As Commissioners, we get asked a lot of questions like…..

What is a commissioner?
What does a commissioner do?
How can my PTA use commissioners?

What is a Commission???

A Commission is a group of individuals that meet to discuss critical and important issues affecting children and families in a specialized area of concern like Safety or Health. They then identify concerns, develop and implement programs, and advocate for change in these areas.

What is the purpose of a PTA Commission?

It is to resolve critical school and community issues and concerns identified by the PTA membership through a needs assessment.

What is the role of a Commissioner?

It is to act as the presiding officer and facilitator of a commission and to report on the commission to the executive committee.

Who selects a commissioner?

Bylaws will indicate whether the commissioner is elected or appointed with board approval.

Who selects commission members?

Any PTA member can serve on a commission as well as outside experts. Commissioners and/or officers appoint commission members as needed.

When does a commission meet?

The commissioner determines a meeting schedule. Utah PTA meetings are generally held outside of regular board meetings on the Wednesday before Utah PTA board meetings.

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

Instagram  Twitter  Pinterest  YouTube
Utah PTA  @UtahPTAOneVoice  Utah PTA  Utah PTA One Voice
Community Engagement Commission

Steve James from Uplift Families was the keynote speaker at the Utah PTA’s Advocacy conference. He started by singing “The Greatest Love of All”. Following the song, he tied in the PTA theme, “Every Child, One Voice” with our Fall Advocacy Conference theme “Creating Connections That Count”. He talked about lessons he learned from children about connecting with others. Steve shared a story about his special needs cousin, who in spite of his challenges has touched the lives of those in his community through his example of resilience. He told about his young son who, through his innocence and genuine sympathy connected with someone who lost her brother to a drug overdose. He also talked about a teacher who connected with his Kindergarten son and inspired him, building his self-esteem.

An entertaining and unique part of Steve’s presentation was when he spontaneously wrote songs out of the phone numbers of select conference attendees. The purpose of his demonstration was to show that although situations come our way in life that we don’t expect or have control over, we can choose how we face each challenge by using our talents and skills to “make music” out of each obstacle. Steve shared that we are an orchestra of instruments, each playing a different part from each other. Yet working together, we can take part in a “musical masterpiece” as we share our individual gifts and talents. We can create connections that count by using our gifts and talents to serve what Steve calls “The Power of Three”... Schools, Homes and Communities. Steve referred to a quote by Ghandi, stating “The best way to find yourself is lose yourself in the service of others.”

Steve told about one of his elementary teachers that created a lasting connection with him, inspiring him in his life. Sometimes we don’t realize how much we truly connect and make a difference in the lives of others. Steve ended singing the last part of “The Greatest Love of All” and reminding us that we can love ourselves for who we are and use our gifts and talents to connect with and serve others, making a difference in their lives.

Male Engagement Specialist

People go and stay where they feel wanted and useful. We work hard to make sure that our moms feel that way but our dads may need an invitation first.

My goal is to increase the number of male members in our PTA. Every time we can get a dad in the door to take part in the school, we are halfway there to having those dads in the PTA. The first step is encouraging our active PTA moms to bring dads to PTA-sponsored events. Once there, our second step is to reduce any stigma that dads may feel. It doesn’t matter if the stigma is real or just in minds of fathers; it can be a barrier to them playing a bigger role in our schools. The PTA videos made by Jason Nackos and his costar Ryan Shriever have gone a long way towards showing men that their role in the PTA is not only important but can be fun, too! Their videos from Mapleton Elementary are hilarious and drive home our point: men are wanted in the PTA, too! Guys respond well to humor and this is key to involving them in our organization.

Let’s be honest: dads are probably going to need a special invitation to join us, at least at first. It helps if each local PTA can enlist one or two dads to make that invitation. Having a dad invite another dad can bypass that initial apprehension and show that they are wanted and needed. I know this approach works from personal experience. As a local PTA president and a dad, I was able to recruit dozens and dozens of dads to join us. Just seeing that they won’t be the first dad can make it easier to recruit fathers. We are going to be working with locals to help them make that initial contact and bring those dads aboard. We will be making videos and Facebook graphics available to our locals and regions.

Our next step will be to go where the dads are congregating. Recruit them in their natural habitat! And supply snacks! We’ll go over the second half of our efforts next month.
**Education Commission**

**WHAT IS AMERICAN EDUCATION WEEK?**

American Education Week—November 18-22, 2019—will present all Americans with a wonderful opportunity to celebrate public education and honor individuals who are making a difference in ensuring that every child receives a quality education.

The 2019 theme, “Reach. Educate. Inspire.”, will be reflected throughout the week of activities. 2019’s theme will be reflected in special observances each day of the 2019 weeklong celebration:

- **Monday, November 18, 2019:** Kickoff Day
- **Tuesday, November 19, 2019:** Parents Day
- **Wednesday, November 20, 2019:** Education Support Professionals Day
- **Thursday, November 21, 2019:** Educator for a Day
- **Friday, November 22, 2019:** Substitute Educators Day

Find out more information at [http://www.nea.org/grants/19823.htm](http://www.nea.org/grants/19823.htm)

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**Family Life Commission**

**Teaming Up for Families**

In today’s fast-paced world, parents face new challenges that leave many wondering how to keep up and keep their kids safe — especially at the start of a new school year. National PTA and Life360 bring families closer with a wide range of smart features, like real-time location notifications and advanced driving safety features, designed to protect and connect the people who matter most.

Together, conversations will be lead around the issues that face modern parents, and connecting them with tools and research like the newly released Go-Guide to help parents make the best decisions for their kids.

Life360 began this collaboration by surveying 2,000 parents nationwide with kids ages 6-25 to uncover key insights around family milestones, communication habits, and modern parenting challenges. The results were compiled into a downloadable Go-Guide. This digital toolkit is filled with discussion starters and best practices for healthy family connectivity. For easy viewing and sharing, the Go-Guide is available in English, Spanish, color, black & white, in a summarized one-sheeter, and for Facebook. Download the guide at [https://www.pta.org/home/programs/connected/go-guide/](https://www.pta.org/home/programs/connected/go-guide/)

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**Modern Parenting Go-Guide**

Insights and Discussion Starters

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Military Families Specialist

Utah PTA Military Family Recognition

Ideas to Celebrate Month of the Military Family (November)

Military Family Month was first celebrated in 1993. In 1994 President Clinton issued a presidential proclamation establishing National Military Families Recognition Day. Later presidents have issued proclamations, and Congress has passed resolutions designating November as Military Family Month. Utah PTA has proclaimed November as the Month of the Military Family.*

1. **Have a Veteran’s Day Assembly.** (recommend Military Family Members wear their service uniform)
2. **Wear a ribbon or an article of clothing that is camouflage or red, white or blue on Assembly Day.**
3. **Have students create artwork that promotes patriotism and display it in the room and school.**
4. **Encourage the reading of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.**
5. **Present a Patriotic story in the classroom during week prior to Veteran’s Day or any day in November.**
6. **Invite a student’s family member to the class to explain what their military service meant/means to them.**
7. **Have students write a paper on “Serving our Nation” by interviewing a former member of the military.**
8. **Sing a patriotic song at the beginning of class.**
9. **Have students write a paragraph, poem or short story of “Why I am Grateful to Those in Military Service”.**
10. **Have the students write a letter to a soldier as a class or individually.** (Mailing addresses provided)

Note: For ideas, timelines, and information contact Kathy Allred at kathy@utahpta.org or militaryfamilies@utahpta.org, 801-372-1274.

See Utah PTA’s Military Family Proclamation at https://www.utahpta.org/military-family-proclamation
One of the classes held at the Annual Utah PTA Advocacy Conference was entitled "Connection Parents to the Vaping Epidemic." Vaping has become a national health care concern as youth usage rates have been increasing at an alarming rate. With over 1300 cases of vaping illnesses across the country and over 26 deaths it is important that we as parents become educated about the dangers of vaping and what we can do to stop this trend. In this class we connected parents to the FACTS about Vaping:

**Fact #1** - Some people mistakenly think only e-cigarettes contain nicotine, so they don’t think vaping is a problem since there’s no nicotine, only water vapors. **WRONG!** These are different names for the same thing. Most e-cigarettes and mods contain nicotine and because they are not regulated by the FDA, most of the time we don’t really know what is in the "juice." Just because it is bought at a store does not make it safe or trustworthy.

**Fact #2** - The Tobacco Industry wants to make "E-juice" or "E-liquid" sound healthy, but it is not. Although the ingredients may sound harmless, when inhaled in a vaping format the compounds change and make it very dangerous to your lungs. Aerosols damage cells and tissues in your lungs.

**Fact #3** - With flavors like Captain Crunch, Unicorn Poop, Cotton Candy and the like these products are being targeted to the YOUTH. They are not targeting smokers who want to quit. They are trying to increase their marketplace and get another generation addicted to nicotine. Studies show that most teenagers who start with vaping end up smoking traditional cigarettes when they are older.

**Fact #4** - There are also reported cases of Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) exploding and causing excessive injury and damage to users. A consequence that is not talked about too often but occurs regularly.

**Fact #5** - Education of the dangers of vaping is important, especially with our parents and youth. Utah Legislature is going to have some bills come out in the 2020 session that will help. We need more support with our legislators to raise the tax on e-cigarettes and products, allow schools more flexibility in dealing with youth who are caught vaping, cracking down on vape stores and internet access, and especially EDUCATION.

To learn more please visit the following websites:
https://thetobaccotalk.org/
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!

Arts Grants are due 2/1/2020

Reflections Specialist

The Reflections Facebook group is very active this time of year! It's wonderful when region directors and Reflections specialists check the group frequently to address issues related to their regions. This group has been a tremendously effective tool for training. We now have 739 members and the group grows by several more members each week! This group is primarily for specialists and parents, and I would like to share with you all what I’ve done to grow the group in hopes that it might be beneficial in growing other Facebook pages or groups. At convention in May, I offered an incentive of a cute (leftover) Reflections pen to everyone who joined the page before the class was over. I used the honor system, but we got a LOT of new members over the course of those two days. Since that time, whenever someone reaches out to me via email, I respond with the needed information, but I also invite that person to join the Facebook page. I am specific in telling him/her why it is a valuable tool for his/her circumstances. Not everyone joins, but many do. I have found in my PTA experience that the most effective way to recruit someone to help with PTA is to ask personally, face to face if possible, and to be very specific about what duties are involved. I do the same thing with inviting people to be part of the Utah Reflections Facebook group. Thank you to all of your for your support of Reflections. If you ever have any questions or feedback, I love to help and I also love help with improving the program. REMINDER: State entries are due no later than January 21th by 3 P.M. I will be sending out more information as we get closer on how to submit the entries through a Google form and also details for turning in the Photography and 2D art entries.

Safety Commission

Rhett Larsen, School and Student Safety Specialist and Christy Walker, Safe and Healthy Schools Coordinator presented at the PTA Advocacy Conference on Mental Health and School Safety. This presentation focused on mental health signs, symptoms, and interventions, and some of the objectives that are being tackled by state agencies. Mental health was described as something that impacts an individual’s ability to live, laugh, love, and/or keep the law. The mental health signs included an overview of risk factors and what experiences and environments could affect a student's mental health. There was also a discussion about mental wellness, strategies parents can use to improve mental health for themselves and their child, and what resources are available to help them.
Student Leadership Commission

We had a fun and successful Student Leadership Conference at the start of October. Thank you so much to all those who came, and all those who helped. The 3-fold focus of PTSA is the same as the PTA, Advocate - Involve - Develop, but the big difference is helping our students learn to advocate for themselves.

Many of our schools are doing their Red Ribbon Weeks, and National Teen Safe Driving Week is also the end of October, but your PTSA can have their own day or week any time. There is a letter by one of our student council members about it (with ideas and resources) on our website on the Student Leadership Commissioner page. This year 27 traffic accident deaths have been teens, and the impact on their communities is very similar to suicide deaths. 40% of traffic deaths in Utah are caused by speeding, 30% from not wearing seat belts (so this would be a good focus for middle schools & jr. highs), and 15% from distracted driving.

Another item coming up for many high school PTSA is Battle of the Bands and the new Open MIKE competition. The updated rules packets for both events are on utahpta.org under Programs/Battle of the Bands. We’re excited to help showcase all of the great talent our students have.

Looking ahead, it’s also time to start holiday service projects into motion, and finding ways to help our students feel connected to their school, family & community. And Student Day at the Capitol is just around the corner, Feb 12 & 18. This will be another great experience for our students.

Our next Student Leadership Committee meeting is November 9 at 10 AM, at the Utah PTA office.

Advocacy VP

A panel of local decision-makers had a roundtable discussion on how to best advocate in your local units, councils, and regions. Rick Nielsen, State Superintendent of the Year from Nebo School District, Margaret Swanicke, Principal from Canyons School District, Tracy Miller, School Board Member from Jordan School District, and Lynette Checketts, Utah PTA Region Director for Davis School District shared how to best advocate for students at the local level.

When asked what their definition of Advocacy is the panel responded with the following answers:

Advocacy is speaking and acting in support of a position. It's eliminating barriers for our children, and speaking out for the one. When speaking for our children always start at the lowest level first. If the problem is in the classroom, talk to the teacher, if it's at the school, talk to the principal. At a district level, the superintendent will probably refer you to an expert in the District offices.

Attendees asked questions about class size, connecting with different communities in your schools, how to get teachers engaged in PTA, Safe routes to school, nominating committees and other topics. Finally, they learned that there are four main ways to advocate –

1) Service - providing a direct service to students and the school that temporarily address the issue.
2) Education - Collect information on a specific topic and education members and the public on that issue.
3) Speaking out for others - Speaking up for the children.
4) Grassroots - The people directly affected by a problem take action to win a solution.
## Important Dates

Join us for the following Advocacy Events:

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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>November 13th</td>
<td>Practical PTA ZOOM</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 20th</td>
<td>Legislative Advocacy Commit. (LAC)</td>
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<td>November 6th</td>
<td>Commission Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 8th</td>
<td>Dates in 2020</td>
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<td>January 29, 2020</td>
<td>LAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 5, 12, 19, 26, 2020</td>
<td>LAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>February 18th</td>
<td>PTA Day at the Capitol</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 4, 11, 2020</td>
<td>LAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 18, 2020</td>
<td>Commission Meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 22, 2020</td>
<td>LAC</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 14-15, 2020</td>
<td>Leadership Convention</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](https://goo.gl/forms/JAiSGs9Jgle4oEF12)
Advocacy Resources:
- Legislative VP and Advocacy Training
- Conducting Meet the Candidate Nights
- Fall Advocacy Conference and PTA Day at the Capitol

Committees:
- Chair of Legislative Advocacy Committee (LAC)
- Chair of Commissioners and Resolutions Committee
- Member of Utahns for Public Schools (UTPS)

Any PTA member can join LAC! It is the 4th Wed from 12-2 at the PTA Office. (Aug, Nov, April) It is every Wed at 12 (Jan-March) at the capital during session.

Interested in a commission or have questions? Wondering about outside resources or partnerships that could help your PTA? If Yes, contact one of the commissioners! We are happy to help, offer ideas and share resources. We are here to support you!