

# Indiana PTA®

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Indiana PTA  
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## The President's Corner

By Tina Hartman

I hope that everyone had a wonderful holiday season with family and friends. As our children return to school, it's time to step up and finish our PTA year strong. Indiana PTA is joining with National PTA for one final 2009-2010 membership push during the months of January and February. Studies have found that 18% of PTA members join during the months of January and February. With the theme "New Year . . . New Opportunities", watch for membership increase incentives coming from Indiana PTA. Indiana PTA is very close to having the first membership increase in several years and it's all thanks to you, our local unit leaders and members. Let's keep the momentum going!

Your Indiana PTA Legislation Committee, with the help of Kathie Green, worked to put together a letter of support for Indiana's Race to the Top Grant Application for State Superintendent, Dr. Tony Bennett that still encompasses the mission of PTA

and supports the diversity of our membership. We are also beginning conversations to be part of the 2010 Indiana Fatherhood Summit so watch for more information to be available soon.

The Indiana PTA Legislative Conference will be held February 10th, so the deadline for registration at this time has a very short window of opportunity. In an effort to get your Legislators in attendance, we need to be able to show them that someone from their area will be represented and will be there to sit down with them to discuss the issues of importance to our children.

Please plan to celebrate the accomplishments of your local unit PTA at the 2010 Indiana PTA Convention in April. We guarantee that you will walk away refreshed, re-energized and with a lot of great ideas to start your 2010-2011 school year.

Wishing you much success as you continue to support the children of Indiana!

## Indiana's Schools Race to the Top

By Kathie Green  
PR and Marketing Chair

Indiana PTA supports the Indiana Department of Education's Race to the Top grant application. We absolutely support any additional funding that can be used to improve Indiana's schools.

National PTA advocated for applications to include sign off by parent organizations (in addition to unions and school boards), which was included in the final application. Through these advocacy efforts, RTT also requires family and community engagement

activities. PTA supports Race to the Top core reform areas, especially those focused on family engagement and assessments for Common Core State Standards." The federal Race to the Top competitive grant has the potential to invigorate and expedite reform efforts throughout the nation, and already has helped drive many bold changes in Indiana. In this economy, we are very concerned about funding for schools in our state and believe this could be a stop-gap measure to help move Indiana schools forward.

# Make YOUR Voice Heard...Attend the INPTA Legislative Conference

This year's Legislative Conference will be held on February 10, 2010 in Indianapolis. Some changes are being made to accommodate the larger number of participants showing an interest in attending. This year's event will be held at the Hyatt Regency in Indianapolis, just one block away from the State House. The Hyatt facility provides more space, which gives participants the opportunity to make a bigger impact on attending legislators.

This is a great opportunity for PTA members from across the state to get the latest legislative information that affects children and schools. Meetings in the morning bring attendees up-to-date on current Indiana legislative issues. This is followed up by lunch with the legislators. In the afternoon the attendees will go to the Indiana State House for individual meetings with their legislator, a tour, or an opportunity to see a committee in action. The cost to attend is \$25.00 which includes lunch and all materials. The

deadline for early bird registration is January 13, 2010.

Space will be available on a first come, first PAID basis and the early bird reservation date will give ample time to let legislators know who will be attending from their area. Again this year, middle school and high school students are encouraged to attend, however elementary school students must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to participate. Each

unit is encouraged to offer students this very unique legislative opportunity to their students.

Attending the Legislative Conference is a legitimate PTA expense, and each unit is encouraged to send both students and members. Registration forms can be found online at [www.indianapta.org](http://www.indianapta.org). We hope you will attend this opportunity to get up close and personal with Indiana legislators.

## What to Expect at the Conference

- Morning snacks at registration
- Daily briefing of issues important to Indiana schools, students, and staff
- Q & A Session with Sen. Kruse, Chair of Senate Education Committee
- Student panel, engaging students in the legislative process
- Luncheon at the Hyatt, pairing attendees with legislators from their region
- Tour of the historic Indiana Statehouse
- Opportunity to meet with individual legislators or watch a committee meeting
- All this and more for only \$25.00! Plan to attend today!!

## INPTA Legislative Conference History

*By Theresa Distelrath  
Legislative Committee Chair*

Indiana PTA has been hosting Legislative conferences since 1940. One of the mission statements of the Indiana PTA is to support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, community, before governmental agencies, and other organizations that make decisions affecting children. The legislative conference is how we fulfill this mission.

The annual legislative conference provides PTA members with the opportunity to advocate on behalf of Indiana children. One of the purposes of the PTA is to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth. The conference provides a venue with opportunity to share ideas and concerns with other members and to speak on behalf of youth with Indiana law makers.

*Advocacy: the act of mobilizing individuals to spark change in*

*programs and policies that benefit children at the local, state and National levels.*

The major difference between most parent groups and PTA is legislative ties. The PTA represents youth at all levels of government. When advocating for children at the State level we represent over 30,000 members. Most law makers respond positively to large numbers. As a PTA member it is important that we advocate on behalf of youth.

*Lobbying: a form of advocacy defined as attempting to influence or solicit changes in legislation.*

A simple email to a legislator is a form of lobbying. PTA's ultimate goal is to promote the health and well being of all children. While PTA members frequently work, volunteer, and provide support for schools, it is also their duty to serve as an advocate for youth at the Indiana Statehouse and in the Nation's Capitol.

## PROFILE: Senator Kruse

### Get to know Senator Dennis Kruse!

Kruse served as an Indiana State Representative from 1989–2004, and is a current Indiana State Senator. He serves as the chairman of the Education and Career Development Committee. He is also a member of Governor Daniel's Commission for a Drug-Free Indiana and is the chairman for the Legislative Coalition to Reduce Underage Drinking

Senator Kruse is a graduate of Auburn High School, and holds a Baccalaureate degree from Indiana University. While on hiatus from his legislative duties, Sen. Kruse is the owner of Reppert School of Auctioneering, and owner of Dennis Kruse and Associates a successful auctioneering and real estate firm.

### the facts...



*courtesy of Sen. Kruse's website*

- Married to Kay, since 1968
- 4 sons, Matthew, John, Timothy, and Daniel
- Republican
- 20+ years of service to Hoosiers
- Auburn resident
- Proponent of Later School Start Dates

## Legislative Issues for 2010

By Theresa Distelrath  
Legislative Committee Chair

January begins a new session for our Indiana legislators. In this 2010 short session, they are sure to keep busy! While there are many key issues facing our legislators, education funding is ALWAYS a priority. Although this is not a budget year, funding for schools is still a critical issue, especially since a decrease in revenue across the state has led to funding for education being cut by \$300 million state-wide. This cut is roughly 3 percent of the money schools receive. Schools were scheduled to get a 1 percent budget increase beginning January 1st. Canceling that increase saves \$117 million. The remaining \$183 million will come from budget cuts.

In addition to already asking our teachers, administrators, and schools to give more instruction with less money, this latest round of reductions will prove to be of supreme importance.

The Indiana Department of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Tony Bennett, have offered several ways for school corporations to save money without eliminating teachers. Among other things, their suggestions include adopting cheaper health insurance plans for school employees, limiting school board members benefits, sharing of ser-

vices between school corporations, and implementing a freeze on administrative hiring. These are only suggestions from the State Board of Education and will be revisited on January 8th. While these suggestions may look good on paper, most are not practical for the majority of school corporations. Several school districts are already in the process of suing the Indiana State government to be fully paid their share of state funding.

It is through activities like the Indiana PTA Legislative Conference that you can have your voice heard by elected officials involved in the decision-making process.

### What are the other issues?

There are five other major issues that will be the focus of the upcoming legislative session:

- ▶ Economic issues with a focus on controlling state spending and creating jobs
- ▶ Property tax caps
- ▶ Managing unemployment insurance and premiums
- ▶ Government ethics reforms
- ▶ Redistricting

## PTA Takes Action...Do YOU?

PTA is the largest volunteer child advocacy association in the United States. Our nation's greatest advances for children, from the establishment of universal kindergarten to a juvenile justice system that protects children from being locked up with adults, were a direct result of the persistent advocacy efforts of PTA. Today, we advocate for family engagement in education, nutritional foods in schools, and equal opportunities for all children, regardless of their socioeconomic background.

With the re-authorizations of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act (JJDP), and the

Child Nutrition Act before Congress, the PTA is still taking important action to improve federal policies to benefit children. National PTA and many individual PTA members are reaching out to Congress

on PTA's public policy priorities. But we need to do more. Congress needs to hear from every PTA member.

To increase PTA's voice on Capitol Hill, we challenge all PTA members to join the PTA Takes Action Network and respond to every action alert by reaching out to their members of Congress. The state with the highest increase in number of PTA Takes Action Network members and response rates to action alerts between now and May 15, 2010, will be named the National PTA Takes Action Challenge Champion and recognized at the National PTA Convention in Memphis, Tennessee, June 10-13, 2010.

When you see an action alert in your e-mail inbox, do not delete it—respond! Tell Congress that you support better policies for family engagement in education; healthier foods in schools; and

equal opportunities for all children. State leaders, regions, councils, and local units are all critical to this effort. PTA can't be as strong and influential without you. We thank you for your advocacy efforts, as well as your many efforts to increase membership.

Sign up for the Take Action Network now on our website at [www.indianapta.org](http://www.indianapta.org). Also, download a copy of the Local Leader's Toolkit to assist you in your efforts with members of your unit.

Watch for frequent updates and suggestions on how you and our 30,000+ members can help Indiana PTA reach the goal for the challenge.

Here's to your success in this important challenge!

Sincerely,  
Charles J. Saylor  
National PTA President

Helene Robson  
NPTA Legislative Committee Chair

Tina Hartman  
Indiana PTA President

Dee Jones  
Indiana PTA Federal Legislative Chair



# Gear Up for Indiana PTA Annual Convention

By Natalie Jones

Convention Committee Chair

Get your bags packed, the Indiana PTA Annual Convention has been scheduled for April 16th-18th at the Indianapolis Marriott East. The Indiana PTA Convention is the premier opportunity for local unit leaders and students to get state sponsored training to help their local PTAs thrive and succeed. Experiencing the Convention gives leaders a new, refreshed perspective.

Participants will be offered a multitude of workshops to cover any and all aspects of running, promoting, and sustaining a PTA. Sessions will be lead by qualified and dedicated trainers. Convention attendees will also have the opportunity to network with other parents and students not only from their region, but from around the state. Participants will be able to share ideas, stories and learn from one another. In addition, exhibitors will be displaying their products and programs in the exhibit hall giving attendees lots of great ideas and goodies to take home!

While the Indiana PTA Convention is primarily focused on training, it is also a time to celebrate all of the accomplishments of our local units. Awards in various categories will be presented at the PTA Awards Ceremony. Reflections and Citizenship

Awards are also presented. Convention is one of those events units just can't afford to miss! Attendance at convention is a legitimate PTA expense, and all units are encouraged to send at least one delegate. For registration and deadline information, visit our website at [www.indianapta.org/Convention.html](http://www.indianapta.org/Convention.html).

## Convention Workshop Sample

- *Do You Know the Way to PTA? GPS for Convention*
- *What's Happening With Your Elementary PTA?*
- *What About Special Education?*
- *So You Want to Be President?(101 Basics)*
- *Planning for College*
- *Marketing Your PTA (includes using Social Media tools)*
- *What the Heck is a Resolution?!?*
- *How Do You Make a Healthy Kid?*
- *Forms, Forms, Forms*
- *What's Down With Your Middle/High School PTA/PTSA?*
- *and much more! A detailed list is available online!*

## Indiana PTA Partner Spotlight

National PTA is the largest volunteer child advocacy association in the nation. PTA reminds our country of its obligations to children and provides parents and families with a powerful voice to speak on behalf of every child while providing the best tools for parents to help their children be successful students. National PTA also provides personal training and development to PTA leaders and serves as training resource to all local units.



## NPTA Legislative Conference

The National PTA Legislative Conference will take place from March 9th to 11th in Washington D.C.

This three day conference will consist of panel discussions, workshops, guest speakers, and Capitol Hill visits with Congressional leaders. This a great chance to get up close and personal with Federal legislators to advocate for every child.

If interested in attending you can visit the National PTA website at <http://www.PTA.org> for additional information on registering for this event. Participants should contact the Double Tree Crystal City Hotel at (703) 416-4100 group code: NPT by February 5th for your hotel accommodations. Travel arrangements can be done via Omega World Travel at (866) 450 -0587.

## Did YOU Know...

...that 33 legislators joined over 175 member of Indiana PTA at the 2009 Indiana PTA Legislative Conference?

The event had an amazing turnout from participants and legislators – more than double the number of participants from 2008 with more than a 1000% increase in legislators in attendance.

We hope to make the 2010 Legislative Conference even better! With space for over 400, we are gearing up for an informative and fun day! We hope you will join us. Be sure to get your Registration forms in before the deadline.

## Follow Us on Facebook

Indiana PTA is now on Facebook with information, discussion boards, event listings, good news stories, and a great way to keep informed! Become a "fan" of Indiana PTA today! You can become a fan from our website at [www.indianapta.org](http://www.indianapta.org).

The IPT is the official newsletter of the Indiana PTA. It can be downloaded from the Indiana PTA website. It's purpose is to educate, inform and share PTA information with it's members and the general public.

The IPT is produced by the Indiana PTA PR/Marketing Committee on a bi-monthly basis.