

WAKING THE SLEEPING GIANT A Legislative Briefing from NCPTA

In April, NCPTA members from across North Carolina gathered at the Embassy Suites in Winston-Salem to hear about a revamped and re-energized PTA, a PTA that has returned to its mission of advocating for the educational success and well-being of children across this State. During the Conference's education policy panel, Ed Dunlap, Executive Director of the School Boards Association of North Carolina, called the PTA a "sleeping giant" that once stirred can become a tremendous positive force for children and their families. It is our mission to wake this sleeping giant and become the force that PTA can and should be.

With your help, we are already making tremendous strides. But we need your help to continue this effort on behalf of all children in North Carolina.

NCPTA President Kyle Robertson and Executive Director Debra Horton are working each and every day on behalf of children across this state and have been on the forefront of the battle to stop cuts to public schools.

On May 15, the NCPTA joined forces with the NC Association of Educators for an education rally that raised the voices of over 500 teachers, parents and students who loudly proclaimed that when it comes to the budget, the North Carolina Legislature must "Fund Schools First." This rally got plenty of attention by state legislators and news media.

Over 33 media organizations covered the rally to stop budget cuts, including CNN. You can learn more about the Fund Schools First movement by going to www.fundschoolsfirst.com.

On May 24, Executive Director Debra Horton joined representatives from the NC Association of Educators, Association of School Administrators, and the School Boards Association, along with State Superintendent June Atkinson to help draw the public's attention to the immediate need for our state leaders to garner the

courage to invest in public schools on the level our children deserve. The North Carolina Department of Education provided grim statistics on why additional education cuts will harm our schools. The General Assembly has already cut public school funding by 12% for the 2009-2011 biennial budget. New cuts under consideration by the Legislature will bring the total amount of public school cuts to \$1.2 billion, a 16% decrease in support from the General Fund for 2010-2011 compared with 2008-2009, despite the fact that our public school needs are growing. These cuts put an undue burden on our teachers, school staff, and students. According to the Department of Public Instruction, in 2009-2010, North Carolina's public schools lost 16,253 state-paid positions, 11.2% of its work force. These cuts included 4,701 classroom teachers, 197 school building administrators, 522 instructional support personnel, 36 central office personnel, 3,775 teacher assistants, 3,013 clerical personnel, and 4,009 other non-certified positions (bus drivers, cafeteria workers, janitors, etc).

Additional cuts will compound job losses and put strain on our teachers and students. Additional cuts will also be felt more deeply when federal stimulus funds decrease and end in 2011. Your NCPTA leaders are working to make sure that you are equipped with this important information and that education budget cuts are not deeper than absolutely necessary.

On a brighter note, House Bill 1861, a bill to fund the NCPTA Parent Involvement Initiative ("PII"), was introduced last week. If passed, this bill will continue funding to PII, a program that focuses on bridging home and school relationships and serving at-risk students through home visits and the development of home libraries. National PTA President Chuck Saylor has stated: "What the North Carolina PTA is doing with their Parent Involvement Initiative is state of the art. I've never seen in my travels anything done at that level to that degree of detail."

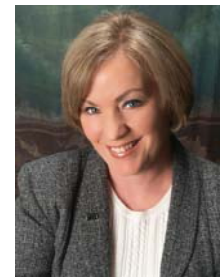


**Donald Dunn, NCPTA
VP of Legislative
Activity, encourages
legislators to Fund
Schools First.**



From the President . . .

Kyle R. Robertson



Thank you TEAM PTA

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your president this year. It has been a great year. I have enjoyed meeting many of you and sharing our common passion of working for the children and youth of North Carolina.

Thank YOU, PTA leaders and volunteers, for your hard work and dedication this year. You spent countless hours working in your schools, helping teachers and students, planning and carrying out programs, and advocating for your students and teachers. You ARE making a difference!

Thank you to the educators of North Carolina. We are so appreciative for the time and energy you give to our children. You work tirelessly to help our children be successful in school and in life.

Thank you NCPTA Board of Directors and Staff for your support and encouragement. You are an amazing group of people, and I could not do my job without you.

During the past year NCPTA has continued to be a strong voice for children and education in NC. We continue to monitor legislation that affects our children and to make sure the parent/caregiver perspective is heard. We have worked with our education partners to tell our legislators to *Fund*

Schools First. We were one of the sponsors of the Teachers Working Condition Survey. With Debra Horton's, NCPTA Executive Director, help, a Parent's Guide to the Teachers Working Condition Survey was published. NCPTA attended the National PTA Legislative Conference in Washington, DC. NCPTA also worked with education leaders to support the Common Core Standards.



Advocacy is the backbone of PTA. Advocacy is the key to making every child's potential a reality. We must always have advocacy as a top priority if we are to fulfill the vision and mission of PTA.

Thank you TEAM PTA for the difference you are making in the lives and education of the children and youth of NC.

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The enthusiasm is tremendous. I would certainly encourage other states to look at North Carolina as a model, and I would encourage North Carolina to share their success story with other states to show what you're doing works because I think it does a great job.”

We need your support to help continue this program. Please take the time to contact your legislators and ask them to support the NCPTA Parent Involvement Initiative. Please also take the time to thank the following bill sponsors: Rep. Lucas, Rep. Yongue, Rep. Glazier, Rep. Tarleton, Rep. M. Alexander, Rep. Bell, Rep. Brisson, Rep. Coates, Rep. Earle, Rep. Faison, Rep. Farmer-Butterfield, Rep. Fisher, Rep. E. Floyd, Rep. Gill, Rep. Hall, Rep. Harrison, Rep. Hughes, Rep. McLawhorn, Rep. Parfitt, Rep. Parmon, Rep. Pierce, and Rep. Wainwright.

If you are interested in learning more about the education budget and receiving policy updates from NCPTA, sign up for NCPTA email alerts and visit the www.ncpta.org website often. Also, the Capwiz system on the NCPTA website advocacy tab under the “take action” heading allows you to contact your elected officials.

As Robert Browning once said, “Our aspirations are our possibilities.” Let's join together to make our aspirations for our children their opportunities

News from National PTA ...

Registration Required for Official PTA Kit

All local, council, district, and region PTAs **must register** to receive their free *Official PTA Kit* for the 2010-2011 school year. The kit registration form is available now at PTA.org/OfficialKit. The form allows your unit to provide a preferred shipping address and date for the kit.



The person registering for and receiving the kit must be an authorized PTA leader and agree to ensure that the kit gets to the 2010-2011 PTA Officers. Please note that each unit will receive only one kit; help us make sure the kit reaches the right person(s) to be of best use in the coming school year.

Family-School Partnerships Online Resources

As your PTA wraps up the year and starts planning for the new school year, consider these questions: How well is our school meeting the goals of the PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships? What more can we do to connect family engagement to the academic success of our students? A number of tools to help you answer these questions and strengthen your school are available at PTA.org/Partnerships.

The *PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Implementation Guide* not only discusses each standard, but also includes a family survey to distribute to the community, a family-school partnership action plan template, and an assessment guide with examples of what good practice looks like. Other tools and resources include:

- PTA Report to the Community template
- PowerPoint presentations on family engagement
- Handouts for parents, such as "A Report Card for Parents," "10 Truths About Parent Involvement," and "Supporting Learning At Home"

With programs grounded in the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, your PTA can better achieve its goals for supporting student success.



PTA Healthy Lifestyles

Plan for a Healthy Summer and a PTA Healthy Lifestyles Grant

Buying fresh produce from the farmers market, taking bike rides, and playing catch are just a few ways families can have fun together this summer and improve their health. Help families practice healthy habits year-round by making PTA Healthy Lifestyles part of your unit's work plan for next school year. National PTA's Healthy Lifestyles Grants offer units up to \$1,000 to support activities planned for November's PTA Healthy Lifestyles Month. Grant applications are due by **Friday, September 10, 5:00 p.m. EDT**, which gives you time this summer to work with your leadership team to put together a program and submit your application. The application form, plus ideas and resources, are online at PTA.org/HealthyLifestyles.

This year's PTA Healthy Lifestyles mailer, which may have arrived already or will arrive soon, includes a brand-new family activities poster to hang in your school. If your PTA recently elected a new board, please help us ensure that this valuable resource gets into the right hands; pass it along to the new PTA president or health chair.

Ask PTA: A New *Our Children* Feature



Our Children has been asking members for feedback on questions ranging from how they came to join PTA to how they instill leadership in their children. Now it's *your* turn to ask *us* some questions. Do you have a nagging problem at your PTA or a question about tax regulations for nonprofits? Do you have a family who has brought you a problem you can't solve without some help, like finding a pediatrician who handles special conditions? Send your questions to info@pta.org (put **ASK PTA** in the subject line), and we'll get answers! If your question is used in an issue of *Our Children*, you'll receive a \$25 gift card. So, **Ask PTA** today!

New from the NC Department of Public Instruction...

By June St. Clair Atkinson, Superintendent



Dear Parents:

As the end of school year approaches, every teacher begins to dread “summer slide.” This is not a scary theme park ride, but an alarming academic trend in which students who do not read on a regular basis during their summer break from school fall behind in reading achievement. To prevent this “summer slide” and encourage your child to work on building literacy skills during this time away from the classroom, the N.C. Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) is launching the “READ NC” campaign.

As part of this campaign, we would like to show you some outstanding new resources that use students’ Lexile® measures, found on end-of-grade and end-of-course score reports, to identify books that will provide them with challenging and engaging summer reading.

The Lexile Framework® for Reading assesses both a student’s reading ability and the text difficulty in books, magazines and even newspapers. In our state, students in grades 3-8, as well as high school students taking the English I assessment, receive a Lexile measure on their end-of-grade or end-of-course test reports. At the bottom of your child’s test results report, you will find a Lexile measure and a link to a page on the NCDPI website: www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/lexiles. This page features more information about Lexile measures and tools to help your child improve his or her literacy skills this summer.

The first of these tools is the North Carolina version of the Lexile map. This map features a variety of fiction and nonfiction titles organized by Lexile level, including some titles with North Carolina connections. I recommend that you print a copy of this reading map and take it, along with your student’s EOC or EOG test score report, when you visit your public library this summer.

The second valuable reading resource is the “Find a Book” search. This tool allows you to search online tens of thousands of book titles by Lexile measure and topic to find books that will tap into your child’s personal interests and complement his or her reading comprehension level. The book search is free and allows users to see if book titles are currently available in local public libraries. This is a great tool to use at home or at your nearby library! Please join me in participating in the “READ NC” campaign and using the Lexile resources now available at www.ncpublicschools.org/accountability/lexiles to make sure your child gains instead of loses valuable literacy skills this summer.

National Safety Council’s National Safety Month 2010

June is the National Safety Council’s National Safety Month 2010. Week 2, June 7 – 13 is dedicated to Teen Driving Safety. The National website, www.nsc.org offers a lot of information and resources on the subject.

For that week, **June 7 – 13**, (only), the NSC offers parents **FREE Enrolment** in its ‘**Alive at 25 Parent Program**’, a 2 hour online course that explores with, and explains to, parents, the unique risks that teen drivers face in their first year behind the wheel. New research is revealing, perhaps surprisingly, that the most influential source of driving information and knowledge for teens is their parents, (www.CDC.gov).

The **Alive at 25 Parent Program** aims to help parents make the most of the opportunity they have to pass on their own driving knowledge and experience, and positively influence their children as they become part of the social contract that driving represents.

The Safety and Health Council, our State NSC Chapter, (www.safetync.org), also offers the **Alive at 25 Program**, (a four hour Defensive Driving Class for teens), and is a source for information about Safety at work, on the road, and in the home.

For more information, contact the Safety and Health Council of North Carolina at **(919)719 9806**.

“Solutions For All”

By Rep. Dale Folwell

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak at your State Convention in Winston-Salem. It was a pleasure speaking to many of you one-on-one about issues that matter. The members that make up PTA groups around our State are what make public schools work. K-12 classrooms would suffer but for your diligent involvement which benefits all students entering the education system. I want you to know that individual PTA members are not invisible to me because of the advocacy that the State PTA Association presents to members of the North Carolina General Assembly on a weekly basis.

Few like politics or politicians, but both of these are a means to an end of things we do care about, like public education. It is important for members of the NCPTA to be involved and informed about what is happening in the NC General Assembly and Governor’s Office. It’s time we start prioritizing by looking at what is working and finding new ways to improve the education for all students.

Below is a list of the legislation that I referenced at your Conference in April.

Every Child Ready to Learn: Moves the kindergarten enrollment cut-off date to Aug. 31. Our previous policy, which resulted in kindergarten classes with kids ranging in age from 4 to 6 and moving up together through grade levels, had been misaligned with policies of other states for decades. The age discrepancies created social and academic performance problems for kids, especially boys, and made teachers less productive.

Schools Notified of Gang Violence: Authorizes law enforcement agencies to communicate criminal intelligence information regarding gang activity to principals when pupils, personnel or property are at risk.

School Bus Safety Act: More than 2,000 times a day in North Carolina someone passes a stopped school bus when the stop arm is extended. Our state now has the toughest laws in the United States as a preventative measure.

Vertical Driver’s License Act: Helps prevent sales of alcohol and tobacco to underage customers by creating a vertical driver’s license issued exclusively for new drivers under age 21.

Simplify Building Standards for Pre-K Classes: This bill saves the state and property tax payer’s money because Pre-K classrooms will not have to be refitted or renovated if they already meet the building standards for Kindergarten classrooms.

State Health Plan/S837: An amendment to the act that removes state health plan vesting from 5 to 20 years because of the plight of the NC State Health Plan and the fact that NC reported a \$28.8 billion unfunded liability for retiree health care, more than four times what the state owes in ordinary debt. There are many reforms needed to bring more clarity to our State Health Plan. We must attract young people and their families to become participants and tackle the unfunded liability that exists in this program important to nearly 600,000 North Carolinians.



PTA REFLECTIONS
40 Years of Achievement in the Arts

NATIONAL PTA ANNOUNCES 2009/2010 “Beauty is...” Winners

Please join NCPTA in congratulating the National Reflections Program winners for the themed year, “Beauty is...” NCPTA is proud to announce 8 of our 24 State Recipients placed at the National level of judging, 1 receiving an Outstanding Interpretation Award, 2 receiving Awards of Excellence and 5 receiving Awards of Merit.

National PTA gives up to five Awards of Merit and three Awards of Excellence in each grade division of each arts area. Six Outstanding Interpretation Award recipients—one from each arts area—are chosen from among all the Award of Excellence recipients.

National Outstanding Interpretation Award

The Outstanding Interpretation Awards recognize the most creative interpretation of the theme in each of the arts areas, regardless of grade division.

Dance Choreography - Senior Division

“I Look To You”

Chelsea D. Townsend, Hillside High, Durham

Chelsea will be recognized at the National PTA Convention in Memphis, Tennessee June 10-13, 2010. Please go to http://www.pwrnewmedia.com/2010/pta_00507/pages/gallery.html to view her video.

National Awards of Excellence:

Dance Choreography - Middle/Junior Division

“Beauty is...”

Alexandra K. Fung, South Charlotte Middle, Charlotte

Musical Composition - Senior Division

“Promises”

Kevin L. Hollander, Mt. Tabor High, Winston-Salem

National Awards of Merit

Literature - Intermediate Division

“Sometimes Beauty Sneaks Upon You”

Mackenzie L. Brown, Monticello-Brown Summit, Brown-Summit

Musical Composition - Intermediate Division

“Beautiful Day”

Jacob L. Burgess, Norris Childers Elementary, Lincolnton

Musical Composition - Middle/Junior Division

“Beauty is Sailing the Oceans”

Anna E. Osment, Alexander Graham Middle, Charlotte

Visual Arts - Intermediate Division

“African Love”

Zoë M. Neijna, Hunter Elementary, Raleigh

Visual Arts - Middle/Junior Division

“Leap Frog”

Reece W. Jones, Roland-Grise Middle, Wilmington



“African Love”



“Leap Frog”

North Carolina Cooperative Extension Department of 4-H and Youth Development and Family and Consumer Sciences

Why Work with the North Carolina Cooperative Extension

NC Cooperative Extension is an organization with a history of driving change by bringing to bear the knowledge and research of the nation's leading land grant universities and is the perfect organization to partner with NCPTA to bridge home and school. North Carolina Cooperative Extension centers are located in every county in the state and serve as the front door to the vast knowledge available from NC State and NC A&T State University.

Our educational programs focus upon:

- Strengthening and sustaining families,
- Developing responsible youth, and
- Building quality communities.



Ready, Set, Lead! PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

The North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Department of 4-H Youth Development and Family and Consumer Sciences can lend a hand in **Ready, Set, Lead PTA National Standards**. See below just a few of the many opportunities to partner locally with your Cooperative Extension Center. These programs are free services.

Standard 1- Welcoming All Families into the School Community

- Together for a Better Education – 6 week parent involvement workshop series



Standard 2- Communicating Effectively

- Parenting Matters workshop series – 8 week parenting class
- Secrets of Parenting – publications to help parents with children of all ages
- Communication Skills Curriculum (under development)

Standard 3- Supporting Student Success

- 4-H STEM (Science Technology Engineering and Math) school enrichment programs
- SNAP-Ed's Steps To Health and EFNEP – Healthful living programs for all ages
- Helping your child with homework publications
- 4-H In-School and Afterschool Clubs



Standard 4- Speaking Up for Every Child

- School workshop
- Mentoring Opportunities



Standard 5- Sharing Power

- 4-H Citizenship programs



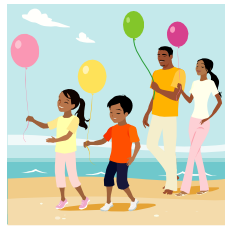
Standard 6- Collaborating with Community

- E-Conservation Program – Programs to teach families about energy efficiency
- Money-In/Money Out - Financial management workshop series
- Eat Smart Move More NC - Healthy eating and physical activity programs

Connecting to your local Cooperative Extension Center is easy. Go to the North Carolina Cooperative Extension website www.ces.ncsu.edu and click on "County Centers" to locate partners near you!



15 Ideas for Family Fitness



1. Take active vacations (hiking, swimming, skiing).
2. At the mall or when running errands, use the stairs rather than the elevator.
3. Get pedometers and have a contest to see who takes the most steps in a given week.
4. Start a new tradition: take the whole family out for an after-dinner walk around the neighborhood or park.
5. Take on active chores as a family (gardening, raking leaves, shoveling snow, or washing the car).
6. Spend an afternoon at the local playground.
7. Play a sport together (basketball, soccer, baseball, softball, touch football).
8. Dance to your favorite music.
9. Go for a family bike ride.
10. Plant a family garden.
11. Play miniature golf.
12. Go to the zoo.
13. Take the dog for a long walk.
14. Whenever possible, walk short distances rather than using your car. When you drive, park a little farther away from the store.
15. Play games that your kids love (tag, Simon Says, Red Light-Green Light, Duck-Duck Goose)

For more information and resources visit www.pta.org and www.parentsaction.org

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www.ncpta.org

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WOW!!!! LOOK WHAT'S HAPPENING IN JUNE & JULY

June

- National Safety Month
<http://www.nsc.org/nsm/>
- 14 – Flag Day
- 9-13 — National PTA Convention, Memphis, TN www.pta.org
- Register for your Official PTA Kit from National PTA – www.pta.org
- Begin preparation for your year-end Financial Review – due August 31st
- Input your 2010-11 officers into the NCPTA database
-

July

- PTA Board should be making plans for the upcoming school year
- Plan your membership drive for the new year
- Check with you school for the 2010-11 Resources and Membership Cards sent from NCPTA. This packet will be sent directly to the school to the attention of the “PTA President.”
- 2010-11 Membership year begins