

Choice



Palmetto State Teachers Association • 2015 Assembly Street • Columbia, SC 29201 • 803.256.2065

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2015 PSTA Annual Convention

*Details and registration
 information inside this
 issue!*

Palmetto State Teachers Association 2015 Legislative Agenda

Education funding should not be dependent on sales tax revenue alone. The General Assembly needs to adopt a plan to restructure and stabilize the education funding in our state.

1. Full Funding of Mandated Programs

Full Funding of the Education Finance Act

The General Assembly must establish education as the state's top funding priority. The cost of providing a sound educational program for all of the state's children should not be funded using nonrecurring money. PSTA supports an increase in Base Student Cost to meet or exceed the level required by law. The education of 21st Century students necessitates 21st Century funding. The current Base Student Cost is \$2120.

Security of the EIA Penny for Innovation

The Education Improvement Act should be thoroughly examined and updated. Money from the EIA funds should NOT be used to supplant funding intended to be paid from the General Fund. To ensure that all sales tax revenues adequately fund the EIA programs, the majority of the sales tax exemptions must be eliminated.

State Must Fund the Fringe Benefits Program

Passing the costs of funding the fringe benefits program to the individual districts creates an unequal burden on the smaller, poorer districts and robs them of dollars that should be used to fund instruction. The legislature must appropriate funds to cover the costs of providing employee benefits.

Full Funding of the Education Accountability Act

The passage of the Education Accountability Act was a milestone in improving the education system in South Carolina. The General Assembly MUST fund the cost of the programs mandated by the EAA.

2. Funding K-12 Education

PSTA supports funding programs and resources for our poorer school districts. The recent Supreme Court ruling on the failure to adequately fund some of our state's poorest school districts was necessary. PSTA supports the General Assembly and local school districts using creative solutions to fund school districts so all students receive a high quality education. The geographic area in which children are born should not determine resources provided for educating them. The tax base of many South Carolina school districts does not provide adequate funds for a high quality education. The recent Supreme Court ruling has provided a starting point for action to take place. PSTA is in support of revamping the tax structure in South Carolina in order to fund a high quality education for all children regardless of where they live.

3. Funding K-12 Reading

PSTA supports summer reading camps and reading coaches in every school district to work with teachers of struggling readers so that all children are reading on grade level. PSTA supports professional development for teachers in reading which should be paid for by the state and/or provided by local school districts at no cost to teachers.

Kathy's Corner

A letter from the Executive Director



Palmetto State Teachers Association prides itself on being a positive voice for the educators of South Carolina. We have a small but hard working staff at PSTA. Our goal is to keep you informed about what is going on at the State House and at the State Department of Education that directly affects public school educators. The General Assembly resumed their work on January 13th and there are already

several House and Senate Bills that we are following closely. Please take time to stay current with the legislative updates by signing up for our LAN (Legislative Alert Network) by contacting craig.king@bellsouth.net.

We hope you'll join us on March 21st for PSTA's 39th Annual Convention! We have invited our newly elected Superintendent of Education Molly Spearman to be our morning speaker. PSTA member, Jennifer Ainsworth will share her experiences as S.C. State Teacher of the Year and we are featuring several great breakout sessions. Your attendance at the convention will earn five recertification credits for your license renewal. Look for a registration form on page 4 of this newsletter. You can also register on our website (www.palmettoteachers.org) or by phone at 803-256-2065.

It's very important that our *EDUCATOR VOICES* are heard this year in the General Assembly. We must stand up for our profession and the students we teach.

Thank you for all you do for the students of South Carolina and I look forward to seeing you in March!

Upcoming Events!

April 13th-17th
Spring 2015
STAR Seminar

The 2015 PSTA Annual
Convention will be held on
March 21, 2015.

To find out about these and
other exciting opportunities
for PSTA members, visit our
website at

www.palmettoteachers.org

or call us at
803-256-2065 .



PSTA Honor Roll

The South Carolina 2014 Association for Physical Education and Sports has named **Marc Camp** as the Elementary Co-Teacher of the Year. Marc is a Physical Education teacher at Draytonville Elementary in the Cherokee School District.

Anne Peterson, Lexington District One, was awarded a Special Olympics Project Unify Grant.

Jennifer Garrick and **Albert Robertson**, teachers in Lexington District One, received South Carolina Social Studies Palmetto Teacher of Excellence Awards at the annual conference in October.

Marsha Neal won a Palmetto Electric Bright Ideas Grant for Hardeeville-Ridgeland Middle School.

Paulette Moore, Debbie Love, Olivia Buffington, Laura Milem, and **Elizabeth Schaefer** presented sessions at the York District One Instructional Conference and Vendor Fair.

Mirandi Squires, Johnsonville Middle School in Florence District Five, was a keynote speaker at the South Carolina Science Council Annual Conference.

The following members presented sessions at the South Carolina Science Council Conference:

Leanne Hagen and **Erin Todd**, Horry County; **Denise Wright**, SC Virtual School District; **Barbara Player**, Georgetown County; **Debbie Chapman**, Florence One; and **John Robert Jackson**, Lexington One.

Congratulations to the following Horry County members who were chosen as the Teacher of the Year at their school:

Joey Trail, Forestbrook Middle School
Stacey Humienny, Carolina Forest Elementary
Mindi Penn, Academy of Arts, Science and Technology

In Newberry County, **Whitney Kibler** was selected as the Gallman Elementary Teacher of the Year and **Sabrina Martin** was chosen to be the Whitmire Community School Teacher of the Year.

Jane Allen retired from Lexington District Two and was inducted into the District's Heroes and Heroines Society in November, 2014. This elite society represents the "Best of the Best" in the district!

4. Enact Comprehensive Tax Reform

While protecting the state's fiscal solvency and to ensure revenues necessary to properly fund public education, PSTA supports comprehensive tax reform.

5. Recruitment, Retention, Compensation, and Evaluation of Professional Educators:

Recruitment

As South Carolina education continues to move forward, it is imperative that we make teaching an attractive career. Providing scholarships for outstanding students to go into education (the Teaching Fellows Program) and funding salary supplements for National Board Certified teachers are ways to increase the number of qualified teachers in our state.

Retention

Research shows we lose many of our new teachers within the first five years of teaching. To maintain a cadre of quality teachers in the classroom, the cap on the increments of the state salary schedule should be raised from 22 to 28 years. Adding steps to the state minimum salary schedule recognizes the value and worth of our veteran teachers, encouraging them to stay in the profession. The General Assembly must:

- fund comprehensive induction programs for new teachers that include networking, release time, and full-time mentor coaching for the first two years, and
- fully fund mentor training for districts and allow trained National Board Certified Teachers to serve as mentors.

Compensation

PSTA believes that educators are professionals and should be duly compensated. We do not support reduction in teacher salary from one year to the next or the elimination of "step" raises for teachers who qualify. The General Assembly must address the discrepancies between South Carolina teachers' salaries and the southeastern average teacher salary. Any changes to the current way teachers are compensated must be carefully considered and studied with teacher input. PSTA recommends that the General Assembly increase the number of steps on the minimum salary schedule to 28 by annually funding an additional step for the next six years. The salary schedule has not been revisited since 2001.

Enhancing the Teaching Profession

Education is a profession, and educators are professionals. The state must ensure that only licensed educational leaders lead all schools, and that a properly trained, licensed, and compensated educator teaches every class. PSTA encourages members of the General Assembly to work creatively to recognize outstanding teachers in their districts. PSTA values a working relationship between legislators and educators. We invite legislators to collaborate with teachers when making decisions that affect education.

Evaluation

PSTA supports teacher accountability for teachers. PSTA believes evaluations should be reliable, valid, and fair. PSTA welcomes the opportunity to work with other education organizations to develop plans for an alternative evaluation process that we feel will be beneficial to South Carolina school students.

Academic Standards

PSTA supports the current process of academic standard adoption in which the Education Oversight Committee and State Board adopts standards. PSTA does not support any legislation that requires the General Assembly to approve standards before they are adopted.

6. Tuition Tax Credits and Vouchers

PSTA does not support any legislation that will direct public funds to pay for private, religious, or home schooling. Tuition tax credit plans draw against our state's general fund revenue resulting in unstable budgets for our public schools and other state agencies.

7. School Safety

The best way to protect our children in schools is to have a well trained and armed resource officer in every school. PSTA supports having a School Resource Officer in every public school with funding provided by the General Assembly.

8. Assault and Battery of School Employees

PSTA supports changing criminal laws so that anyone who commits assault and battery on a school employee faces penalties that are consistent with or greater than the penalties that apply for making threats to school employees.

9. School Choice

PSTA strongly supports public school choice as smaller learning communities within the public schools. These include charter schools, magnet schools, virtual schools, single gender, and Montessori education as public school choice options.

11. School Governance

The legislature must provide for the election of all school board members in nonpartisan elections and for fiscal independence of these elected school boards so they may raise the local funds needed to comply with state and federal mandates.

12. Collective Bargaining

PSTA strongly opposes any legislation that would permit or allow teachers to enter into professional negotiations. PSTA strongly supports the preservation of South Carolina's Right-to-Work laws.



Congratulation to our newest group of National Board Certified PSTA members!

Initial Certification:

Joanna Alford
Kimberly Anderson
Shaina Barber
Samantha Butler
Jamie Davis
James Gilliam
Rebekah Gilliam
Hannah Goolsby
Nicole Graziano
Augusta Greene

Tiffany Hawthorne
Madison Hutto
Whitney Kibler
Iris Lewis
Donna Lorenz
Nichole Luckie
Janet Miscavage
Chris Nostrant
Janna Petersen
Sarah Poole

Sonja Raines
Sarah Ray
Marti Reece
Sarah Rickett
Ryan Russell
Melissa Sundstrom
Mollie Wheeler



Renewals:

Laurie Anderson
Nancy Archie
Michelle Arnold
Stephanie Bailey
Tammy Barnhill Ratliff
Beth Beard
Katrina Bigham
Virginia Boney
Rebekah Bouye
Jody Britt
Sarah Burnham
Audrey Cageao
Robin Carter-Greig
Debra Dirkes
Richard Fish
Ericha Floyd
Yvette Forehand
Jennifer Garrick
Patricia Granger
Janice Hedgepath
Maya Hoffman
rhonda Hollingsworth
Martha Hooten
Jack Hutto

Nancy kalutz
Cynthia Kussman
Doris Lee
Cari martin
Loribeth McGinty
Jeri McGuffin
Dawn Merck
Charlotte Miller
Sandra Owens
Donald paradise
Christine Phillips
Taunja Pool
Kimberly Price
Kerri Price
Cylisa Quarles
James Reeves
Maria Robinson
Angela Rowe
Robert Schiferl
Jennifer Smith
Melisa Smith
Vicki Taylor
Shannon Team
Lanisha Tindal

Margaret Ward
Jennifer West
Sabrina Williams
Elizabeth Willocks
April Worley
Carolyn Wright
Charlene Zehner



Are You an Advocate for Your Students?



It's more important than ever before that we advocate for the public school students in South Carolina.

In the past few months, Kathy Maness, Executive Director of PSTA, has traveled all over South Carolina speaking to districts, Teacher Forums, and parent groups about "Advocating for Our Students". In her presentation, she stresses the importance of being politically active and communicating with our elected officials. The spring semester is an excellent time to get informed and contact your Legislators, School Board members and other officials. If you are interested in having Kathy come and speak to your group, please email Kathy at kfc137@bellsouth.net or Toni Chewning, Director of Communications, at tchewning@bellsouth.net. You may also call our office at 803-256-2065.

Announcements

Beginning with our Spring 2015 edition, the CHOICE Newsletter will now be published entirely as an electronic newsletter. This change will allow us to keep our membership dues low as well as protect our environment for future generations!

Please take a moment to visit our website at www.palmettoteachers.org or call our office at 803-256-2065 to update your contact information. If possible, please use a personal email address. Many times delivery problems occur with school email addresses.

Don't forget PSTA's Facebook page! We are continuing to grow in Facebook fans, and we'd love to see your face there too! Follow us on Twitter @PSTANEWS to stay up to date during the upcoming Legislative Session!

Please help us serve you better. If you are in the process of changing banks and need to make changes to your bank draft please call us a week before the draft date to make sure any bank penalty fees are avoided.

TAX INFO: IRS regulations prohibit association members from claiming the portion of their dues spent on lobbying. In 2014, 9% of all dues could be attributed to lobbying. You may deduct 91% of dues paid in the 2014 calendar year.



A message from the State Department of Education...

Expanded Evaluation System Implemented Statewide 2015-16

Kristin Joannes, Education Associate, SC Department of Education

Effective teachers in every classroom and effective principals leading schools across the state of South Carolina has always been the goal of SC's Support and Evaluation Systems for educators. Beginning with the 2015-16 school years, important improvements in the ADEPT system are coming to school districts statewide.

The revised, multiple measure evaluation system couples professional practice evaluation with student outcomes to provide teachers and building principals specific, data-rich feedback related to their practice. In past evaluation systems, educators focused on teachers' practice in hopes that student achievement would correspondingly improve. This system puts intended student achievement first, strategically aligning professional practice and related professional development to intended student outcomes.

The Expanded ADEPT Support and Evaluation System uses multiple data points to generate an overall effectiveness rating for teachers and principals. For teachers, the system will use a combination of professional practice, student growth, and district choice measures to calculate an overall effectiveness rating, where principal ratings will use practice and student growth using a school-wide value added measure (VAM).

System Measures

The system's Professional Practice measures align with the SC professional standards for teachers (ADEPT) and principals (PADEPP). These measures are evaluated through a series of observations and related artifacts of evidence. How often teachers and principals are observed have not been determined, but regular evaluations are an expectation within the South Carolina ESEA waiver.

Student growth is calculated using a Value- Added Measure (VAM) for both principals and teachers in grades and subjects that have state mandated assessments. A value-added calculation is provided by the state's vendor, SAS EVAAS, using standardized state test scores. This measure controls for variables beyond an educator's control such as (if not over word count). The measure is able to predict expected growth of each student and compare it to the actual growth. Teachers and principals control which students are listed on their rosters. A value-added measure rating reflects the number of students that met their growth goals. Teachers in grades and subjects without a state mandated assessment will write Student Learning Objectives (SLOs) as their student growth measure. A South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) online training module related to SLOs will be available to teachers in February 2015.

The District Choice Measure is the optional student outcomes measure factored into teacher evaluation. For this measure, districts choose from a pre-approved SCDE list of options, or propose their own measure to SCDE for approval. This option allows districts to include district or school initiatives in the teacher evaluation system so that teachers can receive credit for those efforts.

Next Steps

SC educators will engage in Expanded ADEPT Support and Evaluation System training and readiness according to their district implementation plans as early as second semester 2014-15 school year. The SCDE will provide regular, ongoing communications in order to keep educators informed and engaged in readiness activities. Additionally, SCDE will provide training and readiness resources as they are developed on the SCDE website. Educators are advised to visit the website regularly <http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/50/> for updates, and resources.

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Published six times a year by Palmetto State Teachers Association, Toni Chewning, editor. PSTA is a statewide independent professional association for South Carolina educators. PSTA is leading efforts to improve education in South Carolina, to offer outstanding professional development seminars while providing benefits and services for reasonable dues. Questions or comments can be sent to info@palmettoteachers.org.

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President's Perspective by Dr. Jeff Venables

Another school year is already more than half over! I hope everyone is having a great year – I know that I am! Nothing could be finer than to teach in South Carolina! Thank you for all that you do for the children of South Carolina. The future depends on you, and you are doing a great job!

The new teacher evaluation system is set to take effect next year, and there will be much discussion and professional development around Student Learning Objectives (SLO). Many of us are already hard at work on the business of setting goals and determining appropriate growth targets. Others are just beginning to learn what an SLO is. If you have not heard yet about SLOs, start to educate yourself.

The Statehouse is busy this time of year. A lot of politicians have what they believe to be a lot of great ideas about education. For this reason we must continue to advocate on behalf of our students, classrooms, teachers, and administration. Let's take advantage of the opportunity in 2015 to step up, speak out, and become advocates for our profession and our kids.

Be informed! Keep up with what is happening at the Statehouse. Read the bills. If you have not already done so, sign up for the PSTA Legislative Alert Network (LAN). You will receive periodic emails informing you of the latest happenings in the state legislature.

Provide your feedback! Our representatives want and need to hear from us about issues that impact our classrooms, schools, community, and businesses. Let them know what you think. Do not copy and paste form letters. Use your own thoughts and your own words – speak from the heart. You know what is best for you, your colleagues, and your kids. Make it a point to know who your representatives are (www.scstatehouse.gov) and establish communication on a regular basis with your representatives. Call, send an email, or write a letter. Schedule a face-to-face meeting. Invite them into your classroom to let them see what you do and how you do it.

Our executive director, Kathy Maness, and the rest of the team at PSTA are working and fighting hard for you. As Kathy says, it is time to make our teacher voices heard. Don't sit back and be silent. We all can and must be teacher advocates. Make sure to mark your calendar for the PSTA Convention, March 21, 2015. Follow us on Facebook. And keep up the great work of educating our children!

