Featured Speakers and Workshop Presenters

Anna King, National PTA President, National PTA Greetings

Laura Bay, Past National PTA President, Keynote Address and Workshop: The Role of Grassroots Advocacy

Bonnie Edwards, M.A. Ed, Mama’s “3 Pearls of Wisdom”

Carla Tantillo, CEO of Mindful Practices, SEL for Parents: Practices to Help Our Students Show Up and Engage

Charley Cass, Superintendent, Bethel Grand SD #82

Dagmar Kauffman, Founder of On Balance Parenting, Fostering Connections with One *Self

Ranata Witte, Chair of National PTA Programs Committee

Anna King has over 20 years of leadership experience at all levels of PTA, including Oklahoma PTA president and National PTA vice president of membership. She is the 57th president of National PTA.

Currently, Anna is the vice president of legislation for Frederick A. Douglass High School PTSA in Oklahoma City and is a board member of the Douglass Law and Public Safety Academy. She loves volunteering at the high school in her community and working beside students as they use their voices to create change and make an impact.

Outside of her PTA service, Anna is also involved in many community activities. She is a new member of the National Assessment Governing Board, Oklahoma Moms Demand Action school safety co-leader, and member of the Equity Advisory for the Oklahoma State Department of Education.

Anna feels strongly that being an inclusive association is the key to better serving students, families and communities across the country. Under her leadership, PTA will focus its work in three key areas: growth in mission and membership, leadership development and organizational effectiveness. These areas will have an emphasis on diversity, equity and inclusion for justice; the PTA brand—which includes culture and communications for a new era; and advocacy for impact at all levels.

Anna believes that it’s a heart for servant leadership that inspires people to do noble work that calls for them to offer the best of themselves, through humility and courage. She also believes that ALL children deserve to learn in a safe and welcoming environment, no matter who they are or where they come from.

Anna and her husband Glenn have a family-owned mobile catering business. She is a mother of three—Annalishia, Anthony and Glenn II—and a proud Nana of 11 grandchildren.

Laura Bay was elected the 54th president of National PTA in 2015. Prior to her election, she served as president-elect, secretary-treasurer and on the Board of Directors. She also served on the finance, field service and organizational viability committees. Bay is a passionate advocate for education and children’s issues and believes that PTA is the organization which actively supports and promotes parent, teacher and community involvement in child and education issues.

Bay got involved in PTA when her oldest son entered kindergarten classroom over 20 years ago. She was involved in her local unit, council and regional PTA activities for many years and served in a variety of PTA positions—from committee member/ chair to president. She was also active at the district level—serving as a parent voice at staff meetings and on budget committees.

As the Washington State PTA president in 2007–2009, Bay focused on developing leadership potential at all levels of PTA and facilitated the search and hiring of a new executive director. Also, during her tenure as president she led the Washington State PTA in collaborating with other organizations in the successful passage of Engrossed House Joint Resolution (EHRJ) 4204—Simple Majority Initiative. She also provided testimony before state senate and house committees, led a rally on the capitol steps and dedicated her time and energy in a statewide PTA campaign which led to the signing of HB 2261 addressing Basic Education Funding with fellow education stakeholder organizations.

Prior to serving as state president, Bay served on the Washington State PTA Board of Directors for six years as region director, secretary and leadership director. Bay and her husband, Robert, live in Poulsbo, Wash. and have three adult children—Andrew, Matthew and Celeste. She worked for the Bremerton School District as an educator and in the district office as a coordinator for assessment and instruction.
Bonnie J Edwards, M.A. Ed, Author, Educator, and Co-Minority Business owner received her bachelor’s degree and two master’s degrees in Education, Administration Leadership and Director of Instruction from Alverno College, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Bonnie also pursued Doctoral Studies in Adult Education and Higher Learning at Walden University located in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Inspired by bridging educators’, parents, students and community together, Bonnie designed the “Three Pearls of Wisdom” model, blending communication and education modalities into school communities aligned with teacher recertification. This program was implemented an instructed as a graduate course in Interpersonal Communication for adult learners. The course through McPerhson College, provided a pathway for licensed educators to become recertified to teach in the State of Wisconsin. Bonnie is recognized by her colleagues for her personable and reflective leadership style. After 14 years of teaching middle school and special education, Bonnie retired from the Milwaukee Public Schools. In 2018, Bonnie was recognized as a published author and received the Professional Achiever’s Award from the North Central Service Club, a Milwaukee based organization that provides high school scholarships to high performing female seniors of African descent.

In the spring of 2018, Bonnie and her husband, Cary Edwards, became entrepreneurs and established a new business, Edwards Educational Solutions, LLC, providing professional tutoring services to students in K-12 schools and organizations. Former clients included: The Boys & Girls Club of Greater Milwaukee, Carson Elementary School and St. Joan Antida High School. Additional clients include private residents of Milwaukee. The entrepreneur’s dedication to service hasn’t gone unnoticed by the State of Wisconsin Department of Administration. Recently, their business received the 1st runner up “Rising Star” New Small Business Award endorsed by Governor Tony Evers.

Bonnie’s family means the world to her. She believes her parents prepared her to be ready and engaged in resources to help build stronger families and school communities that share a common bond – To help students become what they were meant to become, student by student, family by family school by school, community by community. Bonnie enjoys traveling with her husband Cary, walking, and writing. Bonnie cherished her role as a mother, wife, daughter, sister, niece, and aunt. She also enjoys spending time teaching Sunday School, assisting Church Clerk and studying scripture with her church family. It is natural for Bonnie to spend her life’s work in education making connections with people. Bonnie says, “This is where you start at the table, building relationships, making connections, identifying shared values, respecting diversity, lifting one another up. This is how we build stronger families and school communities.”

Carla Tantillo is the founder and CEO of Mindful Practices—a company which provides SEL professional development, schoolwide SEL student learning programs and teacher wellness programs. She is co-founder and COO of Class Catalyst—an online tool which monitors the SEL needs of each student. Carla is an educator and entrepreneur whose organization has offered innovative Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), mindfulness, and yoga programs to over 300 schools and over 7,000 students across the country since 2006. A certified yoga teacher with a master’s degree in curriculum and instruction, Carla was a founding teacher and curriculum director of a high-poverty high school in Chicago. She has taught at both the secondary and elementary levels, is the co-creator of Hip-Hop Yoga™, and is a highly qualified professional development provider. Carla is also the author of Cooling Down Your Classroom: Using Yoga, Relaxation and Breathing Strategies to Help Students Learn to Keep Their Cool (2012), Everyday SEL in Early Childhood: Integrating Social-Emotional Learning and Mindfulness Into Your Classroom (2022) (2017), Everyday SEL in Elementary School (2022) (2016), and Everyday SEL in Middle School (2022) (2016), Everyday SEL in High School (2022) (2018), Everyday Self-Care For Educators: Tools and Strategies for Well-Being (2020).

Charley Cass is the Superintendent at Bethel Grade School District #82 in Mt. Vernon, IL. This is his 21st year in education serving as a high school teacher, middle school principal, and high school principal during that time. He was the 2016 Illinois Principals Association Middle School Principal of the Year and the 2019 Illinois PTA Administrator of the Year. He has recently published a book entitled Leaving Poverty on Purpose and for Good. Mr. Cass resides in Johnston City, IL with his wife and two children.
Dagmar Kauffman is the founder and executive director of On Balance Parenting, an organization that supports parents, caregivers and communities in raising joyful, competent and resilient human beings who lead whole-hearted and balanced lives. Dagmar is committed to creating a space for conversation and reflection about our culture's current definition of success and its impact on parenting and the well-being of our youth. Dagmar has extensive experience in facilitating and inspiring parents in the U.S. and overseas and is the creator of the Heart Talks: Parenting Courageously! series. Her professional experience includes higher education research and policy analysis, teaching, curriculum writing, youth prevention, social emotional learning, parent education and public speaking. Dagmar is the recipient of a DAAD Scholarship and holds a Master's degree in American Studies from the University of Maryland (College Park, MD). She is a dedicated yoga and meditation practitioner and teacher trainee enrolled in Brown University's (Providence, RI) Mindfulness-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) teacher certification program. A strong believer in volunteerism and servant leadership, Dagmar served many years on PTA boards in the U.S. as well as overseas. She is the co-author of the IL State PTA Social Emotional Learning Resolution (2009). Dagmar currently serves on the Community Alliance for Prevention (Naperville, IL), the Prevention Leadership Team (DuPage County, IL) and the SXSW EDU program advisory board (Austin, TX).

Renata Witte is active on several state-wide Boards of Directors and currently serves as the New Mexico PTA Vice President for Legislation and Advocacy. Her paid work and volunteer work have had a concentration in the areas of family engagement and advocacy. Renata has participated in review panels for family engagement plans both at the state and federal level. She has also served on various national organization’s committees and is the 2021-2023 Chair for the National PTA Programs Committee.