

Plano ISD Council of PTAs Newsletter

January 2009

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Start Your Engines!

Every two years we get a chance to really make a huge difference in Texas. Our legislature only meets for a couple of months every two years - a small window - and the new session just started. You are part of a HUGE organization! In Plano, we have a membership of 36,000 people. Across Texas, the figure rises to 600,000 members dedicated to children. When we work together, we can get a lot done.

Calendar & Contacts

The [Council calendar](#) is on the Plano PTA website. If you are a google calendar user, you can easily add it to your personal calendar.

[Contacts](#) for the PTA Council board and information about each position can also be found on the website.

There is growing optimism throughout Texas about the legislation that can be passed this session to benefit education and the health and safety of children. But these things happen because we tell our legislators we want them to happen. So, for the next few months, you'll be hearing a lot about how YOU can make an incredible difference in the future of our children. The legislative priorities of Plano ISD, Plano PTA Council and Texas PTA are very much in alignment, along with many other noted and respected groups. Working as a team, we can send an email, write a letter, make a phone call or visit our leaders in Austin to let them know where we stand on issues of importance to our children and community. Share your thoughts and actions with your friends to get them to be part of the process and part of the solution. Below are some items you can do now, and in future editions of this e-newsletter we'll have more ideas of how you can make your voice heard and help get the legislation we need. Funding for education, 4x4, unified GPA, TAKS testing, top 10% rule and more....there is a lot at stake. Together, we can make a huge impact. So, start your engines.... here we GO!!!

Quick Links...

[Plano PTA \(Our Website\)](#)
[National PTA](#)
[Texas PTA](#)
[Area 15 PTA](#)
[Plano ISD Home](#)

Sincerely,

[Cara Mendelsohn](#)
President, Plano ISD Council of PTAs

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)



New Guidelines for Historians

The new guidelines for the 2008 / 2009 year will be on the website shortly. Please take an opportunity to review the requirements. If you need the guidelines e-mailed to you, please send a request to my e-mail address: historian@planopta.org.

If you have any questions, please let me know.

[Debbie Rynas](#)
Historian, Plano ISD Council of PTAs

Environmental News

Armstrong Middle School is Plano ISD's 38th school to participate in organic recycling and we are SO excited that they have committed to making their campus as "Green" as possible! Thanks to Donella Green for her leadership and strong support of environmental excellence. If your school would like to join the 38 schools currently participating (and save the district money) please feel free to [contact me!](#)

Finding the best local food sources just got easier. This free [online guide](#) helps you find local, sustainable, organic food in the U.S. and Canada. Click the link above to get started.

Start the New Year off right by saving energy! Computers and monitors account for half of the electricity used in a typical office. A single monitor left switched on overnight can use the same energy as a laser printer producing 800 A4 printed copies! Yikes!

Speaking of computers and other electronic equipment, [Elliott's Hardware](#) is the City of Plano collection sight on the 3rd Saturdays of the month between 9-11. Don't throw these items in the trash!

Keep up all the good recycling work at your schools. It really DOES make a difference.

Michele Dave

Environmental Chairman, Plano ISD Council of PTAs

"WOW" Response to 2008-2009 Reflections Program



The 2008-2009 Reflections Program has now completed the first two levels of judging at the local school level and at the Council level. At the local level, there was great participation with over 2500 entries received from 53 local Plano schools! After the local judging, 515 entries advanced to the Council level judging that occurred on December 2nd at Sockwell Center. The judges at this level were all professionals in their field, representing local art and dance studios, the Plano Symphony Orchestra, a video production house, English teachers, and the PISD Fine Arts Department. They were so impressed with the high caliber of talent exhibited by our Plano students. One of the judges wrote, "Thank you! It was great! I felt honored to be able to serve the community & students in this way."

Fifty-four entries advanced to the next level and will represent Plano ISD in the state level judging, which will occur January 28-30th in Austin.

The Plano Council of PTAs will host a Reflections Reception the evening of April 1st at the Sockwell Center, honoring the students who received a Council award for their entry.

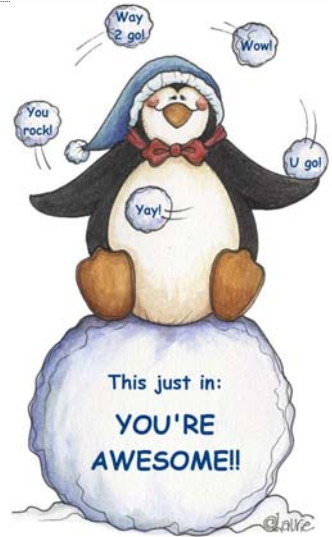
Congratulations to all of our Plano students who advanced to the Council and State levels. And a big thank you to all of the students who participated in this year's program. You truly "WOW'ed" us all.

Jan Barber

Arts in Education Chairman, Plano ISD Council of PTAs

Awarding Our Heroes

Every year local PTAs have the opportunity to honor extraordinary volunteers, staff or community partners that have made a significant impact on their PTA at the Texas Life member Banquet. The banquet is coordinated by the Plano ISD Council of PTAs, and we are proud to have returning sponsor AXA Advisors and Class Act School



Packs.



We are pleased to announce that Jan Wilkerson, Texas PTA President, will be our keynote speaker.

This is a big affair and we expect over 600 guests! Invitations have gone out to all the PTAs and RSVPs are due soon! Our theme this year is Be A Hero. Your detailed information on each honoree should have already been sent to the Council Membership Chairman and pins and certificates should have been ordered so they are received in time for the banquet. If you would like more information, please [email me](#).

Banquet Details

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

6:30 p.m. @ [Plano Centre](#)

(just east of Spring Creek & Central Expwy)

\$25.00 per person, dinner included

RSVP needed by the 1st of February at the latest. - see details on invitations!

Send RSVP card with dinner checks to:

Lisa Williams

6332 Brimwood Drive

Plano, Texas 75093

[Lisa Williams](#)

3rd VP (Membership), Plano ISD Council of PTAs

I Want To Be An Advocate -- How Do I Get In Touch With My Texas Legislators?



We all share the same Texas Senator, the Honorable Senator Shapiro. Our school district attendance boundary is split between 3 Representatives in the Texas House. Please contact only the Representative for which you are eligible to

vote.

Our Texas legislators are:

All of PISD:

Senator Shapiro

5000 Legacy Dr., Ste. 494

Plano, Texas 75024

Phone (972) 403-3404

Fax (972) 403-3405

email form:

<http://www.senate.state.tx.us/75r/senate/members/dist8/dist8.htm#District>

Far East Plano/Murphy/Parker:

Representative Jodie Laubenberg

District Address

603 North Goliad

Rockwall, TX 75087

(972) 772-8525

(972) 722-3377 Fax

email form:

<http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/email.php?dist=89&rep=jodie.laubenberg>

Far North Dallas/Richardson/areas just east & west of 75 to Custer:

Representative Jerry Madden

District Address

P. O. Box 940844

Plano, TX 75074

(972) 424-2235

(972) 424-6730 Fax

email form:

<http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/email.php?dist=67&rep=jerry.madden>

West Plano to Custer Road:

Representative Brian McCall

District Address

2301 W. Plano Parkway

Plano, TX 75075

(972) 881-0890

(972) 578-9268 Fax

email form:

<http://www.house.state.tx.us/members/email.php?dist=66&rep=brian.mccall>

What Do I Say?

Now we know how to contact our legislators, what do we say to them? Here are some ideas:

- That you are hoping they will support legislation for children and education.
- Your thoughts on expanding the 4x4/adding degree plan choices for students
- That you are a PTA member
- Good luck on an important legislative year.
- You will be back in touch as issues arise to let them know your opinion.
- Thank them for their service

Stay Up To Date

Finally, to stay up-to-date on the latest developments, you can check out the [Texas Legislature Online](#). From the status of a bill to finding out how your legislator voted, you'll find it there!

Grab Your Seat on the Bus!

You are invited to hop a ride to Austin to celebrate Texas PTA Day @ Capitol! We'll join folks from all over Texas as we show up on the steps of the Capitol and advocate for issues that affect children. This event will kick-off the 100th birthday of Texas PTA and there is sure to be media coverage and many dignitaries in attendance. Plano ISD is paying for the bus to take us there and back because they believe so strongly in parent involvement and advocacy.



Agenda for the day:

Board the charter bus on **Thursday, February 26th**, at 5:30 a.m. at the **PISD Administration building**.

On the bus, we'll watch a legislative update that has been prepared by Texas PTA lobbyist that will get us up to date on all the issues and etiquette of our visit with legislators. We'll have snacks and drinks provided and you are guaranteed a good time!!!

In Austin, we'll attend the rally on the Capitol steps, participate in the birthday celebration at the Capitol, have lunch and meet with our legislators (in groups with a team leader), take a quick tour of the Texas PTA offices (it is a historic house) and then head back to Plano.

We will return by **7:30 p.m.**

To reserve your seat, please [email Gretchen Abner](#). The bus will fill up fast, so please make your reservation ASAP!

Save the Date - PISD PTA Council Vendor Fair

The PISD PTA Council Vendor Fair is coming!



Date: **March 28th**

Time: **9:00 - 1:00**

Parenting Programs, Fundraising, Speakers, Promotional Products, and School Supply Vendors will be at your disposal. We will also be giving away many raffle items for those who attend. All attendees will receive a special goodie bag & folder with great samples and

ideas.

Save the date and tell your friends and family to attend. This event is FREE and open to other organizations that are looking for programming and fundraising ideas.

Vendor information -- e-mail waysandmeans@planopta.org for more information

Save the Day for RoughRiders and PTA

PTA's RoughRiders Day will be Sunday, May 3, 2009! Sit with your school's PTA and enjoy the RoughRiders game, with all the PTAs in Plano's Council of PTAs as company! Watch for more information, coming soon!



PTA Mission

PTA is

A powerful voice for all children,
A relevant resource for families and communities, and
A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

PTA Vision

Making every child's potential a reality.