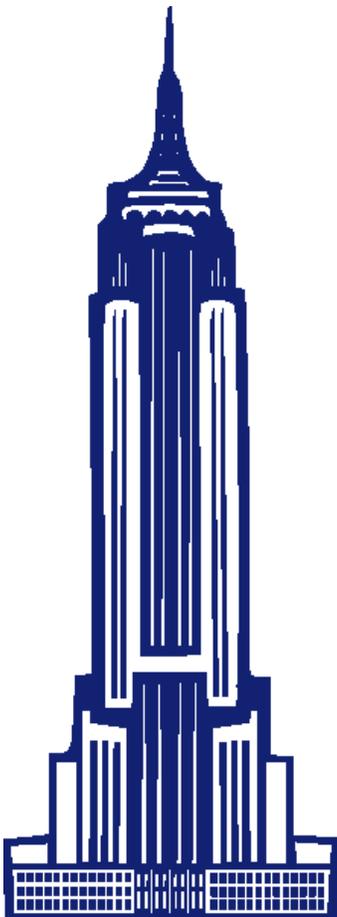


January 2021



Empire State
PTSA[®]
everychild.one voice.[®]



Advocating since 1979

From the President's Desk

It is my honor to have been elected as the President of the Empire State PTSA for 2020-2022. I am pleased to be working alongside the other members of our executive committee, Laurie May, Vice-President, Kelly Howe, Secretary and Neil Johanning, Treasurer, as we begin our terms in office at this very difficult time for us all. Throughout the past year, we have been through many highs and lows as we have had to navigate this unprecedented health crisis. Many have suffered terrible loss, lost love ones, have been isolated, have been devastated by losing jobs, and some may even have lost hope. We send our thoughts and prayers to all who have experienced loss and suffering during this time and continue to hope that we may all return to some sense of normalcy in the near future.

Unfortunately, one consequence as a result of this pandemic over the past year, has been the upheaval of our education system. From pre-school to college and beyond, our young people have been learning in many, many ways, and our administrators, teachers and staff have been doing their best to keep things as normal as possible for them. Hybrid, remote or live, now more than ever as an organization, PTA MUST continue to speak out and advocate for equal opportunities for ALL students in schools. We must continue to address inequities in all areas of education to ensure that our students are receiving the best instruction that they are entitled to. This is no easy task, but by adding more voices to our efforts, we can make a difference!

As the official statewide unit of the New York State PTA, ESPTSA reaches out to leaders in the field of education as well as anyone interested in children's issues and enable those who may no longer be active in or connected to a local unit to continue to be a part of PTA. For over 40 years, our unit has been home to all who wish to be involved or remain engaged in PTA's mission – a place where each member continues to support the legacy of New York State PTA, approaching **125 years strong** and as the **first statewide** chartered PTA in our nation! By adding voices through ESPTSA membership we join with other units across the state by continuing to advocate for change. There are those of us who are now advocating for our grandchildren, as we did for our own children. Reaching out across New York can help to offer our unique perspective to priority issues and strengthen our influence with decision makers when we increase our membership, adding more and more voices.

ESPTSA provides both a home to many and support to NYS PTA. We thank you all for your membership and challenge you to ask others to join Empire State PTSA and continue the legacy of our founding members no matter where you may live throughout the state or in areas beyond. As a member you receive an electronic copy of the New York Parent Teacher periodical and updates on issues of importance to education and children and youth, as well as calls for advocacy efforts.

All of us on the executive committee look forward to better times ahead in the new year, and adding many new voices to join the advocacy efforts for all children and youth. Thank you for all you do for the children of New York.

Yours in PTA,
Jacqueline Wilson
President, ESPTSA

MEET YOUR EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE



Jacqueline Wilson
President

My journey in PTA began when my oldest daughter started second grade at Paumanok Elementary School. Her best friend's mom asked me to join her at a PTA meeting one evening. I did and was asked to volunteer for the JPHS committee - and I was hooked!

Thirty-five years later, I am still an active member currently serving as the Bylaws Coordinator on the NYS PTA Board of Directors, and as the President of Empire State PTSA. Among my many positions in PTA, stand outs include serving as the *Region Director for Suffolk Region*, the *Twin Projects/Awards Chair for NYS PTA*, and working with statewide members as part of several convention teams at the *NYS PTA Annual Convention* and as the *Convention Coordinator* in 2015.

As president of Empire State PTSA, it is my hope that we will engage many more members in our organization, create many lasting friendships and strengthen our voice as advocates for children and youth as a part of the NYS PTA.



Laurie May
Vice-President

My PTA advocacy began over 30 years ago when my children were in elementary school. Like you, I wanted to be an active participant in the education of my children and probably, also like you, quickly realized that there is a much bigger picture beyond my own kids.

The lessons I have learned, the skills I have acquired, the friends I have made, the thrill of being a part of an association that actually makes a difference, are all an invaluable piece of my life today.

I have served as a unit president, council president and as the Region Director of Nassau Region with a laundry list of chairmanships in between. I am currently proudly serving as the 2021 NYS PTA Convention Coordinator and look forward to celebrating 125 years of PTA advocacy in Syracuse with you!

Together, let's take Empire State PTSA to new heights in membership, leadership and advocacy!

everychild.onevoice.org



Kelly Howe
Secretary

Hello! My name is Kelly Howe and I am excited to be the Secretary for Empire State PTSA. My PTA journey began about 13 years ago when my son started elementary school. I became co-president my first year, many friendships and fantastic experiences followed. I held all the offices at the unit level before I was asked to be the Reflections chair on the Region Board. I became an Associate Director then Region Director on the Southeastern Region board. I now serve as the Programs Coordinator for NYS PTA.

I have had a wonderful PTA experience and I have met many great people. I look forward to my time as secretary.



Neil Johanning
Treasurer

I have been involved with PTA for over 30 years serving in many roles at the elementary, middle, high school and council. I also served on the Capital District/Northeastern Region boards.

I first got the advocacy bug while attending a Legislative Breakfast where the legislators knew little of education issues. I decided I had to help fix that! After being District Director, I stepped away from the NYS PTA Board for a few years but later returned as Education Chair/Coordinator. I finished my time on the Board as State Treasurer in 2016. I have stayed involved with PTA through my local units, council, and region. I have also been on our local school board for the last 16 years.

TAKE ACTION! NYS PTA ADVOCACY IN ACTION

As a member of Empire State PTSA, you have the power to contact your State representatives with one easy click on your computer or smart phone. NYS PTA has made your advocacy that easy! Want your elected officials to know where you stand on issues relating to education, the health and well-being of children and youth, legalizing marijuana and other relevant issues? Go [here](#) to advocate on an issue you feel is important and gives you a voice heard in Albany. The link will help you find your representatives and gives you the opportunity to sign up for legislation alerts. Be in the know, be pro-active, be the voice for all children!



Don't Cut Education Funding - our students, staff and schools need our support now more than ever

The NYS PTA and other statewide education groups called on state policy makers to support schools, and oppose any cuts to state aid for schools. The 20% reduction in state aid that schools have been warned about for months as a state budget gap closing measure for...



Support public education and protect the health of ALL children and youth as NY families battle COVID19

Schools across the state continue to provide students, children and families essential services during this pandemic health crisis: meals for children and families, mental health support, online and home instruction, and information on unemployment and support services...



Protect Children - Say NO to recreational marijuana and NO to flavored e-cigarettes!

As budget season draws to an end, we must protect NYS students and youth! We continue to fiercely oppose the legalization of recreational marijuana. The legalization and commercialization of recreational marijuana creates a serious public and child health threat, and...

EMPIRE STATE PTSA MURIEL BERK SERVICE AWARD

The kind of PTA commitment and leadership that led to the formation of the Empire State PTSA (ESPTSA) in 1979 through the work of a superb leader, Muriel Berk, then NYS PTA Membership Chair, serves as a model for us all. Her vision of how to strengthen PTA, coupled with her pursuit of this goal with consistent and constant passion, patience and persistence, continues to serve as an excellent framework for action.

Therefore, on the occasion of the 35th Anniversary of ESPTSA in November 2014, the ***Muriel Berk Service Award*** was established and dedicated to the memory of this visionary leader so that her service will support the service of others into the future.

AWARD:

The recipient of this award will receive a \$250.00 stipend to be used for NYS PTA Convention attendance expenses. The award may be utilized by the recipient for the convention immediately following the award announcement or the next succeeding convention.

CRITERIA:

The recipient must:

- Be a current member of ESPTSA
- Have exhibited long standing PTA service
- Have been nominated by any ESPTSA member or may self-nominate.

SELECTION OF THE RECIPIENT:

Application shall be made through the submission of a one-page statement which states, at minimum, the following criteria:

- How many previous conventions has the applicant attended?
- What positions (i.e., offices, chairmanships) has the applicant held at the unit, council and/or region level?
- Why does their service to the PTA stand as a model to others?

HOW TO APPLY:

1. The one-page statement must be submitted to the President of the Empire State PTSA, via email to esptsa.president@nyspta.org and in the subject line place "Muriel Berk Award", no later than **May 1** of the award calendar year either by the nominee or another member.
2. Applications shall then be reviewed by the Muriel Berk Award Committee who will determine the final selection no later than **June 1** of the same calendar year.
3. Notification of the award will be made by the Empire State PTSA President no later than **July 1**.
4. Please note that, according to the availability of ESPTSA funding, this award may not be given in every year. However, notice of the availability of the award will be made to the membership annually.

MURIEL BERK SERVICE AWARD RECIPIENTS

Muriel Berk Service Award Recipients – The name of the new recipient each year is engraved on the Muriel Berk Service Award Plaque in the NYS Office

- 2015 - Alice Willett**
- 2016 - Maria DeWald**
- 2017 - Susan Lipman**
- 2018 - Susan Berkow**
- 2019 - Catherine Romano**
- 2020 - Stephanie Fehr**



Muriel Berk Award – 2020

Stephanie Fehr from Westchester- East Putnam Region

“Commitment is an act, not a word.” Jean-Paul Sartre

It is an honor and privilege to nominate Stephanie Fehr for the 2020 Muriel Berk Service Award of Empire State PTSA, because in over 40 years of PTA service, her “passion, persistence and commitment to inclusivity and advocacy” has never wavered.

Since 1979, Stephanie has been involved in PTA in many different positions and at every level – unit, region, state, national. The mother of four children and an educator, her dedication to their success led to her prodigious work for the success of all children. She has served in many capacities as a local unit leader, region board chair and officer, state special education chair, state education chair, state vice president, and consultant (Special Meetings Liaison) from 2011 -2016. She has participated in numerous PTA committees (especially resolutions), probably has attended more than 20 NYS PTA conventions, and in 2008 coordinated a Legislation Education Conference.

Importantly, she represented NYS PTA at monthly Board of Regents meetings, which she rarely missed; she also served on the Regents Parent Involvement Committee. Her respected expertise made a real difference. She has served on the following committees of NYSED representing NYS PTA: Destination Diploma High School Reform; Report Advisory Committee; Teacher of the Year; Committee of Practitioners for NCLB. She also served on the NYCC Federal NCLB Advisory Committee. She worked with Senator Clinton’s office on SES policy. She served on the NYC Task Force, and the “Just for Kids” committee. She has collaborated with NYSUT to create publications such as the Special Education and Academic Intervention booklets as well as many white papers.

Highly respected, Stephanie has collaborated with many educational professionals on workshops for various PTA conferences. She was appointed to the Homeless Advisory Committee and did important work on the McKinney - Vento mandates. She served on the national PTA governance team as part of the special education committee, and still works hard for the WEPR PTA board, currently as outreach chair.

A lifelong learner, Stephanie keeps up to date on the most important issues in education, particularly related to special needs students and their families. In her work, her approach is always thoughtful, calm and kind. No question is too trivial for her to answer or research; she has striven to engage members in advocacy at all levels and give support as needed.

Always involved in her community, this year Stephanie is being honored for a second time by Kehilla Hadassah as their Woman of the Year. Amongst her work with that organization, she coordinates the “Read, Write, Now” project, in which over 70 volunteers work in the Westchester public schools.

What stands out most about Stephanie is her ongoing commitment to make a difference through service to promote excellence in education of all children and youth. Her dedication to that service, and to those with whom she works in that effort, are truly ongoing actions – she is an advocate in action in the best tradition of PTA.

REPORT OF AUDIT OF NYS PTA FINANCIALS

NYS PTA Treasurer, Patty Frazier



Background: Our annual audit is prepared by the Bonadio Group, CPAs. They conducted the audit and provided the results in a report comprised of the statement of our financial position as of June 30, 2020, the related statements of activities, functional expenses, and cash flows for the year and the related notes to the financial statements.

For the 2019-2020 Audit Report, we have received an unqualified opinion which indicates there were no financial concerns identified by the auditors.

NYS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT PARENT DASHBOARD

ACCESS ESSENTIAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOLS IN YOUR COMMUNITY

At the NYS PTA Conference, Interim Commissioner Betty A. Rosa and Vice Chancellor T. Andrew Brown announced the launch of the Parent Dashboard on the New York State Education Department (NYSED) website. The Parent Dashboard is part of the New York State's plan for the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). The goal is to increase transparency and give parents access to essential information about the schools their children attend.

The following school-level data elementary are included: Student Enrollment and Ethnicity, Average Class Size, School Climate, Accountability Status, Assessment Results, Financial Transparency, Graduation Rates, College, Career and Civic Readiness, School/District Location and Contact Information. The helpful Question and Answer section answers frequently asked questions about the above data points.

PARENT DASHBOARD

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is committed to making data available and easy to use. This site provides a first step so families can be better informed as they work to advance student achievement. The Parent Dashboard offers information on all public schools including charter schools. Visit [here](#).

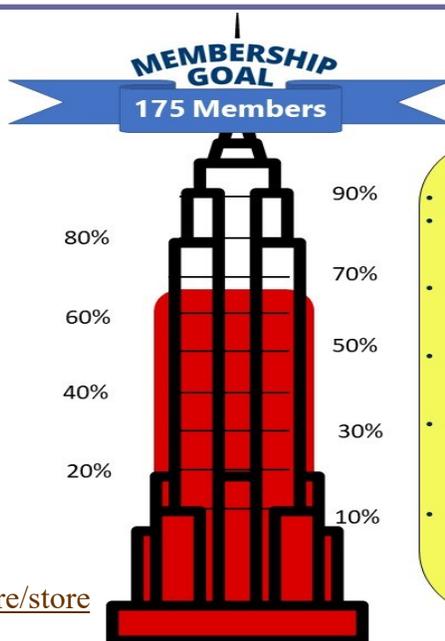
ESPTSA MEMBERSHIP

**EMPIRE STATE
PTSA**
"Reaching New Heights!"



<https://esptsa.new.memberhub.store/store>

Unit Code: 99-888



Why Empire State PTSA?

- Empire PTSA is the NY statewide PTA unit
- You want to continue to advocate for children but have "graduated" out of your local PTA
- Your membership pumps up the volume of voices speaking out on behalf of all children
- You want to stay up-to-date regarding education, and health and well-being children's issues
- You want to be a part of the largest child advocacy association that never stops in its efforts to ensure all children receive an equitable education
- You want to stay connected to a like-minded community of activists working on behalf of ALL children

JOIN US TODAY!

NYS PTA COVID RESOURCES

In April 2020, NYS PTA launched a new COVID-19 [webpage](#), providing guidance for PTA leaders and resources for parents and families, including State Education Department and Department of Health information, school closure and re-opening updates, and information regarding unemployment and meals assistance.

Please bookmark this page for future reference.

NATIONAL PTA

Mental Health Resources for PTAs, Leaders and Families

Access National PTA's curated library of essential mental health resources for PTAs and families. These resources will help you learn about mental health and some of the most pressing issues and approaches, access tools to help you and your families or school community cope, and find the information to effectively advocate for better mental health services in your school community.

For more information visit [here](#).

*Eight in 10 parents say their children are experiencing heightened stress levels right now.
- Survey by Education Trust*