

## Heather Broos – Michigan PTSA Annual Convention Report, 2010

### Friday, April 23, 2010

- **First Timers Session:** Received introduction to Michigan PTSA Annual Convention.
- **Session 103: Presidents: Got PTA?**
  - Presented by Mary DeYoung-Smith, MPTSA President, and Shaton Berry, MPTSA President-Elect
  - Discussed basic responsibilities of the executive board and how presidents can ensure they have the support of their board, especially through a buddy system, feedback opportunities, occasional reminders and clear guidance. Must also remind board members that “we always wear our PTA badge.”
  - President’s resources
    - “Great Idea Bank” on [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)
    - Procedure book, officers’ handbook; principal’s guide
    - Meeting modules
    - NPTA back to school kit
    - Council, field service reps and board
    - Michigan PTSA office
    - Websites
  - Getting the year started: complete board; chairs for Reflections, Legislation/Advocacy, Health/Welfare; transition plan.
  - Need to have efficient meetings – they are the launching pad for PTA action. Plan ahead – only discuss committee reports that need to be discussed or require action by membership. Keep focus – impose time limits for each agenda item. Redirect issues to appropriate person (committee chair, principal, etc.) to eliminate discussion at meetings when it is not applicable to the agenda.
  - Ways for President to work effectively with others
    - Plan ahead
    - Make meetings matter
    - Encourage all members to participate
    - Encourage positive action
    - Help move the group to consensus
    - Remember you cannot please everyone
  - The Agenda
    1. Call to order
    2. Opening and icebreaker
    3. Approval of minutes
    4. Report of the treasurer
    5. Correspondence
    6. Report of the executive board
    7. Report of standing committees
    8. Report of special committees
    9. Additional reports
    10. Unfinished business
    11. New business
    12. Program (not mandatory)
    13. Announcements
    14. Adjournment
  - Parliamentary pointers
    - All members are equal
    - Accept the will of the majority
    - A quorum is mandatory
    - Know when a two-thirds vote is necessary
    - General consent is a silent method of voting

- One topic at a time
  - One member at a time
  - You must carry out the will of the assembly
  - Authority is vested in the office not the person
- Difficult meetings
  - Require action prior to meeting
  - Connect with individuals ahead of time
  - Confirm PTA positions
  - Create agenda – and stick to it
  - Establish ground rules
  - Be polite but forceful
  - Presidents can vote but can also abstain
  - Presidents do not give opinion during discussion—if you want to do so you must turn over the chair to the VP (but the VP does not have to give it back to you)
- Handling disruptions during meetings
  - Maintain poise
  - Do not be defensive
  - Consult Robert's Rules
  - Do not allow personal attacks
  - Call a recess if necessary
  - President shouldn't ask questions related to hot topics – discuss with another board member prior to meeting and have the board member ask the question or bring up the topic
- Characteristics of a leader
  - Lifelong learner
  - Positive outlook
  - Dependable
  - Organized
  - Adaptable
  - Responsive to the membership
  - Develops other leaders
  - Ensure every member's voice is heard – even if they are not present
- Developing leaders
  - Encourage participation by all
  - Don't demand perfection
  - Provide growth opportunities
  - Provide necessary resources – including procedure book
  - Recruitment
  - Recognize and reward achievements
- Any parent involvement – even the involvement we don't see – is parent involvement
- "Diversity is counting everyone; inclusion is making everyone count"
- "Out of conflict comes greatness"
- Six steps to successful delegation
  - Review tasks
  - Select the proper people
  - Provide support
  - Encourage, train and motivate
  - Explain the job fully
  - Keep supervisory control
- Volunteers
  - People volunteer for the benefits, to set an example, to test leadership skills
  - People stop volunteering when no praise is given, there is no chance for personal growth, or they feel they are unable to make a difference
  - Follow up with volunteers early and often
  - If you don't need the volunteer still call, thank and invite to participate in the event/task in another way – ask them to help with something else
  - Ask for volunteers to handle phone calls and email
  - Attendee suggested at-home committee chair paired with every committee chair to handle "admin" tasks like phone calls/email
  - Attendee suggested volunteer coordinator position as a role on the executive board
- Reaching out to volunteers
  - Getting parents involved may include an outreach committee, language translation, community leaders

- Programs that can help include surveys and meetings
  - Time management
    - Set goals
    - Urgent or important?
    - Log your time – all board members, committee chairs and volunteers should do this; helps track the amount of time spent on task/issue; “in-kind donation” letter can be provided based on IRS’s volunteer rate/hr and volunteers can deduct their time/rate on their taxes
    - Make schedules – limit your time, especially for phone calls and gently get the caller to the point (“I appreciate your concern; what can I do for you?”); Doodle and TimeBridge can be used to schedule meetings
    - Communicate – email “to” rather than “cc”; implement 48-hour rule to return calls/email
- **National PTA 2010 Town Hall Meeting**
  - National PTA CEO, Byron Garrett, discussed PTA’s mission, vision and updated strategic initiatives
  - Focus on diversity in PTA
  - Improving business partnerships
- **Session 206: Robert’s Rules of Order and Parliamentary Procedure**
  - Presented by Debbie Macon, Parliamentarian
  - Rules for MPTSA convention reviewed
  - Robert’s Rules are used to make every meeting inclusive, organized, respectful and transparent
  - Robert’s Rules protect the minority and majority, those in the room and those not in the room, and the group as a whole
  - Every board member should have a copy of Robert’s Rules – at minimum the secretary should have a copy
  - Motions are needed to introduce new business and close each meeting
  - If no second for a motion president should ignore the motion – any discussion equals a second (“Absent a second, next agenda item.”)
  - The motion in the meeting minutes is the one stated by the chair and accepted by the body.
  - Chair can respectfully suggest postponement (continue at another specified time) as opposed to tabling the discussion (setting aside the issue indefinitely).
  - Minutes can be provided to membership (in brief or as highlights) prior to approval for record.
  - Motions (action) must be included in the minutes and Debbie recommended they are the only items in minutes – rather than including all the details of what was discussed prior (can state “discussion ensued” and leave out details)
- **Session 304: Conflict Resolution – How to Fight Fair so that Everybody Wins**
  - Presented by Ruthann Jacquette, MPTSA Vice President for Outreach and Support
  - “I’m only the owner of my own behavior.” – We cannot own the actions of others in response to what we say or do
  - Conflict motivators
    - Wants (desires): can change over time, what you did vs. what I want, choose your battles
    - Emotions (feelings): can change over time, fuel conflict, often emotions vs. reason
    - Value (beliefs): fixed, usually the real reason for the conflict (when someone feels their values have been violated), look for the greater good that can be agreed on when there is value difference
  - Degrees of conflict
    - Discomfort
    - Incident – blow up, need to meet to address
    - Misunderstanding
    - Tension
    - Crisis
  - People fear conflict because they are afraid of...
    - The unknown
    - Feelings (theirs/others)
    - Lack of control or personal skills
    - That things will get worse
    - Not being liked
  - Conflict resolution = making choices with solving the problem as the goal
  - Once the board makes a decision all board members MUST support the decision
  - Conflict resolution strategies
    - Listen, listen, listen

- Confidentiality
  - Detailed, written notes (factual, not editorial)
  - Ask probing questions (confirm intent)
  - Objectivity (third party)
  - Next steps (identify them)
  - Best practices
- Do not use email for discussions you would not have in person, face-to-face
- 3 steps toward resolution
  1. Acknowledge concern (make them heard) and rephrase in a positive way
  2. Clarify (ask what, why, how) and listen to break down walls
  3. Talk (be civil and conscientious of body language) to find common ground
- Utilize eLearning Conflict Resolution resources at [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)
- Conflict resolution skills
  - Persuasion – best available means of moving someone in the direction you want them to go
  - Assertiveness – behavior that ensures respect and attention you deserve
  - Negotiation – bargaining for what you want
- Resolution meeting
  - Create an agenda
  - Set ground rules (trust agreement)
  - Allow each person to speak and voice their opinion
  - Focus on the facts/issue (not the person)
  - Listen with neutrality to understand the other person's perspective
  - Understand you cannot change others
  - Look for win/win solutions
- **Dinner/First General Membership Meeting and Keynote Presentation**
  - Two amendments to bylaws passed by assembly
    1. Good standing date changed to December 1<sup>st</sup>
    2. Candidates must have served on the MPTSA board of directors or on a MPTSA committees to be eligible for MPTSA office of secretary, treasurer, VP children's advocacy, VP leadership development, VP outreach and support, VP member resource development, region director
  - Three resolutions passed by assembly
    1. 180 Days of School
    2. Efficiently Reporting Educational Metrics
    3. MPTSA Resolution on Mandatory Expulsion Policies
  - Bryan Davis, director of All pro Dads, spoke about the importance of involvement and engagement of dads in children's lives. Programs available for fathers and mothers.

## Saturday, April 24, 2010

- **Session 401: Making Connections by Growing Your Membership**
  - Presented by Chris Greig, MPTSA Membership Chair and President, Farmington Area PTA Council
  - Farmington Council gave away PTA window cling to each Founders Day attendee
  - Compare membership list to school list (if available) and target those who haven't joined
  - Councils can promote business memberships in the community – recommended that individual units not do this as businesses see value in the area membership
  - Parents are the heart and soul of PTA
    - Have a myriad of talents and ideas
    - Motivations: want their children to succeed, want to support their schools and community, want to give back and thrive on volunteering
    - Realities: financial resources are stretched, need a convenient link to school, have varying levels of interest and availability, need to transition as their children mature
  - Teachers
    - Motivations: want their school and students to succeed, need parent support
    - Realities: many are working parents themselves, stretched with increased class size, increased diversity creates opportunities and challenges, rapidly changing environment
  - Students
    - Motivations: want to lead or volunteer, peer and/or parental admiration and approval, college (looks good when they apply)
    - Realities: need guidance and mentoring, time competes with many other activities, widely varying levels of motivation and interest
  - Community

- Motivations: desire to improve quality of life, grow their own business, attract new families and businesses to the area, successful schools = successful city
- Realities: competing priorities, Michigan economy, often feel they give but don't receive
- Attracting and keeping members
  - Grow your membership
    - Communicate the value of PTA
    - Welcome all families
    - Provide opportunities to connect and support
    - Make PTA matter at your school
  - The value of PTA
    - When families are involved at home and school, children do better in school
    - PTA provides the opportunity, resources and structure to connect parents, , students and teachers
  - Value = Benefits – Cost
    - Show that membership has value and is worth time/dues
    - Develop a marketing plan
    - Develop a message that will “hit home” and highlight the impact of PTA in school and community
    - Show them where the money goes
    - Tell them what they can do (day, evening, weekend)
    - Include info in new year/welcome kits with PTA history
  - Local membership benefits
    - Partnerships with other parents, teachers and community members
    - Vote in local PTA/PTSA issues and decisions (how money is spent, events, etc.)
    - Access to parenting material and resources
    - Opportunity to be an advocate for children on local, state and national levels
    - Benefits with local businesses and national chains
    - Advocacy for ALL children
  - State membership benefits
    - Support from PTA veterans
    - Best practices from around the state
    - Communication network
    - Access to parenting programs: TETO, Let's Move!, Rachel's Challenge
    - Workshops, training and orientation meetings
    - Information on state-level legislative issues (online CapWiz)
    - Reflections, Advocacy Day and Anderson Scholarship
  - National Benefits
    - Electronic and paper resources including newsletters, brochures and helpful hints on everything PTA/PTSA
    - Free “Our Children” magazine – local units have rights to reproduce
    - Representation in policy-making
    - Discounts from national partners
    - Excellent networking system with more than 5 million volunteers nationwide
  - Welcome all families
    - Create a welcoming climate: personal relationships, family-friendly atmosphere, opportunities for volunteering
    - Build a respectful, inclusive school community: respect all families, remove economic obstacles to participation (free/low-cost events), ensure accessible programming (days/times/locations)
  - Communicate and connect
    - Share information between school and families
    - Use multiple communication paths (email, phone, notes home, newsletter, etc.)
    - Survey families to identify issues/concerns
    - Have access to principal
    - Provide information on current issues
    - Facilitate connections among families
  - Make PTA Matter...
    - To students
      - Provide real leadership and volunteer opportunities
      - Value an act on student input

- Recognize and reward
- To business members
  - Communicate value of PTA business membership/partnership
  - Provide opportunities to market to your families (at events)
  - Hold open houses for family-friendly businesses
  - Co-sponsor community service projects
  - Sponsor PTA events like fun runs
  - Councils—hold a business vendor fair
  - Encourage patronage of local businesses
  - Allow “in-kind” memberships/donations (still have to pay \$33 to MPTSA)
  - Include them in the directory and post online with link to their website (note that PTA does not endorse and is not responsible for content on partner site)
  - Thank them for supporting PTA when doing business with them
- To community organizations
  - Partner with community groups to strengthen families and support student success
  - Link families to services, project and activities
  - Turn the school into a hub of community life
  - Represent PTA at community events
- To community members
  - Offer PTA membership or “ALL PTA” state level membership
  - Invite community members to serve as mentors and volunteers
  - Invite community members to celebration events (Founders Day)
- Retaining Members
  - Connect often
  - Strong leadership
  - Evaluate and adjust
  - Recognize and reward
- Membership campaign
  - Make it easy
    - Combine with other activities
    - Be efficient and convenient (add form to principal’s back to school packet)
    - Provide choices on how to join (join online)
    - Present card at time of enrollment (preprint cards with unit name and ID write name/distribute as they join)
  - Make it fun
    - Pick a theme
    - Decorate the school
    - Bring in the mascot
    - Public recognition (wall charts, names displayed in hallways, names in directory, etc.)
    - Friendly competition (classes, grades, staff, etc.)
    - Combine with social events
  - Make it rewarding
    - Free school directory
    - Entry in prize drawings
    - Classroom prizes
    - Special discount at local businesses
    - Free pass to school event
    - Principal student if goals are met
    - Check writing campaign – Invest in your Child/School (rewards for kids to return form/envelope even if empty, prizes for returning forms/envelopes)
- Membership resources
  - Quick reference guide
  - Local officers handbook
  - Just Between Friends ([www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org))
  - Running a PTA ([www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org))
  - Field service and council support
  - MPTSA membership chair
  - MPTSA state office
- **Chit Chat for Councils**
  - Presented by Mary DeYoung-Smith, MPTSA President, and Shaton Berry, MPTSA President-Elect

- Councils provide opportunities for leadership development by modeling good leadership skills
  - Interpret, promote and support
  - Coordinate local units
  - Strengthen PTA leadership
  - Much, much more!
- Councils coordinate opportunities for local units to coordinate efforts and share information. Schools administrators can also share info through a council.
- It is preferred that Council officers do not serve as local unit officers. Council leaders should have training from Michigan PTSA.
- National PTA eLearning modules ([www.pta.org/leadership\\_training.asp](http://www.pta.org/leadership_training.asp)) – 16 training topics
  - Communication
  - Individual leadership
  - Time/paper management
  - Stress/conflict management
  - NPTA skill building resources
- Barb Blanchard, past MPTSA president and Family Engagement Chair, has materials re: volunteers, diversity, etc. and principal involvement presentation
- Council leadership position serve as the “chair of chairs” for local units
  - Scope and purpose of position
  - Guidelines to enhance effectiveness
  - Share MPTSA and NPTA resources
- Every member unit is represented on Council
  - Attend meetings
  - Make reports
  - Announce activities
  - Encourage members
  - Procedure book
  - Delegate report form
- What to accomplish at council meetings
  - Increase effectiveness
  - Provide support
  - Encourage ideas
  - Strengthen relationship between units
  - Provide networking opportunities (parent-to-parent, parent-to-principal, parent-to-administrator)
- Council budget
  - Operating expenses
  - Officer/chair expenses
  - Council purchases
  - Conventions, meetings and conferences
- Council programs
  - Work toward goals
  - Plan in advance
  - Cooperate with units
  - Possible programs: parent education, information meetings on important issues in school/district/community, parent resource center, legislation, blood drive
- Cooperating with the community
  - Local issues
  - Parent education forums
  - Parent representation
  - Networks and coalitions
  - Community service
  - Resources
  - Work in conjunction with other organizations in your community whose mission is in alignment with PTA
- National PTA standards for family-school partnerships
  - Welcome all families into school community (private, charter families too – invite neighboring communities/PTA to participate in events/meetings)
  - Communicate effectively
  - Support student success
  - Speak up for every child (not just children at your school/district/city)
  - Share power
  - Collaborate with the community

- **Magic Carpet Theatre Presentation**
  - Pierre, A Cautionary Tale
  - The Sneetches
  - Love You Forever
  - Bring the Rain to Kapiti Plain
- **Second General Membership Meeting/Awards Presentation**
  - Newsletter of the Year -- Livonia PTSA Council
  - Website of the Year -- Livonia PTSA Council
  - Outstanding Student Membership Award, Middle/Junior Division -- Frost Middle School PTSA
  - Business Membership -- Hoover Elementary School PTA
  - Certificate of Achievement, Membership
    - Cooper Upper Elementary School PTA
    - Webster Elementary School PTA
  - 100% Staff Membership
    - Cooper Upper Elementary School PTA
    - Frost Middle School PTSA
    - Hayes Elementary School PTA
    - Hoover Elementary School PTA
    - Holmes Middle School PTSA
    - Grant Elementary School PTA
  - Michigan Honor Roll -- Webster Elementary School PTA
- **Session 501: PTA and Title 1 (How PTA Can Support Title I Schools)**
  - Presented by Linda Sterling, National Service Rep
  - No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act passed in 2001
  - NCLB and Title I – federal funding within NCLB primarily used for teach as well as resources to support children in need (at risk)
    - Accelerated curriculum
    - Effective instructional strategies
    - High-quality professional staff
    - Extra help
    - Parent involvement
  - Parent involvement strategy
    - Every Title 1 school (or Title I targeted school) must have a written parent involvement policy developed with an approved by parents
    - Section 1118 covers parental involvement
    - Title I parent must sign off on budget
    - Parental involvement budget can be used for all parents, not just Title I-eligible students' parent (minimum of 1% of Title I funds received by the school)
    - Share the policy with other parents in school/district
    - Update the policy as needed
    - Find out what training is available and when
    - Parent surveys to identify what they know
    - Parent education night
    - Encourage completion/submission of free/reduced lunch application
    - Parent education fair with keynotes (free admission/childcare)
    - Translators at conferences
    - Welcome packets
    - Discuss during IEPs
  - School-Parent Compact
    - Every Title I school must have a school compact, developed with and approved by parents
    - Covers what is needed to help all children achieve high academic standards
    - Specifies how teachers will keep parents informed about their children's progress
    - Defines the terms of parent-teacher collaboration
    - Include updates in newsletter and PTA meetings
    - Communicate details clearly and concisely
    - Create a Title 1 Liaison and/or support group for parents
    - Create glossary of terms
  - District Policy
    - Every school district must have a written Title I parent involvement policy, developed with and approved by parents and evaluated every year
    - Get a copy of district policy
    - Look for specific, concrete language that lays out how the district will meet its obligation

- Parents, principal, and district coordinator should meet to review
  - Parent professional development
  - Translators / ADA parent support
  - Student-led conference
  - Policies available in multiple languages
  - Educate parents about needs assessment
  - Utilize legislative chair and resources
- Report Cards
  - School district must distribute a report card specifying how every school and the district as a whole are performing
  - Make sure data is addressed in the Title I or school improvement plan
  - Make sure report card is designed and written in a way that is understandable by all parents
  - Break down report card at PTA meeting
  - Explain how data affects all children – not just Title I-eligible students
- Public School Choice
  - If a Title I school has not made adequate yearly progress (AYP) over the past two or more years, parents have choices
  - Find out how school is doing early and communicate info to parents
  - Find out whether school has met AYP for the past two years – if not, in which areas and why?
  - Schedule a meeting with the principal to find out what the school is doing to improve achievement
  - SES = supplemental educational services (available to parents if school does not meet AYP)
- State Review
  - The state education agency is responsible for monitoring Title I programs in its state
  - If you disagree with the district policy express yourself
  - Ask the state Title I office to meet with district administrators to discuss concerns
  - If you believe the state is not doing its job for all children, contact the federal department of education
  - Let parents know what questions to ask
  - Have a Title I Liaison on the PTA board
  - PTA workshop series over many weeks
- Questions
  - 800-307-4PTA (4782)
  - [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)
- **The W.K. Kellogg Mpatapo Drummers and Dancers Performance**
  - African drums and dancers
  - Deborah Hall, Director, Battle Creek
- **Dinner/Third General Membership Meeting/Keynote Presentation**
  - Audit presented
  - Larry Scott from Rachel's Challenge presented
  - Prize drawings – raised \$3372
- **Convention Party and Silent Auction**

**Sunday, April 25, 2010**

- **Session 601: Home & School – Working Together to Keep Our Children Mentally Fit**
  - Presented by Barb Flis, Founder, Parent Action for Healthy Kids
  - Michigan Department of Education has set mental fitness goal for kids and is looking for PTA to conduct focus groups and/or workshops
  - Mental illness (impairment) should be treated like any other illness
  - Parents need resources to identify mental illness or impairment in their children and support on how to help their children
  - Positive stress: meeting new people, speaking in a group
  - Tolerable stress: short term (ex: car accident) and requires adequate adult support
  - Toxic stress: high level, long term, highly damaging (ex: abuse)
- **Fourth General Membership Meeting/Keynote Presentation**
  - Barb Flis discussed parent action for healthy kids – will be on Fox News May 6
  - Motion presented to modify MPTSA Resolution on Mandatory Expulsion Policies; motion did not pass
  - David Squires, MPTSA VP of Student Involvement, discussed student rallies (10 students attended)