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the VOICE

President's Message,

Tonight, I went to the October board meeting of my son's high school PTSA. Now, this isn't a big school - there are 240 students in all four grades - and yet, there were 9 parents around the table AND the principal AND the school guidance counselor. One of the parents wasn't even on the board but was attending to stay in touch. While everyone was sharing ideas of how we could make a bigger splash and have more fun, I was struck by one of my favorite parts of PTA. It's about engagement - which is just a big word to say "getting involved". In PTA's all over the country, once or twice a month, a bunch of people who care deeply about their children and the schools that care for those children get together and ENGAGE with each other. And because of that, more parents feel like a part of that school's family.

After the meeting, we introduced ourselves to the parents we didn't already know, we exchanged stories about our growing up high school students and, of course, stalked the principal and guidance counselor. For our hour of volunteer time, we were given a chance to engage with each other around work that we all love to do, around the PTA.

So I wanted to say THANK YOU - to each of you who make the time and put in the effort. This work that we do and connections we make with each other are vital to the success of our students and our schools. Just take a minute to think about a few of the ways you have made a difference. This is part of your PTA legacy.

For our part, at Virginia PTA, we are busy like you making things happen this fall! We are working on finalizing the details of our new for 2018 Annual Meeting and Advocacy training in January. We are going to get you engaged with your legislators and other advocates and informed about all things General Assembly. In addition to that, we are taking our summer training on the road! We are creating FOUR leadership training events so that you can learn what you need and meet new people - but it will be more affordable and closer to your home.

Check out the rest of this edition of the VOICE to learn more about our new pilot MEMBERSHIP DATABASE, Reflections information, the new for 2018 Annual Meeting in January and more!

Don't forget to keep in touch and drop me a line with your ideas, your feedback, your concerns, your PTA wins! Looking forward to hearing from you...and thank you for your commitment to this work.

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

Sarah

Navigating Membership Database

As PTA leaders are beginning to submit their membership information into the new (beta) database here are some helpful hints.

- Use the link on the (<https://www.vapta.org/documents/general/1827-pta-local-leader-manual-9-27-17>) to see the Local Leaders Manual as it has been and will be updated periodically as we work through the pilot program
- Call or email info@vapta.org or ed@vapta.org or call 804-264-1234 for help. Calling or emailing anyone at PTA.org will only delay a response as they are forwarding them to the state office.
- You can now enter your own dues structure! See p. 17-19 of the Local Leaders Manual for instructions
- Upload spreadsheet tips:
 - Use only the [spreadsheet](#) provided by National PTA in database, here is a template. Do not change the layout, font, just enter info into document as is.
 - Local Unit Number- no longer required to put all the 000's in that field to make your unit number 8 digits
- Enter your membership type EXACTLY like your set up in the database ie:
 - Family (\$10.00)- copying and pasting is recommended

Mark Your Calendar and Save the Date for 2018 ADVOCACY CONFERENCE!

On January 27-28, 2018 we launch our inaugural Annual Meeting & Advocacy Conference, followed by our annual PTA Day at the General Assembly! This will be an exciting event to share information with our members about the **WHAT**, **HOW**, and **WHY** we advocate.

- Learn **WHY** it's so important to have a **VOICE** at our local, county, state, and federal levels of government.
- Understand **HOW** we can become better informed to speak up about the issues in our communities.
- Talk about **WHAT** we are advocating for – our children's future!

Scheduled Workshops will focus on issues and legislative policy. This is an opportunity for you to focus on **Education, Engagement, and Advocacy** while representing your PTA community at our first combined Annual Meeting and Advocacy Conference! Be sure to allocate funding in your PTA budget to send a representative. **Watch for registration to open in early November!**

Debbie Kilpatrick, 2018 Conference Chair
Questions? Contact: conference@vapta.org

2018 Reflections Resources

As you are nearing the deadline for your local unit Reflections program, we are excited to bring you a more robust family of tools to help you! Please visit the Virginia PTA [website](#) to view new expanded rules sheets for each individual category. These sheets include all of the guidelines from the Official Rules Summary sheet, but also include additional information to help clarify accepted forms of artwork, copyright infringement, presentation guidelines, and packaging information. Also new to the site is the Local Unit Participation Form. Each local unit is asked to fill this out and include it with your submissions so we can have a better idea of how many students are participating. Thank you and please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions! Laura Armentrout, artsineducation@vapta.org

NEW!! MONTHLY FACEBOOK LIVE FOR PRESIDENTS!

We're so excited to launch our monthly Facebook Live for unit presidents! Please join us on WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1 at 7:00pm for our first conversation. We will talk about what's happening, your ideas or concerns and share PTA best practices. Want to get more info? Like us on Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/VirginiaPTA/?fref=ts>.

Free NASA STEM Educational Programs

The Virginia Space Grant Consortium provides the following STEM opportunities for middle school to high school students. All our programs are free to all Virginia students.

- [Building Leaders for Advancement of Science & Technology \(BLAST\)](#)
 - [Virginia Space Coast Scholars \(VSCS\)](#)
 - [Virginia Aerospace Science and Technology Scholars \(VASTS\)](#)
 - [Virginia Earth System Science Scholars \(VESSS\)](#)
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