

CouncilConnections

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Message from the STC President

The Fall is a wild time for PTAs – general meetings, setting the budget, recruiting members, getting hot lunch up and running, books fairs and school pictures, don't forget fundraisers and staying connected with the Council and District Level PTA. It's hard to find time to take a breather and enjoy. It's sometimes even hard to remember to say thank you. But this is the time of year when the tone is set and a strong foundation is laid for your PTA year. This is the time of year to think about what kind of a leader you will be and how the PTA will reach their goals.

The Schaumburg Township Council of PTAs is here as a resource to you – to share ideas, to arrange training programs, to interpret PTA programs and policies, and to coordinate PTA activities throughout School District 54. As your PTA year gets underway, remember to reach out STC with your questions and concerns. In turn, we will try to keep you informed of important information from the School District as well as from the State & National PTA.

STC is hosting Illinois PTAs Council Course on November 12th at the District 54 Administrative Offices in the Board Room. All PTA members interested in understanding or getting more involved with PTA Councils is welcome to attend. This is a course that is not offered very often, so please make plans to attend.

I always say that we all got into PTA for the same reason – to make a better world for our kids. So be sure that while you are getting your PTA year underway, you also set down the Reflections projects, Holiday Workshop Contracts, and Partnership Breakfast Centerpieces and take time out to kick up some fall leaves with your kids.

Mary Kay Prusnick
President, Schaumburg Township Council of PTAs

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Parenting Magazine and National PTA Announce Strategic Partnership

The Parenting Group will support PTA's education advocacy efforts through co-branded content in Parenting School Years, sponsorship of PTA's Reflections Program, and Parenting's Mom Congress on Education and Learning initiative.

New York, NY and Chicago, IL (October 14, 2009) – Bonnier Corp.'s Parenting Group, publisher of *Parenting* and *Babytalk* magazines, and National PTA, the country's largest child advocacy organization, today announced a strategic alliance that will connect the two organizations in the common goal of giving parents the resources they need to help children get the most out of their educations. *Parenting*, which launched *Parenting School Years* earlier this year to help moms deal with the complex issues families face once their children start school, will work with PTA to create co-branded content in the magazine, on Parenting.com and on PTA.org that will give parents easy ways to work towards improving our nation's schools and their children's educational experiences.

Parenting will also serve as the national media sponsor of PTA's Reflections Program, the largest student arts competition in the country, and will feature the program in *Parenting School Years* and online at Parenting.com throughout the year. Reflections, celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, is highlighted in *Parenting School Years*' special report on arts education in the November issue, and through online photo galleries on Parenting.com (Parenting.com/PTA) that feature a selection of Reflections artwork from the nearly 500,000 entries received last year.

Driven by the ever-increasing role parents play in influencing positive change in education, *Parenting* magazine recently introduced its own advocacy initiative, Mom Congress™ on Education and Learning, a prosocial platform to celebrate and connect moms fighting for better schools. Byron V. Garrett, CEO of National PTA, sits on the Mom Congress advisory board, a group of education and family advocacy leaders who help shape the initiative's objectives and guide its members with advice on how they can make a difference. PTA programs and news will be featured regularly on Parenting.com/momcongress, in biweekly Mom Congress e-newsletters, and through outreach to Mom Congress' 10,000+ members.

For every PTA member who subscribes to *Parenting School Years*, The Parenting Group will also donate \$1 to National PTA to help support its advocacy efforts, and PTA will offer *Parenting* readers an exclusive membership discount as part of the partnership.

"*Parenting* is proud to support National PTA in its mission to get more parents involved in the education process," said Greg Schumann, Vice President and Group Publisher of The Parenting Group. "PTA's goals align perfectly with the objectives of *Parenting School Years* and our Mom Congress initiative – to empower moms with the information and resources they need to make a difference. We're honored to have the opportunity to join forces and connect our advertisers with such an esteemed organization to tackle an issue of critical importance in our readers' lives." Schumann will serve on the National PTA advisory board, where he will be part of a team that provides counsel and guidance

to PTA leadership, and work towards heightening the organization's awareness and capacity to broaden its funding scope.

“National PTA prides itself on being a relevant resource for today's parents so that all children reach their full potential. That's why we're proud to be part of such a substantive relationship with *Parenting*, a relevant resource for parents in its own right,” said Garrett, CEO of National PTA. “We're also excited to have *Parenting* as the media sponsor of PTA's Reflections Program. For 40 years PTA has provided a venue for kids to express themselves through art. This is especially important as education budgets tighten and arts programs are disappearing. Together, we'll increase awareness of the program, call attention to the importance of the arts and most importantly get more kids to express themselves through art.”

Article courtesy of PTA.org.

STC Treasurer

The 2009-2010 school year has been off to a great start. A lot of the schools have already turned in their audits, proposed budgets and accepted budgets, as well as their council dues. There has been some confusion on the STC dues. I do not need a copy of the membership dues that you should have sent in by October 1st. The council dues I refer to is the \$50.00 dues that every local unit gives to STC.

I have had a lot of great questions from presidents and treasurer's alike. Please keep them coming.

Julie Johnson
STC Treasurer

Membership

Have you ever reflected back in time; historically as well as personally. I know I have. Recently, I have been helping my daughter study for a test in American History. It has helped me regain a perspective of when times are “tough” people can reach deep and succeed.

I am sure you are thinking 'what does this have to do with PTA membership?' Well, we are in a unique time in history when there are multiple challenges people are facing. We can all name them: economy, housing market and job market... The list can go on. Well, I ask you to challenge your PTA to come together as a united front to really work at bettering the life

of children in your school. To remind your school community that you are more powerful at succeeding when everyone is working towards common goals.

I know, easier said than done. However, a true leader is someone who can make others better. Educate your community on why PTA is important. Help them understand why your passion is so strong. It is certainly not for the fund raisers, fun foods, hot lunch or other “treats” we provide. It is for the advocacy for children.

Where can you find people that care about children? In your community of course; do you know your dry cleaners first name? How about the local pizza restaurant or your dentist? Why not ask these people to support your PTA. The children are the future!

You or your membership committee may have to put yourselves out there and “sell” the PTA memberships to the community. I ask you; are the children worth it?

Mucia Burke
STC Membership Chair

STC Recording Secretary

What does a Recording Secretary of STC do besides take the minutes at the monthly meetings, type them up, and give them to the STC President to approve and send out? Well, that is my main job for sure (and not always so easy with all the discussions we get in at those meetings!), but I am also one of the officers on our board, a PTA member and more importantly, a parent in our school district. The job of Recording Secretary was not a job I had necessarily aspired to, actually I was asked in a casual conversation, “Would you consider being the STC Recording Secretary next year?” My first thought was that I was a good enough note-taker in school, but those notes were just for my benefit and no one else had to decipher what they said or depend on them for help. In this role I would have to take notes at a meeting where several people attended including PTA Presidents, District 54 employees (not to mention the Superintendent himself), and an occasional guest speaker, and I had to make sure to get everything right? Kind of scary, but as most things go in life and PTA, there are always other people there to help with the transition, offer kind but constructive criticism, and give you a pat on the back here and there to help you feel like you are on the right track! I certainly won’t say I am the best Recording Secretary, but I am proud of myself for accepting the challenge of a role I had never had before (I had been a previous PTA VP and President), and I am grateful to be a part of a wonderful group of dynamic, hard-working individuals who also accepted the challenge to make a difference in the lives of their own kids as well as countless other children when they accepted their role in the PTA. Join me in giving ourselves a “pat on the back” for stepping outside of our comfort zone, and let us continue to encourage each other in our important work in this district and in our schools, no matter what position we hold.

Jean Lemp,
Recording Secretary of STC

Dooley

Dooley School had our first-ever PBIS all-school celebration. The PBIS team worked very hard to put together 45 minutes of fun so students could celebrate having earned enough Dragon Dollars (by living the Dooley Do's) to fill the container in the main office. Students had the option of participating in Karaoke or a couple of different games. There was also popcorn, Oreos and water. We appreciate all of the parents who sent in food and/or volunteered to help during the celebration. It was a wonderful way to reinforce the positive behavior we see daily here at our school.

Way to go Dooley Dragons!

Julie LaFrener
PTA President

STC Newsletter Questions for October

How does your school handle Room Reps? Are they led by a PTA chair? Do teachers ask for and manage their own? etc. What happens if a room does not have a parent volunteer to be a rep?

PTA does organize the room reps, people to donate and party helpers. Teachers collect the money and then turn it over to PTA chairmen to distribute at the room rep meeting. We try to find them before, during and after conferences, so teachers can talk face-to-face with parents if they do not have a room rep as of conferences. (Makes it harder to say no when the teachers ask in person.) If a room rep cannot be found, the teacher will handle the party or ask PTA to find another parent willing to organize the party even if their child is not in that particular room.

This procedure has worked well for us, as we currently have 100% room coverage. During previous years, we learned as we went along and this is partnership between the staff and the PTA. Other schools may want to check with their teacher reps for specific preferences, since many of the schools seem to operate differently.

Christine Bock
Armstrong PTA President

We have a committee of 2 called room reps - one coordinates the primary grades, the other coordinates the intermediate grades. Early childhood and CD coordinate teachers coordinate their own thing. On curriculum night parents sign up to be "room Mom or Dad". We also have sign up for the 3 parties at curriculum night. The room parent makes sure the 3 people organizing each party get their plans together. The room parent also seeks volunteers for various events at the teacher's request. Some teachers just solicit their own volunteers

when needed. If no one signs up to be a room parent our room reps go down the class list and call parents until someone says yes. We have never not found a room parent by making phone calls. I don't know what we would do if we did not get someone to take it on.

Lisa Guagenti
Stevenson PTA President

We send out requests for “room reps” and “bakers” in every issue of the Banner, we start early! We even had a sign up sheet at the “Back to School Picnic”. All the slips come to me and then I sort out the requests. For the most part Mom’s get the room they requested but sometimes there are “holes” and I need to ask the Mom’s to rep one of their other children’s room. We did have a small scare this year as the 5th/6th grade classes had a shortage of volunteers. There was a risk that 2 classes would not have a rep. It seems that it isn’t “cool” for your mom to be a room rep at this age, so we did have some children actually ask their parents NOT to do it. Fortunately also at this age they don’t really want to play games either, all they want to do is eat or maybe watch a movie, so it was decided that we would combine the 4 classes into 2 for the 3 parties.

We also ask our parents for a \$5 party money donation so the room reps do not have to shoulder the additional burden of buying everything. I buy envelopes and label them “party money” and we have the teachers pass them out at curriculum night. The teachers have been remarkably cooperative and it really has helped our donation levels.

Once the reps and bakers are assigned we have a little meeting so I can explain a few basics and the reps can meet with the teacher so they can get an idea of what each does/does not want done in the classroom. After that our reps and teachers usually communicate thru email periodically throughout the year.

I can provide you with copies of the forms or letters that we sent out if anyone is interested.

Angela Wood
Blackwell PTA Room Rep Chair

We have a PTA committee that handles the coordination of room reps. At the back to school night we have a sign up and we also send an invite home in the back to school folders. Lists by class room are assembled and the committee chairs draw a name out of the hat of those parents wanting to be the room rep. We also have helpers sign up at this time as well as at conferences.

We have had rooms where no one signed up. At this point we requested the teachers assistance and they usually are able to get a parent or two to volunteer.

RoseAnne Caboor
Fairview PTA President

Partnership Breakfast Centerpieces

Due at the Next Council Meeting from each Local Unit

PTAs have traditionally provided centerpieces to the District's Partnership Breakfast. This year's breakfast, to be held at Mead Jr. High on November 19th, will honor those local area companies that are working closely with our schools. Each local unit has been given a plastic bin to fill a book display.

Following the breakfast, the centerpiece will come back to local PTAs, who will donate the books as they wish. How will your PTA donate the books? Some suggestions have been to donate to the school's office, the Library, the Birthday Book Program, the District's Run to Read effort, to a deserving child, or to the STC Parent Enrichment Library.

Questions? Contact Mary Kay Prusnick at: mp@stc.edu



Photo credit: Tom Goodrich

To Do:

PTA Tax Filing Deadline November 15th

Don't forget that all PTAs whose fiscal year ends June 30th should be planning to file taxes by the November deadline. The Illinois PTA website has a simple explanation on their website outlining which form needs to be filed according to a local unit's gross receipts for the year.

Protect your PTAs tax exempt status – file by November 15th.