Echo Newsletter

Region Director: Susan Brown, director@gvpta.org

September 2017

Information from National and New York State PTA and the Genesee Valley Region.

**From the Region Director**

Susan Brown, GVPTA Region Director, director@gvpta.org

Welcome! I hope everyone's year has started off successfully. September is a busy month as we set the stage for the year to come. As your Region Director, it is the job of me and my team to help you accomplish your goal. If you need assistance, please do not hesitate to call on us. It is what we are here for.

I recently read a report about the kind of parental involvement that matters most. *A New Framework for Understanding Parental Involvement: Setting the Stage for Academic Success* by Angel L. Harris and Keith Robinson may be found here: [www.rsfjournal.org/doi/full/10.7758/RSF.2016.2.5.09](http://www.rsfjournal.org/doi/full/10.7758/RSF.2016.2.5.09).

The authors report that setting the stage for school success is the essential element, particularly in the following areas:

1. Supportive of schooling and extracurricular activities
2. Skillfully navigating school choices—selecting schools/programs for their children
3. Effectively conveying the importance of school
4. Labeling students as smart.

PTAs play an incredible role in supporting schooling and conveying the importance of school. When we show our dedication to school with our hard work, we share with our community the importance of school. PTAs can actively promote the idea that academic success is the key to better outcomes. We can share with other parents who cannot find the time to help with the book fair, chaperone a fieldtrip or run the harvest dance, that their critical contribution to school success can be as simple as showcasing the importance of both school and diligent work.

I would caution parents with labeling students as smart. There is much research out there to suggest that we should emphasize effort and hard work over the idea of natural talent. If, however, we state that we know they are smart enough to accomplish their dreams with enough hard work, we highlight the role of grit. Angela Duckworth talks about the importance of passion and perseverance in her TED talk, which can be accessed here: [www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_perseverance](http://www.ted.com/talks/angela_lee_duckworth_grit_the_power_of_passion_and_perseverance).

Thank you for embarking on this great journey with all your kids—both biological and community wide. You make a difference! Have a great start to the new year!

**CONGRATULATIONS!**

Perkins School in Newark won the regional PARP award for their program “Start a New Adventure Every Time You Open a Book.” They deserve congratulations for running a great program that had children reading with parents and community partners!

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Every advance in civilization has been denounced as unnatural while it was recent.

—Bertrand Russell

Use the talents you possess, for the woods would be a very silent place if no birds sang except the best.

—Henry van Dyke

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Treasurer’s Corner
Michael Valicenti, GVPTA Treasurer
treasurer@gvpta.org or mvalicenti@sjfc.edu

Happy October PTA treasurers!

990’s – If you have not already done so, file your 990 forms. Most units only need to file the 990N electronically which should only take a few minutes to do at IRS.gov. Please do not wait until it is almost November 15th to file.

Treasurer’s reports – You probably have had at least one unit meeting by now. Make sure that a “Treasurer’s report” is on every meeting agenda. The treasurer should present the status of the bank account and any transactions that took place since the last meeting. In addition, profit and loss results should be presented to the membership for any major events and fundraisers.

Monthly reconciliations – Treasurers should reconcile the books at least monthly, right after receipt of the bank statement. These monthly reconciliations can then make up the body of your audit at the end of the year.

Finally, sometimes we treasurers can feel like our only role in PTA is to write checks and make deposits into bank accounts. Indeed, that is our main “job” as a treasurer. But I hope you understand that you are an integral part of something that is doing good things in our schools and in the lives of our children. Always remember that what you are doing is important and that it matters.

Thank you for taking the time out of your busy lives and away from your families to be a part of that one voice for every child.

As always, please contact me with any questions.

GVPTA Advocacy Update
Jori Cincotta, GVPTA Advocacy Chair
jcincott@rochester.rr.com

GVPTA’s Advocacy Chair, Jori Cincotta is the sole parent representative on the Monroe County Education Coalition (MCEC).

MCEC is a partnership of public education stakeholders working together to advocate on shared issues. MCEC is made up of organizations representing over 60,000 parents and teachers, 155+ locally elected school board members, 21 superintendents, and district administrators. The following groups have representatives on MCEC.

- Genesee Valley PTA
- Monroe County Association of School Business Officials
- Monroe County Federation of Teachers
- NYSUT
- Monroe County Council of School Superintendents
- Monroe County School Boards Association
- School Administrators Association of NYS

The group meets once a month during the academic year to discuss current topics in public education and find areas of agreement where we can advocate together.

In our September 22nd meeting we discussed the following:

- Setting up a fall meeting with the editorial board of the D&C to discuss upcoming education topics of interest.
- Members shared positions taken by their respective groups on the upcoming NYS Constitutional Convention:
  - MCSBA-(Legislative Committee) No position. The Legislative Committee just issued educational talking points for their members, which were shared with the MCEC members.
  - NYSUT- Strongly opposed to Constitutional Convention. They are preparing a substantial campaign to educate their membership on risks and historical changes resulting from previous Con Cons.
  - NYS PTA- No position.
  - SAANYS- Strongly opposed. Their campaign is focusing on what this might look like for their members. B. Gorman shared a document from their executive director Kevin Casey with MCEC members.
- Monthly reconciliations – Treasurers should reconcile the books at least monthly, right after receipt of the bank statement. These monthly reconciliations can then make up the body of your audit at the end of the year.
- Finally, sometimes we treasurers can feel like our only role in PTA is to write checks and make deposits into bank accounts. Indeed, that is our main “job” as a treasurer. But I hope you understand that you are an integral part of something that is doing good things in our schools and in the lives of our children. Always remember that what you are doing is important and that it matters.

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As always, please contact me with any questions.

The summer meeting with Federal Legislators indicated the need to provide opportunities for legislators to visit and interact with school districts to validate the implications of potential Federal legislation on the local school districts with firsthand accounts.

An invitation to the Great Schools for All (GS4A) regarding a presentation they are hosting on October 26th. The keynote speaker is Nikole Hannah-Jones from the NY Times. She will speak on achieving racial and socioeconomic diversity in American public schools.
Having a Voice in Your School Budget

Julia Hope Anello, hope4julia@gmail.com

Every May when the School Budget Vote rolls around on that third Tuesday, I always think about getting involved in helping to influence my District’s budget. A useless thought in May, but when is the right time? How does he whole budget process work? What does a year in a school district look like?

The school year begins July first. In late summer, early fall; property taxes are levied and School districts submit their end of year spending information to the State Education Department.

In late fall, your Board of Education is looking for community input for the budget and initial budget development starts.

In late November, early December, the Board of regents releases their State Aid Proposal.

In January, the Governor releases the Executive Budget Proposal, partially based upon the district’s end of year spending.

On March 1st, the Property Tax Cap Calculation is due.

April 1st is the State Budget deadline, which contains School Aid estimates.

Late in April your district’s Board of Education approves their budget proposal.

The third Tuesday in May is the School Budget Vote.

The third Tuesday in June is reserved for a Budget Revote, if necessary.

July 1st is the beginning of another school year.

Lots of dates to remember, but if you want your voice heard, if you want to enter the discussion, it is in your best interests to attend the October and November Board of Education meetings and any community forums they may host. Believe me, they ARE looking for your input. ■

Membership

Julia Hope Anello, hope4julia@gmail.com

As another new and exciting year of PTA Membership kicks off, I hope you are meeting the challenges of growing your units and councils. A few units still have to get their Form A’s completed. This becomes a Membership concern because units will be unable to enter members into the portal if this has not been completed.

New York State PTA has set each unit/council with a challenge to grow, and completion towards that goal can be monitored on the portal.

As a reminder, dues should be sent to NYS PTA each month, with the first payment due by October 31st. Dues slips may be printed through the portal or with this link:

www.nyspta.org/pdf/YourPTA/Membership/Dues-Payment-Form.pdf

I am attending bimonthly Membership conference calls with NYSPTA, So if anyone has Membership concerns about the member portal, please let me know so that we can address them there.

I wish you all a successful school year, and I am always available to answer questions and offer my assistance. ■

Reflections

Julia Hope Anello, hope4julia@gmail.com

“Within Reach” is the National PTA’s 2017-2018 program theme. This year, all unit entries MUST be put into National PTA’s Reflection’s system. To do this, you must first register your PTA unit, then use the "submit student entry" button to input each entry, print the filled-out form and attach it with the artwork.

Important Links:

Reflections info: www.nyspta.org/YourPTA/YourPTA_Reflections.cfm

Registering your PTA: www.magnetmail.net/custom_projects/npta/reflections/reg.cfm

Submitting Art: ptareflections.fluidreview.com/


Important Dates:

The area drop-off will be Wednesday, November 15th. Please CONTACT whomever on the following list is most convenient for you, before dropping off artwork:

Susan Brown, 7518 Knickerbocker Road, Ontario, 14519, ptaususnba@gmail.com, 315-524-4152

Sonya Verrillo, 113 Broadmoor Trail, Fairport, 14450, sonyaverrillo@frontiernet.net, 585-330-3991

Antonia Beaty, 214 Morton Street, Rochester, 14609, proud2be_mrs_beaty@yahoo.com, 585-208-0467

Lisa Christoffel, 227 Cameron Hill Drive, Greece, 14612, lchristofel80@gmail.com, 585-802-3197

Mary Twardokus, 2152 Elton Road, Bloomfield, 14469, mt2152@hotmail.com, 585-657-7722

Absolute final collection deadline to have your unit’s artwork to me is Monday, November 20th, at the Brighton Administrative Building, 2035 Monroe Ave, Rochester @6pm.
The PTA is...

• A powerful voice for all children,
• A relevant resource for families and communities, and
• A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child

nyspta.org/AboutPTA/AboutPTA_Purposes.cfm

Reflection's Reception will be Monday, December 11th at the Brighton Administrative Building, 2035 Monroe Ave, Rochester @6pm.

If you do not have a Reflections program at your school, it is easy to start one. Please email me at hope4julia@gmail.com and I can fill you in and help you get started.

If you DO have a Reflections program, please forward this information to your Reflections Chair. If you have any questions, please email me. I look forward to hearing from you. I am excited to see some more amazing art this year.

Member HUB
Sonya Verrillo
GVPTA Secretary
sonyaverrillo@frontiernet.net

In late August, all PTA units were given access to a group communication tool called MemberHub. This site allows units to create “hubs” (aka groups) where people can share files, photos, receive messages (via email/text), engage in signups and have a shared calendar. Each PTA unit is a separate organization and has a separate master hub. One major benefit for parents/users is that those who are registered with multiple organizations can access those organizations from within the site and can switch from PTA unit to unit without logging out/in.

PTA Officers/Site Admins should decide how to best setup MemberHub for their particular need. Elementary schools may want to have separate hubs for each classroom, whereas middle & high schools may want to have grade-level hubs as well as PTA hubs for their particular unit business. Committee hubs can then be created (with PT/S/A being the parent hub) to encourage participation from parents. Hubs can be closed (ie. Classroom hubs—where only Hub Admins (Teachers, Room Parents) can add members) or hubs can be open (ie. Committee hubs), where any person registered on the site can choose to join.

All PTA units should be putting their memberships directly into MemberHub, NOT the NYS Portal found on the nyspta.org webpage. It is this author’s understanding (after phone conversations with NYSPTA) that records will only be synced on a monthly basis FROM MemberHub TO the NYS Portal—not the other way.

If PTA units have already put in a majority of their memberships into the Portal, they should cease doing so immediately and contact NYSPTA about doing a reconciliation to make their records correct.

All PTA units should make sure to complete the Merchant Processing Agreement in order to enable the collection of dues on their MemberHub site. Giving parents the opportunity to pay dues online will make the process easier on Membership Chairs and others who process manual payment of dues. The Merchant Processing Agreements are pre-filled to include the routing of NYSPTA dues ($4.00/member) to NYSPTA, meaning that units will collect any local dues in a timely manner. This differs from the previous model, where people joined a PTA unit via the NYS Portal and then any local dues were received as a Credit Voucher to be used to offset NYSPTA dues collected by offline methods.

While all of this may sound confusing, there is a lot of support information available at http://support.memberhub.com as well as YouTube training videos on the MemberHub channel.

Learning new systems is never easy, but I believe that the time and effort that PTA units put in to making MemberHub right for their unit/school community will pay dividends in more engaged parents and supporters. I have spent a lot of time working with MemberHub as part of an elementary unit and a middle school unit. If you have any specific questions, please feel free to contact me, Sonya Verrillo at sonyaverrillo@frontiernet.net.
techsoup
Sonya Verrillo
GVPTA Secretary, sonyaverrillo@frontiernet.net

Did you know that as a 501(c)(3) organization, your PTA Unit can register with TechSoup.org for donated and discounted software and hardware?

TechSoup currently reaches more than 900,000 nonprofit organizations in 236 countries and territories. Through TechSoup, you can save 80 to 90 percent on overhead IT costs. After 501(c)(3) organizations register, they may be eligible for software and service donations and discounts that include Microsoft, Intuit, Symantec, DocuSign, Box, Adobe, and IT Assist.

PTA units should register using their formal name (ie. PTA NEW YORK CONGRESS (07-xxx) Unit Name) and Tax ID number. Once approved by TechSoup.org, units can then choose which programs they would like to apply for. Some services, like Google’s G-Suite for NonProfits, may make it advisable for units have a web domain to take advantage of email and other like services.

*It is important to note that all services/products obtained through this method are solely the property of your PTA unit.*

PTA Officers & Boards should consider carefully the ramifications of having any hardware or other real assets. This article is meant only to provide information to PTA units about the availability of this site/service and should not be read as legal or financial advice.

Many attended the Annual GVPT Leadership Academy August 22 at the Webster Schroeder High School. Additional training materials will be added to our website.


NYS Teacher of the Year
Lynn Moulton
BrockportPTSA@gmail.com

Brockport PTSA is excited to share that the 2018 New York State Teacher of the Year is from our district - Mr. Christopher Albrecht!

Mr. Albrecht teaches 4th grade in the Brockport Central School District and received the award on September 12 during the Board of Regents meeting in Albany. Brockport PTSA organized a breakfast for the morning of September 13 at the Fred Hill School so that he could share the experience with his colleagues. It was a wonderful event and gave Mr. Albrecht an opportunity to thank his colleagues for their support and mentorship through the years.

He has been teaching in the Brockport Central School District for 20 years and began his tenure with Brockport as a fifth-grade teacher and has spent the most recent 13 years as a fourth-grade teacher.

Brockport PTSA is proud of our entire school district and excited to have Mr. Albrecht be recognized for his tremendous accomplishments!
If you have any questions or need help with anything PTA, please contact an Assistant or Associate Director, Officer, or the Region Director.

“The Voice of NYS PTA” page/blog provides thoughts and commentary from the President of the NYS PTA, Gracemarie Rozea, on topics of interest to our membership. Please click to read the latest message.

Additional GVPTA Contacts are listed on the web site

NYS PTA Resources

NYS PTA Publications (Fast Facts, Our Children)
nyspta.org/YourPTA/YourPTA_Publications.cfm

Advocacy
nyspta.org/Advocacy/advocacy_home.cfm
www.nyspta.org/pdf/Advocacy/Advocacy-Guide.pdf

Advocacy Newsbriefs
nyspta.org/Advocacy/advocacy_newsbriefs.cfm

Legislative Program
nyspta.org/Advocacy/advocacy_legislativeprog.cfm

Where We Stand [pdf] - includes current Resolutions and Position Papers

For NYS PTA issues sign up for Capwiz and then Take Action with CAPWIZ

The New York State PTA Resource Guide is available for your use as a PTA member.
nyspta.org/YourPTA/YourPTA_ResourceGuide.cfm

Our Children Magazine (National PTA)
http://ptaourchildren.org/

Upcoming Events, Deadlines, and Reminders

Complete Form A
Annual Officers’ Contact Information Update for 2017 membership year
nyspta.force.com/FormARegistration

NYS PTA 121st Annual Convention
Nov. 3-5, Niagara Falls, New York
This is NYS PTA’s annual business meeting where we focus our advocacy efforts, elect state officers and look at how the organization does business. It is a great opportunity to network with other PTA leaders, learn more about a variety of things and have a great time. Consider attending. You can access registration information at http://nyspta.org/Events/Events_Convention.cfm

PTA Partnership Dinner
Nov. 15
Our annual Partnership Dinner is at Glendoveers Party House. This event celebrates the work we do with our partners. Invitations will be coming out soon. http://www.gvpta.org/site4/

Our Regional Awards
for excellent teacher and administrator volunteers are now open to nominations. If you have a staff member that excels in supporting PTA recommending them for these awards. More information may be found at our region website www.gvpta.org/site4/index.php/our-pta/awards