



March/April 2006

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Arkansas PTA

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Calendar

February

February 15

Founder's Day

March

Music in Our

Schools Month

Read Across

America

March 1

Final Membership

Dues

AR PTA Awards

Entries Due

April 7 & 8

PTA State
Convention

Fort Smith Holiday
Inn City Center

May

Send new officers
form to state PTA
office

June

Audit Due

Call to Convention

The Arkansas PTA 81st Annual Convention, the official meeting of the delegate body of the Arkansas PTA, is scheduled for April 7-8, 2006, at the Holiday Inn in Fort Smith, Arkansas. This year Vonda Norwood from Van Buren and Jeannie Cole from Ft. Smith have been working hard to line up exciting activities and learning experiences for our members.

As you know, National PTA is implementing the on-line membership for our state next year. On-line membership will provide the opportunity for all of our members to receive mail outs and emails directly from National PTA. Arkansas PTA will also be able to use the on-line membership to better communicate with our members. In other words, we'll be able to get information out to our constituents in a more efficient and timely manner. Heather Frankland our National PTA representative will be providing guidance for all members. Be sure to take advantage of this wonderful training resource.

We also are looking at changing our bylaws to include mandatory bonding insurance for all of our local units. We are hoping that numerous members across the state will come and represent the diverse views of our membership. Everyone will have ample opportunity to discuss this extremely important issue that will affect all local units.

Mrs. Norwood and Mrs. Cole have also put together a town meeting. We are inviting various local, regional, and state representatives who have a vested interest in all of our children across the state. They will be discussing local, state, and national educational concerns which affect our schools, parents, and students. This is your opportunity to voice your concerns, share your ideas, and build partnerships with other leaders across the state that help implement local, state, and national policies.

The convention committee members have searched high and low to provide our members with the best training and experiences during our workshops. We will be helping parents learn how to be a part of the decision making and advocacy for their schools, the benefits and ways of building a partnership between home and school, ways to help grandparents who are raising their grandchildren, as well as helping PTA officers to become more skilled as leaders in their local PTA units.

Most importantly, we will be recognizing the state Reflections Winners during our annual luncheon.

We have had several vendors sign up for our exhibits. They will be providing free samples, prize drawings, and all around fun for everyone who attends the convention.

Hotel reservations can be made by contacting the Holiday Inn City Center, 700 Rogers Avenue, Downtown, Fort Smith, AR, 1-800-HOLIDAY.

We are looking forward to seeing you there!

Come Join the Fun

We are excited to announce the Northwest Region will be hosting our 81st Annual PTA Convention in the beautiful city of Fort Smith, Arkansas. This will be an outstanding convention with many notable speakers and programs which we know will be of interest to all of us. Please be sure to watch your mailboxes for information on this exciting, upcoming convention.

Something new this year... will be a Town Meeting in which many state, regional, and local dignitaries will be invited to share how collaborating with our community will strengthen schools, families, and student learning. One special guest will be Dr. Ken James, Arkansas Commissioner of Education. However, the most important guest will be YOU! Come share your ideas, listen to suggestions, and develop partnerships across the state to strengthen our community resources.

We hope each of you will have an opportunity to meet our new State PTA Office Manager, Tonya Hooks. Tonya will be looking forward to meeting each of you and becoming better acquainted with you. We appreciate Tonya coming on board and her diligent efforts to help with this year's convention. Our state office is now fully staffed and Tonya is available to answer your questions. You can call our state office at 1-800-782-4782 or e-mail at ar_office@pta.org.

Don Johnson
Arkansas PTA President

Don Johnson
Arkansas PTA
President

Teacher Appreciation Week Is a Time to Give Thanks

Every young mind needs a spark to light the way to a brighter future through learning—and teachers are that spark. In 1985, National PTA established Teacher Appreciation Week, which is May 7–13 this year, to honor the dedicated men and women who lend their passion and skills to educating our children.

National PTA has long promoted the partnership of parents and teachers, recognizing that when parents and teachers work together, all children under their care benefit. Teacher Appreciation Week is a special time that gives parents the chance to show how grateful they are for the many excellent teachers who nurture the intellectual and social development of their children. The week also gives parents the opportunity to rededicate themselves to the parent-teacher partnership.

I encourage you and your PTA to recognize all that teachers do to contribute to the lives of children through expressions of appreciation from students and parents that say “thank you.” Teachers, in partnership with parents, truly make a difference.

Anna Weselak
National PTA President



Ana Weslak
National PTA
President

Legislative News

The legislators were in session at the end of February. Jeannie Cole, Legislative Vice President for Arkansas PTA, testified in front of the House and Senate Interim Committees on Education, February 22. We appreciate all of the members who showed up to help support Jeannie as she spoke about our position concerning funding for education.

A possible special session may start on March 15. If one is scheduled, we will need PTA members to again go to the Capitol and support PTA's legislative position. Please watch for further communication and feel free to email Jeannie Cole, jeannie@thecolefamily.com and let her know that you are willing to help.

PTA Membership News

A special thank you for the extra efforts of the local PTA Presidents and Membership Chairs for helping us see increases in our membership this year. Thank you for sharing in our focused goal to achieve 100% membership in every unit. Congratulations to those units who have accomplished this important goal. Also, congratulations to several units who have achieved the 5% increase this year. We are looking forward to recognizing these High Five Club units during our convention in April. A final reminder, if you have not sent in your membership dues or if you have additional memberships, please send this information to the state office. We will credit your local unit's membership. Remember, only by working together, can we achieve our goals.

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Convention Delegates to Vote on Bonding Requirement

STAND UP AND LET YOUR VOICE BE HEARD

Arkansas PTA Board of Managers has conducted an extensive study of fidelity bonding for all PTA officers who sign or handle PTA funds. Fidelity bonding covers losses sustained by a PTA through any fraudulent or dishonest acts committed by any non-compensated elected officer who is authorized to handle PTA monies acting alone or in conspiracy with others.

The Board's recommendation of fidelity bonding comes as a result of many local units being faced with the mismanagement of funds from theft or the simple lack of established financial procedures. This mismanagement can result in all officers being held legally responsible for the missing funds or the loss of PTA's tax exempt status.

Convention delegates will be asked to approve a bylaws amendment to mandate bonding at a cost of approximately \$60.00 per year. If approved, local units will be required to provide Arkansas PTA with proof of bonding insurance each year in order to be a "unit in good standing."

While many may think bonding is unnecessary—the truth is, theft of PTA funds has increased over the last ten years. Bonding insurance is needed when monetary transactions are the main mode of doing business, as is the case of all units. Units are especially vulnerable to mismanagement of funds because of the difficulty of differentiating duties. When monetary transactions are handled by the same person without a system of checks and balances from start to finish it makes it easy for an individual to mismanage funds without detection. When units are bonded the misappropriated funds will be reimbursed to that unit through the bonding company's procedures.

If you have questions about "why bonding is necessary", call your Region Vice President, he/she will be happy to share information about this amendment or any other PTA requirements.
Essie Middleton, Bylaws Chair.



Arkansas Convention Provides ADE Credit Hours

ADE credit for parental involvement hours can be yours for attending our PTA convention. Dr. Kathleen Cates, FSSD Director of Staff Development for the Fort Smith Public Schools verified that the Fort Smith District will be certifying 11 hours of staff development for teachers, parent facilitators, administrators, and other staff members who attend our convention in-services including the Town Hall Meeting. It is our understanding that most districts will transfer other district's training hours. So talk to your administrator and/or your superintendent and discover if you too can get ADE credit for attending the Arkansas Congress of Parents and Teachers' convention on April 7 & 8 at the Fort Smith Holiday Inn City Center.

One of our highlights will be the Town Hall meeting April 7, at 3:45. Dr. Ken James, Arkansas Commissioner of Education will be in attendance. The purpose of this meeting will be to have community collaboration which will strengthen the relationship between the home, school, and community. It is our goal to bring all of the stakeholders involved in educating our children together and have a discussion and come to a better understanding in order to increase students' achievement, safety, and respect for self, others, and the community. The meeting is designed to inspire delegates with possible ideas and to return to their own community ready to collaborate in a town hall meeting with the knowledge of whom to invite and what kinds of questions to ask in order to generate a quality discussion for an optimal outcome.

We are looking forward to seeing you there.

Jeannie Cole

Co-chair of Arkansas PTA convention

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Tomorrow's News Today

GREAT News!!! This week, National PTA received letters and statements of support for its first annual Take Your Family to School Week from **Secretary Margaret Spellings, U.S. Department of Education, Scholastic Inc., and National School Boards Association.**

Excerpt from Secretary Spellings Statement:

"I have been fortunate to be involved in our public schools in many different ways - most importantly as a parent - for more than two decades. During that time, I have seen that those involved in education are people who want to help children and serve the local community. You (PTA) are on the frontlines of some of the most important years in our children's lives... Thank you for your commitment to education, for your efforts to strengthen family-school partnerships, and for the work you do every day. I extend best wishes for a successful and enjoyable observation of PTA Take Your Family to School Week"

Outcome: Excerpts of the statements of support will be posted to

www.pta.org <<http://www.pta.org>>

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