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NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY - MARCH 2015



Just a few more weeks of winter to go and spring will be upon us. It's been a tough winter with many delays cancellations and rescheduled events. It really is a testament to the level of commitment and love of PTA that the great stuff we do continues to happen during these harsh winter months. I have seen some great things going on around the state, and cannot help but speak with great pride about the strength of our organization when I testify before the Maryland Senate and House on some of the troubling issues and bills in this year's Legislature.

This season we have serious concerns over the Governors proposed budget. Many legislators have joined together with us and our partners (MSEA, MABE, MEC, ACLU, ACY and others) across the state to work toward solutions that do not balance the state budget on the backs of our children. We have concerns, just like every year for the past decade, on voucher bills, this year known as the Maryland Education Tax credit. This tax credit takes critical funds away from public schools and awards it as a tax write off for donations into private schools, Five Million this year, Ten Million next year, and Fifteen Million every year thereafter. We are also concerned with attempts to change the Charter School Law, testing concerns, and starting school after Labor Day.

We encourage you to reach out to your legislators and have your voice heard. We will be gathering at our annual PTA Night in Annapolis on March 4th in room 170 of the House of Delegates Building on Bladen Street from 6pm-8pm to meet and greet with Legislators, our partners, and more! We hope to see you there. Please be sure and let your Legislators know you are coming, so they can expect to meet you.

A gentle reminder: Please take time to fill out and send in your State of Maryland Personal Property Forms, to the state and our office. They are due on April 15th. In the meantime, stay warm. Keep up the great work you do every day on behalf of children.

Maryland PTA
everychild. one voice. **NIGHT IN ANNAPOLIS**

*Ray Leone
President*

March 4, 2015; 5:30pm - 8:00pm
Maryland House of Delegates
6 Bladen Street, Room 170
Annapolis, Md 21401

5:30pm-6:00pm: "Meet & Greet"

6:00pm-7:00pm: Hear a few words from your Legislators

7:00pm-8:00pm: Take a moment to meet with individual Legislators.

Remember to bring your photo ID and allow time to go through security before entering the building.

Contact Your Legislators and make them aware you'll be there!



Treasurer's Corner

Maryland PTA Treasurer, Bruce Butz

Treasurer@MDPTA.org

The year is rapidly winding down. June will be here before you know it. Let's recap some important document requirements. Did you do the following:

Complete and file with IRS (with a copy to Maryland PTA) the 990-EZ with all of the required schedules or the 990N?

Complete and file with the Secretary of State (with a copy to Maryland PTA) the Annual Renewal or Registration along with the COR-85 or 990-EZ or the Exempt Organization Fund Raising Notice?

Complete an audit of your PTA records for 2013-2014 and remit a copy accompanied by your Annual Financial Report to Maryland PTA in accordance with your bylaws?

Complete an IRS 1099-MISC, if applicable, to those individuals or LLCs to whom you paid \$600 or more in the calendar year 2014? Check Cash Encounters to determine who qualified. If you did, did you complete and submit the accompanying 1096 to IRS?

Review your budget to see if any amendments are necessary?

Remit payments for memberships sold to Maryland PTA? As a reminder - Not reporting to Maryland PTA the portion of the dues you collected on their behalf is withholding money that rightfully belongs to them and is considered fraud by IRS.

Receive the 2015 Personal Property Report form from the Department of Assessments and Taxation? These are mailed in early February to organizations who have not forfeited their incorporation in the state of Maryland. They have a return due date of April 15 and can be completed online in mid-February and mailed. In order to maintain your good standing with Maryland PTA, you must submit a copy of that report to Maryland PTA. You can view your status by searching the website of the Department of Assessments and Taxation at www.dat.state.md.us. If you have forfeited your incorporation, contact Maryland PTA as there is a special Revival of Charter that must be completed as well as all missing Person Property Reports.

Legislative Action - Action Alert!

FULLY FUND MARYLAND PUBLIC EDUCATION - February 9, 2015

Governor Larry Hogan recently proposed adjustments to Maryland's Operating Budget for fiscal year (FY) 2015 (ending June 30, 2015) and a new budget for FY2016 (July 2015-June 2016) that will have an impact on all schools.

- Maryland has a long-standing structural deficit (that is, its projected expenditures pursuant to already-adopted law and budgets generally run higher than actual revenue).
- The Governor has proposed eliminating the structural deficit for 2015 and 2016 solely by reductions in spending. The major areas affected by reductions include state employee salaries, Medicaid appropriations (which fund medical services for the poor who otherwise lack insurance), appropriations to state colleges and universities (to underwrite tuition), and assistance to local public education.
- The proposed spending reductions run counter to an approach unanimously recommended by Maryland's Bi-Partisan Spending Affordability Commission. That Commission recommended modest reductions to spending in FYs 2016 and 2017, and allowing for revenue growth to occur per overall national economic trends, to be accompanied by most tax and fee increases, if needed. The Governor has, instead, chosen to close the structural deficit all in one year.

WHAT HAS BEEN PROPOSED FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION FOR FY2016?

Governor Hogan has proposed modest increases to public school construction funding, along with full funding of the State government's share for public school employee pensions. However, he also proposed funding three major items at lower levels than otherwise would be the case.

Maryland PTA is concerned about the following:

- 1.Reductions in Public School Funding Formulas, \$76.1 million loss -- These assistance formulas provide additional dollars to local school systems to meet the needs of students living in poverty, students requiring special education, English-as-a-second language, and students with special needs. Maryland PTA is concerned that changing these formulas will have a negative impact on public school students, and disproportionately and inequitably affect large numbers of poor, minority, special needs students, and students with limited English proficiency.
- 2.Downward adjustment of variables in the Geographical Cost of Education Index (GCEI), \$68.1 million loss -- The GCEI provides school districts with additional funds based upon poverty rates and higher-than-average local costs to provide educational facilities and services. GCEI has been gradually phased in, since 2004, to ensure educational equity across all local school systems. It has not been fully implemented and funded. Governor Hogan's proposal only partially funds GCEI for FY2016. Maryland PTA is concerned that failure to fully fund GCEI will have a negative impact on jurisdictions with higher costs and will over time further compound inequities across Maryland.
- 3.Changing the calculation of the Inflation Factor, \$800 million loss --The Inflation Factor (currently at 1.4%), is proposed at 1% for FY 2016 and capped at that level for FY2017. The Factor has historically been based on actual increases in costs of education. The factor enables local school districts to at least hold activities at current levels. Maryland PTA is concerned that calculating the inflation increase at a factor below actual costs will mean that local districts will have to cut services to students and families because their level of resources is not keeping pace with costs.

What should local PTA members do?

1. First, talk to your local education leaders (Superintendent of Schools, Board of Education members, etc.). Find out what the proposed reductions in state resources will (or could) mean for your local schools. Without creating alarm, try to get as specific as possible i.e. (Could it mean no summer school? Or fewer para-educators in the school media centers? Or fewer programs for gifted and talented students? Or fewer bus runs with more students walking longer distances?). To help you know how much funding your city/county could lose, see a budget chart on MD PTA's website (www.mdpta.org, click on "Legislation" button on the left hand menu).
2. Then, communicate with your local legislators. Write an email via the Maryland General Assembly website (<http://mgaleg.maryland.gov/>; click on "Voice My Opinion" under the "About the General Assembly" tab), or you can use MD PTA's new Engage system. Share your concerns and what the effect of cuts in funding will mean for your local schools. Better yet, meet with your Delegates and Senator, as a local group of PTAs. Share the stories about what the reduced funding could mean for your students and families. You can use the following talking points:
 - The Governor's \$6.1 billion education budget is inadequate to Maryland's need. While overall it will be the most Maryland will spend on education (when including school construction and staff pensions), the proposed budget is actually a \$144 million cut to what could have been because of changes in various formulas.
 - Cutting the Education Foundation Program by \$52.8 million reduces funding for all 867,000 Maryland Students (An estimated 12% of these receive Gifted & Talented services).
 - Cutting the Compensatory Education funding \$18 million will reduce supplemental teaching for about 400,000 of Maryland's poorest students.
 - Cutting funding \$3,754,335 for Students with Disabilities will limit educational services for about 122,000 special needs students.
 - Cutting funding \$2,902,468 for the Limited English Proficiency Education Program, will directly affect about 61,000 students.
 - Cutting the Geographic Cost of Education Index by 50% (\$68.1 million) cuts funds to Maryland's poorest jurisdictions, which have the largest number of minorities (59%). Education funding would be inadequate and inequitable for at least 13 of Maryland's 24 local school systems.
 - Cutting State Aid to Local governments by 53.7 million, cuts funds for local libraries and other services that complement education.
 - Reducing the inflationary factor to 1%, denies reality and fails to support increased costs for educational services and programs.

3. Write a letter or email to Governor Hogan (<http://www.gov.state.md.us/contact.html>). Let him know that while we appreciate his concern for closing Maryland's structural deficit, we are looking for different leadership on this. Encourage him instead to follow the approach unanimously recommended by the Bi-partisan Spending Affordability Commission. Urge him to fully fund education at its demonstrated level of need.

Maryland PTA's leaders are committed to working with Governor Hogan and the Maryland General Assembly to reverse these proposed changes. We need your help, however. We need local PTA member advocacy now. Local constituents talking to local legislators makes all the difference. Please don't let this opportunity go by.
PLEASE TAKE ACTION NOW!

2015 PUBLIC POLICY AGENDA

The 2015 National PTA Public Policy Agenda and Executive Summary is now posted on the National PTA website at <http://www.pta.org/advocacy/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3222&navItemNumber=556> and on the Maryland PTA Website under Capwiz. We encourage all of you to visit the site and become familiar with our policy issues. For training purposes, National PTA has produced a Webinar that outlines the 2015 Public Policy Agenda and can be found at: <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/recording/3059820278148741890>

NATIONAL PTA ADVOCACY AWARD

[Congratulations to Youth's Benefit Elementary School!](#)

Youth's Benefit Elementary School is National PTA's Local Unit Advocate Award Winner! They will be honored at the National PTA "PTA Takes Action Dinner and Awards Ceremony" from 6 to 8 p.m. on March 11, 2015 at the 2015 National PTA Legislative Conference, March 10-12, 2015 in Arlington, VA. Come support our local school winner. Tickets for the dinner will be available. Go to www.pta.org to register for the Legislative Conference or to purchase tickets for the dinner. The PTA began advocating for the replacement of the Youth's Benefit Elementary School in Harford County, Maryland years before they saw their effort come to pass. This project first appeared on the priority list for replacement in 1996, was finally approved in 2008, but was deferred in 2009 due to a variety of factors.

The Youth's Benefit facility is a 3 building school, one of the largest elementary schools in Maryland serving nearly 1,000 students. It had a variety of significant aging infrastructure issues, including, lead in the water in one building and open classrooms in the building that serves 3rd through 5th grade. In addition, the facility has a failing septic system, leaking roofs and a lack of adequate instructional and planning space.

In 2009, members of the PTA Executive Board learned that the approved project would not move forward. That is when they took action and began an intensive 4-year advocacy effort to get the project moved back to 1st priority on the replacement list. The PTA was unwilling to sit idly by while the Board of Education, County Council and County Executive played political games with the priority replacement list.

The National PTA Legislative Committee selected Youth's Best Elementary School PTA for this award because of their superior grassroots advocacy and unrelenting passion to see that the students, many who routinely score among the highest in the County, have a building that is both inadequate and unsafe. As part of their effort, members of the PTA began speaking at Board of Education meetings, County Council meetings and Board and County Budget Hearings. In addition, the PTA requested meetings with the school system Superintendent, Board of Education members, County Council members and the County Executive and corresponded on a regular basis with members of the State delegation. They wrote letters to the editor of the local newspaper and created an online news sight. This effort was successful because the PTA officers educated themselves on all aspects of the capital project selection process, the County budget process, as well as the state funding process for capital school projects. The PTA routinely informed its membership and the community about opportunities for the community to engage with the Superintendent and members of the Board of Education and County Council and the County Executive at key times throughout the process. Together, the PTA officers along with community members, spoke regularly at budget meetings, attended state construction meetings, invited elected officials, including the State Comptroller, to tour the facility.

They were a superb advocacy machine and for that reason deserved the recognition of National PTA Local Unit Advocacy Award.

MEMBERSHIP

Liz Wheeler, Membership Chair
membership@mdpta.org

Now on to the February photo incentive. Last week Maryland PTA received a photo showing well over 100 people from Perry Hall High School PTSA. Sure hope to get others coming in since we have had inquiries and schools have promised that they'll be sending photos in honor of the 100th Anniversary celebrated at the 2015 Convention.

Congratulations! Incentives Winners Continue to Grow.

Pine Grove Middle School PTSA

Pine Grove Middle School PTSA in Baltimore County was randomly selected as the one winning PTA in the state with at least 100 or more signatures on a "birthday card" sent to Maryland PTA for our December incentive.

New Market Elementary School PTA

New Market Elementary School in Frederick County was chosen randomly from PTAs submitting logs of at least 100 volunteer service hours for our January incentive. State-wide a tremendous number of volunteer hours have been contributed and for that we should all be proud. Thanks to all PTAs who shared their methods of collecting volunteer hours.

Both the December and January winners can choose an item from a list of prizes provided by Maryland PTA. See inserts in each monthly invoice statement for incentive updates and the prize list. Incentives are designed to help us celebrate Maryland PTA's 100th year and most of all to show that PTA is fun!

PTAs that have increased membership by 100 or more members in our 100th year of Maryland PTA, and we plan to incorporate submissions from this year's incentives, too.

March's incentive is a growth of at least 100 more members as compared to March 31, 2014 PLUS completing all of the continuing standards of affiliation (SoCA) requirements by the deadline of March 31, 2015.

Thank you to those PTAs who will have completed all of the continuing standards of affiliation requirements by the deadline of March 31. Doing so makes you eligible for Maryland PTA membership awards to be announced at our July convention.

Membership is year round & everyone's responsibility!

Please remember that the state deadline to return unused membership cards is June 30. We encourage you to recruit members year round, which is why we suggest keeping some cards beyond the March 31 membership dues deadline for meeting the standards of continuing affiliation. Note that there is no printed expiration date on membership cards. All membership cards expire on September 30 each year no matter when the card is sold.

The Membership Committee always wants to hear from PTAs. Help us share our strength across the state by contacting us with your successful membership strategies and best practices. And, be sure to mark your calendar now to join us at the 100TH CONVENTION ON JULY 17-18, 2015 at the Crowne Plaza in Rockville, Maryland! We will have special recognition for those delegates from PTAs that have increased membership by 100 or more members in our 100th year of Maryland PTA, and we plan to incorporate submissions from this year's incentives, too.

"Century Celebration Club"

Join the fun of our "Century Celebration Club" for those units who complete at least 5 of the 7 monthly incentives September 2014 – March 2015. Three PTAs are the first charter members.

Congratulations to "Century Celebration Club" members:

Stevens Forest Elementary School PTA
Piney Point Elementary School PTA

Benjamin Banneker Middle School PTSA

These three PTAs, and others who qualify, will be in a drawing to be held in April for 1 free Maryland PTA convention registration.

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February's winner is like a "PTA-selfie." Congratulations go to Perry Hall High School PTSA for being the first in the state to submit a photo of more than 100 participants at a PTSA sponsored activity. Our second entry was from Benjamin Banneker Middle School PTSA.

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MARYLAND PTA WELCOMES SECRETARY ARNE DUNCAN

Maryland PTA President Ray Leone and President Elect Elizabeth Ysla Leight were front and center when U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan walked into Bates Middle School in Anne Arundel County to a roomful of county and state leaders. Secretary Duncan was in Maryland to talk about the education priorities of President Barack Obama and he participated in a town hall for teachers and parents where he was joined by National PTA President Otha Thornton. Parents had the opportunity to raise a variety of questions concerning education including

overtesting, PARCC tests for the general school population and the impact of such testing on special needs students.

MARYLAND PTA SCHOLARSHIPS

Maryland PTA has scholarships available of a minimum of \$500 to high school seniors who are planning to attend any accredited college or university and who plan to pursue a career in education in the public schools of Maryland. The scholarships are funded primarily by the Maryland PTA Lifetime Achievement Awards that are given as the highest honor to an individual who has served children and youth in a special way.

Applicants must be a high school senior. Each applicant will be considered on scholastic achievement, community involvement, and character. The applicant must also obtain the sponsorship of a Maryland PTA local unit in good standing. (This does not necessarily have to be their high school.)

Please contact the guidance counselor at your local high school, visit our website www.mdpta.org, or call Maryland PTA, 410-760-6221 or 800-707-7972, to obtain an application form.

All applications must be submitted to the Maryland PTA Scholarship Committee by 4:30 p.m., March 16, 2015, electronically to scholarships@mdpta.org or via postal mail to Maryland PTA Scholarship Committee, 5 Central Avenue, Glen Burnie, MD 21061.

