

2020 Illinois PTA Candidates

Illinois PTA presents the final list of nominees (slated and self-nominated)

Program Director Candidates

(2020-2022 Term)

BDNC SLATED (Board Development and Nominating Committee)

- Leadership Development

Darvel Stinson

- Legislative Advocacy

Vanessa Richardson

- Membership

Kristin Klis

SELF-NOMINATED

- Leadership Development

Dr. Carmen L.C. Palmer

- Legislative Advocacy

Stephanie Collins

BDNC Candidates

(2020-2022 Term)

BDNC SLATED

- General Member

Jim Sklena

Darvel Stinson - Slated Candidate for Leadership Development Director

Darvel has been a PTA member since 2005 and a member of the Illinois PTA State Board of Directors since 2013. First serving as Program Director of Juvenile Protection & Safety for two terms, then served as Region Director of the South Suburban Cook Region for one term and now currently serving as Program Director of Leadership Development.



While being able to engage with more local unit members as Region Director and listening to their passionate stories of how important PTA is to them, their school and their communities, Darvel became more passionate about Leadership Development. Their stories were genuinely inspiring, which has led Darvel to continue engaging, empowering and encouraging members, not just to remain active members, but to also expand on the leadership qualities that they possess. Darvel believes good members become great leaders, by being provided proper resources in order to better equip them for their positions. Darvel is also active within his own community. Darvel's first appointment was the Lansing School District 158 Superintendent Advisory Committee from 2012-2014. During that time he was also a member of the People Advocating for Recreation of Kids Committee (P.A.R.K.). Currently, Darvel is a member and President of T.F. South H.S. PTSA, Parent Liaison-T. F. South H.S. Parent Advisory Board, Commissioner-Village of Lansing Human Relations Commission, member of the Village of Lansing Complete Count Census Committee, and member of the Ministerial Staff as Youth Pastor at Christ Universal Church of Holiness. It is Darvel's desire to continue on as a member of Illinois PTA State Board of Directors as Leadership Development Director, to help make sure the proper Leadership Resources are accurate, efficient and conveniently accessible, in order to equip leaders and members with knowledge and structure, to effectively continue advocating to make every child's potential a reality.



Vanessa Richardson - Slated Candidate for Legislative Advocacy Director

Vanessa L. Richardson is a mother of a 12 year old son. She works as a public relations associate in Chicago , where she focuses on business to business communications. She has been a part of PTA for 7 years, both as a local unit vice president and president and most currently as the Chicago Region Director.

Vanessa has worked with the Chicago Urban League, League of Women Voters, Parent Power Chicago and countless other parent and child focused groups. Education, juvenile justice reformation and health legislation are important issues for Vanessa.

In her spare time Vanessa volunteers with the Chicago Sports Commission and Scouts BSA. She enjoys family outings and community festivals.

Kristin Klis - Slated Candidate for Membership Director

Kristin Klis has been involved with PTA since childhood when helping her Mother organize Market Day pickups in Elementary School. Kristin's first PTA position was as PTSA secretary for her high School where she served in that position for two years. After high school Kristin served as the IL PTA Youth Representative for a year. Kristin has attended numerous National and State PTA conventions since 1994. When Kristin's youngest daughter started kindergarten, she chartered a PTA at the school and has served as President, Treasurer and Vice President. Kristin has served on the IL PTA BDNC as a general member for multiple years.



Currently, Kristin is the General Arrangements Chairman for the 2020 IL PTA Convention and filled an open Membership Chairman position. Kristin is looking forward to the possibility of serving on the IL PTA as Membership Chairman for a full term.



Jim Sklena - Slated Candidate for Board Development Nominating Committee, General Member

Jim believes in "community". Jim believes strong communities create better children and make us better adults too. PTA is one of the best ways Jim knows of to create & build that sense of community. Jim has a long history of volunteering with community organizations, including the Boy Scouts, local high school's booster club, a local Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) and their state-wide on-call Search & Rescue (SAR) team. Jim's PTA experience began in 2007 simply serving pizza at a PTA Bingo Night.

Except for one year "off", Jim has served as a PTA officer every year since 2008. Jim has been a Treasurer and President at both elementary and Jr. high schools, a Council V.P., a Council President and served on multiple committees along the way.

Jim brings more than 30 years of personal experience working with not-for-profit groups and volunteers, as well as more than 15 years of experience managing volunteers

Dr. Carmen L.C. Palmer - Self-Nominated Candidate for Leadership Development Director

Leadership training is at the heart of the success of our PTA. When leadership training is able to be developed in meaningful and fun ways, members engage and more and more leaders emerge.

With a growing base of well trained, enthusiastic leaders comes an increased and well serviced membership. I truly believe that the Leadership Development Program has a direct and positive impact on increased membership – not overnight, but overtime.

As an elementary school teacher who chartered the PTA in my school during my tenure, I had great PTA training provided by my then District Director via Illinois PTA. I was able to work closely with my parents, teachers, and students successfully. I enjoyed seeing what good leadership training and teaching can do. Now retired, I can still see what good leadership training can do.

My Illinois PTA University doctoral degree thesis of 2019 helped me see again, that the same leadership training practices that made leadership training meaningful and fun then makes leadership training meaningful and fun now. The Good Standing Pot-Luck-Parties Leadership Training Workshop series that were designed by me for my PTAU of IL PhD Thesis produced the Illinois PTA University Chicago Region Class of 2019 yielding seventeen (17) Graduates that walked across the stage at their Chicago Region Graduation Ceremony hosted in Chicago at the Corliss High School Auditorium.

The PTAU of IL Class of 2019 included eleven (11) IL PTA University Bachelor Degrees, five (5) Master Degrees, and one (1) PhD, me. Post- graduation, each graduate was invited to serve on the District 25 Board of Directors by the newly elected District 25 Director, who was one of the Master Degree graduates in the Class of 2019. All accepted, and are presently applying their leadership training as officers in their units and/or as board of directors in their Districts. This is what I think Illinois PTA Leadership training walks like, talks like, and looks like. I hope you do too. Thank you for your consideration



Stephanie Collins - Self-Nominated Candidate for Legislative Advocacy Director

As a retired, 32-year veteran, Chicago Public School teacher, I have always been an advocate for children and social justice. At this time of my life, I continue to be an active participant and leader within the Chicago Teachers Union.

I have been working with my local PTA unit for several years now. In the past, I was a member of the PTA at my daughter's elementary school when she was a child and was also a member of the PTA at the school where I taught. Currently, I am a member of ILPTA and treasurer of the Educational Village Keepers (EdVK) Community PTSA. I am a 2019 ILPTA University graduate of the Chicago Regional Board with a BA working

towards my MA in Leadership Training. Also attended the Illinois PTA convention at Champaign, IL, in 2019. Other projects include Fundraising for "Save Our Schools" and working in partnership with teachers through EdVc. I also sit on the ILPTA District 25 Board of Directors.

32-year retired teacher from Chicago Public Schools. District Organizer, chairperson of CTU retirees, financial secretary of the Black Caucus, Midwest Representative of National AFT Black Caucus, president of IARA Chicago Chapter. Member of Coalition of Labor Union Women. International traveler since the age of 4. Dual citizen of Jamaica, W.I. Proud grandmother to Shan Stephen Fiorenza, who will be graduating high school this May and attending college in the fall.