



October, 2006 – ***“Connecting the Dots at Convention 2006”***

This is just a quick note to urge all units and councils to come to Convention 2006 in Rochester from November 10-12. It is not too late to make a decision to join us. All the information you need is right here on the website or you can notify your region director or the state office with questions. Every unit or council should be represented since, as it says in your bylaws, the *“voting body of the convention shall be the governing body of the New York State PTA. At the convention, reports shall be received, officers elected and installed. Resolutions and a program of legislation shall be presented to the delegates for action.”*

Each unit in good standing, as of September 1, is entitled to be represented by its president or an alternate and one other delegate, that is, has at least two votes. If your membership is over 100, you are entitled to one additional vote for each 100 members or a fraction thereof as shown on the PTA books as of March 31, 2006 (the last full membership year). Each council is entitled to be represented by its president or an alternate. Credential cards are received through your region after your registration is received.

If some of the crucial aspects of a successful PTA team are planning, communication, building partnerships, and training, then Convention is the ideal way to address all of these. Remember also that if finances are a difficulty, you can come as a day delegate or choose alternate hotel and meal accommodations.

Again, as the year continues to progress, please continue to work on your PTA goals and, I hope, to collaborate with the NYS PTA and the National PTA to which you all belong as PTA members.

- **Membership:** Please try to increase membership. This also means reaching out to diverse constituencies in your communities and finding ways to involve them. Membership is not only the life blood of our organization, it gives everyone more resources in terms of both volunteers and dollars. Most importantly, it gives us a stronger voice for children. We're going to need it especially this year as funding issues, and new state leadership and policies emerge. If you need help, let us know.
- **Programs:** Sponsor at least one program for your school that highlights the “PTA difference”, i.e. advocacy on behalf of the education, health and welfare of our students and parent involvement. You are part of the premier child advocacy organization in this country...let's take advantage! Some examples might be the National PTA Schools of Excellence Certification Program which also covers all parent involvement requirements for NCLB or Reflections and Parents as Reading Partners (PARP) programs which help to build arts advocacy and literacy awareness. Also, now is the time to get involved in your school district's budget process....what process of awareness and involvement will you use to educate your parents on this important topic? Then there's the childhood obesity epidemic, new school wellness policies, cyber safety, graduation rates and your local school concern. You get the picture.
- **Celebrate!** At the Convention in November, we will kick off a year long celebration of the 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the NYS PTA. Please join us and celebrate both at the convention and in your unit, council, or region in some way. Market those accomplishments and how they have improved your school.
- **Leadership:** If you are going to jump on the bandwagon, be sure you know where it is headed. Building informed leadership through education, use of resources and training will help both your judgment and your patience. PTA offers you so many opportunities in this regard.
- **Mission:** Whatever you do, connect it to the mission of the PTA. It is the right mission, it is a crucial mission, and it is a mission that will not survive automatically without your help.

Coming to Convention 2006 will surely build your leadership skills and your chances of success and help us all achieve our goals. I truly hope to see many of you there.

Best regards,

Maria L. DeWald, NYS PTA President