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# the VOICE

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## President's Message,

Well, I don't know about you but I would like to vote Punxsutawney Phil off the island. Raise your hand if it feels like your kids have been on your couch more than they've been at their desks...my heartfelt sympathy and gratitude to all the teachers who are having to make adjustments and soldier on as we head into the second half of the year.

Speaking of second half of the year - now is a great time to revisit the goals you set in August. How are your membership numbers coming along? A thoughtful drive right now will serve to invite previously not engaged parents back into the building. How about your budget? Take a look at where you are with your programs to insure that money is going where it should. This will also help you drive the new budget for next year. If something isn't working at this point in the year, maybe you and your board should consider whether you need it next year. And lastly, consider your continuity plan - which is, of course, a fancy way of talking about who will lead the unit next year. Nominations are right around the corner!

Many of you know that I came out of the advocacy "track" - so for me, this is the most exciting time of the year...General Assembly 2018 is roaring on toward crossover. We are busy watching a ton of bills make their way through committees so if you have a particular interest or need some more information, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. We are always looking for members to come to the General Assembly and support or oppose certain bills - but more importantly to help all of you achieve your advocacy goals. Every child, one voice.

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

Sarah

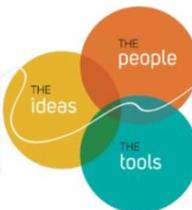
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## Virginia PTA Members Gather in Richmond

Our 2018 Annual Meeting and Advocacy Training (held January 27-28) was a HUGE success! We hosted our National PTA President, Jim Accomando, met with the

Virginia Secretary of Education, Atif Qarni and were inspired by the incredible Courtney Lynch. Members from around the state spent two days debating resolutions and bylaws - but more importantly taking part in training specifically developed to enhance their advocacy efforts. From [workshops](#) on how to work with your school board, to learning about available nutrition programs, to the Virginia PTA legislation program, and to best practices for advocating - our training had something for everyone. It was so energizing to watch people engaging in conversation and exchanging ideas on how they were going to go back to their units and make change. **If you missed out - put next year's meeting on your calendar now - January 26-27, 2019.**

2018 Virginia PTA ANNUAL MEETING & ADVOCACY CONFERENCE  
everychild.one voice.® JANUARY 27-28, 2018



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## PTA Day at the General Assembly!

There's nothing quite like watching PTA members march into their legislators' office, tell their stories, engage them in the process of supporting our public schools...and get recognized from the floors of the House and Senate! On Monday, January 29, Virginia PTA held its Lobby Day - PTA Day at the General Assembly. Armed with talking points, a commitment to their students and schools and the spirit of advocacy, they met with their legislators to push our shared priorities. THANK YOU to all those members who made the trip and made a difference! Check out our Virginia PTA Facebook page for pictures and comments about the day! It was a HUGE success!!

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## Heading Toward Crossover at the General Assembly!

The 2018 General Assembly session is heading into the halfway point on February 14. This means that all bills must be acted on and sent to the other side for consideration. The newly elected House of Delegates

members have created interesting conversation and opportunities this session. We are still watching three budget amendments: expanding the At-Risk Add-On program (Norman, McClellan, Aird, O'Quinn), elimination of the cap on support staff funding (McClellan) and additional funding for STEAM programs (Tran). Bills related to our priorities include: School Nurses in schools (HB791 - Pogge - still alive), Local School Boards set calendar (HB372 - Robinson and HB102 - Adams both passed House and sent to Senate BUT the Senate bills died so these will likely not survive), support further reductions in SOL's (SB491 - Sturtevant - still in subcommittee) and oppose Tax Credit Scholarships (HB1286 - LaRock - still in subcommittee). Additionally, we are watching bills supporting more recess for students (HB1419 is still in subcommittee but SB273 passed the Senate) and supporting reforms to discipline and suspension. Want to get more involved? Make sure you are receiving our [TAKE ACTION ALERTS](#).

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## District Annual Meeting Planning Underway

Every year, your district invites you guys to all get together, maybe have a meal, do a little business and hand out our important awards recognizing your AMAZING WORK! Keep an eye out for your invitation to your annual District meeting. If you aren't sure about your district, check out our district locator here: <https://www.vapta.org/contact-us>

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## Speaking of The 2018 Virginia PTA Awards...

We have posted our newly consolidated AWARDS NOMINATIONS PACKAGE on our website. If you would like to recognize the work of someone in your unit, you might consider nominating them for one of our awards. Here is a list: Volunteer of the Year, Family Engagement, Male Engagement or Diversity & Inclusion. If you want to recognize your principal or superintendent, please consider our Power Partners Awards. Local unit must be in "*good standing*" to be eligible for any award. Deadlines should be posted by your District Director. Local winners will be submitted to the state in March. Click here for more information about the [awards](#). Questions - contact our Family Engagement chair, Sandy Glotfletly at [familyengagement@vapta.org](mailto:familyengagement@vapta.org).

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# Virginia529<sup>SM</sup>

Prepaid529 gives Virginia families the opportunity to prepay the cost of tomorrow's college tuition. Rather than waiting to see what your loved ones' tuition bill will amount to, you can embrace peace of mind by prepaying their tuition with Prepaid529.

Virginia529 would like to be a part of your next PTA meeting or school event to discuss how the program can benefit the families at your schools. Whether you want to hear more about the PrePaid529 program or all of the other benefits of Virginia529, we'd be happy to speak with your community. If you would like to request a speaker for your next event, have materials sent for your students or would like to learn more about our flexible, affordable tax-advantaged college savings programs, just visit our website at [www.virginia529.com/invite](http://www.virginia529.com/invite)

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## Virginia PTA Seeks Committee Members

If you are reading this newsletter then you are an advocate for our children! Dig into the big picture and make a difference throughout the Commonwealth by getting involved. Consider joining as a Member-at-Large in the following committees: Advocacy, Arts in Education, Bylaws, Communications, Health and Safety and Family Engagement. More info is available at <https://www.vapta.org/614-vapta-seeks-committee-members>

Please feel free to email [nominations@vapta.org](mailto:nominations@vapta.org) with any questions!

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## Membership Database News and Updates

THANK YOU for all of your efforts in setting up your PTAs in the National Database. As one of the 4 pilot states, we are learning a lot and helping to set the standards for the system when it rolls out nationwide.

In response to your feedback (all feedback is useful!), National PTA has released a webpage that helps PTAs get set up and begin to actively use the database - <https://www.pta.org/membershipdatabase>. It walks you through the steps of setting up and even has video tutorials!

Also National PTA has provided a [Leaders Guide](#) for additional guidance in using the system.

We hope that you will find this resource helpful and as always, please reach out to the Virginia PTA office if you need more assistance.

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## 2018 Diversity & Inclusion Award

## Deadline - March 31



Does your PTA:

- have proven efforts in welcoming diverse members of their community?
- effectively host multicultural events to engage diverse communities?
- recognize and address issues regarding bias, prejudice and misunderstanding to promote diversity and inclusion?
- effectively partner with community organizations to increase brand awareness of PTA in their community including underrepresented groups?
- make meaningful connections with key members of the community to impact membership and volunteerism?
- have increased the diversity of their board?
- have success in diversifying their membership?
- have interest in continuing to grow their initiatives and efforts to expand their outreach?

Share how your PTA has championed diversity & inclusion for a chance to WIN \$1,000!

**Then this is your opportunity for your PTA to be recognized and win \$1,000! The Jan Harp Domene Diversity and Inclusion Award** recognizes PTAs that best demonstrate outstanding achievement in the areas of diversity and inclusion, as well as efforts to end discriminatory practices.

The award will be presented to one state PTA, one district/council/region PTA and one local PTA. For additional information and the application, please go to [www.pta.org/DiversityAward](http://www.pta.org/DiversityAward).

## Nancy Taylor, Virginia PTA Past President Passes

Virginia PTA is sad to announce that one of our past presidents, [Nancy Taylor](#), who served from 1991-1993, has passed away. A fierce supporter of children - her theme was "All Children - Our Children". She built strong advocacy partnerships across the state and worked tirelessly to bring positive change to our schools. Our sympathy goes out to her family and friends. We are so grateful for her service.

## The Smart Talk

With so many kids receiving new smartphones and tablets for holiday presents, it's important for us to set some smart ground rules for technology use. **Let's kick off the New Year right by having [The Smart Talk](#) today.** Visit [TheSmartTalk.org](http://TheSmartTalk.org) to get started.



Visit our Website

Virginia PTA | (804) 264-1234 | (804) 264-4014 | [info@vapta.org](mailto:info@vapta.org) | [www.vapta.org](http://www.vapta.org)

STAY CONNECTED

