

Advocacy!

What do hot school lunches, polio vaccines, gun safety, substance abuse education and family involvement requirements within No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation have in common?
PTA has advocated for them all!

I hope that you have noticed the name change for this committee. Although some of us can get excited about legislation, we seem to be few and far between. Advocacy, aside from hopefully sounding more exciting, also describes this portion of the PTA better. Did you know that PTA is the largest and oldest child advocacy organization dedicated to the health, welfare, safety and education of children? Advocacy is an intrinsic part of PTA:

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***

The PTA Purposes:

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship
 - To raise the standards of home life
 - ***To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth***
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth
- To develop between educators and the general public such efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education

So we have discussed the why, so how about the what...

What can you do? As a parent we are all advocates for our children. PTA helps with that by providing parent education and supporting family involvement in the schools. Because PTA is a respected part of the education and youth community, we often have a say with governmental and other organizations. You are a part of that by just joining PTA. Being a member is your first additional step in advocacy. Perhaps you want to take advocacy another step. Stay informed! That is where the PTA Advocacy Committees come in. Please look for this monthly report and look to other resources (listed below). An even bigger step is to contact legislators or others about issues that concern you. I will also try to pass on opportunities for that grass roots efforts.

Here is a short summary of some legislative and advocacy activities right now. These are from the September "Ohio PTA News":

- National PTA Resolutions Passed at the 2008 Convention

PTAs are called to take action as the opportunity arises concerning resolutions that are approved by the membership. The resolution titles are:

- Children Left Unattended in and around Vehicles
- Substance and Alcohol Abuse Awareness and Prevention
- Children Exposed to Alcohol During Pregnancy
- Enforcement of Laws Regarding Alcohol, Drugs and Driving Under the Influence
- Promotion of Alcohol Use Targeted at Youth
- Prescription and Over the Counter Drug Abuse

View the National PTA website to read the complete resolutions: www.pta.org.

- Governor Strickland's Education Forums

Governor Strickland met with parents, students, and others this summer to discuss education reform and six principles outlined in his January State of the State Address. The principles include: strengthening commitment to public education, identifying strengths, best practices, individualized teaching methods, and using testing. For more information see: www.ConversationonEducation.org.

- SB 57 Creation of Special Education Vouchers

Should be brought to the House floor this fall. PTA opposes this legislation.

- HB 597 Busing Change

Would require schools to transport students in grades K-8 who live within two miles of school but do not have access to a sidewalk or path en route to school.

Note that Congress has recessed since August due to the upcoming elections.

DON'T FORGET to VOTE on November 4th!!

Useful Advocacy websites:

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| Ohio PTA | www.ohiopta.org |
| National PTA | www.pta.org |
| State of Ohio | www.ohio.gov |
| Ohio School Boards Assoc. | www.osba-ohio.org |
| Ohio Education Assoc. | www.oea.columbus.oh.us |

Please contact me (Elise Fessler @ bfsing@cinci.rr.com, HCC & Finneytown PTAs' Advocacy Chair) to get on a distribution list for monthly Advocacy Reports (this report can be used as is for meetings and newsletters or edit it as desired but please keep the references mentioned).