



# Advocacy Training

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# Mission of PTA:

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- To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.
  - *PTA began speaking out on behalf of children over 125 years ago. Check out the National PTA's Advocacy page (at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)) and Colorado PTA's Advocacy page (at [www.copta.org](http://www.copta.org)).*

# PURPOSES OF PTA:

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, places of worship, and throughout the community.
- To raise the standards of home life.
- **To advocate for laws that further the education, physical and mental health, welfare, and safety of children and youth.**
- To promote the collaboration and engagement of families and educators in the education of children and youth.
- To engage the public in united efforts to secure the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being of all children and youth.
- **To advocate for fiscal responsibility regarding public tax dollars in public education funding.**



# What is "Advocacy"?

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- Actively supporting a cause, idea, or policy.
- Achieving social change by:
  - ❖ Speaking out on behalf of other people.
  - ❖ Providing policymakers with information that will result in their action.
  - ❖ Educating people affected by a problem to help them be aware of their own power to create a solution.

# Two Kinds of Advocacy:

## **Direct Advocacy:**

This involves communicating directly with policymakers. It can also be providing people with the tools they need to communicate with policymakers.

*(Most people only think of this kind of advocacy when they hear the word, and PTA certainly does this, especially the Legislative Engagement Committee, but it's not all we do.)*

## **Grassroots Advocacy:**

This involves training and organizing so we are prepared to advocate.

It includes the following:

- Determining what issues affect us and are most meaningful to us.
- Working with people who have the same goals, interests, or objectives. (Principal, administration, SAC, teachers, parents, school district, community)



# Local PTA Unit Levels of Advocacy

**State Board Member or Committee Chair**



State leadership role

**PTA Board Member**



Participate in leadership roles that shape future goals and positive outcomes for your school

**PTA Committee Chair**



Help plan and execute events that build community relationships and/or support initiatives that benefit all students.

**PTA member**



Attend PTA meetings, read recaps and newsletters, volunteer, share ideas and communicate with partners and community members, and attend events.

**School Community**



Be an informed voter, read newsletters, take surveys, join PTA, volunteer, join PIE/SAC (accountability committees), connect with other parents/guardians, get to know administrators, and participate in community events.



Advocacy  
is the  
primary  
goal and  
function of  
PTA

There are **MANY** ways to  
be an advocate!

**Advocacy can look like:**

- Identifying a need in your school and facilitating solutions with stakeholders
- Fostering open lines of communication between families and staff
- Sharing information, resources and opportunities with families (create newsletters and surveys, advertise PTA meetings)
- Host community-building events to foster **ENGAGEMENT**



# Engagement is Key in Advocacy

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By engaging your school community, you are inviting people to be stakeholders and change makers in their immediate school setting, as well as in local, statewide, and national issues that affect public education.

Parents and families deserve to have their voices heard when decisions about public education are being made. Studies show the drastic positive impact family engagement has in the long-term success of students.



**Schools would need to increase spending by more than \$1,000 per student to gain the same results as effective family engagement**

Source: Houtenville, A. and K.S. Conway. (2008). Parental Effort, School Resources, and Student Achievement. *Journal of Human Resources*, XLIII. Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press.



# National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

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## Standard 4: Speak Up for Every Child

The school affirms family and student expertise and advocacy so that all students are treated fairly and have access to relationships and opportunities that will support their success.

[PTA.org/Standards](https://www.pta.org/Standards)

# What does Advocacy look like at a unit level?

Source: PTA.org

## Goal 1:

### Navigate the School System

Are families knowledgeable and able to raise questions or concerns about their child's educational experience?

#### Indicators:

- Build school staffs' skills to build trust and problem-solve with students and families.
- Make it easy to understand how the school and district operate.
- Comply with families' rights under federal and state laws.
- Connect families to resources that address their questions or concerns.
- Make school staff and families aware of conflict resolution processes and apply them fairly.

# Advocacy at the local unit level, continued:

Source: PTA.org

## Goal 2:

### Address inequitable outcomes and access

- Does the school remove barriers for families to be advocates for and with students', particularly those who are most marginalized?

### Indicators:

- Encourage community and leadership among historically under-represented groups.
- Share understandable, disaggregated data on school progress and practices.
- Recognize and work to eliminate bias in family engagement practices and policies.



# Examples of Promising Partner Practices in Colorado

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- Colorado Department of Education has great resources on Standard 4: Speak Up For Every Child. Examples of how schools have implemented programs or events that promote advocacy and engagement can be found here:

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/familyengagement/standard4speakingupforeverychild>



Level Up:  
The  
Advocacy  
Liaison

- A “liaison” is someone who is a channel of communication between groups of people.
- Every local unit should have an Advocacy Liaison (formerly called “Legislative Chair/Representative”).
- *The name of this person should be submitted to COPTA on the Officers List.*

# What is the role of an Advocacy Liaison?

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To Be:

- The key link between the local unit members and the state PTA and national PTA on legislative issues, ballot issues, and policies affecting children.
- The conduit for accurate information on issues affecting children (such as school funding), in order to empower and motivate PTA members to take action on these issues.
- A resource for acquiring information about legislative and regulatory agencies, policy makers and lawmakers, and campaign activity guidelines and restrictions.



Being an  
Advocacy  
Liaison  
isn't as  
intimidating  
as it  
sounds!

### **3 Key Steps:**

- Be informed.
- Keep members informed.
- Promote advocacy.

# BE INFORMED:



Read Colorado PTA's newsletter.



Familiarize yourself with Colorado and National PTA's websites and follow PTA on social media.



Attend Legislative Committee meetings.



If you have a PTA Council, follow their advocacy activities and positions.



Attend school board meetings, school and district accountability meetings, town halls, and other community meetings.



Know who your legislators are at the state and national levels and who represents you at the city and county levels – and pay attention to how they vote.

## Keep Members Informed:

Share information that comes from the Legislative Committee or other major issues that affect your community by —

- Always asking for a small amount of time to speak during your PTA meetings to discuss advocacy.
- Sharing via email, newsletters, and social media.



## Promote Advocacy Opportunities From PTA:

- National PTA Take Action – <https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy/take-action>
- Great Education Colorado – <https://www.greateducation.org/email-your-legislators/>
- Kids Matter Too – <https://kidsmattertoo.org/take-action/>

Share community meetings and other information that comes from decision-makers (school board, Legislature, city government . . . .)

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**This isn't an "all or nothing" task. Any information you can share is valuable and important to pass along to your unit, especially around voting times when we take positions on ballot issues.**

**Guidelines for  
advocating  
PTA's positions  
on Ballot  
Issues**

**THESE GUIDELINES DO NOT APPLY  
TO BILLS**

- At school events, follow school district policy (for example, rent a table or a room; get the principal's permission).
- At PTA meetings, if the room isn't rented or the school district's policy allowing advocacy on a ballot issue is not in effect:
  - You may state that PTA has a position on the ballot issue.
  - If asked without soliciting – you may answer questions fully and honestly about what PTA's position is and why.




Do not use any school resources for printing, mailing, or distributing literature advocating PTA's position. Literature with PTA's position should be copied on a printer off school grounds and handed out beyond the border of school grounds.

When mailing or emailing information advocating PTA's position, send only to PTA members. Be careful not to send emails to school staff using their district email address.

**NOTE:** PTAs may print and distribute voter registration information, general election information, information that presents both the pros and cons of ballot issues, announcements regarding where to vote (mail-in ballot or polling locations, hours, etc.), and announcements of forums where both sides have been invited.

**Guidelines  
for advocating  
PTA's positions  
on Ballot Issues  
CAUTIONS**



**YES ON  
PROPOSITION  
HH** 



- PROTECTS STATE FUNDING FOR EDUCATION



- TABOR REFUNDS ARE PROJECTED TO EXCEED PAST AMOUNTS EVEN WITH THE PASSAGE OF HH

**WHAT DOES PROP. HH DO?**

- REDUCES THE PROPERTY TAX RATE
- PROVIDES A WAY TO REIMBURSE LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WHO RELY ON PROPERTY TAXES FOR FUNDING, INCLUDING SCHOOLS



- PROVIDES RELIEF FOR RENTERS
- PROTECTS AND EXPANDS TAX REDUCTIONS FOR SENIORS

**Colorado  
PTA**  
everychild. onevoice.

On the  
2023  
Colorado  
Ballot:  
Prop HH

On the 2023  
Colorado  
Ballot:  
Prop II

**VOTE  
YES**   
**ON PROPOSITION II**

**Tax revenues from tobacco products exceeded projections.**

**A "yes" vote allows Colorado to keep this additional revenue and add it to preschool funding.**

**If Prop. ii fails, additional revenues will be returned to tobacco wholesalers and retailers.**





# Advocacy in Action Proposition FF: Next Steps



## Healthy School Meals for All Important Reminders for Families

- The new Healthy School Meals for All Program provides the opportunity for districts to offer free breakfast and lunch to all students at participating schools starting in the 2023-24 school year.
- For this year, it's **still very important for families to fill out the Free & Reduced Lunch Forms** (also called Meal Benefits Application, Alternative Income Form, School Resource Form) so **schools receive full access to federal funding** and **for your student to qualify for fee waivers for AP testing, athletics, band or field trips, and discounted school fees, class materials, bus passes, utilities support and more.** Confidentiality of this information is protected by law. Only one form is required for all children in the household. Immigration, migrant, citizenship or refugee status is not required when completing the form.
- Additional federal funds will go directly to schools to help cover the cost of meals and will also support afterschool activities and other nutritional programs for students.
- Contact your school's nutrition department for details about which form to complete and for more information. Learn more about Healthy School Meals for All at [www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/healthy-school-meals-for-all-program](http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/healthy-school-meals-for-all-program).

### Unit PTAs:

Your support is needed to help maximize federal funding for your district and school. Please work with your school to encourage your families to complete your district's benefit form. To support your efforts, the Colorado Department of Education has created these helpful resources for schools, available in English and Spanish:\*

- Healthy School Meals for All one-page flier
- Newsletter write-up to share with families
- Social media posts and graphics
- Robo call script and text messages
- Family-facing template letter

\* Colorado Department of Education Healthy School Meals for All Communications Toolkit <https://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/toolkit-healthyschoolmealsforall#websitecopy>

**Please work with your school and district nutrition department  
to get the word out!**

Colorado PTA Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee



# Resources:

## **PTA's Advocacy Page:**

<https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy>

## **PTA's Position Page with Position Statements and Resolutions:**

(This is how we ground our positions on local and statewide issues)

<https://www.pta.org/home/advocacy/ptas-positions>

## **PTA's Center for Family Engagement:**

(Engagement and Advocacy go hand in hand!)

<https://www.pta.org/the-center-for-family-engagement>

## **Colorado PTA's Advocacy Page:**

<https://copta.org/advocacy/>

## **Colorado PTA's Resolutions and Positions:**

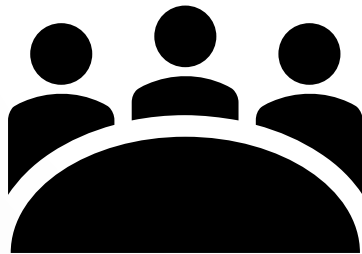
<https://copta.org/resolutions-positions/>



Thank you for being an advocate and helping fulfill PTA's mission!

**COPTA Legislative Engagement Committee meets every 2nd Monday of the month May-December and every 2nd and 4th Monday of the month January-April (legislative session).**

**Please join us or reach out to Evie, Dawn, or Sarah for a meeting zoom link, if you have questions or to connect.**



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