Baltimore County Council PTA

everychild. onevoice.®

PTA Council of Baltimore County, Inc. | Established 1950

https://www.bcptacouncil.org **Free State PTA:** https://wwwfspta.org **National PTA:** https://www.pta.org

NOVEMBER 2026 | BULLETIN

President's Letter

Thanks to the PTA leaders who attended our September 24th **Fall Workshops and General Meeting**! The turnout was excellent, and we hope you learned a lot! THANK YOU to Apex Leadership for sponsoring this event.

Thanks to the Presidents and designates who attended our September and October **BCPS-PTA Leadership Roundtables!** We're grateful that Superintendent Dr. Heiser and Chief of Staff Ms. Cuches are willing to take time from their very busy schedules to meet with us monthly. Thank you to PTA Council's BCPS Liaison Sue Hahn, Office of Family and Community Engagement Supervisor, for facilitating these valuable sessions. There wasn't a November session; watch for invitations to the December one.

PLEASE read below for important information on crucial upcoming deadlines: filing your IRS 990 (**due 11/15/26**), signing the consent form to fall under the new Free State PTA IRS group exemption (**due 12/15/26**), and filing with the Maryland Secretary of State (**due 12/30/26**) to comply with the Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act.

We appreciate all you do to help "make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children."

Feel free to contact me or any of our board members for ANY HELP YOU NEED!

Leslie Weber, President, president@bcptacouncil.org, 410-227-7631

PTA Council of Baltimore County, Inc., c/o Sue Hahn, BCPS Office of Family and Community Engagement
6901 N. Charles St., Greenwood Campus Building A, Towson, Maryland 21204

Every **child.** *One* **voice.**

PTA Council is HERE FOR IT!

American Education Week Attendance Challenge, November 16-30, 2026

American Education Week, a celebration of public education and all who contribute to public schools' success, is held every year the week before Thanksgiving.

PTA Council is excited to partner with BCPS during AEW on an easy, fun, and meaningful way for PTAs and schools to celebrate AEW while supporting the **BCPS "HERE FOR IT! attendance-awareness campaign.**

You may have events planned for AEW - all we ask is that you incorporate into your programming **our "HERE FOR IT!" AEW Attendance Challenge!** Here's how PTAs and schools can participate:

- PTAs host Welcome/Resource Tables on **Family Day, Tuesday, November 17**
- PTAs and schools share the **PTActivate Attendance Survey** (available as a Google form and pdf to print and share) **November 16-30. Take the survey:** https://forms.gle/fK3WwPUoK1Qfd5Az9
- PTAs and schools share and collect the **BCPS HERE FOR IT! Attendance Pledge between November 16 and November 30**

Attendance Pledge (English) and Attendance Pledge (Spanish)

Guidelines: PTAs should tally pledges submitted. Units collecting the most completed pledges (at least 25) are eligible to win a PTA mini-grant. Three (3) grants will be awarded – top elementary school; top middle school; and top high school. Winning units should randomly select a student from their pool of submitted pledges; these students will receive a prize from PTA Council.

Please send your tallies to partnerships@bcptacouncil.org by November 30.

- Register for the virtual BCPS Parent University Dine and Learn Workshop: Here For It! Partnering to Support Strong Attendance **on November 18 at 6:30pm.**

Incentive: The first 10 PTA officers to register, complete the workshop, and stay for the Listening (Q&A) Session will be entered into a PTA mini-grant drawing!

Questions? Email Vice President Ramona Basilio at partnerships@bcptacouncil.org.

Leaders' To-Do List

Visit our Resources Section to access our yearly planning list to remind you of key dates and tasks.

NOVEMBER

- IRS 990 filing due 11/15
- American Education Week, 11/16-20; read above about our AEW Attendance Challenge, which runs 11/16-30!
- Sell memberships at dues level(s) decided upon by your board
- Send officer contact info to Free State PTA and PTA Council

DECEMBER

- Presidents sign Free State PTA group exemption consent form by 12/15 if unit is now under Delaware PTA group exemption
- Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act filing due December 30

Free State PTA Standards of Affiliation (SoA)

https://www.fspta.org/resources-guides (see SoA FAQ for Local Units)

https://www.fspta.org/bylaws (SoA Checklist - Local Unit)

PTAs are both units chartered by Free State PTA and individual non-profit corporations. There are important FSPTA SoA requirements, but also important business requirements from the IRS and the state -- all must be fulfilled to run your unit/business legally and compliantly**.**

In addition to paying member dues (including late dues) and providing officer contact information to FSPTA, you must take care of the following:

- ✓ **BYLAWS:** Bylaws need to be reviewed at least every 3 years and submitted to FSPTA through Givebacks for approval. If you need to do this, use the template here: https://www.fspta.org/bylaws.
- ✓ **FINANCIAL REVIEW:** All PTAs must conduct an annual financial review (due 10/30) and upload a copy into Givebacks. Refer to the Free State PTA Financial Guide in the Finances section of our website for a sample report.
- ✓ **INSURANCE:** Every PTA unit in Maryland must have insurance coverage through AIM. Enrollment forms were emailed to all PTAs. Coverage ended 6/30/26. See the PTA Council website's Finances/Insurance section for details.
- ✓ **IRS 990:** Every PTA must file annually by 11/15. If annual gross income was $50,000 or less, you can submit the 990N e-postcard. Provide a copy of the 990 filing to FSPTA via Givebacks.
- ✓ **MARYLAND CHARITABLE SOLICITATIONS ACT UPDATE:** As a charitable organization soliciting in Maryland, your unit must file documents with the Office of the Secretary of State. Registration is required prior to the commencement of solicitations (for new units) and an annual update is required, due 12/30.
- ✓ **INCORPORATION/MARYLAND PERSONAL PROPERTY ANNUAL REPORT:** All local PTAs must be incorporated in Maryland. To maintain your incorporation status, a Personal Property Annual Report must be filed by April 15 each year if your PTA owns any property or not. Send a copy to FSPTA via Givebacks. Check your status at: www.dat.state.md.us. If you're forfeited, contact us.
- ✓ **MANDATORY FINANCIAL TRAINING** for Presidents and Treasurers
- ✓ **MANDATORY BOARDSMANSHIP TRAINING** for Presidents and one other officer

For all shared documents, be sure to keep copies for yourself!

FSPTA requires that PTAs submit SoA documents via Givebacks! Check your status here and get detailed info on fulfilling SoA requirements here:

https://bcptacouncil.org/pta-unit-compliance

Council Dues: $50 per Unit

Council dues are separate from Free State PTA and National PTA dues. PTA Council relies on Council dues to pay for the support we offer.

NEW THIS YEAR! Units can pay Council dues via Givebacks!

Invoices for Council dues were emailed to all units and were due on 10/1/26. The form is also available here:

https://bcptacouncil.org/resources/finances/council-dues

THANK YOU!

UNIT COMPLIANCE: Check Your Status!

We know that running a unit/non-profit is hard work and we're here to help! Track your status in terms of FSPTA requirements, MD corporate requirements, and IRS requirements.

https://bcptacouncil.org/pta-unit-compliance

Remember to File Your IRS 990!

Most units e-file the 990-N; some file the 990-EZ. This is based on your 2025-26 gross receipts. For most units, your fiscal year was 7/1/25 to 6/30/26 (i.e., Tax Year 2025).

- **info and filing instructions** (including how to access the IRS filing portal if e-filing the IRS 990-N) **here:** https://bcptacouncil.org/federal-taxes/
- **step-by-step IRS 990-N filing instructions**: https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p5248.pdf
- **file:** https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/annual-electronic-filing-requirement-for-small-exempt-organizations-form-990-n-e-postcard
- **NOTE:** when you e-file, you'll receive a confirmation of filing, **but this doesn't mean the filing has been accepted.** The filing's status is "pending." You must go back to **login.gov** (after a short wait) to "Manage your Submissions." When you refresh the filing's status, you'll see whether it's been accepted or rejected.
- **if your IRS 900-N filing is rejected**, please reach out to us!
- **990-EZ instructions:** https://www.irs.gov/forms-pubs/about-form-990-ez

!!! News Regarding New Free State PTA Group Exemption !!!

Free State PTA now has its own IRS group exemption, Group Exemption Number (GEN) 0003. Local units currently covered through Delaware PTA's GEN 2155 are being transitioned to the Free State PTA group exemption. Read more about it here: https://bcptacouncil.org/free-state-pta-group-exemption-faqs

Consent forms must be signed by unit presidents **by 12/15/26** to transition to the Free State PTA's group exemption. The transition from GEN 2155 to GEN 0003 will take place on 1/1/27. *Delaware PTA will remove all Maryland units from their exemption after **January 1, 2027***. This means you'll lose your tax-exempt status if you don't consent to join GEN 0003. This DOES NOT apply to units with their own Letters of Determination (own tax-exempt status).

It's **CRUCIAL** that all of your officers are listed in Givebacks to ensure that Free State PTA is able to send you important information about this matter. If your president isn't listed in Givebacks, you may have not received the form from Free State PTA!

If presidents didn't receive an email directly from Free State PTA, please use this link to access the consent form (this is ONLY if your EIN is now under GEN 2155 and you opt to move to GEN 0003): **Consent Form:** https://waiver.smartwaiver.com/w/e2bh7uegqtveuwifjol6tf/web/

It's November; Did You Take Care of These Items in October?

✓ **Council dues were due on 10/1**. Pay using the form found at the link below and check OR via Givebacks: https://bcptacouncil.org/resources/finances/council-dues

✓ **Annual financial review was due on 10/30**. This is your unit's financial review of its 2025-26 books. Please upload a copy of the review and report (a memo explaining the review) to Givebacks. https://bcptacouncil.org/audits

✓ **First National PTA/Free State PTA membership dues payment to Free State PTA was due on 10/30** (one payment of $5.25/member/year – info here): https://bcptacouncil.org/resources/membership). **Remember to continue to pay dues monthly!**

Board of Education Candidate Forum

Thank you to PTA Council's Advocacy and Legislation Committee Chair Beth Jarrett for organizing our Virtual BOE Candidate Forum on October 20th!

We had a great turnout of both candidates and attendees. All present learned a great deal about the candidates' views on BCPS and the issues it faces and about great things happening in our school system.

Thanks to our Secretary Andra Broadwater for facilitating the session!

Make Sure Your Current Officers are Entered in Givebacks!

Free State PTA needs to get in touch with you!

Maryland Charitable Solicitations Act Filing by 12/30 to Fundraise Legally in MD!

The Secretary of State's office takes this filing seriously!

- check your status here: https://sos.maryland.gov/Charity/Pages/default.aspx
- Go to the Charities Division Links, then select Search Charities and enter your EIN
- Register OR start filing your annual update here: https://onestop.md.gov
- read filing instructions here (pay attention to page 6 and beyond): https://sos.maryland.gov/Documents/CharityAnnualRegistrationUserGuide.pdf

More information is available here:

https://bcptacouncil.org/charitable-organizations-requirement

Please reach out with any questions or issues!

Remaining Community Conversations on the BCPS FY 2028 Operating Budget

Superintendent Dr. Bill Heiser is hosting five Community Conversations to discuss the development of the BCPS Fiscal Year 2028 Operating Budget. BCPS families, staff, and community members are invited to provide input on the process and give feedback on budget priorities.

Woodlawn Middle School
November 19, 6-7 p.m.
3033 St. Lukes Ln, Gwynn Oak, MD 21207

Loch Raven High School
December 1, 6-7 p.m.
1212 Cowpens Ave., Baltimore, MD 21286

BCPS Parent University FACEtime Newsletter

Access resources and read their monthly newsletter here!

https://www.bcps.org/cos/communications/FACE/parent_university/f_a_c_etime_newsletter

BCPS Parent University is the go-to hub for family resources! http://www.bcps.org/parentu

Reflections: 2026-27 Theme "What My Culture Means to Me"

The Reflections arts competition is one of National PTA's signature programs. Every year, 300,000+ students in PreK – Grade 12 create original works of art in response to a student-selected theme. Students can have their work (6 arts categories, 4 age divisions, plus the Accessible Arts Division) recognized at the PTA, County, State, and National levels!

Last year, we had 11 PTAs/PTSAs participate; this year we're up to 16! We're excited that this program is growing! Thanks to all the PTA/PTSA boards, which decided to host the program and identify chairs (and committees) to run it! **Entries are due to PTA Council on 12/4/26**. PTA Council will send winning entries to Free State PTA in late January and Free State PTA will announce state-level winners in mid-March. Our annual Reflections Ceremony honoring all students whose entries made it to county-level judging on Sunday, March 14, 2027, 2-4pm (location TBA).

Find the Free State PTA Reflections Handbook here: https://www.fspta.org/reflections

Find PTA Council guidance here: https://bcptacouncil.org/resources/reflections

Thank you to First Financial Federal Credit Union who will sponsor this event!

NEWS FROM PTA COUNCIL'S RESPONSIBLE CELLPHONE AND TECHNOLOGY USE WORKING GROUP & CURRICULUM & INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE

You may have seen the November 11, 2026 BCPS press release on phasing AI online reading tool Amira out of the BCPS curriculum. Our working group, C&I Committee, and our partner, Schools Beyond Screens Baltimore County, have been working on reducing reliance on technology as a teaching tool. BCPS has made a major step toward monitoring screentime for our children. We hope this is one small step toward returning to traditional reading instruction. Shout out to SBS Baltimore County for their tireles advocacy regarding the issues of AI and screen overuse in our district schools.

Press Release: https://www.bcps.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=2828&pageId=74908105

Press Release Summary: Effective This Marking Period

- Schools are no longer required to use Amira during the instructional day. Families can continue to access Amira for additional support and practice at home.
- Schools can opt to use Amira as a supplemental instructional tool for students performing below benchmark on STAR. The STAR report can be located in the Focus Parent Portal. If your school has opted to use Amira as a supplemental tool, you will receive notification if your child is among those identified for additional support.
- Parents and caregivers may opt their child out of Amira at any time by emailing the school principal.
- Any continued use of Amira during school hours for identified students will occur with artificial intelligence features disabled (non-audio Version).

Effective Third and Fourth Marking Periods

- Amira usage in classrooms will be phased out for all students. Families can continue to access Amira for additional support and practice at home.

Schools will continue to provide targeted, evidence-based literacy instruction and interventions aligned with students' identified needs, using district-approved resources and instructional practices.

Starting in the 2027-2028 school year, families **will not have access to Amira at home**. Families are welcome to access some of the following resources at home for additional support and fluency practice:

- MSDE Family Guides for Student Success
- Supporting Reading at Home
- Reading Tips for Families (multiple languages)

November is National Family Engagement Month!

National Family Engagement Month is a time to recognize the important role families play in their children's education and well-being. We use this month to reframe and refresh how PTAs and school administrators connect with caregivers. Students whose families are engaged are more likely to:

- attend school
- avoid discipline problems
- achieve at higher levels
- graduate high school

The PTA Council values the important role families and caregivers play as partners in our children's education. We're focused on engaging parents and caregivers, staff, and community stakeholders in many opportunities to support students' learning and development.

Throughout November (and throughout the year), we've partnered with the BCPS Office of Family and Community Engagement (FACE), PTA leaders, and school administrators on a variety of events, workshops and collaborative activities designed to bring our school community together. We encourage you to join us and share your insights as we work side-by-side to help our students thrive!

The PTA Council supports family engagement in a number of ways:

- advocates for families at the district and state levels
- trains local PTA/PTSA units to implement National PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships:
    - Welcome All Families
    - Collaborate with Community
    - Share Power
    - Speak up for Every Child
    - Support Student Success
    - Communicate Effectively
- offers health, wellness, and safety workshops
- supports diverse representation with multilingual parent/caregiver leadership voices
- partners with BCPS and PTA networks (National PTA, Free State PTA, and county-level PTA) to support district-wide initiatives, including:
    - National PTA's School of Excellence Program for PTAs/PTSAs to receive national recognition for outstanding family-school partnerships
    - National PTA grant-funded mental health, digital safety, and youth engagement programs, among others
    - National PTA's Reflections arts education program
    - PTA Council's American Education Week HERE FOR IT! Attendance Challenge
    - PTA Council's Responsible Cellphone and Technology Use Working Group's partnership with BCPS
    - PTA Council's PTActivate advocacy framework to identify common issues affecting PTA units and schools and to work together to address them
    - PTA Council's partnership with FACE to support and share information with parents/caregivers.

BALTIMORE COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES



Become a Resource Parent

We *Foster* Hope • We *Foster* Love • We *Foster* Care

How do I become a Resource Parent?

Baltimore County needs individuals, couples and families who can nurture young people ranging in age from newborn to 20 years old.

Requirements for becoming a Baltimore County Resource (Foster) Parent:

- Reside in Baltimore County, MD
- Be 21 or older
- Be in good physical and mental health
- Be able to meet your personal financial obligations
- Complete a background clearance
- Complete required training
- Complete home study approval process
- Able to meet child's medical, educational and emotional needs
- Have a general understanding of healthy child development
- Have sufficient space in your home for a child

Have questions?

For additional information on becoming a foster parent, contact us using one of the methods below:

fosteradopt@baltimorecountymd.gov

410-853-3170

Fill out our inquiry form by scanning the QR code below or visit:

https://bit.ly/3ZXAq39

Baltimore County Department of Social Services
Mark Millspaugh, Director | Stacy Rodgers, Acting Secretary
Katherine A. Klausmeier, County Executive

4/6/26 BF

Contact Us!

PTA Council of Baltimore County, Inc.

c/o Sue Hahn, BCPS Office of Family and Community Engagement

6901 N. Charles St., Greenwood Campus Building A

Towson, Maryland 21204

www.bcptacouncil.org

PTA Council General Meetings & Special Events

- January 28, 2027: Virtual Meeting/Program, 7pm
- March 14, 2027: Reflections Ceremony, location TBA, 2-4pm
- March 18, 2027: Virtual Meeting, Health & Safety Program, 7pm
- April 29, 2027: Virtual Meeting, Program, 7pm
- June 7, 2026: Leadership Training, Scholarships and State Reflections Winners Presentations, location TBA, 7pm

PTA Council Board of Directors' Virtual Meetings 2026-27

First Thursday of the month at 7pm (if interested in attending, please request a link):

- December 3
- January 7
- February 4
- March 4
- April 1
- May 6
- June 3

PTA Council Leadership Contacts

President: Leslie Weber, president@bcptacouncil.org
Vice President: Ramona Basilio, partnerships@bcptacouncil.org
Area VP Central: Beth Jarrett, avpcentral@bcptacouncil.org
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Area VP Northwest: Erica Willams, avpnorthwest@bcptacouncil.org
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Secretary: Andra Broadwater, secretary@bcptacouncil.org
Treasurer: Sara Petry, treasurer@bcptacouncil.org

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Advocacy & Legislation: Beth Jarrett, legislation@bcptacouncil.org
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Curriculum & Instruction (C&I): Manju Holmes, curriculum@bcptacouncil.org
C&I Exceptional Students Subcommittee : Megan Butler, exceptional@bcptacouncil.org
Extension: Emory Young, extension@bcptacouncil.org
Family, School, and Community Partnerships (FSCP): Ramona Basilio, partnerships@bcptacouncil.org
FSCP Multilingual Community Partnership Subcommittee: Edwin Perez, eperez@bcps.org
Health & Safety: Andra Broadwater, health@bcptacouncil.org
Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Edwin Perez, diversity@bcptacouncil.org
Nominating Committee Chair: Melissa Sivels, nominations@bcptacouncil.org (full committee on our website)
Reflections: Open, reflections@bcptacouncil.org
Scholarships: Angie Obaza, awards@bcptacouncil.org

Representatives:

Baltimore County Student Councils: Elijah Thomson
Baltimore County Public Schools: Sue Hahn, shahn2@bcps.org
Teachers' Association of Baltimore County: Lloyd Allen, lallen@mseanea.org