

# Happy Birthday PTA!

February is the month in which we celebrate the founding of the PTA. There are many birthday's to celebrate. **National PTA** is celebrating **112** years of existence. It was on February 17<sup>th</sup>, 1897, that about 2000 people gathered in Washington DC to speak on behalf of the needs of children. Out of this meeting came the National Congress of Mothers later to become the National PTA. The co-founders of this effort were Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst. We also recognize Selena Sloan Butler who founded the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers in 1926, which merged with the National PTA in 1970. In 1897 three fourths of all American children dropped out of school before reaching 5<sup>th</sup> grade to work in mines, factories or farms.

**Ohio PTA** became the 5<sup>th</sup> state to join NPTA in **1901**. Our **Hamilton County Council of PTAs** is celebrating **88** years of existence. It started representing 9 school districts, but now is comprised of 7 (Finneytown, Forest Hills, HCBMR/DD, Northwest, Oak Hills, Southwest, and Three Rivers).

Here are some highlights of PTA:

- 1899, called for the creation of a national health bureau
- 1901, advocated supervision of motion pictures and vaudeville because of their influence on youth
- 1941, was integral in the establishment of nationwide school lunch programs
- 1951, called a national conference on narcotics and drug addiction
- 1954, helped field test and win acceptance of the use of the Salk polio vaccine
- 1966, established a project on the issue of smoking and its overall effects on health
- 1977, NPTA opened Office of Government Relations in Washington, DC to lobby
- 1980s, OPTA Seat Belt Safety (started with Northwest with HCC)
- 1984, NPTA started National Teacher Appreciation Week in May
- 1985, OPTA instrumental in passing NPTA resolution "A Rating System for Records, Tapes, and Cassettes" (started with Oak Hills with HCC)
- 1986, released AIDS education kit and begins AIDS education project in conjunction with the CDC
- 1990, released "Common Sense: Strategies for Raising Alcohol- and Drug-Free Kids"
- 1990s, Nutrition in Schools campaign (started with Forest Hills with HCC)
- 1994, worked with National Cable TV Association to launch critical viewing workshop "Taking Charge of Your TV"
- 1996, launched <http://www.pta.org>
- 2000, publication of "Building Successful Partnerships; A Guide to Parent and Family Involvement" to share successful programs. Workshops are still given.
- 2005, Public Service Announcements (PSA) released and given to units to encourage parent involvement, partnered with the National Ad Council
- Since their inception our unit PTAs have provided support for our staff and students through coordinating volunteers, providing "extra" educational materials, providing enrichment opportunities with in schools and after school programs, helping to educate and inform parents and teachers through newsletters and programs

Celebrating each of the levels of PTA together is very fitting because it reflects the connection we have as evidenced by PTA's official emblem, the oak tree. The trunk represents National PTA, the main branches are the states and congresses, the smaller branches are the districts and councils, the twigs are the local units, and the leaves are the millions of members (currently over 6 million). The acorns represent the accomplishments which are many. It is the integral connection of the members all the way to National PTA that gives us strength in advocating and sharing of knowledge. This unity inspired the PTA motto of *Everychild.Onevoice*.

PTA has also been working on providing membership benefits. The back of your PTA membership card contains a username and password to access special information on parenting and other topics from the website [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org). There are periodic discounts with stores, insurance and events. Training is also available through different levels of PTA.

All we do is to be in support of our PTA Mission of:

- To support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children
- To assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise and protect their children
- To encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of this nation

You should feel a sense of pride in your participation in this great organization. Happy Birthday to PTA and pat yourself on the back for helping to make a difference!

# Advocacy Update February 2009!

**Here is a short summary of some legislative and advocacy activities right now.**

**The following is from Ohio PTA "The News" & e-mails:**

- **HB 320 Child Booster Seat/Seat Belt Law Passes**

This was passed into law and requires any child who is less than 8 years old and less than 4' 9" tall to be secured in a booster seat and requires any child who is at least 8 years of age and under the age of 18 be restrained in a seat belt. Current restraining systems are designed and tested for adults and not children. Proper booster seat use should reduce the odds of significant injury in a wreck by 59%.

- **Governor Strickland's Forums on School Funding**

Six regional forums were held in November & December including one in Cincinnati. The Governor should be releasing his plans soon. The economic situation for the state does not look good. For information about the public forums: [www.ConversationsOnEducation.org](http://www.ConversationsOnEducation.org).

- **Ohio's 128th General Assembly Sworn In**

The 128th Ohio General Assembly is now in session. Note that any bill which did not pass both the Senate and House and signed by the governor by December 31st is now dead and would need to be reintroduced back into committee. The Ohio Senate is controlled by the Republicans and the Democrats control the Ohio House.

- **President Obama's Concern About Parent Involvement**

President Obama plans to focus on engagement of parent's in their child's education. National PTA was asked to meet with the President's transition team in December to discuss the administration's plans around parent involvement.

**The following is from the Cincinnati Enquirer:**

- **Governor Strickland Announces School Change Plans**

Some proposals from the Governor include: longer school year by 20 days (to be phased in over 10 yrs.); longer school days; modernization of all curriculum; stricter teacher standards; allow real estate taxes to grow with inflation; increase states share of funding from 52% to 59%; replace the Ohio Graduation Test with the ACT.

**The following is from the "Ohio Fair Schools Campaign" e-mails:**

- **"Education Week's" Quality Counts 2009 (Annual Report), Ohio Ranks 6th**

Ohio schools rank 6th in the nation, moving up from 7th last year, according to Quality Counts 2009, the 13th edition of Education Week's series of annual report cards tracking state education policies and outcomes. Ohio earned an overall grade of B- in this year's report. In the area of school finance, Quality Counts 2009 said there is a gap in per-pupil spending among Ohio's 614 school districts. The report noted a \$4,681 difference between the highest- and lowest-spending districts (means over \$100K for each 25 students difference). Still, the report said that Ohio spends \$10,119 a year per student, 22nd highest in the nation. The national average was \$9,963. To View the state-by-state analysis, visit: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/qc/2009/17src.h28.html>

- **No Good News for Ohio's Budget**

Governor Strickland, along with several other state's Governors, is making a plea for federal money to help balance Ohio's state budget. Ohio newspapers have reported that a worst-case scenario would include a 25% budget cut across most state agencies, if federal aid is not forthcoming. The potential shortfall for the next two-year budget would be \$7.3 billion if spending remains at current levels. Even if agencies slash their budgets by 10 percent, the shortfall still would be \$4.7 billion. In December, the ODE was directed to cut \$30.4 million from its budget. For more information on the cuts:

<http://www.ode.state.oh.us/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?Page=3&TopicRelationID=11&Content=61475>

**The PTA Mission:**

- A powerful voice for all children
- A relevant resource for families and communities
- A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child