Creating Connections that Count
A COMBINED EFFORT

As Utah PTA Commissioners, our goal is to help local units and their leaders CONNECT to:

1. **UTAH PTA COMMISSIONS** in the areas of Community Engagement, Education, Family Life, Health, Individual Development, Safety, and Student Leadership, and how these Commissions can help at the local level.
2. **AMAZING NATIONAL, STATE AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES** with whom Utah PTA partners and collaborates and how these resources can benefit local units.
3. **OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED BEYOND THE LOCAL PTA UNITS.** Some examples include Legislative Advocacy Committee, Fall Advocacy Conference, PTA Day at the Capitol, Spring Leadership Convention, Utah PTA Commissions, and state and local coalitions.
4. **ALL FAMILIES** with support from Utah PTA Board Specialists in the areas of Diversity and Inclusion, Special Needs, Male Engagement, National Standards for School-Family Partnerships, Military Families, and Reflections.

Welcome to the 2019-2020 new year!

It’s a new year and the Utah PTA Commissioners are excited to move forward with our theme of “Creating Connections that Count”. We have so many programs and resources that can support your local units - but they are only helpful if we can find ways to “connect” them to your local PTA, your school, your communities, and your families.

We hope you will look at ways to connect to the families in your schools, and also to connect students to meaningful relationships with their families, teachers, friends, mentors, and others in the community who want them to be successful. We also hope to create connections to learning opportunities, positive preventative behaviors, and individual talents. It’s going to be a great year and we can’t wait to “connect” with you! Commission Meetings are open to all PTA Members. We’d love you to join us in the Commission that interests you!

Connect with Commissioners... and Other Leaders of Utah PTA

www.utahpta.org
Facebook - Utah PTA Page, Utah PTA Excellent Elementary Group, Utah PTA Super Secondary Group, Utah PTA Advocacy Group

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Community Engagement Commission

**Uplift Families:** Uplift Families is the initiative of First Lady of Utah Jeanette Herbert. The conference is September 28, 2019 at the Thanksgiving Point Show barn. To purchase tickets go to [www.upliftFamilies.org](http://www.upliftFamilies.org). Schedule: 5:30 pm Autumn Harvest Diner, 6:30 pm Presenters, 8:30 pm Meet the Presenters: David Osmond, Brad Barton, Jessie Funk, Collin Kartchner, Clay Olsen.

**My Discovery Destination:** Is enhancing community engagement throughout the state by getting local, family-friendly businesses involved in a state-wide membership drive scheduled for September 16. Over 50 businesses will open their doors FREE to PTA members, and are getting connected with local schools in their area. Other businesses are connecting with the schools through Reflections Adventures that will enhance the experience of our students exploring the arts with the Reflections program. For more information: [MyDiscoveryDestination.com/joinpta](http://MyDiscoveryDestination.com/joinpta)

**Come Play with PTA:** Go to [http://www.utahpta.org](http://www.utahpta.org) and click Events and click Come Play with PTA to see updated discounts for fun family activities.

**Booths to Promote PTA.** We would like to monthly have a booth in the community to promote PTA. We have a tote in the office for anyone to check out with PTA tablecloths, posters, and flyers to put a PTA table together.

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National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

Enrollment is now open for the School of Excellence program and consideration of the 2019-2021 School of Excellence designation. The deadline to enroll is Oct. 1. For more information about the program and to enroll, visit [PTA.org/Excellence](http://PTA.org/Excellence).

Through the [National PTA School of Excellence program](http://National PTA School of Excellence program), PTAs examine how their school communities feel the school measures up to the research-based indicators of the [National Standards for Family-School Partnerships](http://National Standards for Family-School Partnerships). PTAs and schools then work together to address areas for growth and create new ways for families to support student success. The National PTA School of Excellence designation is awarded when a PTA and school have achieved a high level of family-school partnerships.

A record number of local PTAs in Utah have earned the 2-year designation for 2019-2021. We are so proud of these schools for their leadership and accomplishments in building strong, effective family-school partnerships!

All schools who enroll will be invited to participate in the Utah PTA School of Excellence Squad. This Squad will include training, collaboration and support throughout the process to ensure that every school who enrolls feels like they cross the finish line and complete the final application. Contact Amy Fox at nationalptastandards@utahpta.org for more information or to ask any questions.
Welcome from the Education Commission. Although we have not met formally this summer, I have attended a number of meetings where information that will have impact on parents and their children, have been discussed. There are two topics that were covered that I want to provide you with information, since many of you, as leaders in your school, are asked questions about.

School Fees – Although there were not any changes in the existing law which came about through a lawsuit brought by a group of parents in 1992 against the Utah State Board of Education (USBE). The suit alleged school fees were being administered in an illegal and discriminatory manner. The parents prevailed and the courts issued a permanent injunction detailing the processes and requirements for imposition fees in Utah’s public schools.

Although it has been more than 25 years later, in 2018 two government audits were conducted that revealed substantial inconsistency in the administration of school fees statewide as well as insufficient USBE monitoring. As a result, HB250 was passed during the 2019 General Legislative Session that codified USBE Administrative Rule R277-407 School Fees. The law reinforced standards for LEAs in administering school fees and mandated the imposition of penalties for violations.

Fundraising is covered in the new school law and administrative rule but does not appear to cover fundraisers conducted by school PTA’s. A representative from the new Utah School Fees Team has been invited to do a presentation to the Education Commission to specifically cover fundraising from outside groups. If any issues arise, they will be covered in our board meeting.

RISE Assessment – As many of you may be aware, the state experienced significant issues during the administration of the spring assessments. As a result, the USBE has terminated the contract with Questar, the vendor selected to provide the state’s summative assessments. As a result of the issues and the termination of contract, the results of individual student proficiency will be delayed to both parents and the schools. Additionally, school grades will also be delayed or may not be assigned this year. State law provides the USBE with the authority to withhold school grades if they believe the results are not valid. That determination will be made after the assessment department of USBE receives the results from Questar.

Special Needs

Resolutions on High Expectations for Students with Disabilities

PTA Resolutions are official documents outlining the opinion, will, or intent of the association to address concerns that affect children and youth. Resolutions guide the advocacy work of PTA from the local level to state and national levels.

The resolution High Expectations for Students with Disabilities was written by the Utah PTA Special Needs Committee, then it was voted on and approved by the Utah PTA membership in 2017 and the National PTA membership in 2018. During the 2019 Utah Legislative Session, the Legislature demonstrated its belief in and support of this same concept by unanimously passing HCR 14, Concurrent Resolution Encouraging High Expectations for Students with Disabilities.

We hope that this resolution can raise awareness and begin to change the mindset of all stakeholders – parents, teachers, administrators, community members, and the students themselves. PTA supports high expectations for all students and insists that all students, including students with disabilities, should be given the opportunities, instruction, tools, resources, and accommodations to enable them to go as far as possible toward achieving their full potential and living a meaningful, fulfilling life.

These resolutions are now public documents which can be used by everyone to help spread the message of higher expectations. They can be shared in IEP meetings, highlighted in local PTA or school training sessions, discussed with neighbors and friends, shared on social media, or used in many other ways. As expressed by Brad Henry “It is only through raising expectations and striving for excellence that our children can reach their full potential.”

Legislative Resolution HCR 14: https://le.utah.gov/~2019/bills/static/HCR014.html
Family Life Commission

The early years of a child’s education have been deemed crucial for building family and school connections. Children whose parents and families are engaged in and hold high expectations of their children’s education tend to earn better grades, have higher graduation rates, and are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education. Family engagement is essential for every child to have a successful education experience. Take time to think about how your family is doing, how you are doing as a parent, and what things you can do to promote an environment of learning in your home with your children.

With a new school year starting these are a few things to consider with your children:

Focus on three areas to create a home that nurtures children and encourages them to learn and grow:

1. **Basic Needs**: Helping you meet your family's basic needs.
2. **Character & Values**: Developing and nurturing family values, character, and citizenship.
3. **Learning Skills**: Achieving success and happiness through family involvement in life-long learning.

Look at what and how your family is doing in each of these areas. The questions are designed to help you think about what you do currently and identify areas where you can improve.

Celebrate and build upon your strengths, and then identify a few places where you want to improve. The important thing is to focus on connections you want to improve and adapt them to your family. You can reassess your family's needs and educational growth on a regular basis as determined by your family.

Digital Citizenship
Be the VIP in your Children’s Lives

As our children head back to school I would encourage all of us to be the Very Important Person (VIP) in our children’s lives. To do that we should be Vigilant, Intentional and Present.

(1) **Be Vigilant** - Keeping tabs on our children’s online and offline activities feels like a full time job sometimes. But it is worth the extra effort to be vigilant. Here are three ideas of ways you can be vigilant.

1. Visit [protectyoungminds.org](http://protectyoungminds.org) and sign up for their weekly emails to help educate you on ways to keep your children safe online.
2. Utah School Board has asked all schools to establish policies about cell phone use in school. Find out what your school’s policies are and talk to your child about the importance of following these policies and your family’s rules about cell phone use.
3. The Utah Legislature has given the School Community Councils the responsibility of teaching students in their school, digital citizenship and online safety. They have trust lands money they may allocate and use to help educate your children. Ask your community council members how they are fulfilling this duty in your school. Also, Digital Respons-Ability was awarded a grant through the Utah State Attorney General’s Office to provide online safety training to Utah’s students. The program will provide digital citizenship and parenting classes to schools and organizations across the state. The classes will be free of charge because of the grant they received.

(2) **Be Intentional** - Be intentional about the values you are teaching your children online and offline. If you want your children to be kind, for example, set the example of being kind in person and on your social media and other online activities. Monitor your children’s online activities and give them praise for the positive things they are doing online. Also chat with them about the things they might improve. For more ideas of positive activities your children can do online visit [digcitutah.com](http://digcitutah.com). This is a wonderful digital resource for parents, teachers, and schools.
(3) **Be Present** - Be present for your children. When you pick them up from school or when they walk in the door from school be ready to greet them and hear about their day. Try to quickly wrap up any phone calls or online activity so that you can really focus on your child as they arrive home and encourage them to not only share what they did that day, but how it made them feel. This lets them know you care and that they are important to you. Also be present for dinner time. Thirty years of prevention science shows that having family dinner helps build strong family bonds and helps prevent negative behaviors in your children’s lives. Put all devices away and focus on each other.

Finally, Grants are offered by National PTA to help you host parent online safety nights:

i) **PTA Connected Be Internet Awesome Family Workshop Grant**, sponsored by Google, will award $1,000 to 75 local PTAs and $5,000 to 20 State/District/Council/Regional PTAs to host workshops designed to help families connect with each other about online safety. This program is great for Pre-k through 6th grade.

ii) **PTA Connected SmartTalk Conversation Grant**, sponsored by Symantec, will award $1,000 to 25 PTAs to host a SmartTalk Conversation at their school during the month of February, in celebration of Safer Internet Day on Feb. 11, 2020. This grant program helps establish healthy online habits for first through eighth-grade students.

To apply, go to [PTA.org/Grants](http://PTA.org/Grants). Applications close on September 8th, so don’t wait!

I hope you have a fantastic school year with your children and if you have any questions or concerns please contact me at digitalcitizenship@utahpta.org.

**Utah PTA Supports Our Military Families**

As Utah PTA’s Military Family Specialist, I provide opportunities, training and resources to raise awareness, build support, and help our military families and children meet the unique challenges they face! We have the opportunity to recognize military children and youth for their character, courage, sacrifice, resilience and service.

**Did you know?** In Utah we have over 18,000 children who have one or more parents, step-parents, siblings, or extended family members on full-time duty in the military, including members of the National Guard and Reserves on active duty.

What are the challenges our Military Children face? They face frequent relocations, educational inconsistencies-different school systems, adjusting to new neighbors and communities, leaving friends and making new friends, family separations, grandparents as care givers, disability or loss of family member and many other challenges.

What can PTA do? Communicate with military families, educate the community, advocate -- to eliminate nation-wide educational inconsistencies, and be a source of information and support.

How do we reach and include them? Identify them, and find out who they are. Invite them, welcome them, and ask them to participate. Inform them of events and programs and communicate with them. Involve them, because volunteering is what they do. Include them, because no job is too small to use their skills.

How does PTA benefit Military Children and Families? PTA supports them by reaching out to them and helping them. PTA sustains them by being their friends and including them. PTA leaders and members recognize and honor their sacrifice and acknowledge their service with patriotic activities and programs.

**Upcoming Utah PTA Military Family Events**

November is the Month of the Military Family! Utah PTA celebrates this month by partnering with the Utah National Guard their Veteran’s Day Concert, Friday, Nov. 8, 2019 at 7 pm, in the Tabernacle on Temple Square. Every year we hold an essay contest for military children with the theme, “Why I am proud of my Veteran!”

If you have any questions or want more information, please contact me, Kathy Allred, at Utah PTA 801-261-3100, or at [www.militaryfamilies@utahpta.org](http://www.militaryfamilies@utahpta.org).
Health Commission

As the new school year starts the Health Commission hopes you have the resources you need to plan some effective programs in regards to our children’s mental health. We have been very involved in creating connections to help bring programs to local units that will strengthen protective factors including family bonding, building healthy relationships and individual resiliency. We were very excited to pass two resolutions this past convention and encourage you to read through them as you plan your programs this year.

Link to resolutions:
- Prevention & Promotion of Health Behaviors & Youth Suicide Prevention

September is Suicide Prevention Month and October we plan our Red Ribbon Weeks/Months and programs. As you plan events to highlight these important issues we ask you to use evidenced based programs to give our children the best experience possible. In each activity or program you plan you might ask yourself, “What protective factors are we focusing on?” and “Is this activity, presentation, or speaker using evidenced based practices?” Here are some links to some great ideas. Also, please remember that many of the ideas for Red Ribbon Week, Hope Week and Suicide Prevention are very interchangeable.

- Utah PTA Red Ribbon Toolkit
- Suicide Prevention Resources & Programs - Utah School Board of Education
- Suicide Prevention Trainings in Utah (or to schedule your own Prevention Training please email deann@utahpta.org)
- Suicide Prevention Ideas & Resources from Hope 4 Utah

Individual Development Commission

With the focus of our commission to be both Character Development and the Arts, we will focus our energy on connecting with organizations and individuals that will help further the needs of Utah children in these areas. We will advocate on capitol hill regarding any new or proposed changes of laws focused in these areas. "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved."

Helen Keller

Connections we are hoping to make:
- Utah Girls on the Run - or something similar for girls and boys
- Now Playing Utah - information on acting and family activities
- Character Development Programs - honesty, integrity, trustworthiness, respect, and responsibility
- Arts Programs - discounted options for families to help develop their kids' artistic abilities
- Passionate PTA Members who love the arts and helping kids and young adults be the best self they can be while lifting and supporting others!

Reflections

Reflections is under way across the state of Utah. Please make sure that your region specialists reach out to all of the specialists at the level below them, whether that is council or local, and let them know the due date and place for turning their entries into the region. Invite them to join the Utah PTA Reflections page on Facebook.

The state due date for Reflections this year is January 21st. It was accidentally listed as January 20th in some communications. I would be very happy to receive entries before the due date. This year all entries will be turned in digitally through a Google form. I will send those to the region specialists. I will also collect the physical entries for 2D art and Photography. The other entries will not be collected. 2D art and Photography will be entered online as well as being turned in physically because I will use the digital copies to upload my national winners and to compile spreadsheets. If you have any questions, send me an email at reflections@utahpta.org
Safety Commission

There are a lot of FREE resources available to local PTA’s regarding safety. There are assemblies, workbooks and on-line resources available to all schools. Be sure to schedule the assemblies soon so you can get the dates you would like.

- There is a new vendor for Internet Safety Program (replacing NetSmartz). The contact information is:

  Digital Respons-Ability
  Carrie Rogers-Whitehead
  801-953-5675
carrie@respons-ability.net

- SafeRoutes Utah also has a Beat the Street Assembly available, as well as an activity booklet and a Monthly Walk and Biking Challenge with prizes. They can be contacted at [https://saferoutes.utah.gov/schools/](https://saferoutes.utah.gov/schools/)

- The Utah Safety Council has a lot of resources available. They have a Take Safety Home activity booklet and posters and would love to collaborate with elementary schools for a project or school event. If you are interested, Please contact:

  Korrine Pickett, Home & Community Program Manager
  801.746.SAFE (7233) EXT 312
  kpickett@utahsafetycouncil.org

- The Internet Crimes Against Children Taskforce will come to your school for events. They offer Quarterly Cops Q and A sessions. Contact them early to get scheduled.
  Michelle Busch-Upwall, Education Specialist, ICAC Task Force
  Utah Attorney General’s Office
  (801) 281-1245  mbusch-upwall@agutah.gov

- There is a new Firearm Safety Video put out by the Utah Attorney General that I would love every school to incorporate in an assembly or in the classroom. It is only 5 minutes long and is applicable to all school grades. It can be found at: [https://attorneygeneral.utah.gov/lets-stay-safe-utah/](https://attorneygeneral.utah.gov/lets-stay-safe-utah/)

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Student Leadership Commission

We’re excited to announce this year’s Student Leadership Conference!
It will be held at Willow Park Campground in Lehi, Oct. 11 & 12. This is an event that is meant for PTSA student groups throughout the state, and it will be centered on our theme of “Connections that Count.” We will have a campfire program, keynote speaker and group games on the Friday starting at 7 PM, and we will start Saturday at 8 AM with breakfast, followed by rotations centered on connecting with your schools, peer connections, and serving your community. This will be a great opportunity for your students to come together as a team, and come up with ideas to help at your schools.

More details will come out after our first Student Leadership Committee meeting, which is Sept. 7, 10 AM, at the Utah PTA office. We encourage one or two students from each school’s PTSA Student Board to come participate, and they can bring a parent or an advisor if they want to as well. The more students that come, the more we will be able to do, but as of right now, they will be helping to plan and carry out our Student Leadership Conference in October, PTSA Student Days at the Capitol in February, State Battle of the Bands in April, and a statewide Service Week in May.

We need and want our student members to be heard, and for them to take an active role in advocating for themselves. If you’re looking for ways to help your students make a difference at your schools that is why we are here. Please reach out and connect with us.
Advocacy VP

Utah PTA invites you to the Fall Advocacy Conference
"CREATING CONNECTIONS THAT COUNT!"
October 15, 2019
9:00-1:30 PM at the Granite School District Offices
Registration begins at 8:00 AM (Visit the Board Specialist Booths)
$8.00 Conference Fee $7.00 Optional Lunch
Register at: https://www.utahpta.org/advocacy-conference-2019

Opening: 9:00 AM "Creating Connections that Count"
Keynote Speaker, Steve James, Speaker & Musician, CEO of Something Good, Inc
NEW THIS YEAR - TWO TRACKS TO CHOOSE FROM
Council President Training OR Advocacy Classes
Advocacy Classes Include:
Connecting Tax Reform and Education Funding
Connecting Our Kids to Positive Interventions
Connecting Parents to the Vaping Epidemic
Connecting Children’s Mental Health to School Safety
You will learn "why" we should be concerned about these issues and "what" is being done in Utah to support our children. Special session “Connecting Parents to Community Councils”

Important Dates

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<td>February 5, 12, 19, 26, 2020</td>
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<td>February 18, 2020</td>
<td>PTA Day at the Capitol</td>
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<td>March 4, 11, 2020</td>
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Are you interested in knowing more about the advocacy work of Utah PTA!

The Member-to-Member (M2M) Network is a way for Utah PTA Commissioners and Directors to directly communicate with local PTA members on important and sometimes urgent items that pertain to the physical, emotional, and educational safety of children in our state. We also will share information on events, community resources and potential legislation/policies that can impact our children.

If you would like to receive information and calls for action (via email and/or text), please fill in the information at the link below. Your information will not be sold or shared with any third party. You will have the choice as to the topics you wish to receive information on.

You may request to be removed from any or all lists by replying to any M2M Network email with remove or unsubscribe.

https://goo.gl/forms/JAiSGs9Jgle4oEF12
Connect with the
Utah PTA 2019-20 Commissioners

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Todd Hougaard
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We are excited to get to work and help your PTA in the coming year! Please email for more information on the commissions or advocacy work of Utah PTA.