



Hands on Advocacy

NYS PTA

Summer Leadership Conference

2018

Dana Platin

NYS PTA VP for Advocacy

Lucille Vitale

NYS PTA Legislation Coordinator



Lets talk about Advocacy ...

- What does it mean to advocate and lobby?
- Where do I get involved?
- When should I advocate?
- Who do I talk to?
- How do I advocate effectively?
- Why is it important that I advocate?



What does Advocacy mean?



- Getting involved and staying involved
- Educating others on issues, problems, and new ideas

Advocacy vs. Lobbying

Advocacy

- sparks changes
- is broad in nature...it affects *programs and policies* that benefit children, at the local, state, and national levels.

Lobbying

- refers specifically to advocacy efforts that attempt to *influence legislation*.
- There are laws limiting the lobbying done by nonprofit organization

You can advocate without lobbying,
but can't lobby without advocating

IRS Rules on Lobbying

PTAs

- may engage in legislative activity
- are non-partisan
- may not devote more than an insubstantial part of their activities to lobbying
 - May not exceed 5% of gross income
- may not campaign for or against candidates for office
- may not contribute to a PAC

Advocacy vs. Lobbying: Example

- **Advocacy:**
Parents picket a store to stop selling X-rated videos near a school.
- **Lobbying: (next step)**
Parents urge the county legislature to adopt a local law prohibiting or restricting the sale of these items near within a distance from a school.

Are you an Advocate?

Parents are advocates when they:

- Attend a PTA meeting
- Serve on a PTA or district advisory committee
- Attend a parent-teacher conference
- Organize a arts-in-education program
- Attend school board meetings
- Participate school budget preparation meetings
- Disseminate information to your community about school board candidates and/ or the proposed budget

Our PTA Purposes

Our PTA Purposes (aka) the Historical Goals of PTA:

- To promote the welfare of the children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship.
- To raise the standards of home life.
- **To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.**
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.
- To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education.

PTA Advocacy - Lobbying - Law

PTA advocacy issues that have become law:

- Women's right to vote
- Immunization for German Measles
- Elimination of cigarette advertising on TV
- Seat belt installation on school buses
- Legislation identifying children with special needs
- Graduated licensing for teen drivers

When do I get involved?

- When important information needs to be communicated
- When there is misinformation
- When I have something important to add
- When someone asks for information
- When PTA asks you to!



How does PTA get the ball rolling?

- It all starts with PTA members who are passionate and concerned about a particular issue.
- Changes are not easy to achieve. It takes active involvement of thousands of people who believe that something needs to be done.

Grassroots Advocacy means
People CAN effect change!

How do I effectively advocate?

A – Answers, know answers and ask if you don't

D – Direct, be direct and concise

V – Vocal, voice your concerns

O – Observant, pay attention

C – Communicate, tell your story

A – Allies and Partners, who can you work with?

T – Teach, be teachers and instruct

E – Engage, find way to engage that are unique

What is a Resolution?

Resolution= a **statement** on an issue, concern, or problem that:

- Establishes an official PTA **position**
- Formalizes our **research-based** position
- Proposes **action** in the form of an original main motion
- Comes before convention **delegates** for their consideration and adoption
- Upon adoption, becomes part of NYS PTA's "Where We Stand"

How do Resolutions Fit into PTA Advocacy?

THEY:

- **Unify and EMPOWER** members
- Tell others **what PTA stands for:** concrete positions on specific issues
- Provide the basis to **promote and influence**
 - ~ EDUCATION
 - ~ LEGISLATION
 - ~ POLICY
 - ~ PROGRAM

Resolutions + Action => Power

Where do we find Resolutions?

Upon adoption,
Resolutions become
part of the
official NYS PTA
Advocacy Document
“Where We Stand”

- Explanation-Key
- Table of Contents
- 14 Categories
- Position Papers
- Index-Keyword



Where We Stand is the official **position** document of the New York State PTA. It is comprised of resolution **statements** adopted by convention delegates. These statements are intended to guide members as to what **action** to take on specific issues that affect the education, health and welfare of children and youth.

Resolutions that appear in this document are reconsidered within seven years of their original adoption or reaffirmation. At seven year increments, they are reintroduced to convention delegates. By majority vote, delegates determine whether to adopt positions that have been recommended for **retention** (reaffirmation) or **update**, or to be **rescinded**. A resolution may be rescinded from this document when the action(s) in the resolved clauses has been taken. Rescinded resolutions are entered into an ongoing record of retired resolutions. Action may be taken through legislation, regulation or program. Delegates may also be asked to adopt a position(s) in the form of a **new** resolution, one that has not been previously presented to the delegate body. Resolutions are arranged from the most recently adopted retention(s), update(s) and new resolution(s) to the oldest within one of 14 issue categories.

The PTA is effective only through the support and action of its members. Once positions are adopted, the NYS PTA relies on local units, councils and regions to educate members and the public on the issues and to encourage grassroots advocacy.

KEY:

(R-) Retention – convention delegates voted to retain a position after seven years, and wording remains as originally submitted.

(U-) Update – convention delegates voted to retain after seven years, but wording has been changed or removed from the original position.

SED State Education Department

NYS New York State

HOW TO READ DATES:

Most recent year of adoption, followed by (“R-” or “U-” plus the year(s) submitted).

Examples – Retention: 2013 (R-06); Update: 2013 (U-06); New: 2013

The statements for **Action** that appear in this document are the “resolved” clauses of resolutions, numbered and written as adopted by convention delegates. Since NYS PTA is a branch of the National PTA, it is important to refer to National PTA’s **Legislative Program** as an additional action guide.

Action Comes in Various Forms

What does the resolution say needs to be done?

- To educate or raise awareness
- To create or change policy or program
- To support or encourage legislation

*MEANS: Letters, e-mail, phone, testimony,
presentations.*

*Dialogue with school boards, administrators,
legislators,
and policy makers!*

Ways to Communicate

- Visits
- Phone calls
- Letters, e-mail, faxes
- Fact Sheets
- Letters to Editor, Op-Ed pieces
- News articles
- Coalitions

To Communicate Effectively:

- Identify the Issue
- Check State and National Positions
- Do Your Research
- Develop Your Plan
- Evaluate the Outcome

Identify the Issue

- Focus on the Issue
- Does it fit PTA mission and purposes?
- Know who will support you?
 - Membership?
 - Community?
- What resources are available?
- What do you want to happen...is the issue winnable?

Check State & National Positions

- NYS PTA
 - Basic Policy
 - Where We Stand
 - Legislative Directives
 - www.nyspta.org
- National PTA
 - Legislative Program (directives, policies, resolutions, positions)
 - www.pta.org

Do Your Research

- Know as much as you can – you don't have to be expert, but be informed
- Use multiple resources
- Know both sides of the argument: Who supports? Who opposes?
- What are their resources?
- Personalize the issue

Develop Your Plan

- Set your goals
- Know who can help
- Identify targets
- Tactics
- Craft your message
- Use the media/spread the message

Meeting With a Decision Maker

- State Your Concern
- Educate the Policy Maker
- Specify the Action You Want Taken
- Get a Commitment
- Provide Handouts and/or fact sheets to support your position
- Maintain Contact

Representing the PTA

- You must always represent the PTA accurately, fairly and with dignity.

New York State

- *Your statements must accurately represent the PTA position on issues. Personal opinions must be kept to yourself.*

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- Be professional, respectful and courteous.

Tips for Successful Legislative Meetings

Meeting in person with elected officials and/or legislative staff is the most effective means of political advocacy.

Here are some important "do's" and "don'ts" to ensure that your lobbying meeting is **successful** and **effective**.

DO: Do your Homework

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- Prepare carefully and thoroughly
- Study talking points and issues briefs

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DO:

Determine Roles for Participants

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- Designate a group leader to open and close the meeting, to deliver any leave-behind materials, and to keep the discussion moving
- Identify a different person to present each issue or main message
- Choose one person in your group to be the note taker.

DO:

Prepare and Practice for the Meeting

- It's always a good idea to run-through what you intend to say before the meeting itself
- If you are meeting with a group of people, have each person practice their part in front of the group

DO:

Stay on Message

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- Everyone should quickly introduce themselves and state where they're from.
- Stick to the issue and stay on topic
- State a few key points in support of your position
- Make a definite request for action

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DO:

Take the Initiative

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- State **clearly** and **concisely** what issue you want to discuss, what your position is, and what action you want the legislator to take
- Follow this with facts about why he or she should take your position

DO:

Be Articulate

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- Time is at a premium, so get to the point

- Be cognizant of the fact that the legislator is busy and has a full schedule

DO:

Be a Good Listener

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-After you make your pitch, allow the legislator to respond

-Bring the conversation back to the issue at hand if he or she goes off on a tangent or tries to evade your position

DO:

Bring a “Leave-behind” Document

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- Give the legislator a brief fact sheet that outlines your position(s) and why he or she should support your viewpoint

DO:

Remember to be positive, enthusiastic, considerate and appreciative. Be someone your legislators or their staff would enjoy meeting with again.

DON'T: Be Late

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Remember...

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Time is at a premium!

DON'T: Go off Message

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- Stay on track

**- Do not discuss unrelated
issues**

DON'T:

Engage in Partisan Critiques

- We want support of legislators of both parties
- We do not want to alienate any legislators or their staff
- You are working on behalf of an issue, not a party

DON'T:

Forget to Follow-up

- Immediately send a thank you letter to express your appreciation
- Stay informed on your issue and track how your legislator responds

Something to Remember...

Consider Yourself a Teacher and Always Engage

- Legislators don't know it all
- Neither do their staff
- We are in the education business, so educate!
- Ask questions - what do you need from me to make your job easier



The facts are coming! The facts are coming!

Evaluate Your Success

- Did you accomplish what you set out to do?
- What impact did the effort have on your PTA?
- What did you learn?
- What would you do differently?
- What does this mean for the future?

NYS PTA Website

www.nyspta.org
(click on: “Advocacy”)

- Basic Policy
- Where We Stand (resolutions and position papers)
- Legislative Directives
- Advocacy Newsbriefs
- Issues Briefs and Talking Points
- Take Action! using Voter Voice
- NYS PTA Advocacy Team

Electronic Advocacy

Check out, sign up for *Take Action!...*

THE electronic advocacy tool of PTA!

- Alerts/Messages
- E-blasts
- Identifies representatives
- Can be personalized
- Quick and easy!

Take Action Tuesday



Take Action!

Ask Governor Cuomo and your state legislators to support a \$2 Billion investment in our children

Children's needs don't disappear from year to year, and we cannot fund schools as if they do.

#WhyPTA | #DoGoodThingsForKids | #TakeActionTuesday



Where/What are your national tools?

National PTA: www.pta.org (click on “Public Policy”)

- Public Policy Program
- Federal Policy Updates and Alerts
- Online Advocacy Toolkits
- *Our Children* (OC)
- PTA Take Action



Counterparts!

NYS PTA Advocacy Calendar

- Anytime
- • Connect with your legislators on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn
- • Learn names of staff in legislative offices
- • If you meet with a legislator, let NYS PTA office know for possible follow-up

- September
- • **VOTE! September 13, 2018 is State and Local Primary Day**
- • Mail school calendar to your legislators and local officials—attach a personal note
- • Call your legislator and invite them to a PTA event in September or October
- • Ask your principal and teachers to have a monthly joint meeting with PTA leaders
- • Register for Annual Convention, November 9-11, 2018 in Niagara Falls
- • Determine key advocacy issues, committees, and budget requirements for your PTA

NYS PTA Advocacy Calendar

- October
- • Sign up for advocacy communications from NYS PTA and National PTA
- • Present Basic Policy, proposed Convention Resolutions and NYS PTA proposed bylaws changes at a unit, council or region meeting - keep record of vote!
- • **DON'T FORGET!** - October deadline for registration for Annual Convention
- • Start planning a Local Spring Advocacy/Legislation Event
-
- November
- • **JOIN US!** Annual Convention November 9-11, 2018
- • In a joint letter with school officials, ask a legislator to visit a classroom to read, invite them to sit in on a technology class, or have them join lunch in the cafeteria
- • Mail or email your legislators all PTA communications, newsletters
- • **VOTE!** November 8, 2018 is Election Day!

NYS PTA Advocacy Calendar

- December
- • Send your legislators a holiday greeting card and invite them to your holiday concert
- • Contact your local media about an event your PTA is hosting
- • Invite your legislator and two local business people to your PTA meeting
-
- January
- • Mail or email NYS PTA budget analysis to your legislators—write a personal note
- • Give NYS PTA budget analysis to your school district officials
- • Invite local legislators to a PTA activity (Town Supervisor, Village Mayor)
- • Begin work if planning on submitting a resolution to NYS PTA

NYS PTA Advocacy Calendar

- February
- • **JOIN US! Attend the NYS PTA Legislation Summit and Lobby Day in Albany on February 10-11, 2019**
- • Email the NYS PTA budget testimony to your legislators—write a personal note
- • Take action at the NYS PTA Action Center on the state budget
-
- March
- • **JOIN US! Attend the National PTA Legislative Conference in Washington, DC—March 12-14, 2019**
- • Participate in Local Lobby Days, and meet with your state legislators on budget issues
- • Send your local media a press release with photos about a PTA event
-
- April
- • Submit proposed resolutions to NYS PTA office, deadline **April 1, 2019**
- • Legislators are usually in their local district most of April., invite them to a PTA activity or meeting
- • Think about attending National PTA Convention, June 20-23, 2019 in Columbus, OH

NYS PTA Advocacy Calendar

- May
- • Send legislators any relevant school budget information
- • Attend any regional PTA conferences
- • Think about a Get Out the Vote drive for school budget
- • **VOTE! May 14, 2019 is School Budget Day!**

- June
- • **JOIN US! Attend National PTA Convention, June 20-23, 2019 in Columbus, OH**
- • In a joint letter with school officials, invite legislators to graduation
- • Take action on end of session issues – watch for emails from NYS PTA
- • Reserve your spot for NYS PTA Summer Leadership Conference, July 20-22, 2018 at Union College in Schenectady, NY

- July/August
- • **JOIN US! Attend NYS PTA Summer Leadership Conference, July 19-21, 2019**
- • Start planning for next year's advocacy
- • Brainstorm new ways to connect with policy maker

Using Social Media for Advocacy



- Engage and connect with people
- Immediate feedback – like, dislike, love
- Reach broader audiences
- Facilitate Information
- Interact with Public – 2-Way Communication
- Get Others to Spread the Word

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Using Social Media Strategically

- Tag policymakers
- Be responsive but don't "feed the trolls"
- Check-in to state capitols or legislative offices
- Take photos and document your day
- Share, reuse and repurpose National PTA content
- Don't be afraid to go LIVE

Verizon LTE 1:58 PM 47%

Tweet

 **Dana Suchow Platin**
@DanaPlatin

Thank you [@NYGovCuomo](#)
Deputy Sec for Educ & staff for
all your support and for taking
time to meet with our
[@NYSPTA](#) Leadership team.



Add another Tweet

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Tweet

 **Kyle M Belokopitsky**
@kbelokopitsky

Thank you to
[@AndreaSCousins](#) for a great
meeting about how we can
support ALL children and
schools! [@NYSPTA](#)
[@DanaPlatin](#) [@ADKmomma](#)



Tweet your reply

Home Search Notifications Mail

Do your Social Media Homework

New York State

If you don't already, follow your legislators and other elected officials on Twitter and Facebook.

Senate Twitter Handles

@fredakshar

@georgeamedore

@johnbonacic

@philboyleny

@neilbreslin44

@brooks4liny

@davidcarlucci

@tomcroci

@johndefrancisco

@senatorfunke

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@senatoryoung

Effective Advocacy

Requires:

- Building credibility over time
- Solid planning
- Carefully devised activities
- Collaboration
- Personalization
- Meeting decision makers where they are
- Seizes windows of opportunity to influence
- Periodic assessment of initiatives

Grassroots Advocacy

- If you think you're too small to have an impact, try going to sleep with a mosquito!
- Anonymous



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Thank you for joining us!

Dana Platin
NYS PTA VP for Advocacy
vpplatin@nyspta.org

Lucille Vitale
NYS PTA Legislation Coordinator
legislation@nyspta.org

