

# Baltimore County Council

# PTA<sup>®</sup>

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**PTA Council of Baltimore County, Inc. | Established 1950**

<https://www.bcptacouncil.org> Free State PTA: <https://www.fspta.org> National PTA: <https://www.pta.org>

**SEPTEMBER 2024 | BULLETIN**

## President's Letter

**WELCOME to the 2024-25 school year!**

**Events:** We've been busy attending some big events. On 7/17, our Family, School, and Community Partnerships Committee Chair Ramona Basilio and I attended the BCPS Partnership Fair to network with other community partners. On 8/17, Ramona and I hosted a PTA Council table at BCPSFest, another awesome event! We shared information about PTA and encouraged people to join their local units or get involved at the Council level.

**Monthly Meetings with Superintendent Dr. Rogers and Chief of Staff Ms. Charley-Greene:** We're excited that PTA Council and unit Presidents (or their one designate) will continue to have monthly roundtables to hear BCPS presentations and take part in open-forum conversations about school-system issues. The first meeting will be on Thursday 9/5 at 6:30pm. Invitations will be sent via email to Presidents.

**Free State PTA Convention:** July's Free State PTA Convention had great participation from Baltimore County PTA leaders and Council board members! Training sessions will be posted on the FSPTA website soon. Other trainings can be accessed here: <https://www.fspta.org/local-unit-resources>

**Workshops & General Meeting:** Our annual Fall Training Workshops and General Meeting will be held on *Thursday, September 26th at 7pm (doors open at 6:30pm) at West Towson Elementary's Cafetorium*. Watch for an invitation and information soon. Our website, [www.bcptacouncil.org](http://www.bcptacouncil.org), has many of the powerpoints from our past trainings, but attending this event will allow you to network, ask questions, and give feedback on what you need.

**Reflections:** National PTA's Reflections arts program is one of the best programs a PTA unit can run – HONESTLY! Students can have their work recognized at the unit, County, State, and National levels. In the 2023-24 school year, we had a NATIONAL WINNER! Email [president@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:president@bcptacouncil.org) for more information!

Thanks for all you do to help "make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children." Contact me or any other board member for ANY HELP YOU NEED!

Leslie Weber, President, [president@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:president@bcptacouncil.org), 410-227-7631

*Every child. One voice.*

## PTA Council's Responsible Cellphone Use Campaign

PTA Council does not support a ban on cellphones in school. We support Baltimore County Public Schools' "off-and-away policy." However, the reality is the policy is not being implemented consistently.

A recent BCPS survey of over 5,000 stakeholders revealed mounting concerns about cellphones disrupting student learning and creating behavior issues during instructional time, as well as cellphones' negative effect on mental health and student safety. The survey also revealed frustration and confusion about how to manage this complicated problem. The debate surrounding the advantages and disadvantages of cellphone use in schools has become increasingly heated in recent years. There are valid arguments on both sides, with no mutually agreeable solution.

PTA Council recognizes the value of cellphones in augmenting education, as well as the risks of misuse and possible addiction. We are encouraging parents/caregivers, students, educators, and community members to come together to foster a positive balance between students, learning, and the appropriate use of cellphones during the school day.

To this end, PTA Council's Family, School, and Community Partnerships (FSCP) Committee established the Responsible Cellphone Use Taskforce. The taskforce seeks to address the growing cellphone epidemic among BCPS students (K-12). The taskforce is supporting BCPS and the BCPS Social Media Workgroup's cellphone policy initiatives.

We are launching a campaign to advocate for responsible cellphone use. Specifically, we are focusing on parent/caregiver and student education about appropriate and inappropriate cellphone use in school. Please join us in advocating for common sense solutions, greater parent/caregiver awareness, engagement, and accountability around this issue. For the sake of our children, we must find a balance. We need "all hands on deck" to:

- Support the National PTA Social Media Position Statement.
- Promote well-defined school policies and encourage collaboration between educators, parents/caregivers, and students.
- Share information from the BCPS Social Media Workgroup and education advocacy groups on the negative impact of cellphone addiction on student learning, mental health, and safety.
- Join PTA Council's Responsible Cellphone Use Campaign.

For additional information, check out FSCP Chair Ramona Basilio on WJZ-TV:

<https://www.cbsnews.com/baltimore/news/student-cellphone-use-a-cause-for-concern-for-baltimore-county-schools> and Dr. Rogers' 8/20 press conference and Council shout-out:

<https://www.bcps.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=2828&pageId=71367284>. To join the Responsible Cellphone Use Campaign, contact Ramona Basilio, FSCP Committee Chair, [partnerships@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:partnerships@bcptacouncil.org).

### PTA Insurance

Unit presidents should have received invoices from AIM via email.

Free State PTA offers low-cost insurance (\$226/year) to local units. Your package has not changed. Your payment to AIM was due on July 1. If you need help, contact 1-800-876-4044 or Pamela Brizendine at [pbrizendine@aim-companies.com](mailto:pbrizendine@aim-companies.com)

<https://aim-companies.com>

### Start Your PTA Year Off Right; Get Your Kit!

Available from [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org):

[Local Leader Kit | National PTA](#)

[Member Benefits - About PTA | National PTA](#)

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

Parent/Caregiver opinions needed! **Take the BCPS & Title I Family & Community Engagement Plan Survey:**

[BCPS & Title I Family and Community Engagement Plan](#)



## Leaders' To-Do List

### SEPTEMBER

- ▶ Conduct general membership meeting, adopt 2024-25 PTA budget
- ▶ Sell memberships at dues level(s) decided upon by your board
- ▶ PTA Council dues due 10/1; invoice (\$50/unit) in Back-to-School Package
- ▶ Send officer contact info to Free State PTA and PTA Council

### OCTOBER

- ▶ Attend PTA Council Fall Workshops and General Meeting, 9/26, 7pm at West Towson ES Cafetorium (doors open at 6:30pm)
- ▶ Send copy of your unit's annual financial review to Free State PTA (due 10/30)
- ▶ Pay Free State PTA and National PTA membership dues monthly; first payment due October 1
- ▶ Begin work on Reflections

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

## Standards Of Affiliation (SoA)

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

- ✓ **BYLAWS:** Bylaws need to be reviewed at least every 3 years and submitted to FSPTA for approval. If you need to do this, use the template here: <https://www.fspta.org/bylaws>
- ✓ **FINANCIAL REVIEW (AUDIT):** 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 6/30/24. 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](http://www.dat.state.md.us). If your unit is not incorporated or the incorporation needs to be revived, contact us.

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

**FSPTA is asking units to submit SoA documents via Givebacks! Check your status here & get detailed info on SoA requirements here:**

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

## GIVEBACKS TRAINING!

Some units are doing great using this amazing membership management tool offered free of charge via Free State PTA; others are still trying to figure it out. We're working on having Givebacks offer training to PTA units.

Use Givebacks to upload Standards of Affiliation (SoA) documents, pay National PTA/Free State PTA dues (not mandatory since it involves electronic transfers), sell PTA items and memberships, fundraise, create a website, newsletter, or calendar, send member emails, etc. If you can't access your account, email [info@fspta.org](mailto:info@fspta.org).

Visit [www.givebacks.com](http://www.givebacks.com) for support – support representatives are very responsive and helpful!

Stay tuned for more details about Council-sponsored Givebacks training!

## Council Dues: \$50 per unit (NEW!)

**Dues are \$50 per unit this year, as voted upon by the PTA Council Board of Directors.**

We voted to increase dues from \$15/unit to \$50/unit because we have no source of income other than dues and can't compete with local units in terms of fundraising.

Council dues are separate from Free State PTA and National PTA dues. **Invoices for Council dues are in the Back-to-School Package.**

## PTA: Who's Who?

School: Local PTA units are independent non-profits with state and federal requirements.

County: PTA Council is an all-volunteer support and training organization with no legal standing over units. Units pay Council Dues to be supported and represented by the Council, which does no fundraising. We represent local units as a stakeholder group at Board of Education meetings, on the School Board Nominating Commission, and on BCPS and County focus and work groups.

State: Units are chartered under Free State PTA ([www.fspta.org](http://www.fspta.org))

National: Free State PTA is chartered under National PTA ([www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org))

PTA members are members of their local units, Free State PTA, and National PTA because they pay dues to all.



## Membership

FSPTA recommends that your unit use Givebacks (formerly MemberHub), which allows you to sell memberships online, communicate with members, create a directory, sell merchandise, create a newsletter, AND have members print their own membership cards.

If you want to get started with Givebacks, contact Free State PTA at [info@fspta.org](mailto:info@fspta.org).

Member dues for each unit are decided upon at a board meeting. Different levels can be set (for example, \$10/member; \$6/staff member (to encourage the home-school partnership); and \$25/business membership). Just remember when setting your dues that:

- National PTA dues are \$2.25/member
- Free State PTA dues are \$2.00/member

Each unit remits dues monthly in the amount of \$4.25/member to National PTA and Free State PTA. Use Givebacks or the form found here to pay dues:

<https://www.fspta.org/membership>

Visit the Membership Section of the PTA Council website for info, tips, and sample easy-to-fill-out membership form (having a form is recommended):

<http://www.bcptacouncil.org/resources/membership/>

Visit the National PTA website ([pta.org](http://pta.org)) for Membership Campaign info:

[Membership Resources - Run Your PTA | National PTA](#)

[Member Benefits - About PTA | National PTA](#)

## National PTA Grants to Support Digital Safety Efforts!

National PTA is offering over \$1M to eligible PTAs to help host programs in the areas of digital safety, STEM, healthy lifestyles, the arts and more. [The application period is now open](#). No prior grant-writing experience is required, and by answering only a few questions, your PTA can be eligible for \$1,250 or more in program funding. The grants are intended to support online safety and dialogues with teens on the topic of digital safety, including some grants specifically for high school PTAs.

While PTA programs can be implemented at no or low cost, this funding can help PTAs cover expenses such as materials, childcare, custodial services, food, transportation and translation services to ensure all families can participate.

The deadline to submit applications is Tuesday, Oct. 1 at 11:59 p.m. PDT.

When PTAs host these programs, it demonstrates the value and impact of PTA in a tangible way and creates opportunities to reach and engage new members as well as create connections with local partners.

Go to <https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/Awards-Grants> for more information and to apply. Any questions can be directed to [Programs@PTA.org](mailto:Programs@PTA.org).

## **BOARD BASICS: Things To Keep In Mind**

Your unit is a recognized corporation in Maryland and a recognized 501(c)3 charitable organization (non-profit) in the eyes of the IRS; abide by non-profit, IRS, and Maryland requirements.

You run a business, the main goal of which is advocating for children and youth; you fundraise to achieve goals you set.

3:1 rule: 3 non-fundraising activities (educational or enrichment programs) for every 1 fundraiser; try to serve as many students as you can with your programs and be inclusive as you can.

As a non-profit, remain non-partisan or you risk losing your tax-exempt status (don't endorse political candidates!). Also, don't get involved in school system personnel issues.

Be a good steward of your unit's funds; expenditures should not be for personal gain, but for the good of the organization.

When you advocate, don't counter National PTA, Free State PTA, or PTA Council positions. If you're not sure, ask.

BE VISIBLE to your community; make sure your PTA is on your school's website with current contact and membership information (even if you use Givebacks to sell memberships, have a membership form available).

### **Transition Checklist**

- Financial Review
  - ✓ Review Committee should have been created at last Board of Directors meeting of year; 3 people (usually PTA members) who did not have check-signing authority during fiscal year under review should take part
  - ✓ Fiscal year-end was 6/30/24; meet after 7/1/24 once June bank statement has been received and reconciled
  - ✓ Copy provided to Free State PTA by 10/31/24 via Givebacks
  - ✓ Present review to your general membership
- Liability, Directors & Officers Insurance Through AIM:
  - ✓ Coverage period July 1 to June 30
- Procedure Books
  - ✓ Every Officer and Chair should maintain written records of duties, practices, and efforts for reference and to pass to their successor
- Accounts, Passwords, Combinations, Keys & Codes
  - ✓ Email Accounts, social media/online tools
- Finances
  - ✓ Bank Accounts
  - ✓ Turn over checkbook and all Treasurer materials
  - ✓ Go to bank together and change signers (may need election meeting minutes to prove identities of officers)
  - ✓ Cash box and night deposit bag and keys
  - ✓ IRS e-file information



## 2024-25 PTA COUNCIL CALENDAR

### General Meetings and Special Events (virtual or in-person)

- September 26, 2024: Fall Training Workshops and General Meeting, 7pm, West Towson Elementary Cafetorium (doors open at 6:30pm)
- January 30, 2025: Meeting/Program, 7pm
- March 16, 2025: Reflections Ceremony
- March 27, 2025: Meeting/Program, 7pm
- April 24, 2025: Meeting/Program, 7pm
- June 9, 2025: Officer Training, 7pm



### Fall Workshops & General Meeting

*Thursday, September 26, 2024 at 7pm*

*(doors open at 6:30pm)*

*West Towson Elementary Cafetorium*

*Light refreshments will be served*

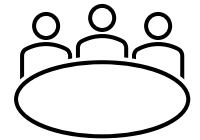
Training sessions to run your unit successfully - all are welcome to participate!

Watch for an invitation and details via email!

### Board of Directors' Virtual Meetings

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

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|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2024:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ September 5</li> <li>○ October 10</li> <li>○ November 7</li> <li>○ December 5</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ January 2</li> <li>○ February 6</li> <li>○ March 6</li> <li>○ April 3</li> <li>○ May 1</li> <li>○ June 5</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
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### Reflections: 2024-25 Theme "Accepting Imperfection"

The Reflections arts competition is one of National PTA's signature programs. Every year, 300,000+ students in PreK through Grade 12 create original works of art in response to a student-selected theme.

This program, begun over 50 years ago, helps students explore their thoughts, feelings, and ideas, develop artistic literacy, and increase their confidence. Students submit entries in grade-appropriate divisions (Primary, Intermediate, Middle School, High School, and Special Artist) in the following categories: Dance Choreography, Film Production, Literature, Music Composition, Photography, and Visual Arts.

It's an amazing program – students and families LOVE it! Email [reflections@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:reflections@bcptacouncil.org) to let us know if you'll host a program this year. Your Reflections Chair/Committee will receive training and all documents they need from the kick-off to the celebration.



## UNIT COMPLIANCE: Check Your Status!

We know that running a unit (corporation/501(c)3 non-profit) is hard work and we're here to help! It's important to track your status in terms of Free State PTA Standards of Affiliation (SoA) requirements, Maryland corporate requirements, and IRS requirements.

Use the UNIT COMPLIANCE tab on the homepage of our website to help!

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

## PTA COUNCIL & FREE STATE PTA NEED OFFICER CONTACT INFORMATION FOR:

**President, VP(s), Secretary(ies), and Treasurer**

**Unit (School) Name ~ Position ~ Name ~ Email ~ Home or School Address ~ Phone**

Share with PTA Council: [Contact Information 2024-25 School Year \(google.com\)](#)

Share with Free State PTA by entering the information into your Givebacks account.

Sharing your Officer Contact Information is a Free State PTA Standards of Affiliation (SoA) requirement.

## PTA Council Leadership Contacts

President: Leslie Weber, [president@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:president@bcptacouncil.org)

Area VP Northwest Area: Ryan Coleman, [avpnwnc@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:avpnwnc@bcptacouncil.org)

Area VP Southeast Area: Will Feuer, [avpsenc@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:avpsenc@bcptacouncil.org)

Secretary: Andra Broadwater, [secretary@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:secretary@bcptacouncil.org)

Treasurer: Jayne Lee, [treasurer@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:treasurer@bcptacouncil.org)



### Committees:

Advocacy & Legislation: Beth Jarrett, [legislation@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:legislation@bcptacouncil.org)

Communications: Katie Fetchik, [communications@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:communications@bcptacouncil.org)

Extension: Emory Young, [extension@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:extension@bcptacouncil.org)

Family, School, and Community Partnerships: Ramona Basilio, [partnerships@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:partnerships@bcptacouncil.org)

Health & Safety: Andra Broadwater, [health@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:health@bcptacouncil.org)

Nominating Committee: Beth Jarrett, [legislation@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:legislation@bcptacouncil.org)

Reflections: Jess Roosth, [reflections@bcptacouncil.org](mailto:reflections@bcptacouncil.org)

### Representatives:

Baltimore County Student Councils: TBA

Baltimore County Public Schools: Sue Hahn, [shahn2@bcps.org](mailto:shahn2@bcps.org)

Teachers' Association of Baltimore County: Kelly Olds

## 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](http://www.bcptacouncil.org)