Leadership Handbook

New Jersey PTA

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1. BENEFITS YOU GET FOR BEING A MEMBER...

- Name recognition as part of a state and national organization; a powerful group that has a proud history of advocacy for all children.
- Informed and trained leadership through participation in New Jersey PTA leadership development trainings.
- New Jersey PTA (NJPTA) as a registered agent for local PTAs and councils.
- Technical services, such as staff and board assistance with charitable registration, incorporation annual report, and Internal Revenue Service forms and information.
- Friendly staff available for information on legal requirements, parliamentary procedure, and other PTA-related questions. Office service available 8:30 am – 5 pm, Monday through Friday for assistance.
- Low cost group rates for liability and other insurance products.
- Websites: state, and National PTA. These websites include 24/7 information and resources for parents and local PTAs. The leadership resources webpage features resources exclusive to PTA leaders and members.
- Reflections cultural arts program for children with recognition at local, state, and national levels.
- Recognition of your PTA’s successes through our awards program—Recognition Awards, newsletter/website/communication awards, and membership awards.
- Individual recognition through the awards such as the Outstanding Educator, Honorary Life Membership, and Meritorious Service Award.
- Publications such as the Leadership News electronic newsletter, and other communications throughout the year from your region, the New Jersey PTA, and National PTA.
- Advocacy — NJPTA supports children and families in public policy and legislation in Trenton. The staff works with the elected NJPTA Vice President of Advocacy and Legislative Activities Chairman and council legislative chairs, as well as, local PTAs on advocacy issues.
- Networking opportunities: forum for ideas and chance to meet with others to discuss mutual concerns.
- Locally accessible conferences and workshops such as: Advocacy Days, webinars, region conferences, and online e-Learning classes (from National PTA).
- Annual state PTA leadership convention—two days of leadership training, awards recognition, program ideas, networking, and fundraising ideas with many exhibitors to visit.
- A unified force to help assure quality schools and opportunities for all children.

2. New Jersey PTA

2.1 What is the New Jersey PTA?
- Membership organization of parents, teachers and students in New Jersey; founded in 1900
- More than 120,000 active members
- National PTA affiliate

2.2 Why?
- To improve the safety, well-being, and education of every child
- To encourage and promote parent and family involvement in children’s lives
- To provide meaningful and timely resources and information for parents and community
2.3 Benefits to Our Members

- To advocate for laws that protect and nurture children and youth
- To speak with one voice for every child

2.4 How?

- Grassroots advocacy efforts at all governmental levels
- Reflections program that encourages artistic expression in children and youth
- Educational conferences and training for PTA members and community
- Partnerships with other organizations focused on child success
- Print and electronic resources and publications
- And many more ways and means to promote a better world for children

2.5 Contact

The Field Service Contact for your area is available to answer any PTA-related questions you may have. Visit the New Jersey PTA website for information on Field Service, Councils, and Regions and how to contact your Field Service Contact. The state PTA office may be contacted at (609) 587-0100.

3. STRUCTURE

The New Jersey Congress of Parents and Teachers (New Jersey PTA), a branch of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (National PTA), is a nonprofit membership association which seeks to bring together the home, school, and community on behalf of all children and youth.

3.1 Local PTA/PTSA

A PTA (or PTSA) is a local, self-governing membership association, operating in compliance with the National PTA, New Jersey PTA, and Local PTA Template Bylaws. The main purpose of a local PTA/PTSA is to serve the needs and desires of its members in promoting the health, welfare, safety, and education of children and youth in the home, school, community, and place of worship.

A local PTA is the basis of the grassroots involvement of NJPTA because all members of NJPTA belong to a local PTA. The real strength of NJPTA lies with the 120,000+ local PTA members, working for children and youth. A local PTA is chartered by and affiliated with the New Jersey PTA.

3.2 PTA/PTSA Council

A PTA/PTSA council is a group of local PTAs working together to coordinate the efforts of those PTAs. The role of a PTA/PTSA council is to support, coordinate, facilitate, and serve the needs of the local PTAs which are members of that PTA council. A PTA/PTSA council is chartered by and affiliated with the New Jersey PTA.

3.3 New Jersey PTA

The New Jersey PTA is a nonprofit, tax-exempt, statewide membership association, formed in 1900, to provide service to the local PTAs and PTA councils which it has chartered. Washington State PTA is governed by a board of directors consisting of seven statewide officers, 5 region directors, a committee chairman on Diversity and Inclusion, Education and Special Education, Family Engagement, Federal Legislation, Health and Safety, Legislative Activities,
Membership Development, Procedure and Bylaws, and Reflections. County Council Presidents from the remaining County Councils have a vote on the board. The board also includes 3 members at large appointed by the state president. The board governs the affairs of the New Jersey PTA and provides leadership training and education to local PTAs and councils. The New Jersey PTA is chartered by and affiliated with the National PTA.

3.4 National PTA
The National PTA, founded in 1897, is the nation’s oldest child advocacy organization. It is comprised of nearly 4 million members throughout the United States, Europe, and the Pacific.

The National PTA provides training and educational resources to state PTAs and keeps PTA members aware of federal legislation impacting children and youth. The National PTA also provides grants to local PTAs, councils, and state PTAs, enabling them to develop programs, projects, and activities designed to help children and youth throughout the nation.

The National PTA is a “clearinghouse” of ideas and activities of PTAs throughout the United States. The National PTA works with many organizations and companies to sponsor award recognition and scholarship programs.

3.5 Region Information
A New Jersey PTA region is a geographic area within the state. It is the focal point for leadership training, education, networking, service, and coordination of all local PTAs and councils within each geographic region. A region is part of the New Jersey PTA.

New Jersey PTA is organized into 5 regions to achieve a closer working relationship with local PTAs and councils. The region director has the responsibility for guidance to both local PTAs and councils, interpreting and extending the PTA program, organizing new local PTAs and councils, and developing PTA leadership in the region.

By dividing the state into regions, a local PTA’s needs and concerns can be met quickly and with greater understanding by a member of the state PTA board of directors living within the region. Contact your region director or check the New Jersey PTA website www.njpta.org, for leadership training and other information in your region.
4. COUNCIL LIST

A PTA council consists of local PTAs within a defined area. The main purpose of a PTA council is to promote the welfare of children and youth. A PTA council’s role is to inform, advise, guide, instruct, provide customer service, encourage the leaders of local PTAs, and be responsive to their needs for conferences, leadership training, and coordination of efforts of the member PTAs. If your PTA is part of a council, the council president is available to support, coordinate, facilitate, and serve the needs of your PTA.

Additional councils may not be created through action of the New Jersey PTA Board of Directors. For information on creating a council (which may consist of Local PTAs in a district, part of a county, or a multi-county geographically area) please contact the Field Service Committee at fieldservice@njpta.org.

The following are the current councils:
Bergen County Council
Burlington County Council
Camden County Council
Essex County Council
Hudson County Council
Mercer County Council
Ocean County Council
Union County Council
Warren County Council
5. NEW JERSEY PTA FLOW CHART

120,000+ Members  550 Local PTAs

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<tr>
<th>Officers</th>
<th>5 Region Directors</th>
<th>3 Members at Large</th>
<th>9 County Council Presidents</th>
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<tr>
<td>President</td>
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<td>President-Elect</td>
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<td>Vice Presidents (3)</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
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Committees and Programs

- Diversity and Inclusion
- Education and Special Education
- Family Engagement
- Health and Safety
- Legislative Activities
- Membership Development
- Procedure and Bylaws
- Reflections

5.1 Officers

- Rose Acerra, president, racerra@njpta.org
- Cathy Lindenbaum, president-elect clindenbaum@njpta.org
- Robert Acerra, vp/leadership development & membership r.acerra@npta.org
- Sharon Roseboro, vp/advocacy sroseboro@njpta.org
- Bamby Bergeron, secretary bbergeron@njpta.org
- Denise Ingallina, treasurer dingallinera@njpta.org

5.2 Committee Chairmen

- Kieanna Childs-Alexander, diversity & inclusion kchildsalexander@njpta.org
- Kathleen Witcher, education & special education kwitcher@njpta.org
- Jacqueline Gibbs, family engagement, jgibbs@njpta.org
- Chermica Gardner, health & safety, cgarnder@njpta.org
- Elise An, legislative activities ean@njpta.org
- Laurie Palmer, procedure & bylaws lpalmer@njpta.org
- Lee Sutton, reflections lsutton@njpta.org
5.3 Region Directors

**Region 1** consists of Bergen County, Hudson County, Passaic County, and Sussex County.
Nancy Wallace, region director: nwallace@njpta.org

**Region 2** consists of Essex County, Morris County, and Warren County.
Denise Crawford, region director: dcr Crawford@njpta.org

**Region 3** consists of Hunterdon, Middlesex, Mercer, Somerset, and Union County.
Doris Harris, region director: dharris@njpta.org

**Region 4** consists of Burlington, Monmouth, and Ocean County.
Ginger Reinhold, region director: greinhold@njpta.org

**Region 5** consists Atlantic County, Camden County, Cape May County, Cumberland County, Gloucester County, and Salem County
Robert Acerra, region director (acting): racerra@njpta.org

### 6. SERVICES OF THE NEW JERSEY PTA

#### 6.1 Leadership Education

The New Jersey PTA conducts numerous leadership education workshops annually throughout the 5 regions, including a statewide leadership convention each spring. These workshops, which are open to all PTA members, help PTA leaders learn skills and techniques to enable their local PTAs and councils to improve how they identify and meet the needs of their membership.

These workshops help PTA members develop programs, projects, and activities within their communities to benefit children and youth. They provide opportunities for PTA members to share ideas about improving the quality of their children’s health, welfare, safety, and education. The most successful PTAs include sufficient funds in their budgets for education and training workshops.

#### 6.2 State PTA Office

The New Jersey PTA offers a wide variety of resources pertaining to the association. The state PTA office manages the day-to-day functions of the association and serves as a direct link to all the services of the New Jersey PTA. PTA members may call the state PTA office: (609) 587-0100. The state PTA office provides information, material, and answers questions that come from local PTAs, councils, and members.

The state PTA office staff:
- Answers questions about membership supplies, resource and leadership materials, award orders, grant applications, and other PTA supplies
- Answers questions regarding rules, regulations, and laws affecting PTA activities
- Helps with state and federal government forms required by nonprofit organizations and clarifies instructions on their use
• May serve as the registered agent for incorporated PTAs and councils
• Keeps a current mailing list of PTA officers, legislation chairs, membership chairs, and others who have subscribed to state PTA mailings
• Maintains a record of interactions with PTAs
• Keeps records of the payment of membership dues
• Handles registration and arrangements for statewide workshops and conferences
• Prepares organizing resources for new local PTAs and councils
• Maintains a general website
• Provides support for the online membership enrollment program

6.3 Board of Directors
Members of the New Jersey PTA board of directors are volunteers who are accessible and available to PTAs, councils, and members for assistance and advice. Board members provide leadership training, presentations about issues or concerns to a local PTA, installations, and meet with community and state leaders to advocate PTA’s positions on issues affecting children and youth.

6.4 Region Director
The region director is an elected member of the NJPTA board of directors. A region director coordinates the delivery of the association’s programs and services within the region. Region directors plan and organize leadership trainings for the local PTAs and councils in the region. Along with the other service delivery team members, the region director is a valuable resource, available to assist with any PTA-related issues you may have.

6.5 Printed Publications
The New Jersey PTA makes available to its member’s publications on leadership, education, programs, and legislation. Some of these publications include: President’s Handbook, Leadership Handbook, Advocacy Handbook, and the Treasurer’s Handbook.

6.6 Social Media Presence
To increase visibility, the New Jersey PTA utilizes several online platforms, such as: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Linkedin, and our website. Be sure to join our social media outlets to get up to date info on a daily basis.

6.7 Leadership Convention
The annual state PTA leadership convention is an opportunity for PTA members to train and build their leadership teams for the upcoming year and to network and learn from other PTA leaders from across the state. Join us this Spring at our 116th Leadership Convention. Delegates meet to elect statewide officers, vote on resolutions and bylaws changes, and attend educational and personal development classes. Local PTAs, councils, and individuals receive recognition for service to their communities through the awards program; many local PTAs and councils display information about their programs to provide ideas to other local PTAs and councils. Remember to add state convention to your local PTA and/or council budget.
7. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE LOCAL PTA/COUNCIL BOARD

As a member of an association’s board of directors, you are required to assure yourself and the association’s membership that the corporation is operating in conformance with all the rules, regulations, laws, ordinances, and statutes which govern that organization.

The board of directors is the main decision-making body and legal representative of a PTA; the members expect board members to be responsive to their needs and to be well informed as the board conducts the business of the association.

7.1 Local PTA/Council Board

The board’s role is to ensure the continuity of the association by planning for its future: establishing and reviewing the major policies and programs that support its goals and objectives and verifying that the organization is fiscally sound. In many ways, your function is critical to the life of the association. To accomplish these legal responsibilities, it is essential that your PTA budget has sufficient funds for you to attend training.

Most business of the PTA can and should be conducted by the board of directors. Consensus building is the most positive form of decision-making. Parliamentary procedure should be used as a tool to facilitate, not hinder, thoughtful discussion of your PTA’s business decisions by the board of directors. Once the board has made a decision, all members of the board of directors should support the decision.

The executive committee of a PTA consists only of its elected officers and the procedure and bylaws chairman. The executive committee studies and makes recommendations to the PTA’s board of directors. The only authority actually given to the executive committee is to approve appointments by the president.

Three very important traits of a good leader are the ability and willingness to:

- **Communicate:** Speaking effectively is only one part of communicating. Effective leaders are also good listeners.
- **Delegate:** Empowering others to participate in the work and the decision-making means giving up some direct involvement. Good leaders know that meaningful, manageable responsibilities keep people actively involved in the organization.
- **Educate:** A leader seeks out educational opportunities within the organization. A good leader also educates by using that knowledge and those skills to train and develop others.

7.2 Quorum

Quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present to conduct business. Your Local PTA bylaws state your quorum number.

7.3 Fiduciary Responsibility

The board of directors of any corporation, including a local PTA or council, has been entrusted with the responsibility of managing resources belonging to others. These resources include the PTA’s dues, donations, and funds raised through activities as well as any property belonging to the PTA; resources also include the PTA’s reputation in the community. The responsibility to take care of assets belonging to others
is known as a “fiduciary responsibility.” As a board member, you are responsible to make sure that the corporation (the local PTA or council) is operating in a fiscally and legally sound manner. This is not only a requirement of the Local PTA Bylaws but is also demanded by state and federal law.

The individuals who serve on the board of a local PTA or council (or any other nonprofit organization) have responsibilities different from but complementary to the board itself. The obligations of board service are considerable and extend beyond the basic expectations of attending meetings and participating in fundraising activities. When you become a board member, you are legally obligated to carry out your duties in a prudent and reasonable manner in order to preserve and protect the corporation.

If you, as a board member, fail to exercise prudent, reasonable caution and care, you leave yourself open to criticism from your peers and potential personal liability for financial losses resulting from mismanagement that occurs during your term as a member of the board of directors.

Each PTA officer should fully understand the duties of the office. This information can be found in the Local PTA Bylaws, local PTA/council standing rules, and state PTA resource materials. Included in the duties of the executive committee and committee chairs is reporting to the board of directors and to the membership. Have all reports prepared before the meeting and placed on the agenda by notifying the president that the report is prepared. Keep the report concise and informative and be available to answer any questions. Many boards limit the length of time for oral reports, so be sure the report is kept within that time frame.

Upon assuming office, the officers are authorized to honor expenditures that have been provided in the approved budget. All books, funds, and supplies belonging to the PTA must be relinquished to the new officers by the retiring officers immediately upon leaving office (June 30).

### 8. LEGAL DOCUMENTS NOTEBOOK

It is very important that each PTA maintain a legal documents notebook. This is a notebook into which the PTA places all documents relating to the legal status of the local PTA; many of these documents are subject to public inspection. To truly safeguard your PTA’s organizational records, you should keep them in a safety deposit box at a bank. If that is not possible, the records should be maintained in a fireproof safe. Most organizations maintain their corporate records in a three-ring binder (or several binders) with tabs for different categories of documents. The PTA’s standing rules should state who has the notebook and who is responsible for updating it. For example, the secretary may be responsible for maintaining the original notebook and making copies for the president and treasurer. See the Legal Documents Notebook Resource Document for the complete list.

### 9. E-LEARNING COURSES

National PTA’s e-Learning initiative to provide training and education is available to every PTA member. Visit National PTA’s e-learning webpage for the latest e-Learning courses.

Here is a sample of the types of courses offered:
• PTA Essentials
  • PTA Basics
  • Effective Advocacy for Your Child
  • National Standards for Family School Partnerships
• PTA Nuts and Bolts Series
  • Board Basics
  • Local Unit President
  • Local Unit Secretary
  • Local Unit Treasurer
  • Membership Basics
• Leadership Enhancement
  • Creating and Delivering a Speech
  • Cultural Competency
  • Ethical Leadership
  • Parliamentary Procedure
  • Planning Your PTA Year
  • Preventing Theft in Your PTA
  • Reflections Leader Training
  • Running a Successful Program
  • Writing and Proposing PTA Resolutions

10. ONLINE LEADERSHIP RESOURCES

The Leadership Resources page contains leadership handbooks, Money Matters, and a variety of other resources for PTA officers and members.

Visit pta.org or njpta.org for other online resources.

We wish you all the best in your term as a PTA Leader, please reach out to NJPTA if you have any questions.