



**REGISTRATION**  
**and**  
**WORKSHOP**  
**INFORMATION**



# Summer Leadership Conference

## July 19-20, 2025

Crowne Plaza-The Desmond Hotel, 660 Albany Shaker Road, Albany, NY



Dear PTA Leaders,

It is our pleasure to invite you to the 2025 Summer Leadership Conference on July 19-20, at Crowne Plaza-The Desmond Hotel in Albany! NYS PTA has planned an exciting 24-hour event, which includes keynote speakers, training workshops, exhibitor opportunities and networking with members across the State. This is an approved and encouraged use of PTA funds, and you can make your own hotel accommodations at a reduced room rate (see below for that info).

Summer Leadership Conference 2025 is a wonderful opportunity to meet new PTA friends, network and expand your leadership skills. Our NYS PTA Governance Team members and other professionals will provide you with the tools and skills you need to be strong and confident leaders.

SLC is a great opportunity for you and your PTA officers, board members and all members interested in developing their leadership skills. A well-run PTA will serve the children and community most effectively; well-trained and motivated members will lead to the successful longevity of your PTA unit. Take a look at the workshop offerings, share the information widely, register and attend a wonderfully planned conference, while you enjoy meeting other PTA leaders in a fun, relaxing environment.

This year we are planning this to be an all-encompassing event with our theme – *Come One, Come All! The Greatest PTA on Earth!* We invite you to embrace the fun theme and come dressed in your favorite circus-related apparel.

Please visit our website at [www.nyspta.org](http://www.nyspta.org), where you can view the latest up-to-date information, printable fliers, registration information and [register online](#). If you have questions about this event, please contact your PTA Region Director or send an email to the 2025 Summer Leadership Conference Coordinator Carol (Raymond) Clementi at [craymond@nyspta.org](mailto:craymond@nyspta.org). Registration inquiries should be directed to the Conference Coordinator.

We hope that you and members of your unit, council and region will join us for a fun filled, informative and energizing conference, as we continue to Measure the Mission for all Children!

Looking forward to seeing you in Albany!

Carol (Raymond) Clementi  
Summer Leadership Conference Coordinator



Hotel Reservations are made on your own (under the NYS PTA room block) at Crowne Plaza-The Desmond Hotel before June 25, 2025 at the room rate of \$155/night, per room (not per person). Hotel reservations for Summer Leadership Conference [CLICK HERE](#) or call the hotel directly at 518-869-8100 using **Group Code QLZ**.

# Schedule at a Glance



## Saturday, July 19, 2025

12:00pm – 6:00pm	Registration / Information / 1 <sup>st</sup> Timers
12:00pm – 4:45pm	Exhibitors
12:00pm – 4:45pm	PTA Store
12:00pm – 1:15pm	Dedicated Exhibit time / NYS PTA Team Tables
1:15pm – 1:45pm	Opening Session
1:45pm – 2:15pm	Dedicated Exhibit time / NYS PTA Team Tables
2:15pm – 3:15pm	Workshop Session 1
3:15pm – 3:30pm	Break
3:30pm – 4:15pm	Dedicated Exhibit time / NYS PTA Team Tables
4:15pm – 5:15pm	Workshop Session 2
5:30pm – 6:30pm	Workshop Session 3
6:30pm – 7:30pm	Dinner
7:30pm	First Timers Group Photo
7:30pm – 7:45pm	Break
7:45pm – 9:00pm	Evening Session/Activity

## Sunday, July 20, 2025

7:45am – 8:30am	Breakfast
8:45am – 9:45am	Workshop Session 4
10:00am – 11:00am	Workshop Session 5
11:10am	Full Group Photo
11:15am – 11:45am	Closing Remarks and Prize Drawings



**July 19 only!**  
**Visit the PTA Store  
for your PTA-related  
merchandise and  
exclusive specials!**

# WORKSHOPS - Saturday, July 19, 2025



## Session 1: 2:15 p.m. – 3:15 p.m.

### 101 Taming the Conflict

*Presented by: Jennifer Collazo, NYS PTA Secretary*

The carefully crafted juggling act of events, programs, and activities in a PTA unit, can cause volunteers to bring out the best (and the not-so-best) in one another. You are not alone! Units have to solve the conflict or deal with it. PT Barnum once said, "No one ever made a difference by being like everyone else", and in PTA, we make a difference for every child.

### 102 Presidents- It is Your Circus!

*Presented by: Patty Frazier, NYS PTA President*

Presidents, you are invited to join NYS PTA President Patty Frazier to chat about the best ways to direct what is happening in the three rings of your unit and the sideshow too!

### 103 Recipe for a Functioning and Engaging PTA Board

*Presented by: Joan Wabnik, NYS PTA 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President*

The PTA board of directors plays a crucial role in the governance and strategic direction of an organization. It is the collective body both elected and appointed to oversee your PTA. This presentation will concentrate on the key aspects that constitute a well-functioning PTA board.

### 104 Reflections Doesn't Need to Be a Tightrope Walk

*Presented by: Kim Blasiak, Programs/Events Associate, and Jennifer Pollock-Hurst, NYS PTA Arts Specialist*

Not familiar or comfortable with the National PTA Reflections program? Learn about the AMAZING student Reflections program, how to start, and where to find help! If we have time, we will touch on other PTA programs too!

### 105 Financial Accountability Best Practices

*Presented by: Sonya Verrillo, NYS PTA Treasurer, and Kyle Belokopitsky, NYS PTA Executive Director*

New for 2025-2026, this workshop is REQUIRED for Presidents and Treasurers to be a unit in Good Standing. This workshop equips participants with essential tools to ensure financial accountability and transparency within their organization. Topics include fraud prevention strategies, financial best practices, monthly reconciliation procedures, and annual audits/financial reviews with confidence. Attendees will leave with practical knowledge to strengthen internal controls and safeguard their nonprofit's financial integrity.

### 106 Region Membership Training for RMCs

*Presented by: Kathleen Jenne, NYS PTA Marketing Specialist, and Danielle Blanchard-St. Louime, NYS PTA Membership Engagement Specialist*

Part 1 of Region Membership Chair training (*for Region Membership Chairs only*).

### 107 Region Bylaws Chair Training

*Presented by: Geri Lehane, Bylaws Coordinator*

This is a training for Region Bylaws Chairs on how to approve bylaws. It would be helpful for Region Directors to understand this process as well (*for Region Bylaws Chairs and Region Directors only*).

# WORKSHOPS - Saturday, July 19, 2025



## Session 2: 4:15 p.m. - 5:15 p.m.

### **201 Know Your Story, Tell Your Story, Sell Your Story: Critical Partnerships in Advocacy** *(This workshop is available for possible CTLE credit)*

*Presented by: Bob Vecchio, Executive Director, Nassau Suffolk Schools Boards Association*

Advocacy, collaboration, and working together with your School Boards and School Governance Teams. Come discuss how PTAs can expand partnerships with school leaders to develop community advocacy action plans in this interactive workshop. Bring your questions!

### **202 No Cupcakes Required: Engaging Middle and High School Families**

*Presented by: Fiona Ratray, Taconic Region Director and Starbridge Family Engagement Coordinator*

This session will explore the evolving needs of middle and high school families through the lens of PTA leadership. We will examine current barriers to engagement and discuss how PTAs can lead efforts to reframe families as essential partners in student and school success. Participants will leave with actionable strategies to strengthen family investment in both education and the broader school community.

### **203 Be a PTA Artiste!**

*Presented by: Jennifer Collazo, NYS PTA Secretary*

It doesn't matter if you have a talent or skills to contribute, a desire to work with student programming, the interest to advocate, or if you just want to be involved by association...PTA is the place for you. There are countless ways that our members can contribute to the future of this great organization. Bring on the Passion for PTA - there's room under the Big Top for Everyone!

### **204 Givebacks - Beyond Membership**

*Presented by: Courtney Mullis, Givebacks Customer Success Manager*

Givebacks is for more than just membership. Learn how to use features like fundraising, Shop-to-Give, newsletters/messages, website design, and more!

### **205 Step Right Up - Presenting the Greatest PTA Board of All!**

*Presented by: Amany Messieha Dgheim, NYS PTA Immediate Past President, and Lucille Vitale, NYS PTA Vice President*

Juggling PTA board responsibilities can sometimes feel like a circus act. This fun and interactive workshop will allow volunteer leaders to find resolutions to board challenges and why using safety nets is so important!

### **206 Region Membership Workshop for RMCs**

*Presented by: Renee Daniels, Membership Coordinator*

Part 2 of Region Membership Chair training *(for Region Membership Chairs only)*.

### **207 What Holds the Big Tent Up? Bylaws and Procedures!**

*Presented by: Patty Frazier, NYS PTA President, and Sonya Verrillo, NYS PTA Treasurer*

We are shining the spotlight on what holds the tent up! Learn how to build a strong foundation for your organization by knowing your bylaws and procedures to keep your board and group in perfect formation—just like a well-rehearsed circus act.

# WORKSHOPS - Saturday, July 19, 2025



## Session 3: 5:30 p.m. – 6:30 p.m.

### 301 Hot Topics in Education *(This workshop is available for possible CTLE credit)*

*Presented by: Kyle Belokopitsky, NYS PTA Executive Director*

Discuss critical issues facing our schools, children and educators, and how you can make an impact. Internet enabled device limitations, Foundation Aid, school-based mental health, and more. Bring your questions in this fast-paced interactive workshop.

### 302 Soothe the Circus - PTA Basics

*Presented by: Jennifer Collazo, NYS PTA Secretary, and Susan Brown, NYS PTA Field Support Coordinator*

An interactive workshop presenting an overview of PTA from mission to roles to financial concerns. We will help PTA leaders gain knowledge to help them lead their unit with confidence.

### 303 No One Walks Alone *(This workshop is available for possible CTLE credit)*

*Presented by: Donna Thomas and Dr. Jaimee Arnoff from James's Warriors*

The James's Warriors No One Walks Alone presentation provides a comprehensive understanding of youth mental health, with an emphasis on suicide, coping strategies and HOPE.

### 304 Dear Senator, Send in the Clowns (But Make It Formal)

*Presented by: Mary Sotomayor, NYS PTA Leadership Development Coordinator*

When you're writing to parents, staff, or elected officials, your letter can't swing in like a trapeze artist without a net. In this session, we'll teach you how to craft professional letters that get attention for the right reasons—no juggling required. With the help of ChatGPT, you'll learn to balance tone, structure, and just the right touch of flair to turn your message into a standing ovation.

### 305 All About Audits and Monthly Reconciliations

*Presented by: Sophia Wu, Westchester-East Putnam Region Associate Director of Events, former treasurer of Westchester-East Putnam Region, YCPTA, Gorton, Saunders, and PEARLS*

When the \$\$ is right, your goals are in sight! Get an overview of the best practices for PTA treasurer and the board/members. Attendees will learn how to review financial records through monthly bank reconciliation reviews and annual financial reviews, both required by your insurance coverage.

### 306 Givebacks for Region Support

*Presented by: Theda Smith, Membership/Field Support Senior Associate*

This workshop is for Region leaders. We will cover running reports, supporting local units, and navigating Givebacks as a region or council member.

### 307 Unlocking the Power of the NYS PTA Resource Guide

*Presented by: Pat Assortato, NYS PTA Field Support Coordinator, Patricia Genco, NYS PTA Wellness Coordinator, and Lynn Petrofsky, NYS PTA Recognitions Specialist*

Join us for an insightful workshop dedicated to the NYS PTA Resource Guide. This comprehensive guide is your ultimate tool for understanding and utilizing the resources provided by the NYS PTA. Whether you are a new member or a seasoned veteran, this session will equip you with everything you need to know to effectively support your PTA unit and enhance your community engagement. Don't miss this opportunity to explore best practices, innovative idea and practical strategies that will make your PTA experience more impactful and rewarding.

# WORKSHOPS - Sunday, July 20, 2025



## Session 4: 8:45 a.m. – 9:45 a.m.

### 401 Queerness & Queries; a Crash Course in Cultivating Community

*Presented by Amy Collazo-Schiavo, NYS Pride PTSA Vice President 2, and Maddy Giattini, NYS Pride PTSA Vice President 3*  
An open discussion about language, identity, community, and history. Join us to learn and have your questions answered. We'd like to focus on covering as much as possible (terms, events, flags, etc.) while still leaving room for any questions you may have.

### 402 SEPTA and SEPTSA Units are Spectacular! *(This workshop is available for possible CTLE credit)*

*Presented by: Patty Frazier, NYS PTA President*  
When there is a SEPTA/SEPTSA unit in town, awe-inspiring things happen for all children! Come be a part of our discussion of the sights and sounds that make our Special Education PTA units the greatest! For established, new and considering SEPTA/SEPTSA units.

### 403 Welcome to the Greatest Show in PTA! Under the Big Top: Understanding the Role of PTA Council

*Presented by: Jennifer Collazo, NYS PTA Secretary, and Maria Sanders, NYS PTA Environment Specialist*  
Join us "Under the Big Top: Understanding the Role of PTA Council!" This session will spotlight how PTA Councils serve as a vital bridge - collaborating with administration, the Board of Education, and staff to amplify the voice of all local units. Learn how councils keep the show running smoothly by supporting PTA leaders, promoting advocacy, and strengthening school communities across the district.

### 404 Family Engagement, the Magic of Partnerships

*Presented by: Susan Brown, NYS PTA Field Support Coordinator, and Jaclyn Masters Stephens, Genesee Valley Region Director*  
Family Engagement is a key component of student success. This interactive workshop will focus on why family engagement is important and ways to build it.

### 405 Givebacks - What You Need to Know!

*Presented by: Theda Smith, Membership/Field Support Senior Associate*  
This workshop is for PTA unit officers. You will receive an overview of how to utilize Givebacks as a PTA officer. The workshop will cover the modules for officer compliance, membership, remitting state dues, and 990 filing confirmation. We will also briefly cover PTA communications and utilizing your online store.

### 406 PTA Dream Themes: Membership Campaigns and Strategies for Every Month

*Presented by: Danielle Blanchard-St. Louime, NYS PTA Membership Engagement Specialist*  
Discover real PTA membership success stories and turn them into your own show-stopping campaigns! Using leader spotlights and tips from NYS and National PTA, we'll walk through a month-by-month plan aligned with awards and badges to help your membership soar.

### 407 Financial Accountability Best Practices

*Presented by: Sonya Verrillo, NYS PTA Treasurer*  
New for 2025-2026, this workshop is REQUIRED for Presidents and Treasurers to be a unit in Good Standing. This workshop equips participants with essential tools to ensure financial accountability and transparency within their organization. Topics include fraud prevention strategies, financial best practices, monthly reconciliation procedures, and annual audits/financial reviews with confidence. Attendees will leave with practical knowledge to strengthen internal controls and safeguard their nonprofit's financial integrity.

# WORKSHOPS - Sunday, July 20, 2025



## Session 5: 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

### 501 Experience the Magic and Wonder of Reading

*Presented by: Kim Blasiak, Programs/Events Associate, and Biena Depeña, NYS PTA Literacy Specialist*

Did you know that NYS PTA has literacy programs for students? Come learn about the Pick a Reading Partner Program and Every Child Reads Initiative.

### 502 What Kind of Ringmaster are You?! Find out the skills and resources needed as President of a PTA Unit and or Council

*Presented by: Robin Brumfield, Leadership Training Specialist and Kathleen McEnroe, Technology Training Specialist*

Running a PTA unit or council can feel like managing a three-ring circus - and every great show needs a strong, creative and composed Ringmaster at the helm! Find out about the unique leadership styles a PTA/PTSA President will need to lead a successful and well-balanced unit and or council.

### 503 Resolution Ready: Research & Writing for Effective PTA Advocacy

*Presented by: Susan Fisher, NYS PTA Legislation Coordinator*

Want to make a real impact in your PTA and beyond? Strong resolutions and position statements are the backbone of effective advocacy, shaping policies that support children and families across the state. In this hands-on workshop, you'll learn how to research key issues, craft compelling resolutions, and write persuasive position statements that drive change. Whether you're new to advocacy or looking to sharpen your skills, this session will give you the tools and confidence to make your voice heard where it matters most. Join us and be the catalyst for positive change!

### 504 Changing a Child's Story: PTA's Role in Supporting Communities of Care for Foster Children and Youth *(This workshop is available for possible CTLE credit)*

*Presented by: Namiko Suga, NYS PTA Juvenile Protection Specialist*

PTAs can play a vital role in the lives of the over 14,000 foster children and youth in New York State. Learn how your local units, especially SEPTAs and other special interest PTAs, can contribute to communities of care within the foster system through training, inclusive family engagement, and community outreach.

### 505 The Greatest Secretary in PTA!

*Presented by: Val Ford, NYS PTA Family Engagement Coordinator, and Maria Sanders, NYS PTA Environment Specialist*

Step right up for a fun, energizing workshop to empower recording and corresponding secretaries with the skills, confidence, and mindset to manage the “circus” of a busy PTA, from juggling tasks to taming communication chaos, all while having fun and staying energized.

### 506 Investing in Your Unit's Future: Volunteer Appreciation and Membership

*Presented by: Kathleen Jenne, NYS PTA Marketing Specialist*

We are all grateful for our volunteers but does your PTA truly make them feel seen and appreciated? Discover effective strategies to recognize and retain your unit's most valuable assets, its member volunteers! We will discuss practical approaches to volunteer appreciation, fostering loyalty, and tactics to strengthen member engagement.

### 507 Big Top Budgeting for Treasurers

*Presented by: Sonya Verrillo, NYS PTA Treasurer*

Step right up and master the art of financial management under the big top! This engaging workshop will teach treasurers how to juggle budgets, tame expense reports, and walk the tightrope of financial accountability with confidence. Whether you're new to the ring or a seasoned performer, you'll leave with practical tools and a few circus tricks to keep your finances in balance.