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PRESS RELEASE

NYS PTA Proudly Announces the 2020-2021 NYS PTA Officers

November 18, 2020 (Albany) – NYS PTA is excited to share that at the virtual 124th NYS PTA Conference, NYS PTA members from across the state unanimously elected new association officers.

The following NYS PTA Officers have been elected to new terms:

- Dana Platin, NYS PTA President, from Holbrook, NY
- Helen Hoffman, NYS PTA 1st Vice President, from Franklin Square, NY
- Amany Messieha Dgheim, NYS PTA Vice President, from Airmont, NY
- Kelly Short, NYS PTA Vice President, from Holbrook, NY
- Melissa Cancro, NYS PTA Secretary, from Yorktown Heights, NY

Joining the newly elected officers are the following NYS PTA Officers currently serving:

- Lucille Vitale, NYS PTA Vice President, from Massapequa Park, NY
- Patricia Frazier, NYS PTA Treasurer, from Williamsville, NY

President Dana Platin has been a longtime PTA volunteer, starting her journey in 1994 as a member of the Merrimac Elementary PTA. She served in various roles at her local PTA including President, before serving on the Suffolk Region Board of Directors. Dana then joined the NYS PTA Governance Team and NYS PTA Board of Directors, most recently serving as NYS PTA Vice President. Dana, a former Kindergarten teacher, is currently working as a Kindergarten classroom assistant for the Sachem Central School District and resides in Holbrook with her husband, Michael. They are the proud parents of Brittany, Tyler, Alexander, and his wife, Nicole.

Please see comments below from NYS PTA President Dana Platin:

“I am humbled, honored, extremely excited and truly grateful for this extraordinary opportunity. I never would have imagined all those years ago when my son entered kindergarten, that I would be standing here before you today, as your newly elected NYS PTA President. My PTA journey began at Merrimac Elementary School in the Sachem School District on Long Island, and in the beginning, I volunteered on behalf of my own children. But I soon discovered that I was actually making a difference for all children. My commitment to PTA is only possible because of my family and my principal at Lynwood Avenue Elementary School, Dr. Danielle DeLorenzo for their endless support and encouragement.

“These last seven months have been like nothing else we have ever experienced. We have all been forced to sail in uncharted, turbulent waters and, at times, have barely managed to stay afloat. Students and their families are faced with new challenges each and every day. Some are back in school, some are at home learning remotely, and some are experiencing a hybrid learning environment, but all of them are dealing and trying to cope with the uncertainty and unpredictability of this new normal. Teachers and school administrators are coping as well, dedicating countless hours to addressing health and safety concerns, while providing a robust and equitable academic experience for both in-school and remote learners.

“Each of us has been tested beyond our limits and PTAs are doing all they can to steady the ship. Local leaders are doing a wonderful job finding new ways to generate excitement and motivate involvement. Units are holding virtual meetings but are struggling with declining membership numbers. With parents unable to participate in the schools this year, we need to think out of the box as to how we can engage all of our families. We need to reach out to those who have not yet joined and explain why their membership is so vital and so important for their individual schools and for our association. The power of positivity goes a long way, so we will get through these difficult times as a team. We believe in you and we will endure. Remember, we are stronger together and NYS PTA is here to support you.

“Now more than ever we must support diversity and inclusion initiatives and programs at the unit, council, region and state levels. We need to ensure diversity among PTA leaders in support and representation of all children and families. Sadly, we know that many children do not have the same opportunity to thrive and succeed as others. Inequity in varying communities is a serious problem and we are committed to addressing these issue as we advocate for all children and youth in New York State.

“I am so proud of the many achievements and accomplishments of NYS PTA. For me, I am most proud of our efforts to ensure that there are now Alternative Pathways to Graduation and a Superintendents Diploma for special education students. This was a personal win, as my youngest son who has autism, was able to graduate high school with a meaningful, and extremely well-deserved, high school diploma. It was such a momentous and emotional occasion for our family, and families all across New York State, and further proof that NYS PTA will always be the leading advocate for ALL children.

“My Presidential Theme, *Shining a Light on Every Child with One Voice*, with its accompanying lighthouse, represents that NYS PTA is a beacon for ALL children. My two favorite places on Long Island are Montauk and Fire Island and their lighthouses, which overlook the ocean, but there are 13 other lighthouses around New York, located on several lakes and in the middle of rivers. From the end of Long Island at Montauk Point, to the Hudson Valley, from Lake Champlain to Lake Erie, from the Finger Lakes to the Niagara River, and from Lake Ontario to the St. Lawrence River, these beacons of light give continuous guidance to ships to keep them safe from danger and harm. A lighthouse symbolizes strength and safety, but most of all it symbolizes hope, and that is something we all truly need right now. Our NYS PTA beacon will continuously shine as we advocate to make every child’s potential a reality and as we continue to make a difference for all children and youth. Our PTA lighthouse will strive to be THEIR safe haven and I hope that it will be YOUR inspiration. I know that I can count on each one of you to shine your guiding light to provide illumination so that we can remain steadfast in the storm. Stay safe, stay healthy and wear a mask to stop the spread, but most of all, thank you for all you do.”

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The NYS Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (NYS PTA) is honored to represent the families of our 2.6 million school children and our nearly 300,000 member parents, families, and educators. It is our mission to make every child's potential a reality and support EVERY child with ONE voice. www.nyspta.org