



SO....NOW WHAT?

ADVOCACY IS THE HEART OF PTA

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"I always wondered
why somebody doesn't
do something about
that. Then I realized
I was somebody."

~ Lily Tomlin

- PTA Mission, Advocacy History and Resources
- How can we engage our community?
- Creating a plan for change
- What can PTA Advocates Do and What Can't They Do?
- Advocacy Ideas
- Using Social Media to Advocate
- Groups you may want to consider in your advocacy effort
- Elected Officials Go to School Program
- NCPTA Priorities and Advocacy Committee work
- National PTA Priorities (2017 Legislative Agenda)



PTA AND ADVOCACY OVERVIEW

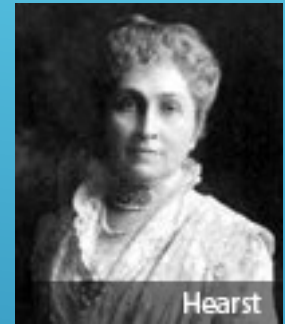
PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

PTA MISSION



It's Our History:

- ▶ PTA was formed out of the desire of parents and teachers to work together to make public education better for all children.
- ▶ Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst founded the organization when women did not have the right to vote and social activism was not popular. However, they believed mothers would support their mission to eliminate threats that endangered children, and in early 1897, they started a nationwide campaign
- ▶ 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.



PTA: A HISTORY OF ADVOCACY

- ▶ As the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the nation, National PTA is the conscience of the country for children and youth issues. Through advocacy, as well as family and community education, National PTA has established programs and called for legislation that improves our children's lives, such as:

- 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: A HISTORY OF ADVOCACY

National PTA Resources

- ▶ www.pta.org/advocacy
- ▶ www.ptakit.org - check out the Advocacy Tab
- ▶ Great video: How to Lobby the PTA Way

North Carolina PTA Resources

- ▶ <http://ncpta.org/index.php/advocacy/>



START WITH RESOURCES

- ▶ Key to engagement: show existing and potential members why their local PTA is relevant
 - ▶ If families see that the PTA in their community is actively working to bring about positive change in their school district- change that will impact their child- they will be more inclined to get involved
- ▶ Key to engagement: take the fear out of advocacy
 - ▶ Advocacy simply means to support a cause
 - ▶ Strive to highlight how you have supported every child and brought about change
- ▶ Key to engagement: be prepared to answer questions about current issues
 - ▶ Your unit doesn't have to tackle every issue: choose one or two topics that impact families, teachers and students in your community and build support



HOW CAN WE ENGAGE OUR COMMUNITY?

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.



CREATING A PLAN FOR CHANGE

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.

Goals	Organizational Considerations	Constituents, Allies, Opponents	Targets	Tactics

- ▶ Endorse candidates
- ▶ Make a campaign contribution to, or an expenditure for, a candidate
- ▶ Rate candidates on who is most favorable to your issue(s)
- ▶ Let candidates use our facilities or resources, unless resources are made equally available to all candidates at fair market value



WHAT **CAN'T** WE DO AS PTA
ADVOCATES?

- ▶ 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



WHAT **CAN** WE DO AS PTA
ADVOCATES?

- ▶ 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
- ▶ ALWAYS say thank you – Positive Advocacy is Strong Advocacy

SPEAKING ON BEHALF OF YOUR PTA

- ▶ Work with your school to implement a strong family engagement policy, as required by federal law.
- ▶ Attend school board meetings and Board Advisory Meetings.
- ▶ Attend school district meetings on such topics as healthy alternatives in the lunchroom and federal, state and local budget cuts.
- ▶ Work with school leaders and state education officials to implement PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.
- ▶ Write a letter to the editor about the importance of family engagement in education, school funding or other topics.



ADVOCACY IDEAS

- ▶ Become active with your state PTA's efforts on state-level advocacy.
- ▶ Sign up for the National PTA Takes Action Network and respond to action alerts to reach your legislators on important issues and legislation.
- ▶ Sign up for the Advocacy News from North Carolina PTA and respond to the alerts listed there.
- ▶ Educate members of Congress and their staff on PTA's federal public policy priorities.
- ▶ Meet with decision-makers at the local, state or federal level.
- ▶ Read, read, read, read, read...
- ▶ Educate your parents through newsletters and social media posts



ADVOCACY IDEAS

- ▶ 90% of people trust peer recommendations vs. 33% trusting messages from brands and organizations
 - ▶ Members sharing and talking about PTA information and its issue campaigns will create a more favorable response than a direct message from PTA
- ▶ Bringing awareness to PTA efforts is effective for:
 - ▶ membership growth
 - ▶ member participation
 - ▶ volunteer development
 - ▶ strategically advancing your issue campaign
- ▶ Begin slowly & experiment
 - ▶ Education quotes
 - ▶ Education news stories
 - ▶ Simple status updates with new initiatives
 - ▶ Sharing and cross-promoting with partners



USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ADVOCATE

- ▶ Facebook

- ▶ Consider your post frequency
- ▶ Develop relationships
- ▶ Find a voice that works for your PTA and use it
- ▶ Make your page “sticky”



- ▶ Twitter

- ▶ Respond quickly
- ▶ Choose who you follow
- ▶ Build a relationship with users
- ▶ Join the conversation



USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ADVOCATE

- ▶ Negative comments? Inevitable!
 - ▶ Respond in a respectful way
 - ▶ Provide accurate information to support your position
 - ▶ Remain calm, judicious and refrain from sharp, heated posts
- ▶ Interactions with Elected Officials or Administration
 - ▶ Permissible and encouraged!
 - ▶ Excellent way to make your voice heard
 - ▶ Refrain from interacting with campaigns of elected officials
 - ▶ Refrain from posting or reposting a message from anyone that has a campaign message for any candidate



USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO ADVOCATE

- ▶ Principal and Staff
- ▶ Board of Education
- ▶ School District Staff Members:
 - ▶ Area Superintendent
 - ▶ Leadership Team
- ▶ State Board of Education
- ▶ State Department of Public Instruction
- ▶ North Carolina General Assembly
- ▶ Federal Department of Education
- ▶ US Congress



GROUPS TO CONSIDER IN ADVOCACY WORK

- ▶ We strongly encourage as an easy Advocacy Step to work with your principal and consider inviting an elected official to your school:
 - ▶ School Board Members
 - ▶ Member of the County Commissioners
 - ▶ Member of the NC General Assembly
- ▶ Keep in mind that Town Council members may also be helpful – but they do not generally fund schools directly
- ▶ Check out a detailed plan of action at <http://ncpta.org/index.php/programs/elected-officials-go-to-school/>

NCPTA ELECTED OFFICIALS GO TO SCHOOL PROGRAM

North Carolina Advocacy Priorities:

- ▶ School Funding
- ▶ Teachers and Administrators
- ▶ Parental Involvement
- ▶ Accountability
- ▶ Health and Wellness



<http://ncpta.org/index.php/advocacy/pta-advocacy-priorities/>

NCPTA ADVOCACY PRIORITIES



- ▶ Advocacy Newsletter
- ▶ Lobby Day/Legislative Day- April or May 2018
- ▶ Advocacy Training Opportunities
- ▶ Social media postings with advocacy updates and news
- ▶ “Behind the Scenes”
 - ▶ Attend coalition meetings with community partners
 - ▶ Attend education committee meetings at NCLEG
 - ▶ Create resolution and position statements
 - ▶ Meet with legislators at NCLEG

NCPTA ADVOCACY COMMITTEE

The National PTA's Legislative Checklist for the 115th Congress outlines the policy priorities National PTA and its constituent associations believe are critical to ensuring all children reach their highest potential. The checklist features the following policy areas:

- ▶ 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



<https://www.pta.org/advocacy>

NATIONAL PTA ADVOCACY PRIORITIES

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS OR NEED HELP?

- ▶ Contact Julie von Haefen at julievonhaefen@yahoo.com
- ▶ Contact NCPTA at office@ncpta.org
- ▶ Website: www.ncpta.org
- ▶ National PTA resources: www.pta.org/advocacy

THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING AND THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE AND COMMITMENT TO PTA!

