

helpful publications

- ◆ National PTA (www.pta.org):
 - National PTA Federal Public Policy Agenda
 - National PTA Resolutions & Position Statements
 - “Advocacy” in *Our Children*
 - National PTA Advocacy Toolkit
- ◆ New York State PTA (www.nyspta.org):
 - Where We Stand (NYS PTA Resolutions & Position Papers)
 - Basic Policy
 - Legislative Priorities
 - Advocacy Guide
 - Advocacy Newsbriefs
 - Resource Guide*
 - Wellness Toolkit
 - Issues Briefs and Talking Points
 - Regents Reports
- ◆ PTA Takes Action with VoterVoice and Advocacy Alerts



LEGISLATION GUIDE

New York State
PTA[®]
everychild.onevoice.[®]

www.nyspta.org

New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc.

PTA is the largest grassroots organization in the country, promoting the welfare of children and youth. Legislative activity is an integral part of parent-teacher advocacy. As long as the activity stays within the guidelines of National PTA's nonpartisan policy, action on the part of members ensures that democratic laws beneficial to children will be enacted.

what does a PTA legislation chair do?

informs

- ◆ Read National PTA and NYS PTA legislative materials. Select one or two key issues on which you and your members decide to focus. Use the National PTA's Federal Public Policy Agenda and New York State PTA "Where We Stand" to select these issues, or use issues arising from your individual units.
- ◆ Make legislation come 'alive' by making it relevant to the interests of your members. How will it affect them and their children? Use local data to show impact.
- ◆ Keep information simple, but complete. Don't hesitate to start with the basics. People don't like to admit that they don't understand.
- ◆ Your school administrators and school board can provide a lot of information on state aid plans and can tell you how budgets or proposed legislation affects the schools.
- ◆ Sometimes a special issue comes up and you want to concentrate your efforts on it. Following one particular issue can allow members to advocate effectively.

communicates

- ◆ There is a lot of help available. Don't hesitate to ask for it! Connect with the PTA Region chair and State Legislation Coordinator, and with community organizations for coalitions and general networking.
- ◆ Inform and inspire your legislation/advocacy committee and general membership. Provide brief summaries at meetings. Develop bullet points and talking points to focus discussion and stay on topic. Create e-mail networks, use social media, and establish a network of concerned members for information sharing and creation of action teams.



advocates

- ◆ Read newspapers, school board/teacher/administrator publications, get National and NYS PTA updates on the websites. There is a wealth of information that you can share with the PTA unit and members.
- ◆ Write articles for your newsletter, and letters to the editor of the local papers on the important issues. Make sure to clear all public communications with your unit president.
- ◆ Use the information you have gathered to extend the legislative activity of NYS and National PTAs by:
 - writing letters
 - phoning your legislator (and getting others to do so, too)
 - postcards, or faxes to legislators if the issue needs instant action
- ◆ Help members write letters. Give them data, suggested language and proper ways to address legislators.
- ◆ Hold an annual legislation meeting, usually in conjunction with your Region Legislation meeting, and invite all of your local legislators to take part. Legislators like the opportunity to get to know their constituents. Give each a chance to be heard. Give members a chance to ask questions, and be sure you have a moderator who allows tough questions but does not allow guests to be insulted or attacked.
- ◆ Get to know the legislative aides in your legislator's office. Provide them with PTA positions and opinions on current issues. You may not have the opportunity to speak to the legislators, but their aides are usually well-informed and helpful. Legislators are usually more accessible to visitors in their local offices.