

COLORADO PTA OFFICERS' NEWS DECEMBER 2020



A Word from CO PTA President Nora Brown

Dear PTA leaders,

The next few months may be unsettled, but hopefully your families and schools have learned how to be flexible and make the most of uncertain times. The holidays should give us all time to relax and reflect on all we are thankful for – I know I will be grateful to see 2020 in our rearview mirrors!

How do we PTA? Like you, we continue our dedication to your PTA/PTSAs to help get through these challenging times. Reaching out and showing your families and schools that you care and are trying to connect and build community is so valuable at this time. We are creating new resources and trainings to help you reimagine this year, like our Zooming into Membership forums to learn what other PTAs are doing and to share ideas. Our new MemberHub platform is a great way to manage and communicate with your members. We are holding trainings and recording them for you to access when convenient for you. Watch for our new website too, with lots of updated resources and more user-friendly navigation.

CO PTA updates:

- Please help us **welcome Tracy Reilly, our new Office Administrator**, who will be supporting you and assisting in the office. Our office hours are currently 10:30-2:30 Monday to Friday. Tracy comes to us with PTA, financial, and administrative experience. We are excited to have her join our team!
- **Christena Burnham is our new Membership Director**. She has been doing a fantastic job as our Region 1 Coordinator, working with our schools on the Western Slope. She has great ideas and brings energy to help you all with your membership goals. Thanks to Lauren Cikara for all her hard work and dedication to PTA! We'll miss you and know that Christena will keep moving us forward.
- We are planning our **Virtual State Convention for April!** We are excited for the great workshops, speakers, forums, and networking opportunities we are putting together for you all. Make sure and mark your calendars to join us! No travel and no leaving your families – just new ideas, inspiration, and fun!

Interested in what PTA membership looks like nationally? Take a look at the membership numbers in this newsletter. Also, check out the winners of the McDonalds/PTA Teacher Awards! Thanks to all of you who nominated a teacher: McDonalds gave seven Colorado teachers \$100 to use in their classroom and lots of free meal tickets to help us thank our teachers for their extra work and care this fall.

Have you checked out National PTA's *Notes from the Backpack* podcasts? These short discussions cover topics all parents can relate to and learn from – especially now.

Thank you for all you are doing. We are here for you if you need any help. The way you care for your school communities is amazing!

Together we are PTA: for every child – one awesome voice!

Nora Brown

Colorado PTA President



Save the Date!

CO PTA Convention

April 14-18th

Registration opens mid-January. Early bird registrants will receive a box of great items.

Membership Trainings

Jan 13th February 10th 6:30 pm

Join us as we highlight PTA Success Stories, Membership Tips, and Ideas to Grow Your PTA. This is a great opportunity to learn from others and to share with other PTA members. All are welcome! [Click here to register!](#)

Healthy Unit in Good Standing

Colorado PTA's standards for a HEALTHY UNIT IN GOOD STANDING. Are in place to help us help your unit succeed.

- Officers List submitted by July 1
- Membership dues mailed to the office by October 1 AND February 1
- Insurance purchased by November 1
- Financial Review submitted by end of September
- Bylaws updated every three years by February 1
- IRS Form 990N or 990EZ submitted
- Three officer specific trainings completed by February 1

We are here to assist you and hope to earn the privilege of your time. If you have questions, please contact Virginia Smith, Colorado PTA VP of Field Service.



Insurance Matters

Many of you have asked about purchasing insurance when you aren't planning events this year. AIM insurance has provided the following information:

How could there be a loss if we aren't having in person events?

- Crime- Whether PTA's are collecting money through virtual events or protecting funds from previous periods, there is still a huge need to protect your funds. And in challenging economic times, Embezzlement is a very significant risk.
- Directors & Officers -D&O protects the decisions you make as an officer or director. Virtual events hold the very same liability as in person events, as officers are making no fewer decisions, and are possibly subject to even more scrutiny as we navigate a very challenging pandemic/quarantine time. It should be noted that someone can sue you just because they disagree and even in the case of frivolous lawsuits the D&O steps in to defend.
 - *EX: PTA conducts a virtual fundraiser and officers decide to spend the money on school laptops instead of playground equipment and a parent sues. Or vice versa, in the times of COVID someone could decide that purchasing playground equipment was inappropriate and that money should have been spent on laptops.*
- General Liability -Having any type of event, whether in person or virtual, creates liability. Also, the General Liability includes \$5,000 per person in General Liability -Having any type of event, whether in person or virtual, creates liability. Also, the General Liability includes \$5,000 per person in accident medical. So if a volunteer is injured preparing or conducting a virtual event, the accident medical covers them.
 - *EX: Zoom Yoga class- There is an instructor guiding children on yoga poses. It's a PTA event and if a child hurts themselves, the PTA could be held liable.*
- Property - Property covers the personal property of the PTA such as fundraising merchandise, popcorn machines etc. Whether your PTA is fundraising virtually- selling spirit wear, conducting online auctions- or your PTA has event equipment being stored, the property coverage protects have access to any family or medical leave. Workers who need it the most often are the ones without this benefit. For the average worker, this benefit pays for itself if it is used once in a 40 year career.

Reminders

- ▶ Conduct your PTA/PTSA unit's [Financial Review](#) and send a copy of the report to the state office.

AIM INSURANCE - due November 1

- ▶ Purchase general liability, bonding, and director/ officer liability insurance. Your unit may take advantage of Colorado PTA's group buying power and reduce your costs by selecting AIM as your insurance company.
- ▶ You should have gotten information directly from AIM and paid them directly.
- ▶ If you select a different company, please send proof of insurance to the PTA state office.

▶ IRS 990 FILING

All units must file the appropriate IRS Form 990 (990N – e-postcard, 990EZ, or 990). Your deadline to file is the 15th day of the 5th month after your fiscal year ends (for example: file by Nov 15 if your fiscal year ends June 30).

- ▶ To file a 990N online (which you would do if gross receipts are less than \$50,000), go to <https://sa.www4.irs.gov/epostcard/>. If this is your first time, you will need to create an account. Make sure to record your User ID and password! Here's an instructional 3 minute video showing [how to file 990N](#) that can help you through the process.

- ▶ A copy of the IRS Form 990 filing must be mailed or emailed to the Colorado PTA office. If filing a 990N, please email a copy of the accepted filing. Need to file for an extension? Provide Colorado PTA office with documentation of the extension.

Contact your [region director, council](#), or [state office](#) with any questions, concerns, and assistance.

Please Share with Your Members!

Grants

National PTA grants opened on November 2. \$1,000 grants are available for local PTAs interested in operating programming related to STEM, digital safety, healthy hydration, and the arts. Programs offered will provide PTAs the flexibility to PTA their way and deliver programs to children and families in a variety of ways, no matter how learning is occurring in their school community or whether or not families have access to technology. In addition, local PTAs will have an opportunity to be a part of a learning community designed for PTAs to receive support and learn from each other in this changing environment. Local PTA leaders can check out the [PTA.org/Grants webpage](https://pta.org/Grants_webpage).

COVID 19 Resources

[COVID-19 Resources](#) for parents & kids - info on food access, kid-friendly home activities, and more

The serious impact Covid-19 has had on children's mental health was investigated by The Child Mind Institute, which offers tips for navigating holidays during the pandemic and evidence-based guidance about children's mental health and learning disorders in the following:

Facebook

We shared tips for navigating the holidays during the pandemic. Tips for reducing stress, helping kids cope with disappointment, and advice to help your family focus on creating new traditions this year.

Instagram

With kids unable to participate regular activities and exercise during the pandemic, more than two-thirds of parents who recently sought help for their child reported noticing a decline in their child's emotional well-being, behavior, and physical health.

Twitter

This week Kathryn Lige, ACSW, shared tips on spotting depression in tweens and advice on how to get the most effective treatment for your child.

CDPHE's [Exposure Notification System](#) is a new opt-in feature on your phone that notifies you if you may have been exposed to someone contagious with COVID-19. Using this service could result in receiving notifications *days earlier* than you would typically get notified by a contact tracer. You can learn more about how the service works at addyourphone.com, where you can also find a supporter toolkit with email templates, a one-page explanation, and social media posts to encourage others to enable the service on their smartphones.

Suicide Prevention

The **Suicide Prevention Coalition** of Jefferson, Clear Creek and Gilpin Counties recently made available online several Suicide Prevention and Support resources, including a **Suicide Attempt Survivor Support Packet**, **Suicide Loss Survivor Support**, and a **Support Person**

Packet: <http://suicidepreventioncoalitionjccg.org/>

Health and Nutrition

Results of the 2019 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey are now available on [the CDPHE Dashboard](#)

The **American Institute of Stress** has created [15 tips to help parents](#) talk to their children, answer questions, minimize stress, and mitigate their own anxiety about the virus. The New York Times [shared tips for helping teens](#) adjust to their new dynamics. **Our teachers are brave and ready but need our support now more than ever.** Consider attending school board meetings to find out how COVID funding is being directed, and advocate for any unmet needs to help keep our teachers and students safe. And last but possibly most importantly: send small gifts or notes of appreciation to your child's teachers. They are under immense stress, and a simple positive note and word of encouragement could help them get through these days.

USDA waivers allow all students/youth under 18 to receive meals at no cost through June 30, 2021, an extension of the free Summer Food Service Program (includes breakfast, lunch, snack, supper) regardless of economic ability. The waiver also allows for meals to be served outside the typically required group settings and for parents and guardians to pick-up meals for their children. Approach to accessing meals varies with student schedule (remote, hybrid, in-person) and the school. It is still important for families to complete the Free and Reduced Meal application that enables waivers for other fees such as for transportation and tests. More information is at <http://www.cde.state.co.us/nutrition/summerfoodserviceprogram>

Flu and MMR vaccinations: A statewide communications campaign was launched by CDPHE to promote flu and MMR vaccination. PTA leaders can help amplify the campaign's messages by sharing the campaign's websites, fluvoxcolorado.org and vacunagripecolorado.org.

Get Involved in Advocacy

PTA Legislative Committee

The Colorado PTA Legislative Committee has continued to meet once a month (via Zoom) through December on the 2nd Mondays; in January through April it will meet on both the 2nd and 4th Mondays – always at 6:30 p.m. Anyone who is interested in joining in should contact Evie Hudak, Public Policy Director, at legislative@copta.org to receive the Zoom link. PTA members who attend 3 or more meetings per year are entitled to vote. Every PTA Council should have a Legislative Chair and every PTA unit should have an Advocacy Liaison – these people will receive information from the Legislative Committee with the agenda, minutes, and other relevant committee information.

At the December 14 meeting, the group will finalize the list of Legislative Priorities for 2021, which it began to draft at the meeting on November 9; these will be recommended for adoption by the Colorado PTA Board of Directors in January. These priorities will guide the committee in consideration of bills that are introduced in the 2021 session of the Colorado General Assembly (Legislature), which is set to begin on January 13.

The Legislature had a Special Session and passed 10 critical bi-partisan bills to help the state deal with the effects of the coronavirus pandemic. PTA's [Legislative Priorities for 2020](#) will be used to consider bills from the Special Session, as well as our [Position Statement on School Reopening and COVID](#).

Results of the General Election

Colorado PTA took positions on several measures that were on the ballot in November's general election. We had a 60% success rate in the election results. The impact of these results was discussed at the Nov. 9 meeting of the Legislative Committee. Here are the ballot issues, PTA's positions, and the results:

1. YES on **Amendment B, Repeal Property Tax Assessment Rates** – Passed.
2. YES on **Proposition EE, Tobacco and E-Cigarette Tax Increase for Health and Education** – Passed.
3. NO on **Proposition 116, Decrease State Income Tax Rate** – Passed.
4. NO on **Proposition 117, Require Voter Approval for Certain New Enterprises** – Passed.

YES on **Proposition 118, Paid Family and Medical Leave** – Passed.



Get Involved and Take Action Now!

It is imperative that Congress acts now to come to an agreement on a COVID relief package. Despite the record-breaking numbers for new COVID-19 cases each day, public schools continue to do the hard work to deliver education in virtual and in-person settings. There are numerous critical needs that children, families, educators and public schools are facing which must be addressed in the next COVID relief package. National PTA continues to ask Congress to address five key areas 1) funding to reopen schools safely, 2) increased support for Title I and IDEA, 3) dedicated funding for remote learning, 4) more resources for family engagement in education, and 5) increased funding for child nutrition programs.

[Take Action: Schools Need Resources Now!](#)

Public schools need resources now! Please contact your Members of Congress today and ask them to provide the critical funding needed to reopen schools.

Save the Date!

Legislative Committee meets at 6:30 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of the month, May through December, and adds an additional meeting on the 4th Monday, January through April. Join us by conference call. Click [here](#) to learn more about this committee, or send an email, legislative@copta.org

Health, Wellness, and Safety Committee meets 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., on the 2nd Wednesday of the month (excluding December). Join us by conference call. Click [here](#) to learn more about this committee, or send an email, HWS@copta.org

Position Statement on School Reopening and COVID

Approved on August 8, 2020

PTA advocates for healthy learning environments for all students and school staff. We believe that all school health, wellness, and safety plans should be based on science and factual evidence and should change as new scientifically acquired information becomes available. This approach is why our position is that schools should re-open only in accordance with the initial guidelines outlined by the CDC, CDPHE, and local departments of public health.

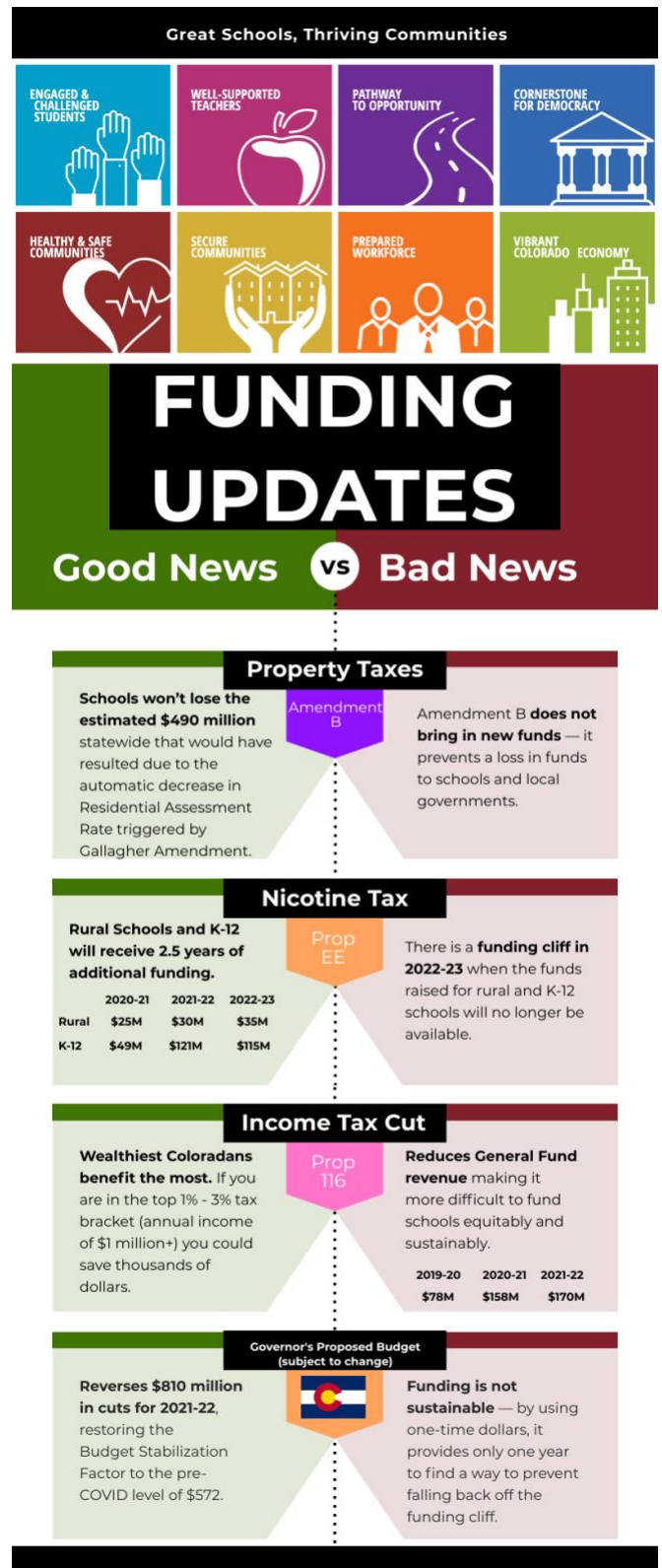
Colorado PTA supports federal and state programs that provide additional funding for schools to enhance building safety including ventilation systems, structural improvements that allow appropriate physical distancing, student isolation if infection is suspected or documented, effective PPE for all staff and students, actionable testing for students and staff, hardware and technological access to support students through digital learning, and additional staff to help facilitate small groups and physical distancing. We urge Congress and the state of Colorado to ensure all students have access to reliable broadband internet access.

When in-person learning cannot be achieved safely, schools and districts should provide high quality remote learning options that are equitably accessible to all students and families.

We believe that family and student supports must be maintained both while schools are in-person and using remote learning, including food and nutrition services, mental health support, special education services, and English language learning supports.

Colorado PTA urges all districts, legislators, and the Colorado Department of Education to include parents, educators, and students in all decision-making related to re-opening school plans and to provide clear communication avenues to address concerns before, during, and after plans are developed.

We believe that all plans for school re-opening should include procedures for tracking and tracing transmission of COVID-19 infections, protocols for students and staff who test positive for COVID-19, thoughtful plans for cleaning/disinfecting schools, best practices for maintaining physical distancing, and other measures that mitigate illness transmission in schools.



Is your PTA an advocacy superstar? We've got an opportunity for recognition

☆ The National PTA 2021 Advocacy Awards are now open for nominations. Nominate your superstar **by Jan. 4, 2021.**

Welcome to CO PTA Tracy!

We would like to introduce you to Tracy Reilly, our new Office Administrator.

Tracy has two daughters: one who attended college in California and is now there working, and her younger daughter who is a high school freshman. Tracy has PTA experience and has served as the parent volunteer/communications coordinator since 2017 at Hill Middle School. She has a BA in English and worked for ten years in financial services. Her more recent experience is in operations management and administrative assistance.

We are excited to have Tracy join our team! Please join us in welcoming her!



Colorado PTA Scholarships

Since 1948, the Colorado PTA has awarded over 300 scholarships to graduating students who attend PTA/PTSA affiliated high schools.

In order to apply a student must:

1. Be a graduating high school senior and a member of an affiliated PTA/PTSA high school in good standing.
2. Have been a Colorado resident for the last two (2) years.
3. Plan to enroll as a full-time college student taking a minimum of 12 semester hours at a college or a vocational school.
4. Have maintained a 2.5 grade point average on a 4.0-point scale.

Criteria used to determine the scholarship awards are:

1. Scholastic Record
2. School/community service/work experiences
3. Financial need
4. Recommendations
5. Student's plan as described in their 500-word essay.

Completed [applications](#) must be postmarked by March 1, 2021. Winners will be notified in late March and will be invited to attend, as our guest, the Colorado PTA Convention in April 2021. The scholarship is awarded for one year, split equally by semester. A formal letter, accompanied by the application will be sent to all PTA High School Principals and PTA Presidents the first week of January.



National PTA Support

Access National PTA resources to help you learn the basics of running your PTA unit. Find just about everything you need as a local PTA leader, including guidance to help you:

- select and work with your board
- formulate your PTA calendar of programs and events
- navigate unique financial challenges of a 501(c)(3)
- grow your PTA membership
- choose and organize a PTA fundraiser
- communicate with your school community and more!

These tools and templates, online resources and training courses will inform your work as you establish your PTA and volunteer roles and throughout the year.

PTA Podcast

Do you want to talk to your kids about race and racism, but not sure where to start? We can help! Get expert tips from the founders of EmbraceRace in the [latest episode](#) of the National PTA Podcast, Notes from the Backpack. Love the episode? Leave a 5-star review to help spread the word!

