Lifeline for Leaders: Advocacy, the Heart of PTA

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NCPTA Board of Directors and Advocacy Committee
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Agenda

- PTA: A History of Advocacy
- Values
- Mission
- PTA Advocacy Priorities
- Advocacy in Your Community
- Creating a Plan for Change
- Partnerships
- Using Your Influence
- Limiting Your Influence
- Advocacy Resources
- Upcoming Events – 2019
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PTA: A History of Advocacy

- Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst founded PTA when women did not have the right to vote and social activism was not popular. Believed mothers would support their mission to eliminate threats that endangered children.
- On Feb. 17, 1897, more than 2,000 people—mostly mothers, but also fathers, teachers, laborers and legislators—attended the first convocation of the National Congress of Mothers in Washington, D.C. Twenty years later, 37 chartered state congresses existed.
In 1970, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (National PTA) and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers (NCCPT) – founded by Selena Sloan Butler in Atlanta, Ga. – merged to serve all children
PTA: A History of Advocacy

- PTA is the oldest and largest organization in the country that advocates for children.
- National PTA is the conscience of the country for children and youth issues.
Through the PTA’s history, National PTA’s advocacy has established programs and called for legislation that improves our children’s lives:

- Creation of Kindergarten Classes
- Child Labor Laws
- Public Health Service
- Hot and Healthy Lunch Programs
- Juvenile Justice System
- Mandatory Immunization
- Arts in Education
- School Safety
PTA Values

The history of PTA is demonstrated in its values:

- Collaboration
- Commitment
- Diversity
- Respect
- Accountability
PTA Mission

To make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.
National Advocacy PTA Priorities

- Elementary and Secondary Education
- Special Education
- Federal Investments in Education
- Early Learning and Childhood Education
- Child Health and Safety
- Gun Safety and Violence Prevention
- Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
- Education Technology and Student Data Privacy
- Postsecondary Access and Opportunity
NCPTA Advocacy Priorities

- School Funding
- Teachers and Administrators
- Parental Involvement
- Accountability
- School Safety
- Mental Health
- Juvenile Justice
- Child Health and Nutrition
- Equity in Education
Advocacy in Your Community

Is your PTA relevant to the community you serve?

If not, why should they join the PTA?

Community is everything!
Fundamentals of Advocacy

- Direct service organizing
- Grassroots
- Research and education
- Speaking up and speaking out
Steps to Advocacy

- Show existing and potential members why their local PTA is relevant
- Take the fear out of advocacy
- Be prepared to answer questions about current issues
Creating a plan for change

1. What are the issues affecting students and families in your district?
2. Organize your unit to effectively advocate regarding that issue:
   1. Be realistic.
   2. Have a plan.
   3. Communicate your goals.
   4. Work with local, state and national leaders.
   5. Be patient.
PTA ADVOCACY STRATEGY CHART

Advocacy is the cornerstone of PTA’s mission. In order to achieve your advocacy goals at any level, it is important to have a strategic plan. This chart poses the right questions in the right order and serves as a particularly useful tool for group discussions, as it maintains focus to the issue at hand. Use this chart as a guide to developing your strategy and revisit it to check your progress.

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Groups to consider in advocacy work

- Principals, teachers and staff
- State, County and Local Boards of Education
- Local Coalitions
- School District Staff Members:
  - Area Superintendent
  - Leadership Team
- State Department of Public Instruction
- North Carolina General Assembly
- Federal Department of Education
- US Congress
Use your Influence

- Identify the issues that directly affect your families
- Strategize possible solutions
- Include the affected families in your process
- Do your research
- Storytelling
Use your influence

- Conduct or promote voter registration
- Host or co-sponsor a candidate forum (http://www.ptakit.org/Advocacy/Advocacy-Templates-and-Tools.aspx)
- Distribute nonpartisan sample ballots, candidate questionnaires or voter guides
- Continue issue advocacy during an election
- Educate voters on the voting process
- Encourage volunteers to serve as poll workers or translators
- Educate the candidates on your issues
- Organize “get out the vote” activities
- Support or oppose a ballot measure
- Encourage and remind people to vote
Use your influence

- Keep in mind that only the president may officially speak on behalf of your PTA unit.
- You’re welcome to speak as an individual and state that you’re a PTA member.
- The PTA president may only speak on behalf of the unit if the unit has taken specific action on something (may not represent the ideas of a few members as the ideas of the entire PTA unit).
- Pass resolution statements or position statements on topics (after approval from your board) and send them to lawmakers, school boards, newspapers.
Use Your Influence

- Create, post and publicize resolutions
- Respond to Voter Voice
- Use Social Media to highlight the advocacy issues you want to address
- Provide your members with a call-to-action
- Develop partnerships – Who else is impacted
Social Media
Use Your Influence

- Stay informed on legislative committee discussions
- Visit, call and email with your state legislators
- Visit, call and email members of Congress
- Visit and email your school board representatives
- Elected Officials Go To School
Limiting Your Influence

- Don’t allow your dislike for a candidate to jeopardize your influence
- Don’t support or endorse one candidate over another
- Don’t participate in, or donate to, political campaigns as the PTA
- Don’t allow unequal time for candidates to speak
- Doing any of these activities could jeopardize your 501 (c)(3) tax exempt status.
Advocacy Resources

- National PTA Resources [www.pta.org/advocacy](http://www.pta.org/advocacy)
  - Alerts
  - Resolutions
- NCPTA Advocacy Resources at [ncpta.org/advocacy](http://ncpta.org/advocacy)
  - Monthly Advocacy Update (Subscriptions updated monthly from MemberHub)
- Find your State Legislator at [ncleg.net](http://ncleg.net)
- Find your member of Congress [www.govtrack.us/congress/members/NC](http://www.govtrack.us/congress/members/NC)
Upcoming Events – 2019

- National PTA Legislative Conference – March 12-14 in Washington, DC
- PTA Day – March 26 in Raleigh
- NCPTA Annual Convention – May 17-18 in Charlotte
Questions

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