

2
0
2
4

Engage.

Empower.

Energize.

Illinois PTA Convention



Featured Speakers



Heidi LaFleur, Founder
Heidi with a Why, Inc
Keynote Address

Heidi LaFleur is a vibrant, positive and common sense leader with an explosive passion for helping people understand trauma & the critical importance of social emotional learning. She is an author, a forever teacher, former school administrator and most importantly, a mother who lives the trauma and mental health cycle with her family. She wakes up every morning to spread the message that our job is to make EVERY day the BEST day for EVERY child.

With her personal experience being the foundation of her work with kids who struggle, she has worked with thousands of students in need of an understanding, positive and compassionate adult in their lives. Her true purpose in life is to help others learn strategies that impact the lives of children of all ages & behaviors. She is the founder of Heidi with a WHY, Inc. where she provides keynote speaking, professional development, consulting & coaching opportunities across the country.

Heidi received her Bachelor of Science in Education at Drake University where she earned a full volleyball scholarship. Her graduate work in Educational Leadership took place at Northeastern Illinois University. She has authored Hop on the Clue Bus – A Common Sense Guide to Leadership, Hop on the Clue Bus - A Common Sense Guide to Conquering Teacher Evaluation and Those Kids are OUR Kids. She was awarded the Double D Award from Drake University, the highest honor bestowed on alumni student-athletes for work in their field of study, as well as the John P. McGovern M.D. Award for Lectureship in School Health. Heidi is a grateful wife of a firefighter/paramedic and proud mother of three beautiful children.



Rose Acerra, Vice President of
Advocacy, National PTA
Keynote Address

Rose Acerra Rose Acerra has been a dedicated PTA advocate since her first of three boys entered school over 25 years ago. She was elected to the National PTA Board of Directors in June 2019 and is honored to continue her PTA journey during her two-year term. At the national level, Acerra currently serves as the Vice President of Advocacy for National PTA.

Advocacy is a big part of Rose's PTA journey; she has worked to get parents a seat at the table whenever it was important to have a parent voice. PTA in New Jersey is now a critical resource and partner with other education associations, helping to ensure that students receive the education they deserve. Acerra's efforts were recognized in 2017, when she was presented with the National PTA Shirley Igo Advocate of the Year award.

With a goal of demonstrating the value of PTA, Acerra led a team of New Jersey PTA board members to recruit new members which resulted in an increase in membership for the first time in 12 years, and also greater customer satisfaction and relationship building with local PTA leaders.

Rose enjoys sharing her passion for PTA with others, and spending time with friends and her family which includes her husband, Robert and her three sons, Robert Jr, Richard and Raymond. In her spare time, she loves the beach, cruises and reading.

Convention Workshops - Saturday, March 16, 2024

Session 1 | 10:00am – 10:45am

Project Adam

Project ADAM is a national organization that helps schools become better prepared for a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) through our Heart Safe designation program. Sudden cardiac arrest in the young is a rare occurrence, but being well prepared can increase the chances of survival. Our workshop will discuss how Project ADAM works with schools to become better prepared by creating a Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP), building a dedicated CPR trained response team, having a sustainable AED maintenance model, providing education to all staff on the signs of a SCA, and conducting annual drills.

*Presenter: [Jaclyn Reider](#), DNP, CPNP-AC, CCDS, Pediatric Nurse Practitioner, Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
[Heather Baker](#), Elementary School Principal*

Saving Our Youth from the Opioid Crisis: How the PTA Can Help

In 2021 one in seven American youth, ages five to seventeen, received mental health treatment. It is reported that, in Illinois, 145,000 youngsters between the ages of twelve and seventeen suffer from depression. Approximately 61.8 percent have not received mental health treatment. When left untreated, almost 50 percent of these children will be diagnosed with a substance abuse disorder in later years.

Statistics indicate that 21.3 percent of eighth graders in the United States have tried illegal drugs at least once, with the number increasing to 61.8 percent by twelfth grade. Teens in Illinois are 4.29 percent more likely to use drugs than the average American teenager.

The PTA is a strong agent in engaging parents and can be a driving force in mental health awareness and substance abuse prevention. Ways that the PTA can promote mental health awareness and educate about substance prevention will be discussed in the workshop.

Presenter: [Phyllis Babrove](#)

Convention Workshops – Saturday, March 16, 2024

Session 2 | 12:40pm – 1:25pm

Evidence-Based Funding, Equity and the Transformation of School Funding

In 2017, Illinois passed the Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) formula to address the least-equitable school funding in the nation. Since that time, over one billion dollars have been added to school funding. We'll discuss with a panel of experts how EBF works; where we've been, where we are, and where we're going to get all schools fully funded; what increased EBF funding means for an underfunded school district; and what families should know about their school funding situation.

Our panel includes Robin Steans, President, Advance Illinois; Ralph Matire, Executive Director, Center for Tax and Budget Accountability; and Joshua Stafford, Superintendent of the Vienna High School District.

*Panel: [Robin Steans](#), President, Advance Illinois
[Ralph Matire](#), Executive Director, Center for Tax and Budget Accountability
[Joshua Stafford](#), Superintendent of the Vienna High School District*

Don't be a Spectator – Support PTA! Cross-Promoting Membership with your PTA Programming

How can you:

- Create opportunities to inform & engage potential members?
- Motivate potential members to act?
- Motivate to move from being a spectator to becoming a member of your PTA?

Membership promotion doesn't have to end after your Back-to-school events! Reach out to potential members by utilizing your amazing programs and events to demonstrate the value & impact of your PTA, provide opportunities to engage and welcome members to your PTA. Join us to learn how to cross-promote membership at your events and programs. Learn about other events that are a perfect vehicle to welcome new members throughout the year.

Presented: [Julie Holdeman](#), Membership Director Illinois PTA

Navigating New Horizons: Embracing the Modern Family in PTA

Explore the evolving concept of family in today's world. Together we will delve into modern family dynamics, inclusive communication strategies, and ways to support student well-being. Our esteemed panelists will discuss strategies on how to foster unity, break down previous barriers to build collaborative communities, and discover PTA 2.0 by adapting to the changing needs of families. This workshop is for parents, teachers, administrators, and anyone interested in creating an inclusive school environment. Join us as we gain valuable insights and practical strategies to contribute to a harmonious and welcoming educational atmosphere.

Panel: [Jaime Keirn-Whiting](#), Family and Community Engagement Director Illinois PTA
[Adrian Herrera](#)
[Northwest Suburban Peace Affiliation](#)

National PTA Presentation – Saturday, March 16, 2024

Session 2 | 1:30pm – 2:15pm

PTA Connected: Navigating the Ups and Downs of Digital Life

Parenting in the digital age can be challenging, and today's families are faced with many tough decisions surrounding technology use and navigating digital spaces. Through the PTA Connected initiative and related programming, National PTA empowers PTA leaders and families with tools and resources to strengthen their digital health, online safety and digital citizenship. This session explores several of the key themes of PTA Connected and invites participants to learn more about PTA Connected programs and National PTA program grant opportunities, in particular the Ready, Tech, Go! program, supported by AT&T. Hosted by National PTA's PTA Connected National Ambassador, Mikki Wilson.

DOOR PRIZES: One lucky participant will be randomly selected to receive a \$100 Walmart e-gift card and another lucky participant will receive a \$50 Walmart e-gift card. You must be present during this live PTA Connected session to be eligible to win.

Presenter: [Mikki Wilson](#), PTA Connected National Ambassador – National PTA



Illinois PTA 2023 Administrator, Teacher, and Volunteer of the Year

Zipporah Gwin, Outstanding Administrator of the Year. Ms. Gwin is the principal of Stratton Academy of the Arts in Champaign.



Ms. Gwin says becoming principal at Stratton Academy of the Arts in 2022 is one of her proudest accomplishments. She has dedicated the past two years to her role as a principal, demonstrating steadfast dedication to addressing the challenges and triumphs many at-risk children and families face. Within the last two school years, she has provided free and accessible enrichment opportunities in the areas of the arts, athletics, and academic programs that expand the educational experiences for over 200 students who currently participate.

She consistently focuses on results and has established systems and structures that support the overall development of students, staff, and families within the Stratton community. Zipporah works diligently to maintain a trusting and productive educational culture and climate for all stakeholders.

Active in her community, Zipporah extends her impact beyond the school walls by engaging with the youth at her church. Beyond her professional commitments, she finds joy in singing, shopping, traveling, and writing. These endeavors showcase a passion for both academic excellence and personal growth. Her diverse involvements enrich her as a community leader.

Mark Duker, Outstanding Teacher of the Year. Mr. Duker is a teacher at Waubonsie Valley High School in Aurora.



Mark Duker began his teaching career at Glenbard East High School in Lombard, IL, where he taught from 1993-1997. Mark started the band programs at Still Middle School in 1999 as well as Scullen Middle School in 2001. After 10 years at Scullen, Mr. Duker moved to Neuqua Valley High School in 2011 and then in 2013 joined the faculty of Waubonsie Valley High School where he now serves as the Fine Arts Department Chair and conducts the Wind Ensemble.

His passion is contagious as he enthusiastically leads students and more importantly, his departmental staff through the rich experiences of Art and Music. Mark's drive and attention to detail serve him well as he seeks out new ways to improve the departments he oversees, supports his staff and their growth and offers new and rich opportunities to our students. He has been a part of many renovations to his departmental areas and organized and led program efforts like the oversees band/orchestra and choir trips. He is truly a tireless advocate to enrich the educational experience for all.

Mark lives in Naperville with his wife Jen and their children Maddie and Josh..

Kelly Jo Easton, Outstanding Volunteer of the Year. Kelly is a member of Charleston Joint PTA in Charleston.



Hello, my name is Kelly Jo Easton! I am the proud mother of two, Maddison 15 & Case 13, and married to Todd. We live on our family farm that my husband owns and operates. I help him in the office and prepare the farm crew lunch to take out to the field during our busy planting and harvest seasons. Wednesdays are spent volunteering with Food 4 Kids, a program that our local PTA started. I, with the help of many wonderful volunteers, set up, pack & distribute 300 weekend food bags for our district's Pre-K through High School Students in need. The rest of my days are filled with the usual running kids to dance, Girl Scouts, 4-H, soccer, baseball or wrestling practice. We also have 11ish goats, chickens, and dogs to tend to...if you have any kind of farm/livestock animals you understand the -ish!

Congratulations to our award recipients and thank you to all our Administrators, Teachers, and PTA Volunteers.

2023 - 2024 Program Grant Recipients

This year, Illinois PTA has 24 local PTA units, 1 PTA council, and State were recipients of National PTA Grants. These grants ranged from \$1,250 to \$5,000, totaling \$40,000. These funds have been used to carry out PTA programs in their schools and communities and to promote the PTA Mission in Illinois.

PTA Grant Recipients from Illinois

PTA Wellness Fair \$1,250 Grant sponsored by Walmart

- Abraham Lincoln PTA, Belleville
- Kimball Hill PTA, INC, Rolling Meadows
- Urbana High School PTSA, Urbana

PTA Healthy Minds \$1,250 Grant sponsored Sponsored by the New York Life Foundation and The Allstate Foundation

- Calvin Coolidge PTA, Lansing

PTA Healthy Minds \$1,250 Grant sponsored by Allstate Foundation

- Fischer Middle School PTSA, Aurora

PTA Smart Talk \$1,250 Grant sponsored by Norton

- Willow Bend PTA, Rolling Meadows

PTA Connected – Be Internet Awesome \$1,250 Grant sponsored by Google & YouTube

- Dever PTA, Chicago
- Douglas School PTA, Belleville
- Longwood PTA, INC, Naperville
- Jane Stenson PTA, Skokie
- White Eagle PTA, Naperville

STEM+ Families Science Festival \$1,250 Grant sponsored by Bayer Fund

- Barkstall PTA, Champaign
- Booker T. Washington PTA, Champaign
- COUNCIL ADDISON PTA, Addison (\$5000)
- North School PTA, Villa Park
- Stratton PTA, Champaign
- Twin Echo PTA, INC, Collinsville

PTA Connected – Ready, Tech, Go! \$1,250 Grant supported by AT&T

- Aldrin PTA, INC, Schaumburg
- Dirksen PTA, Schaumburg
- Dooley PTA, Schaumburg
- Emerson PTA, Elmhurst
- Madison PTA, Lombard
- Mokena PTA, INC, Mokena
- Oliver J Kendall Elementary School, PTA, Naperville
- Poe Classical PTA, Chicago
- Sutherland PTA, Chicago

Healthy Bodies \$5,000 Nutrition Education Project sponsored by YUM-O

- Illinois PTA

Congratulations to all Grant Recipients!

Want to hear about grant opportunities for your PTA? Register your email with Illinois PTA to received announcements of future grant opportunities as soon as they come available right to your inbox.



2023-2024 Membership Star Level Recipients

PLATINUM STAR AWARD RECIPIENTS

PTA / Council	Region	President	Last Year
Ardmore PTA - Villa Park	Dupage East	Jessica Marquez	Bronze
Blaine Elementary School PTA – Chicago	Chicago	Lauren Trost	Platinum
Chesak-Martin PTA – Lake In The Hills	Northern	Lacee Keller	Silver
Columbus Manor PTA – Oak Lawn	South Suburban Cook	Tiffany Becerra	Platinum
Eisenhower PTA – Hoffman	Northwest Cook	Jessica Augsburger	Platinum
Emerson PTA – Elmhurst	DuPage East	Holly Bland	Platinum
Fischer Middle School PTSA	Dupage West	Jennifer Byers	
George Washington Elementary PTA - Chicago	Chicago	G Buis	
Glenbrook PTA - Streamwood	Northern	Joy Ballenger	Gold
Hadley Jr High PTA – Glen Ellyn	DuPage West	Martha Scarleski	Platinum
Kendall PTA – Naperville	DuPage West	Melissa Arndt	Platinum
Kimball Hill PTA – Rolling Meadows	Northwest Cook	Jamie Kanas	Silver
Leggee PTA – Huntley	Northern	Dawn Hinkle	Platinum
Maercker School District 60 PTA – Clarendon Hills	DuPage East	Poonam Patel	Silver
Manor Hill PTA – Lombard	Dupage East	Megan Nunziato	Silver
May Watts PTA – Naperville	Dupage West	Bridget McKernan	
Mokena PTA – Mokena	East Central	Maire Faddah	
Roosevelt PTA - Belleville	Southern	Jackie Kramer	
Sutherland PTA – Chicago	Chicago	Monique Gill	Platinum ²
Twin Echo PTA – Collinsville	Southern	Sarah Evers	Bronze
Welch PTA – Naperville	DuPage West	Jamie Garcia	Gold

² Unit has reached Platinum level in 2023 and 2022.

GOLD LEVEL AWARD RECIPIENTS

PTA / Council	Region	President	Last Year
Clow Elementary PTA – Naperville	DuPage West	Katie Mayle	Silver
Delay-Lace PTA – Darien	Dupage East	Daniel Flores	Bronze
Early Childhood PTA – Belleville	Southern	Nicci Ehinger	Platinum
Franklin PTA – Champaign	East Central	Heather Hamilton	
Herrick PTA – Downers Grove	DuPage East	Kelly Matusiak	Gold
Lake Park PTA – Addison	Dupage East	Carolina Bonilla	Bronze
Norridge District 80 PTA – Norridge	West Suburban	Athena Kalaras	Platinum
North School PTA – Villa Park	Dupage East	Sara Freund	Silver
O'Neill PTA – Downers Grove	Dupage East	Katie Suva	
Pleasant Lane PTA – Lombard	Dupage East	Allison Kozlowski	
Prairie Children PTA – Aurora	DuPage West	Alison Shareef	Gold
Thomas Paine PTA – Urbana	East Central	Carrie May-Borich	Silver
Virginia Lake PTA - Palatine	Northwest Cook	Sydney Manola	Bronze
Whittier PTA – Downers Grove	DuPage East	Britta Waszak	Gold
Young PTA – Aurora	Dupage West	Liz Larson	Bronze

SILVER LEVEL AWARD RECIPIENTS

PTA / Council	Region	President	Last Year
Belle Aire PTA – Downers Grove	DuPage East	Krystin McGuire	Silver
Bower PTA – Warrenville	DuPage West	Stephanie Kaurin	
Champaign Central PTSA – Champaign	East Central	Patricia Phillips	Silver
Churchill School PTA – Glen Ellyn	DuPage West	Aline Cox	Silver
Culver School PTA – Niles	West Suburban Cook	Georgia Chronopoulos	Silver
Edison PTA – Elmhurst	DuPage East	Megan Farley	Bronze
Graham PTA – Naperville	DuPage West	Becky Thorn	Gold
Hanover Highlands PTA – Hanover Park	Northwest Cook	Christine Ziemba	
Hawthorne PTA – Chicago	Chicago	Lydia Vincenty	
John F Kennedy Middle School PTA – Plainfield	East Central	Angelica Atwood	Gold
Longfellow PTA – Wheaton	DuPage West	Ashley Quaintance	Bronze
Lorena Ave PTA – Wood River	Southern	Amy Raymer	Bronze
Pierce Downer PTA – Downers Grove	DuPage East	Jennifer Klemz	Silver
Square Barn PTA – Algonquin	Northern Region	Jennifer Kranig	
Steck PTA – Aurora	DuPage West	Kara Kelderhouse	
Whittier PTA – Wheaton	DuPage West	Michelle Potter	
Wiesbrook PTA – Wheaton	DuPage West	Jen Pumphrey	
Winston Campus Jr High PTA – Palatine	Northwest Cook	Debbi Carrier	Gold

CONGRATULATIONS on Your Membership Achievement!

Illinois PTA ‘Reach for the Stars’ Membership Recognition Program honors PTA Local Units, PTA Councils, Districts and Regions that grow and support PTA membership. The tiered program recognizes membership growth and stability not just in the current school year but is also structured for PTAs to build on their success year after year.



Learn more about the ‘Reach for the Star’ Membership Recognition Program.

ILLINOIS PTA EVENT CALENDAR

View dates for upcoming trainings and events all year.



Illinois PTAs and Schools Designated as National PTA Schools of Excellence 2022-2024

Congratulations to the PTA School of Excellence Program Winners!

We are delighted to announce and extend our heartfelt congratulations to the exceptional winners of the PTA School of Excellence Program.

This program celebrates the dedication and innovation demonstrated by Parent-Teacher Associations in creating a nurturing and enriching environment for our students. The winners have exemplified outstanding teamwork, community engagement, and a commitment to fostering a positive and inclusive school culture.

Join us in acknowledging the hard work and collaborative spirit of these winning PTAs. Their efforts have not only enhanced the educational experience for our students but have also strengthened the bond between home and school.

To the PTA School of Excellence Program winners, your passion for education and unwavering commitment to our school community deserve the highest praise. Your achievements inspire us all and serve as a shining example of the positive impact that dedicated parents and teachers can make together.

Aldrin PTA and Buzz Aldrin Elementary School in Schaumburg

Keller PTA and Helen Keller Jr. High School in Schaumburg

Hoover PTA and Hoover Math and Science Academy in Schaumburg

Jefferson PTA and Jefferson Elementary School in Collinsville

Pleasant Hill PTA and Pleasant Hill Elementary School in Palatine

Stevenson PTA and Adlai Stevenson elementary School in Elk Grove Village

Twin Echo PTA and Twin Echo Elementary School in Collinsville

Whiteley PTA and Frank C. Whiteley Elementary School in Hoffman Estates

Whittier PTA and Whittier Elementary School in Downers Grove

Annually, National PTA award three PTAs a Phoebe Apperson Hearst Award nationwide. Please join us in congratulating:

Twin Echo PTA and Twin Echo Elementary School in Collinsville

the recipient of a 2023 **Phoebe Apperson Hearst Family-School Partnership Award of Merit.**

Congratulations once again and thank you for your invaluable contributions to our schools' excellence!



SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

Start Your Journey to Excellence

Enrollment for the 2024-2025 School of Excellence program opens soon.



Illinois PTA 2023 Legislation Report

Illinois PTA Legislation Policies committee reports the following achievements for 2023.

Advocacy Campaigns

In 2023, Illinois PTA ran 13 different advocacy campaigns with almost 1,700 e-mails sent to legislators in those campaigns by 1,032 PTA advocates. Of those, 569 (55%) were first-time advocates. In 2022, eight campaigns sent a total of just over 500 e-mails to legislators. This increase in response through our Voter Voice platform helped make the following legislative successes possible.

School Funding

Illinois PTA, as part of the [Funding Illinois's Future](#) coalition, was a leader in the push to increase the Evidence-Based Funding (EBF) formula appropriation to \$550 million in FY24, from testifying at the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) budget hearings through final passage of the budget. Increasing EBF funding to \$550 million from \$350 million would cut the time until all schools are at 90% adequate funding from 2037 to 2032.

It looked like this funding increase might happen until early May, when a report showing April tax revenues were unexpectedly down from the previous year and another projected the costs of medical coverage of undocumented migrants increasing to over \$1 billion in FY25. Both made legislators reluctant to increase EBF funding beyond the \$350 million they had done in years past.

However, the good news was that almost all legislators agreed that \$350 million was a minimum funding level for EBF (we've had to fight for even that in years past), and there was even some interest in making EBF funding at \$550 million a continuing appropriation until schools were fully funded (which means it would automatically be included in the budget at that level).

Invest in Kids (Vouchers)

When the EBF formula was originally passed, Governor Rauner vetoed the legislation, and the Invest in Kids voucher program was added to get his signature. The program was scheduled to last just five years, but had been extended once for an additional year. It was scheduled to end January 1, 2024.

Illinois PTA joined a coalition led by [Illinois Families for Public Schools](#) to advocate for allowing the program to end as scheduled. Private schools and the families that have benefited from the voucher program (the vast majority of whom have never had their children in public schools) lobbied almost continuously throughout the spring session and the fall veto session to extend the program. Fortunately, legislators were not persuaded that providing up to \$75 million in tax credits for vouchers was a responsible budget approach when our public schools remain underfunded. Sunsetting Invest in Kids accounted for the largest advocacy response from our members this year. Your voice made a difference.

It is likely that there will be some effort this spring to resurrect the program in some form. Illinois PTA will continue to oppose vouchers, and we hope we can count on your continued advocacy as well.

Whole Child Task Force Recommendations

[ISBE's Whole Child Task Force](#) produced a report in March 2022 with some 30 recommendations on teacher and staff training, processes, data needs, and restorative justice that would address all child needs in school. Far too often, these legislatively-mandated committees meet, produce their report, and the report ends up sitting there without any recommendations being implemented. [Advance Illinois](#) contacted Illinois PTA about working together to implement some of the recommendations regarding child trauma in education.

The supporting legislation, HB0342 (now [PA 103-0413](#)), focused on four key recommendations:

- Reporting the number of school counselors, social workers, psychologists, and nurses by school on the [Illinois Report Card](#).
- Creating a standard set of definitions around childhood trauma and implementing consistent education programs using these definitions and recommended best practices for both teacher training at state universities and professional development for current teachers. This would eliminate the various terminology and practices that districts might be implementing on their own, enabling best practices to be more easily shared between districts.
- Creating a Children's Adversity index by May 31, 2025 that would measure community childhood trauma exposure across the population of children between ages 3 and 18. The development of this index would focus on using data already collected across a wide variety of state agencies. The index is to be designed to measure progress and compare school districts to the state average. The index may be used to provide additional funding to schools with above average childhood adversity in the future to better serve and educate the children in those districts.

E-Cigarettes

Illinois PTA has been at the forefront of educating families on the [risks associated with e-cigarettes \(vaping\) since 2014](#), and the 2018 Illinois PTA Convention delegates adopted a [resolution on Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems \(ENDS\)](#). Since then, Illinois PTA has advocated for a variety of legislation to keep children safe from e-cigarettes. HB1540 ([PA 103-0272](#)) will ban vaping in any indoor location where smoking tobacco is currently prohibited, effective January 1, 2024.

Healthy School Meals for All

Illinois PTA has worked with the [Greater Chicago Food Depository](#) (a statewide organization despite the name) on child hunger issues for several years now. While our original focus at the start of the legislative session was a bill providing grants to help schools implement Breakfast After the Bell, HB2471 ([PA 103-0532](#)) moved to the forefront when a supplemental nutrition aid bill was amended to provide healthy school meals for all Illinois children.

Implementation of the bill is subject to appropriation, and since the bill was signed after the budget was enacted, the program did not begin last fiscal year. Look for Illinois PTA to campaign for funding this spring when the budget is being discussed. During the pandemic when schools were closed, many provided meals to all children and discovered that didn't just increase participation in the school lunch program among all students, but also increased it among those students who would have qualified under the free and reduced lunch program. Providing school meals to all children can reduce the stigma associated with the school lunch program and ensure that fewer Illinois children go hungry.

Opioid Antagonists (Narcan)

Previously, Illinois law said that schools may have opioid antagonists (e.g., Narcan) available on campus if they chose to do so. HB3428 ([PA 103-0348](#)) changed that "may" to a "shall," with some caveats should supplies be limited and schools find it difficult to obtain. Requiring schools to have these on campus has the potential to save children's lives, as many of the opioid overdoses are not from taking opioids directly, but rather through "fentanyl poisoning" where fentanyl has been mixed in with another drug without the user being aware that it was there.

School Bus Stop Arms

Last year, Illinois PTA successfully advocated for exempting school buses with longer stop arms from being classified as "oversized loads" on Illinois roads. This session, SB2340 ([PA 103-0404](#)) requires school districts to install longer stop arms that block the adjacent lane of traffic on all school buses with routes that require children to cross the road, effective July 28, 2023. Given that the Illinois Department of Transportation estimated that there are 1.9 million stop arm violations every year, having a longer arm that blocks the adjacent lane of traffic should make it safer for children getting on and off the school bus.

Juvenile Justice

Illinois PTA has been advocating for the end of youth solitary confinement for years, and HB3140 ([PA 103-0178](#)) finally ends the practice except for limited circumstances (e.g., the child is a threat to themselves or others, the child is awaiting transfer to another facility or their release) and only for a limited time (e.g., until they get themselves under control and do not present a threat to themselves or others). Given the strong correlation between youth solitary confinement and suicide (more than half of the suicides in juvenile facilities occur while in solitary confinement), it is long past time that the practice was ended in Illinois.

Special Education

HB3680 ([PA 103-0197](#)) requires that schools take into consideration any extra accommodation a student might need during an emergency (e.g., natural disaster or active shooter) when developing a student's Section 504 plan or Individualized Education Program (IEP). A student's IEP or Section 504 plan also must be taken into consideration when deciding whether to exempt a student from participating in a walk-through lockdown drill.

Mental Health

In order to increase the availability and accessibility of mental health resources for students, SB1709 ([PA 103-0222](#)) requires the Department of Human Resources to partner with ISBE to provide technical assistance in providing mental health care during school days. HB2156 ([PA 103-0143](#)) requires that student ID cards shall also include the contact information for the [Safe2Help Illinois helpline](#).

Bullying and Harassment

HB3425 ([PA 103-0047](#)) requires that school bullying prevention policies must include notification of the parents or guardians of all students involved in an alleged bullying incident within 24 hours of the school's administration being made aware of the incident. In addition, schools (including charter and non-public, non-sectarian schools) must report annual data on each verified allegation of bullying and the action taken to ISBE starting with the 2024-2025 school year. Personally-identifying information is not to be included in the reporting.

Full-Day Kindergarten

HB2396 ([PA 103-0410](#)) requires schools to provide full-day kindergarten beginning with the 2027-2028 school year. School districts may apply for a two-year extension to the deadline if the district is below 76% adequate funding as calculated by the EBF formula, the district is in the top 25% of the capital funding need by the Full-Day Kindergarten Task Force but hasn't received the capital funding yet, and in other limited circumstances.

State Literacy Plan

Numerous bills were introduced this session targeted at specific issues in literacy, pushing specific approaches to literacy, or favoring specific literacy diagnostic tools. As the literacy teachers on our board routinely point out, there is no one silver bullet to teach literacy—teachers need a toolbox full of diagnostic tools, approaches, and best practices. That's why Illinois PTA supported the creation of a State Literacy Plan in SB2243 ([PA 103-0402](#)).

Subscribe Today!

Illinois PTA legislation team works year-round to stay informed about what is happening in Springfield and around the state that impacts our children and their families. Keep current on Illinois PTA advocacy activities by [subscribing](#) to our Take Action alerts.



Illinois PTA 2023 Resolution Report

At the 2023 Illinois PTA Convention, the delegate body adopted an amendment to the **2018 Resolution on Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS)** calling for legislative initiatives addressing the proximity of tobacco retail stores to schools. This amendment furthers the work of the original Resolution calling for limiting the availability of e-cigarettes and other related products to children and youth, working with the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) to include age-appropriate information in the Illinois Learning Standards, and disseminating information regarding the dangers inherent in the use of these products to our constituents and like-minded associations.

The Resolutions Committee has researched similar proximity measures such as the distances between schools and alcohol sales. The majority of such ordinances are local in nature, and Illinois PTA will be preparing materials that PTAs can use to advocate for local authorities to pass ordinances restricting the proximity of tobacco sales near schools.

The **2017 Resolution on Financial Literacy**, which was submitted to and adopted by the National PTA, continues to remain in our focus as we monitor legislative initiatives calling for Financial Literacy to become a stand-alone course requirement for high school graduation in Illinois. Illinois PTA advocacy has helped HB 1375 secure passage in the House, but the bill still awaits action in the Senate.

The Illinois PTA continues to monitor the effects of the Managed Care health services provided to children in the foster care system as called for in the **2021 Resolution on Health Care for Children in the Foster Care System**, paying particular attention to the information being provided to the Illinois Departments of Health and Human Services. We continue to be in contact with legislators who have expressed concerns about the lack of data available.

The **2021 Resolution on Child Safe Gun Storage** was submitted to the National PTA in 2022 and was adopted by the convention delegates. We continue to review and advocate for legislative initiatives that will strengthen existing laws, improve communication regarding the hazards of unsafe gun storage, and work with other associations addressing gun-safety as a public health concern.

Resolutions which have been submitted to and adopted by the convention delegates to the National PTA can be found on [the Resolutions page under the Advocacy tab](#). Illinois PTA resolutions can be found on [the Resolutions page under the Advocacy tab](#) on the Illinois PTA website, with active resolutions and supporting materials on the [Active Resolutions page](#).

Resolutions of the Illinois PTA which have been completed can be found in our Continuing Positions, while those which have generated no further action have been retired in keeping with the Bylaws and Policies & Procedures of the Illinois PTA State Board of Directors.