

# COUNCIL TALKS

Garland ISD Council of PTAs Newsletter • November 2012

## DATES TO REMEMBER

### NOVEMBER

- 6 **ELECTION DAY!**  
Vote! Vote! Vote!
- 7 **GISD Council of PTAs  
November Meeting**  
Harris Hill Administration Bldg  
Annex, second floor  
9 a.m.  
**PTA Rally Day Legislative  
Policy Issues Webinar**  
10:00-11:30 AM, or  
7:45-9:15 PM (see page 7)
- 8 **PTA Rally Day Legislative  
Policy Issues Webinar**  
10:00-11:30 AM, or  
7:45-9:15 PM (see page 7)
- 13 **GISD Board of Trustees  
Work Session**  
Harris Hill Administration Bldg  
Annex - Board Room - 1st floor  
6 p.m.
- 16 **5th Grade Greeting Card  
Contest** Deadline for district-  
level entries
- 28 **Outstanding PTA entries due**

### DECEMBER

- 7 **Reflections Contest entry turn-  
in session #1**  
Harris Hill Administration Bldg  
Annex, second floor  
3-6:30 p.m.
- 8 **Reflections Contest turn-in #2**  
8:30-10:30 a.m.  
**Reflections District Judging**  
10:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m.  
**Entry pick-up**  
5:30-7 p.m.

## The President's Pen

Suellen Atteberry, Council President  
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### INSPIRATION:

Freedom. It has different meanings to different people. For some it means the ability to speak your mind. For some it means being able to live where you want within a countries borders. For some it means they are willing to pay the ultimate price so that others can remain free or become free. For some it means it means the ability to choose your leaders. This upcoming month, we as United States Citizens have the right and the freedom to exercise our choice to elect our leaders. Republican, Democrat, Liberal, Independent or whatever you chose to be, exercise your right to VOTE.

I work in retail. My holiday planning started in July. The holiday season to most begins Thanksgiving week – mine started the beginning of October. Making sure that my team has what it needs to succeed is my job. PTA is oddly enough like retail. We plan months in advance to make our PTAs, children and events that we organize succeed. If you have an event you want to promote let us know. If you need some help planning – let us know & we will do what we can to help you succeed.

#### Membership Challenge

Once again – the Garland ISD Council of PTAs Presidents membership challenge is still 3%. The Membership dues deadline at the state was Oct 15<sup>th</sup>.

*(see President's Pen, page 2)*

### NOVEMBER PROGRAM:

## FOOD AND FITNESS MATTER: RAISING HEALTHY, ACTIVE KIDS

(see flier on page 3)

Our presenter, Sharon Goldblatt, recently completed her seventh term on the Texas PTA Board of Directors. She has extensive experience at the local, council, district, state, and national levels of the PTA, and is currently a member of the National PTA Resolutions Committee.

Sharon's vision is that everything matters, and every individual has a responsibility to give back to the community in whatever way, large or small, that they can.

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## PRESIDENT'S PEN

*Continued from page 1*

If your PTA has collected membership dues and this has not been turned in to the state – do so immediately.

## QUESTIONS?

As always – If you have a question or are unable to find something, ask & we will help you! There is email contact info on the Council website, at [www.gisdpta.org](http://www.gisdpta.org).

## COUNCIL TRIVIA: WHO AM I???

In each newsletter there will be a question/s about one or more of the Council Board Members. Some of the trivia questions will be obvious and others a bit more challenging. The April issue will have the last question/s. You will have until one week before the spring luncheon to turn in your answers. The winner will be announced at the luncheon & yes Virginia – there will be a prize – a trivial one, but nonetheless – a prize!

**Here is wishing you good luck – get to know your Council Board!!**

- Who has served in every PTA position except treasurer?
- How many Council board members will have graduating seniors this year?
- Who is the Arts in Education chairperson?
- How many and which Council Board members work for the school district?
- How many and which Council Board members have only 1 child?
- How many and which Council Board members have only boys?



[HTTP://WWW.TXPTA.ORG/PROGRAMS/REFLECTIONS/](http://www.txpta.org/programs/reflections/)

Sharon Wainscott, Council Arts in Education Chairman

## REFLECTIONS DATES TO REMEMBER:

**Council Level Judging of Reflections entries:**

**Where:**

Harris Hill Administration Building Annex  
Garland, Rowlett & Sachse Rooms on second floor

**Drop off for judging will be available on:**

- December 7th from 3 - 6:30 P.M., and December 8th from 8:30 - 10:30 A.M.
- Judging from 10:30 A.M. - 5:30 P.M.
- Pick up from 5:30 P.M. - 7 P.M.

**Annual reception honoring the artists**

- January 10th at the Curtis Culwell Center.

## Did you know?

- *Today's fast food child's meal is the same size of a regular meal 20 years ago?*
- *150 extra calories a day for 1 year = 15 pounds of weight gain?*

Join us to learn practical tips for parents and families to motivate and empower their quest for a healthier family lifestyle.

## Food & Fitness Matter: Raising Healthy, Active Kids

This parent program provided as a free benefit of PTA.

**Date:** Wednesday, November 7, 2012    **Time:** 9 a.m.

**Location:** Harris Hill Administration Building Annex  
Garland/Rowlett/Sachse Rooms

**Details:** Presented by Sharon Goldblatt

# READY. SET. ACHIEVE!

Committed to Student Success



# PTA RESOLUTION

## CONCERNING HIGH STAKES, STANDARDIZED TESTING OF TEXAS PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS

Courtesy of Texas PTA

**WHEREAS**, the over reliance on standardized, high stakes testing is strangling our public schools and undermining educators' ability to transform a traditional system of schooling into a broad range of learning experiences that better prepares our children to live successfully and be competitive on a global stage; and

**WHEREAS**, we commend Robert Scott, former Commissioner of Education, for his concern about the overemphasis on high stakes testing that has become "a perversion of its original intent" and for his continuing support of high standards and local accountability; and

**WHEREAS**, we believe our state's future prosperity relies on a high-quality education system that prepares students for college and careers, and without such a system Texas' economic competitiveness and ability and to attract new business will falter; and

**WHEREAS**, the real work of designing more engaging student learning experiences requires changes in the culture and structure of the systems in which teachers and students work and that parents enhance; and

**WHEREAS**, what occurs in classrooms every day should be student-centered and result in students learning at a deep and meaningful level, as opposed to the superficial level of learning that results from the current over-emphasis on that which can be easily tested by standardized tests; and

**WHEREAS**, Our vision is for all students to be engaged in more meaningful learning activities that cultivate their unique individual talents, to provide for student choice in work that is designed to respect how they learn best, and to embrace the concept that students can be both consumers and creators of knowledge; and

**WHEREAS**, only by developing new capacities and conditions in districts and schools, and the communities in which they are embedded, and by engaging parents in meaningful ways as partners in this effort, will we ensure that all learning spaces foster and celebrate innovation, creativity, problem solving, collaboration, communication and critical thinking; and

**WHEREAS**, these are the very skills that business leaders desire in a rising workforce and the very attitudes that are essential to the survival of our democracy; and

**WHEREAS**, imposing relentless test preparation and memorization of facts to enhance test performance is stealing the love of learning from our students; and

**WHEREAS**, we do not oppose accountability in public schools and we point with pride to the performance of our students, but believe that the system of the past will not prepare our students to lead in the future and neither will the standardized tests that so dominate their instructional time and limit educators' ability to make progress toward a world-class education system of student-centered schools and future-ready students; therefore be it

**RESOLVED** that the (*name of your local PTA here*) calls on the Texas Legislature to reexamine the public school accountability system in Texas and to develop a system that encompasses multiple assessments; reflects greater validity; uses more cost efficient sampling techniques and other external evaluation arrangements; more accurately reflects what students know, appreciate and can do in terms of the rigorous standards essential to their success; enhances the role of teachers as designers, guides to instruction and leaders; embraces an environment of collaboration between parents and school personnel; and nurtures the sense of inquiry and love of learning in all students.

If your Local PTA hasn't yet had the opportunity to do so, please consider adopting the High Stakes Testing Resolution printed above. It is very important that PTAs statewide take a stand on high-stakes testing and that they make that stand a public one.

The GISD Council of PTAs has passed this resolution to share with our legislators.  
We **STRONGLY** encourage all locals to do likewise!

Once your PTA adopts the resolution, consider presenting it to your local school board and encouraging these community leaders to adopt the school version. Then, notify Texas PTA when you've adopted the resolution by contacting Stacy Glover at [sglover@txpta.org](mailto:sglover@txpta.org) or [communications@txpta.org](mailto:communications@txpta.org).

# OUTSTANDING PTA - SEPTEMBER WINNERS

Kathy Parks, Chairman - Outstanding PTA, kparks@verizon.net

## Elementary Winner

### ABBETT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Instead of the typical teacher luncheon, the Abbett PTA Board treated the staff to a Back-to-School lunch with bowling as a team building activity for staff and board members. It was a fantastic way to get acquainted with new teachers and board members, but with a little friendly competition.

After returning to the school, the teachers were all smiles and ready to greet their students as they came to campus for the first time this school year. The theme for the year, "Out Read, Out Math, Out Smart", was displayed throughout the school to promote PTA membership. The PTA board had various booths set up in the cafeteria for students and parents to learn all the different ways they could be part of their child's education through PTA membership. Booth options included Reflections, mem-

bership, retail support, school supply purchases, and spirit wear. Staff was on hand to assist parents with background form completion and turn-in. Parents were able to mark many "to-do" items off their list; a true *one stop shop!*

## Secondary Winner

### CLASSICAL CENTER at BRANDENBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL

The PTA kicked off the Olympic games with an Olympic styled breakfast for faculty and staff. The Olympic breakfast included first-day parfaits, fuel for school (chicken sandwiches) and power minis (breakfast muffins). The hallways were decorated with Olympic rings, the library was an inspirational mix of red, blue, yellow, green and black with centerpieces made of Mason jar Olympic rings filled with goodies. Our PTA challenged our staff and faculty to make this a "Gold" year by encouraging

everyone to become a PTA member. Thus, our PTA would qualify for the Golden Apple Award. We collected memberships and cheered our faculty and staff on to an Olympic year.

We welcomed our 6th grade students and parents to our award winning middle school. Our PTA board members, faculty, staff, cheerleaders, and National Junior Honor Society members greeted and escorted the 6th graders and parents through the school. In keeping with our Olympic theme our show choir sang the National Anthem to the crowds of people in the gym and in the hallways.

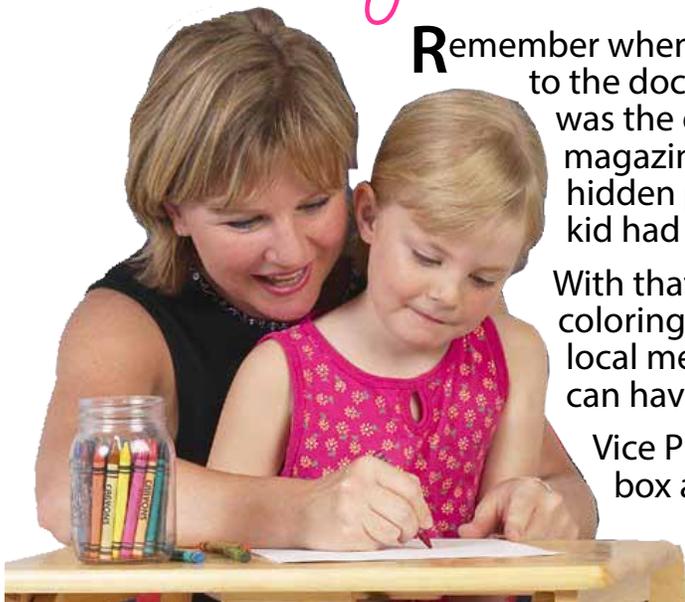
## Olympic events of the day included:

- 100 meter find your classroom search
- a timed "open your locker" event
- locate the bathrooms, and the
- how to avoid the "8th grade hallway" crawl

(see Outstanding, page 6)

## 2012-13 Council PTA Service Project

# Coloring Books & Crayons



**R**emember when you were a kid and the worst part of going to the doctor's office (well, other than getting a shot) was the endless waiting? The *Highlights for Children* magazine was a special treat, but really... How many hidden pictures are there to find? Especially if some kid had already circled all the hidden stuff?

With that in mind, our objective this year is to collect coloring books and crayons that we can distribute to local medical clinics, so that kids waiting in the lobby can have something to do.

Vice President-Aide, Cheryl Verret, will have a big box available at every meeting for you to drop your donations into. (Keep your eyes open at those school supply sales for crayons for the cause!)

## OUTSTANDING

*Continued from page 5*

The PTA sold spirit wear and memberships. All were greeted with a Gold medal smile and a memory of a lifetime.

### Elementary Honorable Mention

#### PEARSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

The PTA heard a presentation from school principal, Vickie DeVantier, regarding Title I education, and viewed a powerpoint presentation from Tricia Foster about *Drama Kids*. The Rowlett High School Cheerleaders performed along with the little Eagle and Falcon cheerleaders. In addition, there was a bounce house, face painting, and hot dog meal.

### Elementary Honorable Mention

#### HERFURTH ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Picture this. A 7-8 foot tall grey cinder block wall; over 300 foot long and encompassing the play area for approximately 80 kindergartners. While the intent is keeping the youngest Herfurth students safe, when you are 3 foot tall and tiny, those grey walls sure look high, dreary and oppressive!

Now imagine parents, teachers, students, community members and volunteers showing up on the playground twice a week over the summer to surprise the teachers and students with 320 feet of hand painted murals! This cheerful artwork definitely brightens up the space.

What started as a small idea between two individual PTA members discussing art and the beautification of the school blossomed into an inexpensive series of events allowing volunteers to “give back” in a way they had never done before. Regardless of artistic experience, everyone who attended was able to pitch in. The mural-painting team included community members from a local church, parents of former students, former students, teachers, PTA members and current students. What a transformation! A space that felt like a prison yard had transformed into a beautiful outdoor space, designed to jump-start little imaginations!

### Secondary Honorable Mention

#### ROWLETT HIGH SCHOOL

Our September 2012 event was held to help our Freshman Parents feel a little more comfortable.

We welcomed freshman parents to the campus (and of course invited them to join our PTSA!)

Parents were encouraged to be school volunteers. Our new principal, Michelle Bounds, assisted by two of the assistant principals, covered several important areas. There was an open “question and answer” session to make sure that the parents of the incoming freshmen had the information they wanted or needed for the start of school.

The parents were then introduced to the Class of 2016 faculty sponsors, and were able to talk about their plan for the next few years. We had a wonderful turnout and 95% of the parents stayed until the very last minute.

## LEARN MORE ABOUT TEXAS PTA'S TOP LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

The Texas Legislative Session that begins in January, Texas PTA will work on many policy issues that impact Texas children and youth. The top four issues that advocates will focus on are:

- **Public School Funding** - Policymakers must restore \$5.4 billion cut from the current public school budget, must fund enrollment growth, must fund remediation costs associated with the new STAAR and EOC tests, and must re-write the school finance system so that it is equitable and adequate.
- **Student Assessment** - Policymakers must make adjustments to the new statewide assessment program, STAAR. In particular, it is imperative that changes be made to EOC tests administered in high school.
- **Graduation Requirements** - Policymakers must broaden graduation requirements so that students have choices about the path they will take to college or career.
- **Vouchers** - Policymakers must not shift scarce public education dollars to private schools with programs that partially fund the cost of private school. Students have choices within the public school setting. Public dollars should not be sent to private schools that are not overseen by elected officials whose job it is to protect the public interest and use of taxpayer dollars

*For details about these three policies, visit [www.txpta.org/legislative](http://www.txpta.org/legislative) for policy papers outlining specific requests in each area.*



**VOTE! VOTE! VOTE!**

**EARLY VOTING:**

**MONDAY, OCTOBER 22 - THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 2**

**ELECTION DAY: NOVEMBER 6, 2012**

# Rally Day 90-MINUTE WEBINARS

We are offering Rally Day webinars on three topics to help you prepare for the upcoming Rally Day and legislative session:

- **Getting Started:  
Planning for Rally Day**  
What is it and how do I plan for it? (posted)
- **The Policy Issues**  
Learn about critical issues on which Texas PTA will advocate
- **Setting up and Conducting a Meeting with a Legislator**  
Tips for the day and how to find your legislator

The dates and times for each of these webinars are listed below. Use the links to register to the webinars you would like to attend.

## THE POLICY ISSUES

- November 7 - 10:00-11:30 AM
- November 7 - 7:45-9:15 PM
- November 8 - 10:00-11:30 AM
- November 8 - 7:45-9:15 PM

## SETTING UP AND CONDUCTING A MEETING

- January 7 - 10:00-11:30 AM
- January 7 - 7:45-9:15 PM
- January 9 - 10:00-11:30 AM
- January 9 - 7:45-9:15 PM

To RSVP for yourself or a group to attend Rally Day, to get a downloadable copy of the schedule, to register for webinars, or to receive more information, visit:

[WWW.TXPTA.ORG/EVENTS/RALLYDAY](http://www.txpta.org/events/rallyday)

## OUTSTANDING PTA ENTRY MATERIALS

- The forms to enter YOUR outstanding PTA programs in the monthly competition are available on our website, [www.gisdpta.org](http://www.gisdpta.org) in the “forms” section.
- The forms are now available in both PDF and MS Word formats!
- The next Outstanding PTA entry submission deadline is Wednesday, November 28th (the week after the Thanksgiving break.)

## 5TH GRADE GREETING CARD CONTEST

Judy Kriehn, District Liaison, [jkriehn@garlandisd.net](mailto:jkriehn@garlandisd.net)

Last week, entry materials were emailed to all elementary campuses for the annual Greeting Card Contest co-sponsored by the Council and the school district. The top designs from each participating campus are due to the Communications Department by Friday, November 16th, and judging will take place before the Thanksgiving break. Three designs will be selected and used on the cards sent by Trustees and Dr. Culwell, celebrating the holiday season.

The entry materials are also posted to the PTA website at [www.gisdpta.org](http://www.gisdpta.org)

TO BE INCLUDED ON

TEXAS PTA'S UNDER THE DOME

LEGISLATIVE UPDATES EMAIL LIST, VISIT: [WWW.TXPTA.ORG](http://WWW.TXPTA.ORG)

## NEWS FROM THE GARLAND ISD

### SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PROCESS

Trustees recently selected School Executive Consulting Inc. to conduct its superintendent search. The decision came after board members visited with representatives from three firms – Proact Search, Texas Association of School Boards, and School Executive. Trustees are working with the firm to secure a calendar that will guide them throughout the search process. Community Focus Groups are being formed this month to share input and assist in selecting a new superintendent.

In August, Curtis Culwell announced his retirement as superintendent of GISD—effective this December—after 14 years guiding the district. School Board members look to have Culwell's successor in place next spring.

### SCHOOL FINANCE LAWSUIT

“Rising expectations for students have to be accompanied by a rising level of resources—and that has not occurred in Texas,” Culwell told an Austin-based reporter as the case began Monday. He added that the school districts' path to the courthouse was made smoother by the Legislature's decision to cut school funding by \$5.4 billion and move ahead with the new and much tougher STAAR test.

According to the article, the finance system distributes money to school districts inequitably, giving some districts thousands of dollars more per student than other districts despite having similar property tax rates. The inequities violate a constitutional requirement that the system be efficient.