

The PTA Story

Overview

This section contains a brief history of National and Texas PTA along with legislative accomplishments.

How to Use

Use this section to familiarize yourself with the history of National and Texas PTA.

Who Should Use

- Officers
- Chairmen
- Individual Members

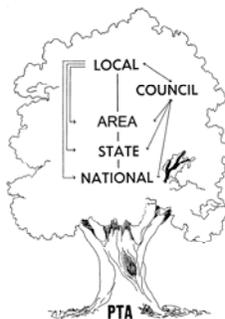
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National PTA History

The National PTA was organized February 17, 1897, in Washington, D.C., through the combined efforts of Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst. Its work is carried on by a membership of more than 6 million in more than 26,000 Local PTAs and branches in the 50 states; the District of Columbia; the European Congress of American Parents, Teachers and Students; the Pacific Congress of American Parents, Teachers and Students; and the Virgin Island Conference of American Parents, Teachers and Students.

The emblem of the organization is an oak tree with the following symbolism:

Trunk—National Congress,
Large branches—State Congresses,
Small branches—Areas and Councils,
Twigs—Locals,
Leaves—Individual members and
Acorns—PTA accomplishments.



The name was changed to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers in 1925. The national office is in Chicago, Illinois, with a satellite office in Washington, D.C.

The National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers was organized in 1926 in Atlanta, Georgia. Mrs. Selena Sloan Butler was the founder and first president. On June 22, 1970, in Atlanta, the National PTA and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers were unified.

PTA Servicemark Information

PTA, *Parent Teacher Association* and *PTSA* are registered as service marks with the U.S. Patent and Trade Office in Washington D.C. by National PTA.®

PTA does not contain periods, and there is not a hyphen between parent and teacher in *Parent Teacher Association*.



Texas PTA History

Organized

Mrs. Ella Caruthers Porter organized a state Congress of Mothers on October 19, 1909, in Dallas.

Name

Texas Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations 1909-1932; Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers (Texas PTA) since 1932.

Few organized groups have experienced such phenomenal sustained growth as the PTA. It was founded on fundamental objectives and needs and guided by men and women of clear vision and steadfast purpose for the welfare of children and youth.

On October 19, 1909, Mrs. Ella Caruthers Porter of Dallas, who had been named by the National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations as organizer for Texas, issued a call to the mothers of Texas to convene in the First Methodist Church of Dallas to organize a state congress.

With the assistance of the Dallas Council of Mothers, Mrs. Porter called a three-day conference of representatives of interested organizations. Texas mayors were requested to send delegates from their towns. The aforementioned persons, together with leading educators and other interested men and women, made up the organizational body. State Fair officials and the *Dallas Morning News* were active partners in the undertaking. The response was greater than anticipated.

Cooperation of the Texas State Teachers Association was secured and that body adopted resolutions endorsing the organization of Local PTAs in the Texas schools.

Mrs. Porter was elected president, an office that she held for three years. Her administration was devoted largely to extension service.

From a small beginning, Texas PTA has grown to an organization now numbering more than 600,000 in membership. Texas PTA is the largest child advocacy group in the state and the second largest state congress in the nation.

Why has the organization had such growth? The answer is simple, but meaningful—SERVICE—as spelled out in the pages of this handbook.

Organization

The Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers, chartered under the laws of the state, is a volunteer organization actively engaged in work for the welfare of children and in certain lines of educational work. It is a branch of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, an organization with more than five and one-half million members.

The National Congress of Parents and Teachers serves as a central coordinating agency throughout the nation, a clearinghouse of parent-teacher information and a national public relations agency. It provides publications and leadership training for its members.

Structure

The structure of the state branch follows closely with that of the national organization. State bylaws indicate the relationship of the state branch to the national organization and show how the state branch is related to Area, Council and Local PTAs.

State officers include a president, two vice presidents, six regional vice presidents, secretary, treasurer and historian. Officers, with the exception of the historian, are elected by ballot at convention for a term of two years or until their successors are elected.

The Executive Committee is composed of the President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and two (2) board members elected by and from the board of directors. The Executive Committee meets before each meeting of the board of directors and upon the call of the president.

The Texas PTA Board of Directors consists of the officers, five representatives of the Council of Areas, the parent education/programming chairman and the chairmen of the standing committees.

Selecting Nominees for Texas PTA Board of Directors

All Local PTAs receive nomination forms prior to an election. Area, Council and Local PTAs, along with members of the Texas PTA Board of Directors and individual Local PTA members may submit nominees for consideration to the Nominating Committee. Mail suggestions to the Texas PTA Office in an envelope marked "Suggested Nominees."

State Convention

The Texas PTA Annual Convention shall be the governing body of the Texas PTA.

- *Purpose:* The state convention shall provide information, inspiration and guidance for carrying out the work of the Texas PTA. It shall provide an opportunity for conferences, workshops and exhibits, as well as inspirational addresses relevant to parent-teacher work. Convention business shall be conducted by the delegate body and may include amendment of bylaws, election of officers, adoption of resolutions and legislative positions, presentation of reports and such other business as may properly come before the convention.
- *Call:* The official call to convention will be printed at least 30 days prior to convention, in Texas PTA's *The Voice*, the official newsletter of the association.
- *Time:* The time and place of the annual state convention shall be decided as authorized by the Texas PTA Board of Directors.

- *Delegates:* Voting power shall be vested in the Texas PTA Board of Directors, presidents of Area PTAs or their alternates, past presidents of Texas PTA, presidents of Council PTAs or their alternates, presidents of Local PTAs or their alternates and one delegate for each 50 members of a Local PTA (or fraction thereof as accredited on the books at the Texas PTA Office). An accredited delegate shall have only one vote, although he is entitled to vote in more than one capacity. Non-voting members may attend and upon payment of the registration fee receive a convention packet.
- *Credentials:* Payment of the registration fee and presentation of credential and membership cards entitle the delegate to a voting card. Each delegate must be registered on or before the first day of convention to be eligible to vote in the election of officers.

Legislation Is PTA Business

The first PTA meeting held in Washington, D.C., in 1897 recognized that child welfare could not be achieved by good intentions. Good homes and good parents do not exist in a vacuum. Children are ennobled or defiled by the social conditions in the world outside the home. Laws often need to be passed to improve these conditions. Without organized effort specifically pointing out these needs, legislative solutions to the problems are difficult or haphazard. PTA has no interest in legislation apart from the care and protection of children.

Texas PTA participates in coalitions and alliances that help us to achieve our goals. It is through our broad-based grassroots efforts that we are successful in our goals and we will be seeking to continually involve more and more members in the legislative process.

Accomplishments

The Texas PTA arranged the first child welfare conference ever held in Texas at the State Fair in Dallas (1910), when the first drinking fountain

was exhibited. For the first time in the history of the educational movement in Texas, PTA called together 18 state organizations to discuss conditions affecting children in the state and to concentrate on fundamental needs.

The Texas PTA was the first organization to inaugurate an educational campaign for birth registration, prevention of infant mortality and to take an infant mortality survey.

Other outstanding measures inaugurated and/or promoted by the Texas PTA follow:

General Health and Welfare

- Children's Trust Fund
- Rural child labor survey
- Appointment of county health officers and public health nurses
- Health inspection of public school children
- Provision for Department of Public Welfare
- Sheppard-Tower appropriation for maternity and infant care
- Creation of a child welfare commission
- Creation of a Bureau of Child Hygiene
- Rigid observance of state laws against gambling
- Abolition of the public drinking cup
- Laws preventing sale and distribution of indecent literature
- More stringent laws concerning sex offenders
- Better juvenile probation law
- A custodial institution for mentally handicapped (now Austin State School)
- Proper care for prisoners and for the insane
- Protective measures for women and children in industry
- Adequate child labor laws
- Appointment of women probation officers
- Better laws regarding family desertion
- More stringent laws concerning marriage and divorce
- Aid to dependent children and to needy blind

- Prohibition of sale and transportation of pornographic materials
- Prohibition of sale of fireworks
- Recodification of laws affecting the welfare of children and youth
- Revision of laws concerning sale and consumption of liquor
- Support of legislation providing funds for a state juvenile parole system within the Texas Youth Council
- Institution of a project for a continuing health supervision education program
- Smoking and Health Project
- Smoking and Alcohol Education Project
- Increasing funding for child abuse caseworkers and child abuse prevention
- Promoting Children's Health Insurance Program for families earning up to 200% of the poverty level
- Getting school-based health clinics funded.
- Convincing the legislature to set up the Texas Healthy Kids Corporation to provide access to health insurance for all children
- Limiting the access of children to tobacco products
- Regulate cement kilns burning hazardous and toxic wastes and/or tires
- Voluntary guidelines for indoor air quality in public schools
- Juvenile justice reform
- Provision for regional libraries for audio-visual materials
- Proper construction of school buildings
- Educational survey
- Vocational education (particularly homemaking)
- Raising per capita appropriation
- Providing high school education for all children
- Constitutional amendment providing for a state board of education
- Visiting teacher legislation
- A division of adult education in the State Department of Education
- Physical education bill (requiring the teaching of physical education in public schools)
- Lowering scholastic age to include six-year-old children
- Strengthening and enforcing teacher certification, salaries, tenure and retirement
- Better equalization of educational opportunities for all children
- Provision for Texas School of the Air
- Minimum Foundation Acts (commonly known as Gilmer-Aikin Legislation)
- Audiovisual education bill
- School lunch program
- Education for the exceptional child
- Provisions for education of the physically handicapped
- Preservation of educational TV channels
- Texas' claim to the Tidelands
- Support of Hale-Aikin Proposals
- Establishment of a project committee on school dropouts
- Utilization of professional qualified leadership training consultants and personnel to provide training experience for PTA officers and leaders
- Continuing improvement of communications between the PTA and those engaged professionally in education at all levels
- Teacher pay raises
- Site-Based Decision Making

Education

- Public Kindergarten programs
- Compulsory school attendance law
- Free textbook measure
- Constitutional amendment removing tax limit for school purposes
- Rural school aid bill
- Adequate appropriations for maintenance of higher institutions of learning
- Consolidation of school districts
- Compelling instruction in the English language in all public, private and parochial schools
- Establishment of county libraries and extension of library service

- Defeating vouchers and tax credits that would use public money to fund private schools
- Helping pass a \$3000 teacher pay raise
- Increasing overall funding for public education
- Requiring parental notification of uncertified teachers
- Requiring parental involvement standards in the school accountability system
- Requiring parental notification of class size waivers.
- Maintaining the integrity of “Parental Rights and Responsibilities,” Chapter 26 of the Texas Education Code
- Supporting funding for the Governor’s Texas Reading Initiative to help all children be able to read by third grade
- Obtaining funding for regional dyslexia coordinators provide technical assistance to school districts
- Providing more opportunities for the public to comment in the environmental regulation permitting process
- Requiring state agencies to have a written policy to allow state employees to attend parent-teacher conferences
- Prohibit school property tax abatements
- Open all site-based decision making committee meetings to the public

Safety and Miscellaneous

- Improved driver’s license laws with increased highway patrol and uniform accident reporting
- Revision of speed limits
- Better D.W.I. laws
- Fifty-four-hour law for working women
- Mother’s pension bill
- Married women’s property rights bill
- Jury service for women
- Creation of Women’s Division in Bureau of Labor Statistics
- Social Security Act
- Better motion pictures
- Recommendation of recodification of Texas school laws, Texas criminal laws and procedures

- School zone speed law
- Requiring seat belts for all children ages 4-15 in passenger vehicles
- Strengthening the Juvenile Driving While Intoxicated Laws
- Requiring city buses used to transport school children to display a caution sign and blinking lights
- Prohibit anyone under the age of 18 from riding as cargo in the back of a pickup truck
- Statewide playground safety standards
- Graduated Driver’s License

Legislation

During the 74th Legislative Session (1995), Texas PTA had a significant impact on the revision of the Texas Education Code, under which parents have the right to:

- Petition the board, designating which school in the district the child will attend;
- Request class change for the student;
- Request the addition of a specific academic class if there is sufficient interest;
- Request that a child who completes all required courses graduate early and participate in graduation ceremonies;
- Access 10 different student records;
- Review state tests administered to the child (after they have been administered);
- Review all teaching materials and have full information about events;
- Access meetings of the board of trustees (except officially closed meetings or executive sessions, as allowed by law);
- Disallow certain activities without parental consent, such as tape recording or videotaping a student (except for purposes of safety, co-curricular/extracurricular activities, regular classroom instruction or media coverage); and
- Remove child from class that conflicts with family’s religious or moral beliefs.

Texas PTA Has Achieved Distinction as:

- An organization that is steadily increasing the scope and value of its effort to serve children;
- A splendid medium of promoting study and cooperation in regard to schools and education matters and for enlisting the public interest in issues affecting youth;
- A helper, when needed, to assist children to attend school;
- Promoter of health programs for every child;
- A group fostering a more effective safety program;
- An organization training leaders who, in turn, will develop better citizens;
- The first state PTA to own its own headquarters building;
- The first state to establish life memberships;
- A grantor of scholarships to educators; and
- A sponsor of educational projects, such as workshops in safety, education for family living, civil defense, legislation, mental health, youth development, education, a film on study groups, radio and television series on education for family living and many other programs and projects helping to achieve the goals of PTA.

The new Texas Education Code also included the following PTA issues:

- Parental inclusion on the school district decision-making committee;
- Each campus should have an organized parent-teacher organization;
- Maintains 22:1 in kindergarten through fourth grade;
- Requires schools to be tobacco-free;
- Establishes alcohol-free, drug-free and zero-tolerance school zones; and

- Increases teacher salaries and state money for staff development.

Revenue of Texas PTA

State and National Dues

The portion that the Local PTA treasurer sends to the Texas PTA Office for each member secures membership in both the Texas and the National PTAs. The national portion is one dollar and seventy-five cents (\$1.75) and the state portion is one dollar and twenty-five cents (\$1.25).

General Fund

The Texas PTA portion (\$1.25) of each member's dues is placed in the general fund to be used for the operation of the Texas PTA. Other sources of revenue include literature and jewelry sales, income from short-term savings or certificates of deposit, registration fees, exhibit fees and *The Voice* subscriptions.

Extension Fund

Monies in this fund are used to extend the services of the Texas PTA. These services are the reaching out of the Texas PTA to strengthen Local PTA members. The Area PTAs render most of these activities through the use of the Area PTA revolving fund. Such services include the Area PTA conference and workshops, the monthly newsletter, Officers' and Chairmen's Training for Local and/or Council PTAs, the teaching of the Texas PTA Leader Orientation, the organization of new Local or Council PTAs, the expenses of Area PTA committee meetings and the travel expenses of Area PTA officers to Local PTA members when direction or experience is needed.

The sources of revenue to the extension fund are the net profits from Texas PTA Honorary Life Memberships, Texas PTA Extended Service Awards, one-half of National PTA Founders Day Gifts and returns from the investment of the Ella Caruthers Porter Memorial Endowment Fund.

Ella Caruthers Porter Memorial (ECP) Endowment Fund

In 1923, Mrs. Ella Caruthers Porter of Dallas, organizer of the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers, realizing the need for extension of

parent-teacher projects, challenged the membership to match her gift of \$5,000 to establish an endowment fund. In November of that year, Mrs. Porter's challenge was met and the fund was created with the initial sum of \$10,000. This fund has grown steadily through contributions of PTAs and interested members.

The management of the endowment funds shall be entrusted to the Executive Committee acting as trustees.

Beginning with the establishment of the endowment fund, Mrs. Porter served as chairman of the board of trustees until her death on July 26, 1939. Shortly after, the name was changed to the Ella Caruthers Porter Memorial Endowment Fund of the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers.

Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers (TCPT) Endowment Fund

In 1957, the Texas PTA Board of Directors established the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers Endowment Fund. Gifts from PTAs, legacies and such other contributions as approved by the board of directors shall be placed in this fund. The interest is used for educational purposes (such as career teacher or student scholarships) adopted by a two-thirds' vote of the board of directors. The Executive Committee acts as trustees for the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers Endowment Fund.

National PTA Founders Day Gifts

Each year we renew our understanding and appreciation of the plan for child welfare manifested on February 17, 1897, when Mrs. Alice McLellan Birney, assisted by Mrs. Phoebe Apperson Hearst, called interested persons to meet in Washington, D.C. Parenthood was challenged to fulfill its duty of rearing not merely children of the household and pupils in a school, but citizens of a community, equipped in body, mind and spirit to build a nation. Over the years, millions have accepted this philosophy. To honor

the founders of the National PTA, we observe the day with special programs and gifts to the fund. Tribute is paid to those who, serving as national president, have fostered that outlook in each new generation.

Texas Congress Birthday Gifts

In observance of the birthday of the Texas PTA, we pay tribute each year to the memory of Mrs. Ella Caruthers Porter and her co-workers who organized the Texas Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations on October 19, 1909. For 30 years, Mrs. Porter, the first president of the congress, was actively engaged in the promotion of parent-teacher work in Texas as president and in other capacities. She was prominently identified as chairman of the board of trustees of the endowment fund as well as chairman of the Texas Congress Birthday and Founders Day committees. The Texas Congress birthday is observed throughout the state with special programs and gifts.

Friends of PTA

The "Friends of PTA," a core of caring patrons offering additional support for the services of the Texas PTA through individual contributions, was formed in May 1975. The list of "Friends" boasts hundreds of names, including parents, teachers, school officials and concerned citizens.

Local PTAs need expanded services from Texas PTA. The association faces ever-increasing costs for existing programs. In rising to these challenges, the "Friends of PTA" has become an increasingly important avenue for dedicated members to make tax-deductible contributions to ensure adequate funding for statewide programs and projects. Contributions to "Friends of PTA" are used to supplement the revenue of Texas PTA in a variety of ways.

Building and Maintenance Fund

Texas PTA was the first state PTA to own its own headquarters building. It was originally built in 1937. It was built as a home versus an office building because it was the "home" of all the Texas PTA members. As the membership of Texas PTA continued growing over the years, so

did the PTA home. In 1950, the first addition was added to the building, which doubled the size of the home. A second addition was added to the building in 1957. This addition again doubled the size by adding a second floor.

In 1986, the building needed major repairs and the Building and Maintenance Fund was established. Individual members, Local, Council and Area PTAs may donate to the fund. The purpose of this fund is to replace reserves that were used to start the needed major repairs and to establish an ongoing fund to maintain the home of Texas PTA.

Texas PTA Honorary Life Membership

A Texas PTA Honorary Life Membership is one of the highest honors that can be bestowed upon an individual by the Texas PTA for outstanding contributions to the well-being of children and youth. The National PTA also confers the National PTA Life Achievement Award. A form is available in the “Resources and Forms” section of this Handbook.

Texas PTA Extended Service Award

A Texas PTA Extended Service Award is given to those people who have continued to give outstanding service to the Texas PTA. This award may be presented at any time by a Local, Council, Area or Texas PTA. The recipient must have been actively involved in the Texas PTA for ten (10) years and be a Texas Life Member. A form is available in the “Resources and Forms” section of this Handbook.

Recognition Square

Dedicated in honor of Texas PTA’s 90th Birthday, Recognition Square was created as a place to honor the special people that have made PTA what it is today. Recognition Square is filled with bricks commemorating Local PTAs and their members, Council PTAs, Area PTAs, Honorary Life Members, Texas PTA board members, corporate sponsors and any other individual or group a member wishes to honor. All proceeds from Recognition Square go to the

construction of the square and the building fund to maintain the historic downtown state office. A form is available in the “Resources and Forms” section of this Handbook.

Emergency Relief Fund

The Texas PTA established the Texas PTA Emergency Relief Fund in 1995 to provide emergency assistance grants for victims of hurricanes, floods, tornadoes, catastrophic illness and accidents. Financial aid is provided only to the truly needy and is consistent with that need. Funding comes from tax-deductible donations from individuals and PTAs. Contributions may **not** be earmarked for a specific recipient. A form is available in the “Resources and Forms” section of this Handbook.

Contributions

In 1931, the board of directors of the Texas PTA created an opportunity for members to give memorial gifts. Gifts may be contributed in memory of a deceased person. The contribution should be made payable to the Texas PTA and marked “Memorial for (name).” The Texas PTA sends a certificate to the family of the deceased, acknowledging the memorial. The name and address of the family should be sent to the Texas PTA.

A donor making such a memorial should indicate whether he desires the gift to be used for the general fund, extension services, the Building Fund or educational purposes. If a preference is indicated, the donor’s wishes will be honored. If no preference is indicated it will be placed in the general fund.

An Area, Council or Local PTA or an individual desiring to contribute to any of these funds may mail checks to the Texas PTA, 408 West 11th St., Austin, Texas 78701-2113.

If different gifts are included in one check, a notation should be made showing the amount intended for each fund.

Contributions and bequests to the Texas PTA are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.

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