I admit it! I’m still riding the high from last month’s Summer Leadership Conference! It’s quite possible that I may have enjoyed myself more than anyone, but it was also apparent that everyone in attendance had a really great time too. For me, nothing is more thrilling than seeing our participants actively engaged and having a wonderful experience. I was especially happy to meet so many first timers! My sincere thanks to all who followed the yellow brick road to be a part of the fun and learning that weekend! There’s no place like PTA!

For me, when I was involved in my local PTAs, the month of July was always a time to take a break and a time to put PTA on the back burner. I never missed an SLC though. It always refueled and pumped me up for another year of PTA. When August would roll around, my fellow board members and I would get together to start planning for the new school year. But where to begin?

Here’s a sample calendar to get you started. Be sure to fill in your school events, PTA activities and fundraisers.

**August** – Read your bylaws and procedures, prepare budget and programs, meet with Principal

**September** – Back to School night, membership recruitment, executive board meeting with presentation of budget to executive board

**October** – General Membership Meeting, review bylaws for Nominating Committee election information, NYS PTA Convention registration

**November** – File 990 form, attend NYS PTA Convention

**December** – Plan for Founder’s Day

**January** – Elect nominating committee according to bylaws

**February** – Participate in advocacy activities, including NYS PTA Virtual Legislative Summit

**March** – Plan for Teacher/Staff appreciation, review proposed school district budget

**April** – General Membership meeting – officer elections, select delegates to attend Region Spring Conference

**May** – Update officer information in MemberHub, submit insurance payment, fill chairmanships for upcoming year

**June** – SLC registration

One of the most important partnerships you’ll have is with your building principal. Set up a meeting in August to chat about goals and priorities.

- Work together as a team
- Meet consistently: discuss issues, review events, keep each other informed
- Work out problems or misunderstandings - be honest and direct
- Invite Principal to PTA board meetings
- Present PTA concerns and issues to principal and develop a forum for open discussion

Always remember, the PTA mission and vision drives our goals:

- PTA is a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.
- Making every child’s potential a reality by establishing the New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (NYS PTA) as the premier association for parent involvement and advocacy for all children.

There are excellent resources available on our website at nyspta.org. Take some time to peruse through the many links and options. You’ll find the NYS PTA Resource Guide, which provides a wealth of information to answer all your questions and cover your needs. There are also many outstanding webinars on numerous topics of interest, along with various recordings of “How to PTA” presentations.

As you recruit new members and leaders, be sure to show your enthusiasm and make everyone feel welcome. Embrace the uniqueness of each person and find ways to involve and empower others. Be all-inclusive, always show your appreciation and never forget to say thank you. Stay flexible and open. Have fun and, above all, remember... IT’S ABOUT THE CHILDREN!

Heading back to school is filled with promise and excitement. Wishing you all the very best, much success and a fantastic year!

Happy Summer!

from Dana M. Platin, NYS PTA President
School's almost back in session! Your PTA can help the children in your community travel more safely to and from school by hosting a Traffic Safety event! NYS PTA can provide educational materials, reflective give-aways, bicycle helmets, and more for your event.

Email Draca Hing for more information about the event at dhing@nyspta.org.

The Every Child Travels Safely initiative will focus on transportation safety and see that children and caregivers increase safety in all aspects of child travel. To learn more about Traffic Safety, Click Here!

Media Liability, Are you Covered?

Pictures, do you have permission?
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AIM offers optional coverage for Media Liability. Call us at 1-800-876-4044 for more information.
Accelerate Literacy Growth with NYS PTA!

- **LightSail Premium Subscription** is **FREE** for the summer for NYS PTA members & families!

- Get access to **thousands of books, audiobooks, & multimedia resources**, including interactive books, livestreams, TED Ed talks, & World Book Digital Encyclopedia

- See how families can read & learn together **any time, anywhere**!

- **Personalized library** based on the student's **EXACT reading level** that changes & grows right along with them as they read the books they choose for themselves!

- **Individualized support for struggling readers** with **Personalized Reader**, built by SPED experts for students with dyslexia, ADHD/ADD, autism, wandering minds, visual impairments, CVI, & other reading challenges.

Register NOW for the

**NYS PTA Summer Reading Slam!**

**July 22 - August 31, 2022**

Join **NYS PTA Students & Families** in the **Ultimate Reading Tournament** this summer by reading on **LightSail**...and earn some **amazing prizes**!
It’s coming. Labor Day weekend, the unofficial end of summer and beginning of the school year. And with that brings expectations and questions. What will school look like this year? Will schools stay open? What will my child learn? Will they have fun? Will they like their teacher? Will they make friends? Will they be bullied? Will they struggle? What can I expect?

Every parent, every family, has the same questions. We all have expectations of our school, expectations of our children, and expectations of the educators that support them each and every day. I know I do. So, if you find yourself struggling right now, asking yourself question after question, having a bit of anxiety, wondering what September will bring, know you’re not alone. Not by a long shot.

After we ask our very valid questions to our partners, in our heads when we can’t sleep, to our friends and community members, we look for answers. And that’s where PTA comes in. See, PTA has never been more important. PTA is that link – that critical link between family and school, that critical link between parents, families, educators, and our children. And communication has never been more important.

As PTA, it’s our job, now more than ever, to keep parents and families connected, informed, and educated. It’s our job to ensure our students and educators feel supported.

This is serious work. After the past two years, our children, our educators, our schools – they have struggled, they have overcome adversity, and they have succeeded. But we go into another uncertain year. Just like we have questions and expectations, so do they. That’s why we must communicate, collaborate, and support each other, every day, all day.

My son, entering 8th grade, recently asked me what the school reopening rules would look like (knowing I had a bit of an “in”). I explained we should know soon, and as soon as we did know, that I expect both our great school and PTA to share this information with families, and offer an opportunity to ask questions. I told him that school would reopen in a month, welcoming back all our 2.6 million school children, and that his school would do everything they could to support him. And then he asked the most important question for a soon to be 13-year-old – was the lunch menu posted yet?

I laughed. We laughed. I knew he would be ok. Why? Because of his amazing teachers, school-related professionals, staff, educators, and our PTA – who would be there every day in our little PK-8 school district in semi-rural Rensselaer County to support him and his school mates.

So when you find yourself asking questions, having expectations, and having anxiety about September, know it’s ok. You’re not alone. In actuality, you stand with nearly 250,000 NYS PTA members who have your back. Because together, we can make every child’s potential a reality. There is no other more important work.

PS – Dear Jackson’s school, he’s still waiting for the lunch menu.
My Mom's Big Surprise

Hi, my name is Madeline Sotomayor. I wanted to tell you all about my surprise trip to the capital building in Albany. My mom is on the PTA and she had a big surprise for me. We were going to play hooky together from school and work. She told me I would get to see some of the people my mom works on PTA things with and some important people who help to make our laws.

We started the day with a big breakfast and lots of excitement. I promised everyone to take as many pictures as I could. I really did not know what my mom did exactly but I always wanted to come and I’m so happy I did. I learned so much and hope more kids like me get to do this too. We got in early so we were able to visit different buildings and a museum before we met with everyone. My mom and I love museums!

Tips on what to bring on a PTA road trip

- Lots of water
- Charged phone to take pictures
- Snacks that fit in your purse
- Comfortable shoes
SO MANY PEOPLE TO MEET!
While we waited to go in to the senate floor I got to see a few of the PTA parents my mom works with including PTA President, Dana Platin. There where other kids there like me! Then I got to meet the Senator. She asked me my age and grade and where I was from. I was a little taller than she was which was so cool!

OUR PRIVATE TOUR
We got to hear all about how the building was built and how old it was. Did you know it was haunted? In 1911 there was a fire and a building guard didn't make it out. Apparently, he still walks the halls at night jiggling his watch for all to hear.

SENATE FLOOR
The first area was where we could sit up top and see the Senate floor. At the second location, we listened to the senator make an amazing speech about all the things I did not realize PTA did. We were able to stand up and people clapped for us. I was not expecting that. In the third location, we were on the senate floor and we heard a few discussions about things that legislators were discussing, it was like a courtroom.

GUN LAWS, GAY RIGHTS AND AFRO LATINA DAY!
I still can't believe all of the things I got to see and do. Now I know what a resolution is! So many people clapped for us and were really happy to see us. I felt famous. Is this what my mom gets to do on PTA trips?? I never want to miss one!
Resolution 1048

WHAT IS A RESOLUTION

A resolution is an official expression of the opinion or will of a legislative body. The practice of submitting and voting on resolutions is a typical part of business in Congress, state legislatures, and student government associations. It is capable of creating an official stance. Resolutions allow the constituents voices to be heard, create a change, and to pressure your government representatives to listen to your demands as a constituent. Resolutions are different from laws. Resolutions are limited to a specific issue or and not intended to be permanent.

JULY 25TH

I watched as this resolution was officially presented. On July 25th it will officially be Afro-Latina, Afro-Caribbean, and African Diaspora Women's Day. A day to celebrate girls like me!

THE OFFICIAL WORDS

WHEREAS; It is duly fitting that all New Yorkers join in these important celebrations of one of our State's most vibrant communities; this much anticipated observance and its accompanying activities will foster greater appreciation for women of African descent and their culture, and will serve to promote the spirit of cooperation that is characteristic of all citizens of New York State; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that this Legislative Body pause in its deliberations to memorialize Governor Kathy Hochul to proclaim July 25, 2022, as Afro-Latina, Afro-Caribbean, and African Diaspora Women's Day in the State of New York.
Bylaws are designed to help an organization function in an orderly manner. Your bylaws include all the rules by which your PTA operates. They cannot be changed without previous notice and cannot be suspended. Every member of the board should have a copy of the bylaws and be familiar with them.

In your Bylaws you will find:

a) Your official name – While you may use acronyms or nicknames for your unit locally, any official correspondence, contracts or business should use the name as listed in your bylaws.

b) Membership year, amount of dues, deadline to submit dues to the state office – It is important to remember that Membership eCards are issued to individuals.

c) Officers to be elected, when the election is to be held, election of the nominating committee, who may be nominated, voting process, term of office, when term begins and the method of filling vacancies.

d) Duties of Officers - Lists the primary duties of each officer of the association. Further defining of officers’ duties would be found in your procedures/standing rules.

e) Executive Committee and Executive Board – Defines who is on each, the duties of each, regular and special meetings, and the required quorum to conduct business.

f) Committees – Defines who is eligible to serve on a committee, creation of committees, appointment of chair, term of office, required special committees, required special reports.

g) Council Details - Eligibility and election/selection of delegates, term of office, duties. A unit that is a member of a council must adhere to council bylaws in assigning delegates. Not all units are part of a council.

h) Fiscal Year – The fiscal year is the same as New York State PTA’s fiscal year – which is July 1 to June 30 – in accordance with IRS regulations.

Bylaws must be updated at least once every three years for a unit to remain in good standing. Verify that your Bylaws have not expired or are not close to expiring. The summer is the perfect time to start to work on reviewing and updating your bylaws. The president, in consultation with the executive committee, can appoint a bylaws committee (3-5 members is sufficient). Detailed instructions to update bylaws can be found in the New York State PTA Resource Guide or in the Bylaws/Procedures link on the NYS PTA website www.nyspta.org under the Leaders tab.

If you need assistance, reach out to your Region Bylaws Chair or Region Director. They are more than willing to help you.

By Pat Assortato, NYS PTA Bylaws Coordinator
I have been thinking about this topic for awhile. Being a PTA leader can seem like an unpaid, full time job on top of our regular paying job, being a parent and the many other responsibilities that we hold.

Don’t get me wrong, PTA is a great organization and being a voice for all children is important! I am noticing that it can come with a price. The price comes at a loss of sleep, our peace of mind, our family time, etc. If we are in PTA related meetings most nights of the week, who pays the price? Our families, which include our children who are part of those voices that we are fighting for.

What if there’s a better way? I don’t want to say balanced way because as I get older I don’t think there is any such thing. If you find that solution, patent it and be blessed with the fortune you will make!

Don’t go it alone. Healthy Leaders surround themselves with people who are going to encourage them and understand their challenges. Get connected with your Region. Each Region has a Region board who’s function is to support the unit and council leaders in their area. If you need help connecting with your Region Director, email pta.office@nyspta.org.

At Region meetings and events, I found people to answer my questions and who empathized with my challenges. From my home Region, Westchester-East Putnam, I found mentors in Jane Harsha, Antoinette Darden-Cintron and Stephanie Fehr. People who were further in their PTA journey then I was. The reason I’m on the State board was because of a chance encounter at a NYS PTA Summer Leadership Conference (SLC). I was a newly minted Region Membership Chair who had no idea what I was doing. There is a training just for membership chairs and I was nervous. I was sitting next to this lady who was really knowledgable about membership. I introduced myself and started asking her a bunch of questions. Luckily she was very friendly and didn’t seem bothered by me at all. That lady was Helen Hoffman, the current 1st Vice President, and she encouraged me to become the Programs Coordinator a few years later. Ironically, Kelly Short, one of our Vice Presidents, was sitting behind us and she joined the conversation and now we all work very closely together.

Set boundaries. As a PTA President, you may feel like you have to be available 24/7. You don’t have to be. Healthy Leaders guard their time and set boundaries. Some leaders have found having a set time every day to dedicate to PTA work is helpful. I tend to work on PTA tasks at night because I’m a night owl. For other leaders, it works better for them to respond to emails/text through the day. Find a rhythm that works for you.

It is good to take a night or day away from PTA work to relax and recharge. Set a message on your email stating that you are away and you will respond to your messages in the next day or two. If you don’t want to do this for yourself, do it for your board. The board follows the President’s lead. If you are on 24/7, your board members may think that’s what they have to do too. The entire board will experience burn out and that’s no good to anyone especially the kids you serve.
Empower your board members and committee chairs. You have a board and committee chairs for a reason. Healthy Leaders set their volunteers up for success. Setting people up for success can be time consuming in the beginning but if you train them well it will ease your workload in the long run. Having procedures that spell out each board member's job description and having descriptions of what committee is responsible for keeps everyone on the same page. It gives people clear expectations. If you need help with creating procedures, reach out to your Region bylaws chair. Contact your Region Director for their contact information.

If you are having an event, create an events binder or google doc documenting what you did, who headed up what activity, instructions for the activity, supplies list, volunteer list, vendor contact list, etc. After the event, write up what went well and things you would change if you did the event again. This not only gives the next person a great starting point but you could repeat the same event with most of the work done for the next year!

As for empowering people, you have to let some things go. People are not going to do things the way you would do them. As long as it is not a safety issue, it's really okay.

Cancel events/programs. Healthy Leaders make the hard calls even if it is cancelling a time honored tradition. I know it sounds cold and it goes against everything we stand for. The truth is that if you don't have enough volunteers, you are creating an unsafe environment for the kids.

It's okay to show people your need. If you are spreading yourself thin but still going forward with an event to the parents everything looks okay when it really is not. People can't respond to your need if they don't see it. This happened with our SEPTA. Our board had dwindled down to three of us. Our members were not showing up. I was President and had served every position on the board except Treasurer. I was tired and burned out. I felt like the worst person in the world to let it go but I had to for my own sake. It took a few years but new, capable, energetic people revived it and the unit is growing.

Most importantly, be kind to yourself. This article was born out of all the mistakes I have made myself in PTA and at work. We are all growing in our leadership no matter what level of PTA you are at - Unit, Council, Region, State and National.

Thank you for your service and I wish you a great new year!
I’m not a financial advisor, or stock market pro, but I do know value when I see it. Value is a commodity that has many facets. I can tell you that PTA is a sure thing. I have 30 plus years invested in PTA and the dividends are priceless. My now successful adult children have been the beneficiary of the years I spent volunteering for this national organization dedicated to the wellbeing of all children.

What benefits did I gain from PTA? Knowledge. The firsthand knowledge of essential information pertaining to public education, in my children’s school, locally, statewide, and nationally. I joined PTA for my children, I became an advocate for every child.

Going to my children’s PTA meetings gave me insight and afforded me the opportunity to speak out on behalf of not only my children but my friend’s children, my neighbor’s children, my community’s children.

There is no greater voice for children than the voice of PTA, for all children.

Our NYS President Dana Platin chose a lighthouse and slogan, “Shining a Light on Every Child with One Voice” as the theme of her presidency. This resonated with me on several levels. I too love lighthouses. This year’s convention theme “A Beacon of Light for Every Child” is a powerful message to our members and to the most vulnerable of us, our children. Lighthouses were special to me from a very early age. The lighthouse beacon represents several things. Can you just imagine being out to sea for days, even months and seeing after a long journey, that light, that beam, land is a heartbeat away. Home, a safe harbor, family, community. What a glorious sight it must have been for them.

PTA is that light, that beacon. We are that light, that beacon. We cannot let negativity, discourse, nor naysayers diminish the power of our collective voices. It is up to us, every adult, to speak on behalf of children.

The NYS PTA convention is, in many ways, a beacon for every member of NYS PTA. It gives us the unprecedented opportunity to be effective, proactive advocates for children. Your PTA will be a powerful resource for each and every parent, caretaker, teacher, administrator, and community member to make a difference in the life of every child. We are all in this together. Our challenges are daunting, our collective voices are empowering. Knowledge, training, common ground, engagement, collaboration, is our strength.

Please join us in Albany November 4-6, 2022, at the Crowne Plaza-

Desmond Hotel to meet like-minded child advocates determined and committed to learn, share, collaborate, communicate, celebrate, and support the work of PTA. Without you, our volunteers, that beacon will be dimmed, and our voice will be silenced.

We appreciate that your time is invaluable. Please consider the value of your attendance at the NYS PTA Convention. Your attendance will determine our State officers, the resolutions that will set the course of our advocacy efforts, our bylaws, and so much more.

So please save the date, November 4-6 and be sure to include attendance to the 126th NYS PTA annual convention in your budget considerations.

Follow the beacon to Albany, we’ll see you there!
As June grew to a close - with the non-stop festivities, dinners, graduations, and parties that come with it – I’m sure we were all ready for the school year to end. Yet somehow, here we are just a few weeks later, planning ways to kick off a new school year. It’s exhausting and exhilarating at the same time! While we take time to decompress and enjoy the sunshine, it is essential to find ways to build on the engagement we worked so hard to develop during the school year.

Walking the line between being welcoming and overwhelming can be difficult. But, thanks to digital communication, we can offer ways for people to connect at the pace that works for them. Remember - not all connections are face-to-face. Sharing resources can be a valuable tool for engagement. To get your message out, utilize your PTA email and social media channels, and ask the principal if she can post on the school website.

Some ways to connect over the summer:

a) Summer Reading - Share links to your local library program, or virtual ones like LightSail for reading at home (LightSail - NYS PTA)

b) Create a Flat Stanley version of your school mascot and email to families. Ask them to send in pictures of the mascot’s adventures.

c) Chalk the Walk - Get together the night before school begins and decorate the school sidewalks to welcome the students.

d) Share resources with parents - ask the school principal or social worker if they have materials that would help benefit the school community over the summer. Some general suggestions are:

   - Concerns about food insecurity: link to your local food bank, or this NYS wide resource: Food Insecurity and Federal Nutrition Program Participation Hunger Solutions New York
   - 988 the New Mental Health Lifeline (National Suicide Prevention Lifeline)
   - Strategies for a Successful Summer Break - Child Mind Institute
   - Summer Learning - Family Resources | National PTA
   - Save-the-Date Notices - not just for PTA events, ask the principal about in-school events/half days. The more notice the better, so families can arrange for time off or child care.

Not sure what people want? Ask! Make a quick Google Form asking for suggestions. Perhaps an incoming kindergarten parent wants to organize an informal park meet-up but doesn’t know where to start. Not only are you finding out what the needs are, you’re also getting to know new parents, and possible future leaders!

We must be mindful of our volunteers as well. PTA leaders need to spend time with our families to recharge our own batteries. Obviously, some meetings are necessary, but try to minimize in-person meetings. If possible, communicate via an email, or schedule a phone call with only the involved parties. Have a backup contact, not everyone can (or should) be reachable at all times. Be realistic regarding timelines, don’t expect quick turn-arounds.

There is no reason we can’t continue to engage with our school communities, and plan for the year ahead, in a way that allows us all to take advantage of this time with our families. September will be here before we know it, and with it comes fresh starts, new friends, and endless opportunities!
The Empire State PTSA — a state-wide PTSA

By Jacqueline Wilson, President Empire State PTSA

The Empire State PTSA is a unit of the New York State PTA and the National PTA. This statewide unit was organized in 1979 (we were the first) to reach out to people who are leaders in the field of education as well as anyone interested in children's issues. It enables those who may no longer be active in or connected to a local unit, or our many educational partners, to continue to be a part of PTA. ESPTSA is home to all who wish to be engaged or remain engaged in PTA's mission – a place where each member sustains the rich legacy of NYS PTA, advocating for 125 years, as the first chartered PTA in our nation!

Speaking of statewide PTAs, did you know that of the 54 chartered Congresses of National PTA, 46 of them have statewide PTAs! Many have names that take on the "nickname" of the state, (like Empire State) such as "Show Me PTA" for Missouri or "Golden State PTA" for California. However, many have some very unusual and creative names that would make you stop and think about where they actually are located. For example, the "Good Life" unit in Nebraska, or the "Flickertail PTA" of North Dakota. It is rewarding to see how many states have engaged and encouraged new members in this way. More members equal more voices and greater advocacy for our children.

So, how does ESPTSA contribute to NYS PTA? First and foremost, by adding voices through ESPTSA membership we turn up the volume of our chorus for advocacy! Whether seasoned member or novice, statewide Empire members offer perspective to priority issues and strengthen our influence with decision makers by building our capacity.

Next, the ESPTSA gifts memberships each year to students who have received the NYS PTA Jenkins Memorial Scholarships as well as to recipients of the Richard Gazzola Teacher fellowship. It is our hope that these memberships, along with a one-year subscription to our electronic periodical, New York Parent Teacher, will encourage both the students and teachers to continue their journey in PTA for years to come.

We have been fortunate that our membership dues and generous donor gifts to the association have made it possible to expend funds to NYS PTA for various projects and materials to enhance the work of staff and governance in their advocacy efforts for children and youth. These projects include:

- Region-designed banners that are displayed at our annual convention, one representing each of the 12 state regions. By keeping the banners “in house” and returned each year we ensure that every region has the spotlight at convention.
- Three fire-proof cabinets for the state PTA office in Albany. These are of utmost importance to our organization as they house the archival material of the NYS PTA and the cabinets ensure that these most precious documents will always be safe.
- The purchase of projectors for use by NYS PTA governance and staff for Powerpoint presentations or displays at various state events and in the field. This is a cost savings for NYS in that there is less money expended on rental fees for AV equipment at hotels and conference centers.
- Donation of a brass tree outside the office and several past presidents' plaques inside.
- The establishment of the Muriel Berk Service Award in honor of this outstanding PTA member who was instrumental in establishing the Empire State PTSA. This award of $250 can be used by the recipient towards expenses to attend a NYS PTA event. Recognition is made annually at our meeting held during the NYS Convention weekend. In addition, we purchased a special plaque, displayed in the NYS PTA office which recognizes the recipients of this award.

For the year 2021-2022, we were so proud to surpass our membership goal of 175 members. Thanks to all of you who supported us. Please consider becoming a member for the 22-23 year or renewing your membership at https://esptsa.memberhub.com/store

As you can see, ESPTSA provides both a home to many and critical support to NYS PTA. Keep this in mind when you see that Empire State building symbol looming before you. We encourage all to join Empire State and continue the legacy of our founding members by remaining active informed PTA representatives, no matter where you may live throughout New York State.
YOUR PTA MEMBERSHIP = OUR ADVOCACY VOICE FOR ALL CHILDREN

January
Tested to the Joint Legislature in support of full funding for school aid, increasing support for student and educator mental health, and supporting students with disabilities, English Language Learners and Pre-K students.

February
Fought for (and won) funding for student mental health, the Recover from Covid School Program, and continued digital and tech equity for students.

March
Advocated for expansion of Career and Technical Education programs and support for CTE/STEM instructors and students who attend BOCES programs and programs in the Big 5 City School Districts.

April
Renewed positions on school safety, focusing on violence prevention, gun safety, and community/education collaboration in supporting students in crisis.

May
Fought for (and won) Regents flexibility and expansion of the safety net for students to qualify for a Regents diploma.

June
Fought on Capitol Hill for Universal School Meals and Bipartisan Common Sense Gun Reform.

July
Fought for (and won) legislation which would support a family's access to affordable water, heat and electric.
We are excited to begin a new year of Reflections!

What is Reflections?

Glad you asked. Reflections is the National PTA Arts program. Reflections has been around for over 50 years supporting the arts! Each year over 300,000 students from all over the country create works of art reflecting on the student-selected theme. These students range from Pre-K to Grade 12.

The theme for 2022-2023 is **Show Your Voice!** Students can submit artwork in one or all of the following categories: Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography and Visual Arts.

Students are grouped by age divisions: Primary (Pre-K-Grade 2), Intermediate (Grades 3-5), Middle School (Grades 6-8), High School (Grades 9-12) and Special Artist (all grades).

The Reflections program starts at the PTA/PTSA/SEPTA unit level. To run any National or New York State program, including Reflections, a unit must be in good standing. This means that the unit must have at least 25 members, pay their membership dues by October 31, have insurance paid for and paperwork completed, have bylaws that are current, and file a 990 form with the IRS. If your unit is not in good standing, please contact your region director for help.

To get your PTA going with its own Reflections program, follow these five basic steps:

**Step 1: Getting started (September)**

**Step 2: Promote your program (September/October)**

**Step 3: Judging (November)**

**Step 4: Celebrate! (November-June)**

**Step 5: Advance entries to your region (November/December/January)**

Click HERE for more detailed information about running a Reflections program at your school. Information will be updated throughout the summer and early Fall.

And the final important step to remember: your Region Reflections Chair and the NYS PTA Arts Specialist, are here to help you!

Contact us at any time arts@nyspta.org

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**PARENTS AND EDUCATORS!**

**TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS FREE OFFER – LIVE, ONE-TO-ONE VIDEO CHAT SESSIONS**

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Enhance Any School Event with a Movie

An annual license from Swank Movie Licensing USA covers all planned and unplanned movie showings at your school for any occasion: holiday parties, family movie night, rainy day recess and more.

Swank Movie Licensing USA is the only company that can provide you with a comprehensive selection of Hollywood films like these:

- **Space Dandy**
- **Playdate in Paris**
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- **Rock Dog 2: A New Legacy**
- **The Garden Was Small Potatoes**

Visit swank.com/k-12-schools/nyspta for more info!

Email: jcorse@movilc.com
The long-awaited summer months are finally here! Some families may be planning their summer vacation, while others are staying home for the summer. Whatever you do, don't forget the importance of reading. Encouraging children to keep reading over the summer will be very beneficial to their learning.

Summer reading is vital, in addition to helping kids continue learning while school is out, it also helps discover the joy of stories, encourages social-emotional development, and promotes the importance of lifelong learning. Providing year-round access to books is essential to improve student achievement. Books help students understand people can be different than them, and it allows them to see themselves in stories. Kids love to pick out books themselves. Comic books and graphic novels are great for reluctant readers.

Below are several ways to make reading fun for children—

Read Often, Keep Books in Sight, Give Books as Gifts, Change Your Voice, Talk About the Pictures, Use Movement, Point to the Words, Ask Questions, Do a Project, Let Your Child Choose the Book, Act Out the Story, Read to Your Pets, Create a Reading Nook, Use Sight Words Display Books, Dress Up, Connect to Real-Life Events, Find Letters.

Whatever you decide to do, keep reading!

Seize Success this Summer.
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