Colorado Gives

Colorado PTA is excited to announce that Colorado Gives Day is set for Tue., Dec. 6, 2022. This is the day when Colorado comes together to raise funds for local nonprofits, and we’re excited to be part of the day!

On Colorado Gives Day, we’ll be celebrating our accomplishments and making good happen for schools all across Colorado. We invite you to join us by helping us share the news about Colorado Gives Day and invite your family, friends, and your personal network to participate. Every gift is tax-deductible and helps us reach our goal. Our fight to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children is more vital now than ever before. This day of giving is one of the many ways you can make a real difference. Please visit https://copta.org/ for more information about what we do. We look forward to having you join us for this special campaign. Together, we can make the world a better place for all children.

A Message from Colorado PTA

President Staci Ruddy

Hello PTA Families,

Happy December! It’s hard to believe we are on the cusp of 2023. I hope this year has been good to each of you. This is a great time of the year to review your goals and celebrate the accomplishments you have made over the past several months.

This month’s newsletter is full of inspiring information to get you ready to start the new year! You will find information about the updates to the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. These standards were created over 20 years ago and serve as a best practice for schools, districts, states, and even national leaders to ensure families, schools, and communities work effectively together to support student success. The updated language within each standard has an increased focus on equity, a more defined description of student success, and guidance for implementation based on role. Learn more at www.pta.org/standards and please reach out to us if you have questions about this updated content.
Season of Belonging

As we enter December, Colorado PTA encourages you to focus on inclusion. There are at least 14 religious holidays and several other non-religious celebrations recognized this month. PTA, as a nonsectarian organization, opposes programs in public schools that involve religious worship, instruction, or indoctrination. PTA represents parents, caregivers, educators, and communities of all children, which enables us to best achieve PTA’s mission to make every child’s potential a reality. Our collective backgrounds, perspectives, and ideas allow us to create the strongest future and direction for PTA. Therefore, for our December calendar this year, we are presenting a list of diverse celebrations.

Dates to Note in December

- Dec. 1 - WORLD AIDS DAY - International day of action on HIV and AIDS.
- Dec. 3 - INTERNATIONAL DAY OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES – This day recognizes and raises awareness of persons with disabilities in order to improve their lives and provide them with equal opportunity.
- Dec. 8 - BODHI DAY – This Buddhist celebration, also known as Rohatsu, commemorates the day that the Buddha, Siddharta Gautama, experienced enlightenment or spiritual awakening (bodhi). Celebrated on the 8th day either of December or the 12th month of the lunar calendar.
- Dec. 10 - HUMAN RIGHTS DAY - On this day in 1948 the United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Dec. 12 - OUR LADY OF GUADALUPE – This is a Christian celebration of the apparition of the Blessed Virgin Mary (by her title, Our Lady of Guadalupe, the Patroness of Mexico and the Americas) before Juan Diego, an indigenous convert to Roman Catholicism, on the Mexican hill of Tepeyac in 1531.
- Dec. 19 – 26 CHANUKAH – The Jewish 8-day “Festival of Lights,” also spelled Hanukkah, celebrates the rededication of the Temple to the service of God in 164 BC after the victory of the Maccabees over the Greek King Antiochus, who sought to suppress freedom of worship.
- Dec. 21 - WINTER SOLSTICE - Marks the first day of the season of winter. It is celebrated as Dong Zhi by the Chinese and Yule by pagans/Wiccans.
- Dec. 24 - CHRISTMAS EVE - Christian celebration of the arrival of Mary and Joseph in Bethlehem for the birth of Jesus.
- Dec. 26 – BOXING DAY - A public holiday in the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand. Referred to by the Irish as St. Stephen’s Day. In the Bahamas it is celebrated with Junkanoo, a massive street festival, originally developed by slaves, who were given three days off for the Christmas holiday.
- Dec. 26, 2022–Jan. 1, 2023 - KWANZAA - This is a 7-day celebration honoring African American heritage in America and its continued vitality. “Kwanzaa” means “first fruits (of the harvest)” in Swahili.
- Dec. 29 - WOUNDED KNEE DAY - On December 29, 1890, more than 200 Lakota Sioux were massacred by U.S. troops at Wounded Knee in South Dakota.
- Dec. 31 – NEW YEAR’S EVE - New Year’s Eve is called Ōmisoka, in Japan; it is considered the second-most important day in Japanese tradition, as it is the final day of the old year.
PTA’s National Standards for Family-School Partnerships set the bar for how schools and parent organizations should work together to support student success. We know that families are essential partners to providing a high-quality education for every student. Decades of research show that family engagement matters for student success – students whose families are engaged are more likely to attend school, avoid discipline problems, achieve at higher levels, and graduate. Family engagement also helps schools! Research suggests it is just as important in predicting school improvement as school leadership, well-qualified teachers, and a rigorous curriculum.

The National Standards for Family-School Partnerships have recently been updated. The National Standards were last updated in 2008. Since then, there have been dramatic changes in educational trends, community demographics, and the family engagement evidence base. For example, the past decade has seen a growth in research around the science of learning and development, as well as more specific studies about parent-teacher communication and relationships. Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has fundamentally altered the ways that families, young people, and schools interact, and it has exacerbated opportunity gaps in and across communities.

National PTA’s 6 Standards are still the following:
1. Welcome All Families
2. Communicate Effectively
3. Support Student Success
4. Speak Up for Every Child
5. Share Power
6. Collaborate with the Community

While the standards themselves have not changed, the explanations of the Standards and the goals that describe each one in action have been updated. They have been redesigned for multiple audiences to do the following:
- Incorporate research and best practices since 2008.
- Integrate the perspectives of families, educators, and youth, particularly those from historically marginalized communities.
- Improve the usefulness of the Standards across the education system.

You can find a breakdown of each of these Standards and see a set of indicators that describe the more specific actions that PTAs, educators, and schools can take to achieve the goal. There is a significant amount of additional information on PTA’s page for the Standards, support of this mission.
ADVOCACY FOR FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

PTA has a broad history of advocating for policies that encourage meaningful family-school partnerships.

National PTA has as called upon Congress to strengthen family-school partnerships by:

- Building upon key provisions included in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), and as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), to provide schools with guidance and tools needed to meaningfully share power with parents, welcome and communicate effectively with all families, and meaningfully collaborate to support student success.
- Providing funding to incentivize and support family engagement initiatives in schools and communities across the country.
- Creating an Office of Family Engagement in the U.S. Department of Education to provide support and guidance to schools and state departments of education on effective family engagement strategies. (see PTA Takes Action: Strengthen Family-School Partnerships).

At the state level, Colorado PTA has advocated for family-school partnerships in many ways including:

- Supporting the legislation that created the State Advisory Council for Parent Involvement in Education and aligned its work with the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.
- Supporting legislation that would require employers to provide a specified amount of leave time for employees to attend academic activities such as parent-teacher conferences.
- Supporting legislation that would create a family-school partnership coordinator in the Colorado Department of Education.
- Ensuring that any legislation creating a commission or task force related to children or education includes parent representation among its membership.
- Providing training for parents on issues and ways to advocate on behalf of students with their elected officials.
- Partnering with other organizations to support the needs of our students.

The 2023 legislative session is quickly approaching! The Colorado PTA Legislative Committee meets on the 2nd and 4th Mondays from January through April, during the annual session of the Colorado General Assembly (State Legislature), and on the 2nd Mondays during the other months. PTA members who attend 3 or more meetings per year are entitled to vote at the meetings. If you would like to sign up for the Legislative Committee email list – which will allow you to receive information from the committee including meeting invitations, agenda, minutes, and other relevant information – please sign up here.

Please see our Legislative Priorities for 2023.

HEALTH, WELLNESS, AND SAFETY

improving family-school partnerships

- Parents can become champions for making physical activity a higher priority in schools: https://www.activeschoolsus.org/join-the-movement/.
- The University of Northern Colorado is a strategic partner of Active Schools and has developed multiple resources to support promoting an active school environment: https://www.activeschoolsus.org/.
- Action for Healthy Kids has a family-school partnership model and 6-step framework to support families and communities engaging with school and district staff to facilitate changes that support student health: https://www.actionforhealthykids.org/family-school-partnerships/.
- Partnering with other organizations to support the needs of our students.
Reminder: Membership lists and dues need to be submitted to MemberHub as soon as possible. We will be following up with the units who submitted dues last year but haven’t this year.

Did you know…… you can submit dues as often as you need. Even though National PTA requires that dues are to be submitted on October 1 and February 1, a unit can submit them any time that they have new members.

Start Strong and Focus on Membership
We are excited to offer a fun and interactive initiative for local PTA leaders who want to integrate membership into all aspects of their PTA.

• Don’t reinvent the wheel…
  Learn about and use incredible free PTA resources!
• Have fun and win prizes…
  Complete exciting challenges and interactive activities to earn points for a chance to win prizes!

MEMBERSHIP: THE KEY TO PTA’S SUCCESS
All too often, membership is seen as a one-time transaction. Membership is so much more! People who understand the purpose, feel connected, seen, heard, and valued are more likely to join. People want to feel like they are a part of your PTA and believe in PTA’s mission before they actually join (or renew!).

SAVE THE DATE FOR OUR ANNUAL CONVENTION!

Colorado PTA’s annual Convention in 2023 will be on Saturday and Sunday, April 29-30, 2023, at the same location as last year, the DoubleTree by Hilton Denver Tech Center, 7801 E. Orchard Rd., Greenwood Village.

We welcome your suggestions for workshops. If you might be interested in presenting a workshop, know someone who would be good, or have a topic for a workshop you’d like to see, please contact our Convention Workshop Chair, Evie Hudak, at eviehudak@copta.org.

We still need some help to prepare another great Convention! The next meeting of the Convention Committee will be Dec. 15, 7:30 p.m. If you are interested in helping and would like to join the meeting, please email Christina Powell, VP for Convention, at christinapowell@copta.org.

These are the areas we still need help with:
• Program (creating the Program document).
• Decorations (creating decorations for the tables in the ballroom).
• Technology/AV (arranging for, setting up, and running the audiovisuals).
• Registration (checking people in at the event).
• Workshops (helping presenters and getting the rooms set up).