

## Plano ISD Council of PTAs Newsletter

March/April 2009

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Henry Ford said "Whether you think you can or can't, you are right," basically saying we can do anything if we believe we can. I think each person has the ability to do more than they think they can, even if they don't believe it, if they just start doing it. We are facing many challenges in our PTAs, schools, communities and homes. A lot of families are struggling and many changes are sure to come our way. Now is the time to start doing all you "think you can," and more, to keep our children on the path to success in the future. There are many ways for you to do it - from contacting your legislators about important education bills being considered, planning how PTA can meet the needs of our students with less resources available, preparing our students for college and putting money into savings to make those dreams come true, taking a stand in the community and agreeing to a volunteer position in your PTA. More resources about each of these steps are listed below. As a member of Plano PTA Council this year, you have already accomplished a lot. Let's do more - I think we can!

### Calendar & Contacts

Sincerely,

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

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.

### Save the Day for RoughRiders and PTA

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

### Quick Links...

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

[Join Our Mailing List!](#)

PTA's RoughRiders Day is Sunday, May 3, 2009, but the deadline for ordering tickets is **FRIDAY, APRIL 10!!**



## Upcoming Dates

Frisco RoughRiders vs. Corpus Christi Hooks  
Sunday May 3, 2009  
2:00pm

4/14  
PTA Council regular meeting, 10 am, PISD Admin

For just \$12.50, you get all this, **plus** helping to make your school the loudest one in the bullpen!

4/18  
Area 15 PTA Spring Conference in Richardson

What's included:

4/23  
PTA/Key Communicators Candidate Forum, 7 pm, PISD Admin

- A ticket in the bullpen section with your school
- A limited edition RoughRiders baseball cap
- Kids 12 and under run the bases following the game
- A PlayBall game program (with customized PTA cover)
- A donation to scholarships for Plano students
- Access to Deuce's Playground for all kids under 12
- Pregame player autographs

4/30  
New PTA president/treasurer training, 6:30 pm, PISD Admin

For more information, please contact your PTA President or e-mail [roughriders@planopta.org](mailto:roughriders@planopta.org).

5/3  
PTA Day @ RoughRiders!

Your tickets will be available for pick up at the RoughRiders Ticket Office after April 22 or will call on the day of the game. Ticket Office hours are Monday-Friday 9am-6pm; Saturday 10am-4pm.

5/4-5/8  
Teacher Appreciation Week

[Click here](#) to download the ticket order form.

## 2009-10 PTA Council Officers Elected

5/12  
PTA Officer & Chairman Training, 9 am, Sockwell Center \*for all incoming PTA board members



President	Cara Mendelsohn
1st Vice President	Dana Bilbray
2nd Vice President	Kelly Waterman
3rd Vice President	Lisa Williams
Treasurer	Angela Miner
Secretary	Susie Learmont

5/26  
PTA Leadership Orientation Training 6 pm, PISD Admin, \*\$6, elected officers are required to attend once in PTA career

You are welcome to apply for PTA Council chairman positions. Contact [Cara Mendelsohn](#) for an application form. Deadline is Friday, April 10th.

## Legislative Update

5/27  
PTA Leadership Orientation Training 9:30 am, PISD Admin, \*\$6, elected officers are required to attend once in PTA career

Over 7000 bills were filed in the Texas legislature this session. Over 2000+ have to do with education, children's safety and health issues. Plano PTA is tracking a number of these bills. If you don't already receive the Texas PTA "Under the Dome" e-news, please consider subscribing. It is a great way to stay on top of what is happening in Austin on issues of concern to parents. To subscribe, email [advocate@txpta.org](mailto:advocate@txpta.org). To check out bills of interest to Texas PTA go to <http://www.txpta.org/legis-res-pos.html>.

### **Concerned about Vouchers? Think Pre-K is Important?**

Last week, Plano PTA leaders met with State Rep. Madden-R, Plano, to talk about a bill he co-authored that supports a statewide voucher plan for pre-K (HB1891). PTA has a position that opposes any vouchers, but this bill is even more pointed in how it affects Plano.

**What this means to you:**

Less dollars for our school district AND the millions of tax dollars you have already paid to build our 3 early childhood centers that have certified teachers, along with curriculum that prepares them to be successful in public school, will be sitting below capacity to fund private, unaccredited enterprises to provide pre-K without certified teachers. There are no statewide pre-K educational standards that have been adopted.

In Plano, we haven't had an increase in the dollars from Texas to the school district per student in 4 years. We are facing a deficit (again) and can't afford for even one dollar less to be available. Because they are out of other options, our school board has had to

approve increases in student:teacher ratios in elementary schools, have our teachers teach an additional class each day in the high schools and eliminated programs that specifically target low income and minority students for advanced classes.

Please send an email to these 2 legislators to let them know your thoughts on this issue.

Rep. Jerry Madden

We have asked Rep. Madden to withdraw from this legislation, as it was not in the best interest of the citizens of his district. He did not agree. Perhaps you could ask him also?

Chairman Rob Eissler

Rep. Eissler is the Chair of the House Public Education committee and co-author of the bill. He has the power to modify the bill, move it forward or kill it.

### **High School Graduation Requirements - What is the latest?**

Big education bills have been introduced in both the Texas House (HB3) and Senate (SB3). Both bills are really long and include many elements that affect public education. The section that deals with high school graduation proposes some modifications to the 4x4. We support the modifications but they do not fix the basic problems and contain some new undesirable elements.

#### **Good News**

- Students will have more choices! Students with a passion for certain elective strands will be able to fit them into their schedules and even try some additional electives that fit their interests. Students who don't really have a passion for any one thing will have the opportunity to find a niche.
- There is a second degree plan choice, the Standard Plan, that does not require 4x4 and instead requires at least 3 years of math and 2 of science. (note: there are additional specifications to this plan)
- Additional 4th year math and science classes are being added that would better fit some student's needs.

#### **Bad News**

- The bill calls for the creation of the Texas Plan, which is 4x4, plus two years of foreign language + 8 electives. This flexibility in electives is nice, but cuts out mandated PE, health, technology and arts classes. Our concerns range from issues about epidemic childhood obesity, need for sex education on the high school level (Texas has the 3rd highest per capita teen pregnancy rate in the US and highest for second teen pregnancy), need for technology and arts education, which we view as essential to career success.
- Sadly, instead of offering the Standard Plan as an equal option, it is considered a lower degree geared toward career and technical pursuits and requires a parent and school official to sign off on a student's participation.
- If voted in, these new plans will go into affect for our 6th graders, leaving all of our 7th through 10th graders under the current 4x4.

### **FYI - Other Parts of the bill:**

- Allows districts to promote kids to the next grade even if they fail TAKS
- Retains the distinguished diploma for students who take a 3rd year of foreign language and show advanced measures (like AP classes).
- Will eliminate TAKS and replace it with something that is also high stakes.
- High school students will take end of course exams.
- Schools will have new ratings: accredited, accredited-warned or accredited-probation.

- School ratings will still be based on the one test taken on the one day (TAKS or other).
- Districts will have new ratings that include testing data, financial information, special education compliance
- Mandates a uniform GPA by the Texas Higher Education Board

The bill authors have encouraged input on ways to improve the bill. We encourage you to take a minute to email them and share your opinion of this bill and any ideas you may have on how it can be improved:

#### [Senator Florence Shapiro](#)

Sen. Shapiro is the Chair of the Senate Public Education committee and co-authored the bill. She has the power to modify the bill, move it forward or kill it.

#### Chairman Rob Eissler

Rep. Eissler is the Chair of the House Public Education committee and co-author of the bill. He has the power to modify the bill, move it forward or kill it.

### **Upcoming School Board Election**



Two spots on the Plano ISD school board are up for election on May 9th. Trustees make all final decisions regarding school district priorities, policies, personnel, textbooks, expenditures and growth management. They also adopt a budget and levy taxes. There are 6 candidates running and you are encouraged to learn more about the candidates. Plano PTA Council co-hosts with the Key Communicator program a candidate forum each year. Please join us on April 23rd at 7 pm in the PISD Administration board room for an opportunity to

learn more about the candidates that will affect your child's educational experience in Plano. Additional candidate forums are listed [here](#).

### **Superintendent Otto and President Jenkins Discuss The Power of Parents**

Murphy Middle School welcomes all PISD parents to hear and speak with PISD's leaders **April 15 at 7 pm** to learn how parents can influence the state legislature right now! Find out PISD's stand on issues such as TAKS, accountability measures, Robin Hood, 4x4, the drop-out rate, and the future of online and plugged-in education options. Learn who makes decisions regarding your school and how you can voice your opinion to legislators on these and other issues. A Q&A session will follow the presentation, so come prepared with questions. Now's your chance!!



### **Dues News & Bylaws, Too!**



"Effective July 1, 2009: The total annual dues amount per member sent to Texas PTA (combined dues for National and Texas PTA) will be \$4.00. This amount represents the National PTA dues portion of \$1.75 and the Texas PTA dues portion of \$2.25, which reflects the \$1.00 increase approved by the convention delegates. All amendments, including the dues increase, will take effect without further approval at the Local PTA level. You can view the bylaws changes [here](#)."

If you are in the process of amending your Council or Local PTA bylaws, please be aware that your Texas PTA Board of Directors approved amended templates, which will go into effect after Summer Leadership Seminar in July. These new templates will be available for your review on the Web site in April. However, you should continue to complete the amendment process using the existing templates at your Council or Local PTA. The changes to the templates are all mandatory and will not require either a vote of your membership or resubmission to Texas PTA. For more information, contact a Texas PTA Bylaws Committee member or your Texas PTA Member Services Department at 800-TALK-PTA."

(excerpted from March 9, 2009 Letter from the Texas PTA President)

## **What does this mean for you and your local PTA unit?**

***Dues Increase:*** This means that effective July 1, 2009, your local unit's total dues will be \$1 more than they were last year. For example, if your local unit's total dues are currently \$10, then from July 1 forward, they will be \$11. This is automatic and requires no action on your part. If your local unit would like to keep their total dues at their current \$10, that would require a Bylaws revision. Bylaws revisions generally take at least three months to go through for approval, from start to finish, so it is unlikely that you would get your approved set back in time to keep your dues at \$10 for the beginning of the 2009/2010 school year.

***Bylaws Template Change:*** All local units in Texas will need to update their bylaws with the new template after Summer Leadership Seminar. If the only change you are making to your Bylaws is the new template, this will not require either a vote of your membership or resubmission to Texas PTA. However, if you make ANY other changes to your Bylaws or Standing Rules, you will need to follow the required steps for amending Bylaws or Standing Rules. Checklists, forms and instructions for updating Bylaws and Standing Rules are on the [www.txpta.org](http://www.txpta.org) members only section under the Membership tab.

*Susan Talavera  
Plano ISD Council of PTAs Parliamentarian*

## **Mark Your Calendar! Officer & Chairman Training is Here!**

Plano ISD Sockwell Center  
6301 Chapel Hill Blvd.  
Plano, Texas 75093  
**Tuesday, 12 May 2009**  
**9:00 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.**



This event is an excellent opportunity for PTA members to receive general and job specific training. Ask questions, share ideas, and start planning for the new year.

**9:00 a.m.** Annual Regular Meeting of the Plano ISD Council of PTAs. During the meeting we will announce the participants and winner of the Plano ISD Council Outstanding Local Unit PTA Award!

**9:30 a.m.** The Council offers something new - group training for all board members (PTA/PISD policies and procedures the whole board needs to know).

**11:00 a.m.** Seven job specific sessions listed below (ideas, resources, policies, and procedures specific positions need to know).

- President
- Treasurer
- Membership
- Volunteers
- Secretary
- Programs: including program resources and program planning, plus information from our Arts in Education, Diversity, Environmental, and SAGE chairmen.
- Ways and Means: including a "how to" for getting donations from your community

If a Board member is unable to attend these sessions, be sure to send representatives from your Board to take notes and gather information to take back to your local unit. Questions? Please contact Dana Bilbray at [aide@planopta.org](mailto:aide@planopta.org). No reservations required!

## **LOT Training**



This is the training you've all heard about! It is an excellent introduction to all things PTA, taught by specially trained volunteers of Area 15. These trainings are provided by the Council of PTAs to fulfill your Bylaws requirement that all PTA officers must be trained once in their PTA career or by October 15, 2009. These sessions are open to all local unit PTA members.

**May 26, 2009**



Tuesday evening course  
5:30-6 p.m. Registration  
6:00-8 p.m. Training

**May 27, 2009**

Wednesday morning course  
9:00- 9:30 a.m. Registration  
9:30-11:30 a.m. Training

**Cost:** \$6.00 payable to Texas PTA, due at registration (receipt will be provided for reimbursement by your local unit). You may take a "refresher" course for free, but a handbook will not be provided.

**Location:** Both sessions will be held in the 1st floor Board Room of the Plano ISD Administration Building located at 2700 W. 15th St., Plano, 75075. Food and drink are not allowed in the Board Room.

Please R.S.V.P. or direct questions to:  
Dana Bilbray, Council of PTAs Aide to the President  
[aide@planopta.org](mailto:aide@planopta.org) or 972-516-1557

**Important Facts to Remember:**

- Space is limited-please RSVP early
- Latecomers (5 minutes) will not be seated
- You must attend the entire 2 hour class to receive your credit
- Addition trainings will be offered outside of Plano - visit Area 15 website at <http://www.area15.txpta.net/> for listings

## Texas PTA Life Membership Banquet Honorees

Being a Hero at this year's event was equally amazing to previous year's with over 600 guests in attendance. In addition to the super honorees and their sidekicks who attended, members of the superintendent's cabinet, school board members, administrators, teachers and staff, and past PTA Council presidents were also present to extend their congratulations.



Among the many incredible recipients that evening, the Plano ISD Council of PTAs honored Kelly Waterman, Plano PTA Council's Sage Chair, and Michele Carey-Dave' our Council Environmental Chair with the Texas PTA Life Membership Award for their outstanding volunteer work with the community, the PTA and their work for the youth of our city.

Texas PTA Extended Service Awards were given to Amy Newell of Rice Middle School, Becky Tanoury of Renner Middle School, Lynn Schlemmer of Aldridge Elementary School and Sethi Rashmi of Plano Senior High School for their extensive and continued service to the PTA and for the benefit of youth in our area for over the past ten years. Beyond that we also honored 204 fantastic PTA volunteers, staff members and teachers with Texas PTA Life Memberships as well. By the end of the evening we were all flying high with pride and the sense of knowing that justice was served!

*Lisa Williams,*  
Plano ISD Council of PTAs Membership Chair

## 2008-2009 Reflections Program



The 2008-2009 Reflections Program has now progressed to the next level, having been through local judging back in October, Council judging in December, and State judging in February. The Plano ISD entries have fared extremely well throughout the judging process. At the local PISD school level, with 55 schools participating, we had approximately 2500 total entries. Of those, the top 20% advanced to the Council level, where we received 515 entries. Of these 515 entries, 85 received Awards of Excellence, 116 received Awards of Merit, and 72 received Honorable Mentions, for a total of 273



awards. For a complete listing of the Council award recipients, go to:

[2008-2009 Reflections Results](#) [Excel .xls file]

[2008-2009 Reflections Results](#) [Adobe Acrobat .pdf file]

The next stop was Austin for our top 10% (54 entries) for State judging, which occurred in late January and early February. Of the 54 entries that we sent, 34 received awards! What a showing for Plano ISD! We received 10 Awards of Excellence, 9 Awards of Merit, and 15 Honorable Mentions. One of the Awards of Excellence received the honor of advancing to the National judging level and 7 additional entries will be included in exhibits in Austin at the Texas Commission of the Arts and the Texas Education Agency. Our students truly demonstrated the talent that exists in Plano. For a complete list of Texas PTA state award recipients, [click here](#).

Council award recipients and their families have been invited to our Council Awards Presentation on Wednesday, April 1st at the Sockwell Center. Awards for Kindergarten through 5th Grade will be presented at 7:00 p.m.; Awards for Grades 6 through 12 will be presented at 8:00 p.m.

Texas PTA will present their awards to students this summer. They will be contacted directly by Texas PTA.

Congratulations to our award recipients and to all of our amazing students who participated! Many thanks to our parents and especially to the local Arts in Education Chairmen, who have promoted the Reflections Program and the expression of the arts in our schools.

### Got Shoes?

PTA Council is participating in collecting used shoes for a display at the Collin County Courthouse to illustrate the number of victims that are served through the court annually. If you have adult or children's shoes that are worn out or no longer fit and you would like to donate them, we'll get them to the courthouse. After the display is over, the shoes will be shipped to Africa to a village where they use 2-litre bottles cut into half and tied to their feet with rags as shoes. We'll be collecting them at the April Council regular meeting on 4/14 at 10 a.m. in the Admin building. If you have shoes to donate but can't drop them off that day, please email [president@planopta.org](mailto:president@planopta.org) and we'll make arrangements to pick them up.



### Garage Sales for PTA



Two of our local PTAs are conducting GIGANTIC garage sales! Now is the time to get busy with your spring cleaning and donate those no longer needed items while helping the PTAs in our community.

There are no items too big or too small. Please remember that people are reluctant to purchase used appliances, electronics or battery-operated merchandise unless they know it works, so please only donate things that are in working condition with good batteries.

Items to Donate:

- Clothing (in good condition)
- Children's Toys (in good condition)
- Men's, Women's, Children's, babies
- Games (with all pieces included)
- Shoes, Belts, Purses, Jewelry
- Furniture
- Tools, Yard Equipment (in working order)
- Books
- Electronics (in working condition)

- Videos, Video Games
- T.V.s, VCR, Radios, Clocks, Cameras
- Small Household items (in working condition)
- Large Household items
- Dishes, Kitchen Ware, Small Appliances, Sofa, Tables, Chairs, Desks
- Pictures, Picture Frames, Candleholders, etc.

Please have any small items in baggies.

Please have breakable items in boxes instead of bags.

#### Armstrong Middle School

Please contact:

Mandy Jernigan, (972) 801-9106

#### Beaty Early Childhood

Please contact:

Terri McFarling, (972) 769-8892 or [btamcfarling@verizon.net](mailto:btamcfarling@verizon.net)

Where: Beaty Early Childhood School

1717 Nevada, Plano - in the Activity Room

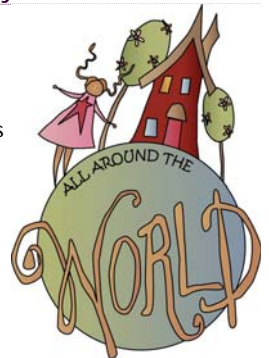
When: Saturday, April 25th 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

Tax Deductible Donation Drop off Date & Times for Beaty ECS:

You are welcome to drop off your \*\*tax deductible donations\*\* on Friday, April 24th, from 12:30-3:00 pm and 4:00-7:00 pm in the Beaty activity room, which is located on the south end of the school. Please do not bring donations to the front office or the PTA room. Please use the south doors of the activity room to drop off your items.

### Colorful Display of Cultures at Andrews Elementary

The amazing diversity of Andrews Elementary in north Plano was on colorful display at the school's seventh annual Multicultural Family Night on February 5. More than 700 Andrews guests, teachers, students and their families, experienced the sights, sounds and tastes of nearly 20 cultures through a variety of activities, including cultural booths, passports, a parade of nations, an international fashion show, songs from around the world, and other activities and entertainment.



Every Andrews student contributed to the evening's theme by creating international artwork in their art classes. The hallways were lined with Chinese kites, Argentina's famous "calle caminito" scenes, Japanese origami fish, clay vases painted in the Oaxaca Mexican style, Guatemalan worry dolls, and windmills-village scenes from the Netherlands.

Cultural booths showcased art, textiles, photos, and other artifacts from Argentina, China, Denmark, India, Mexico, the Netherlands, Pakistan, Russia and Sweden, as well as the Andrews PTA. Kids were encouraged to visit each booth and learn about the different countries by using their passports, which contained flags to color and questions to answer for each country. Students also enjoyed getting their passports stamped at each booth. The PTA booth offered information and brochures in multiple languages.

Attendees enjoyed a "taste of Italy" with samples of Italian favorites from Angelo & Vito's restaurant.

A colorful parade of nations kicked off the evening's entertainment. More than 60 students marched with 33 flags, all led by the school mascot, "Andy the Eagle". The international parade was followed by the 2nd graders' "Fifty Nifty United States" parade with flags from each state.

Visitors were then treated to a special performance by Murphy's Ollin Tonalzin Aztec dancers. The group wore dazzling feathered costumes while performing ancient dances from the Aztec culture to the beat of rhythmic drumming.

Nearly 50 students showed their heritage in an international fashion show. The colorful display included Austrian lederhosen, Indian saris, Chinese qipao, Korean hanbok, Mexican sombreros, and colorful Colombian vestido. The evening ended with the 3rd graders signing songs from around the world in various languages.

The exciting evening came together through the joint efforts of Andrews students, teachers, staff, parents, Cub Scouts and the PTA.

## **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.**

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