



everychild.one voice.®

the **VOICE**

President's Message,

Hope your spring holidays were enjoyable and that you had a great Spring Break! I always forget how hard it is for our kids to dig back in for those last nine weeks - so as parents, my husband and I are trying to get back to that routine with varying degrees of success.

The last nine weeks can be challenge for parents, students and teachers alike. As I said, coming back from Spring Break may require a re-commitment to school work and re-connection with your teachers and administrations. With assessment season around the corner, PTA's can play an important role in building that bridge and supporting our schools and students. Be sure to meet with your principals to ask how you can help keep those lines of communications open. Ramp up your social media posts with links to school calendars or end of year events. Maybe you guys are putting together a spring social or are considering an Open House for incoming parents. One thing I found really helpful in 5th and 8th grade was an opportunity to sit with PTA members at my new middle and high school. I had a TON of questions about how to prepare and my more experienced PTA and PTSA friends were a huge help!

On the advocacy front, PTA is continuing its efforts nationally and statewide on the gun violence prevention. National PTA has an important advocacy effort underway right now - you can check it out [here](#). Please take a minute to encourage your member of Congress to keep our children and our schools safe from gun violence. Also - there is an important article below detailing other actions you can take to help prevent gun violence so check it out!

And lastly, hopefully you know that Teacher Appreciation Week is May 7-11. Of course, there are so many cute ideas for Teacher Appreciation on [National PTA's Pinterest page](#). New for this year, though, we are offering you really great resources you can customize for your school and unit. Please click [here](#) for more information on how to [#ThankATeacher!](#)

I am looking forward to seeing you guys at your District Annual Meetings. I'm trying to attend as many as possible so please come out and introduce yourself. I'd love to hear what you're up to and how we can help support you in your super important work!

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sarah".

Sarah

April 27th Deadline to Submit the Winning 2019 Citizenship Essay Theme Win \$25 Gift Certificate to the Virginia PTA Store

We are excited by the record number of Citizenship Essays having been submitted and anxiously await the results of this year's contest! In looking forward to next year, we would love for you to share your ideas for next year's Citizenship Essay Theme! Virginia PTA is committed to promoting a sense of citizenship and responsibility in the lives of our children – tomorrow's leaders. To demonstrate the value that Virginia PTA places on good citizenship, we are proud to sponsor, support, and encourage Virginia students to write an essay for the Citizenship Essay Contest. If you have a great theme to suggest for next year's contest, please submit it to Sharon Abernathy, Virginia PTA Secretary, at secretary@vapta.org **before April 27, 2018**. The winning theme will be announced at the Virginia PTA Annual Awards Banquet in May.

Advocacy Actions to Promote Gun Safety & Violence Prevention

We are encouraging PTAs and advocates to take four actions this month to promote gun safety and violence prevention and push out to your membership as appropriate:

1. Send an [email](#) to your Member of Congress to strengthen gun safety and violence prevention laws
2. [Wear orange](#) on April 20th to show that you are part of the movement demanding change to eliminate gun violence
3. Schedule an in-district meeting or host a forum during the upcoming congressional recess from April 30 – May 4

4. Amplify these efforts on social media using the [sample posts](#)

Below is specific information on each advocacy action you can take today.

First, we have a [new action alert](#) urging members of Congress to cosponsor and support legislation that strengthens background checks, provides funding for gun violence research, enacts an assault weapons ban, and prevents persons who may endanger public safety from accessing guns. Be sure to promote your support for gun safety and violence prevention policies using our [sample social media content!](#)

Also, we are aware that a National School Walkout protesting gun violence is scheduled for April 20 to mark the 19th anniversary of the tragic Columbine school shooting. National PTA and Virginia PTA do not have a position on student walkouts, however we understand that some local PTAs may choose to support a walkout or march that is occurring in their community. Please see [National PTA's guidance document](#) regarding student voice around advocacy for gun violence prevention.

We encourage you to wear orange on April 20 to mark the anniversary of Columbine and show that you are part of the movement demanding change to eliminate gun violence. The color orange has been associated with gun violence awareness and prevention efforts, as it is the color hunters wear in the woods to protect themselves and others. We have created a special orange PTA t-shirt that can be ordered to wear on April 20. T-shirts must be ordered by April 13 to receive by April 19. [Visit ShopPTA.com](#) to purchase a shirt.

Mark Your Calendars to Attend Summer Leadership Training Boot Camp

Will your PTA have new or returning PTA officers this year? Have you been to a Virginia PTA training before? Does running a meeting make you nervous? Could you use a few tips on PTA procedures or building a volunteer team? Then the Summer Leadership Training Boot Camp is for you!

Boot Camp is a day filled with continuous training and opportunities to learn new skills with leadership training, informational sessions, and opportunities to network with PTA leaders. Attending is the perfect way to empower yourself with information to help you have a successful and rewarding PTA school year. It's affordable for just \$40 per attendee! Your PTA should have a line item for training to cover the cost. We're looking forward to seeing you there – it's local!

Boot Camp will take place in the following local areas:

- Saturday, July 21 - Northside High School, Roanoke
- Saturday, July 28 - King George High, King George
- Saturday, August 4 - Freedom High, Chantilly (South Riding)
- Saturday, August 11 - Jolliff Middle, Chesapeake

Share this [flyer](#) with your PTA leaders and members.

Membership Database News and Updates

It's officer transition time!

When you have elections, please be sure to submit your new officer information via <https://www.vapta.org/officer-contact-information>. This is an important step in maintaining communication with individual PTA's/PTSA's from year to year.

Some key information for you to know about the database as we close out this school year and start the next:

- Beginning July 2, National PTA's database will be ready to receive your PTA's 2018-2019 members.
- The existing dues structures will automatically be used for the upcoming school year unless you notify the state office of a change.
- The database will be down from June 15 to July 1 for conversion to the new year.
- If your PTA is not yet set up in the database, **beat the fall rush- GET YOUR DATABASE SET UP NOW!**
 - <https://www.pta.org/membershipdatabase> - walks you through the steps and even has video tutorials!
- Plan on attending one of the 4 [Summer Leadership Training Boot Camps](#) across the state

As always, if there is anything that we can help you with, please reach out to the Virginia PTA office at (804) 264-1234 or email info@vapta.org.

District Annual Meetings

If it's spring, it's time for your District Annual Meeting! Have you been to your district meeting? This is your year! It's a great place to get an update, meet some other leaders and be recognized for your hard work! Check

out the listings of those meetings:

- April 18 - Hunt District
- April 22 - Patriot District
- April 25 - Richmond District
- April 29 - Northern VA District
- April 28 - Southeastern District

Contact your District Director for more information. Don't know your district or need an email, click [here](#).



Celebrate Teacher Appreciation Week and #ThankATeacher with Us!

Teachers provide so much to our students—inspiration, motivation and, ultimately, their futures. From May 7-11, 2018, we would like to show our thanks and gratitude by treating them like a V.I.T. – VERY IMPORTANT TEACHER.

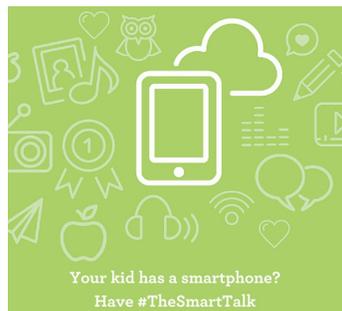
Teachers change the lives of millions of children every day, and their work and impact extends far beyond the boundaries of the classroom. Join us during **PTA Teacher Appreciation Week** to [#ThankATeacher](#) for all that they deliver to our nation's children.

To help you thank the teachers in your lives for delivering so much, we've created [certificates](#) and [flyers](#)! Here are a few more ways you can get involved:

- Have your school principal, PTA/PTSA President
- or student sign and present our ready-made [appreciation certificates](#) to the teachers in your life.
- Share photos and your activities during the week by using the hashtag [#ThankATeacher](#) on social media!
- On Thursday, upload a #TBT of you and your favorite teacher and thank them using the official [hashtag #ThankATeacher](#).

New some social media inspiration? Dress it up with these graphics:

- **Facebook Cover**
- **Twitter Cover**
- **Instagram**



The Smart Talk

The Smart Talk helps families and kids talk about using digital devices responsibly and decide a few important questions together, like: What are they allowed to post on social media? What should their privacy settings be and what apps can they download? How much screen time is ok? Once those questions have been answered, a custom agreement is created, which can be printed and signed so that all of the ground rules are easily remembered by everyone. Visit [TheSmartTalk.org](#) to get started.

Visit our Website

Virginia PTA | (804) 264-1234 | (804) 264-4014 | info@vapta.org | www.vapta.org

STAY CONNECTED



