your PTA. They need to be updated at least once every three years and submitted to Wisconsin PTA for approval.

A huge thank you to those that have served on your unit's com-

mittee to update your bylaws. For those that are not sure when they need to be updated, you can check the bylaws packet that was sent in the August mailing for your due date, or call or email the WI PTA office. Remember, if you are past due, your unit cannot

participate in Reflections or other national programs, nor can it apply for any grant money, scholarships or awards that are available. And don't forget, you must use the 7/11 version of the bylaws, which can be found on the WI PTA website.

Re-Evaluating Your Budget

The school year is now in its fourth month and most of you have had your primary fundraiser. Now it is time to review your budget. Was your fundraiser successful or did you not meet your goals? When you answer this question, you then need to ask the question: Do we need to change our budget?



The budget can be changed through a vote. Changing your budget after the fundraiser is a good idea because you know what money you really have to work with. It is a misconception that if there is a budget for the program, than there is money. Reviewing your budget few times a

Linda Dubiak, WI PTA BOD Treasurer

year helps to keep your costs in check.

You will also want to remember to use your funds every year. Only carry over the amount you will need to work with until the next year's primary fundraiser. Members do not like to see that the funds they have raised are not being used in a timely manner.

PTA is Going to Court

National PTA

At its November 5th meeting, the National PTA Board of Directors authorized our attorney to file a lawsuit against School Family Media, the company that does business under the name PTO Today. The suit claims trademark infringement, false advertising, unfair competition and commercial disparagement. The complaint seeks a permanent injunction from using the term PTA, using any trade name similar to PTA, or any other representation likely to cause confusion with PTA; it also seeks damages, punitive damages and legal fees.



failed to comply, legal counsel sent a follow up letter in March of 2009. After extensive discussion the company agreed to add a disclaimer that they were not affiliated with PTA and drop some of the statements we felt created confusion.

School Family Media has since breached that agreement. They deleted the disclaimer and have returned to making statements clearly designed to create the impression that they are affiliated with PTA; they have also added false and misleading statements about PTA. Just a few examples include:

- Get answers to your PTA Questions
- PTA has lost tens of thousands of units
- Starting a new PTO / PTA

We have discussed the situation with our Patent / Trademark attorney and mutually agree that sending a further cease and desist letter seeking voluntary compliance will not be productive. It is likely School Family Media will engage in similar tactics, first delaying compliance and then reinstating their false and misleading claims. As such, the Board felt the only way to permanently resolve this situation is through a negotiated binding settlement or a court order.

In July of 2008 National PTA sent a cease and desist letter to School Family Media citing examples of their infringement on our trademark and requesting voluntary compliance. When School Family Media

- PTO vs. PTA – Different acronyms, same purpose and passion – all PTO Today
- How to write PTA Bylaws

We will keep you apprised of the progress in this matter.





everychild.one voice

Wisconsin PTA
4797 Hayes Road, Suite 102
Madison, WI 53704

Phone: (608) 244-1455
Fax: (608) 244-4785
E-Mail: wi_office@pta.org

Reminder to PTAs:
Update Board Rosters
with all:
**Additions, Deletions
or Changes
throughout the year!**



WI PTA Calendar

December

- 1 10% Membership Increase award deadline
- 26-27 WI and National PTA offices closed ~ Christmas

January

- 2 WI and National PTA offices closed ~ New Year
- 13 Reflections Deadline
Postmark Deadline for: Katzer-Smith, Kim Schwantes. Teacher of the Year, WI Honorary Life and Ron Dunlap Awards
- 16 National PTA offices closed ~ Martin Luther King Day
- 18-20 WI Association of School Board Convention, Milwaukee
- 21-22 WI PTA Board of Directors Meeting

February

- 12-18 Take Your Family to School Week
- 17 PTA Founders Day
- 20 President's Day

March

- 1 Membership Award forms due to WI PTA office

April

- 26 WI PTA Board of Directors Meeting, Lake Geneva
- 27-28 WI PTA Annual Convention, Lake Geneva

SAVE THE DATE!



Wisconsin PTA Convention
April 27-28, 2011
The Abbey
Lake Geneva, WI