

2023 Annual Business Meeting

Executive Director's Report

The last three years have been difficult, but the worst is behind us. The good news is we hit bottom and are heading up. We have much, much better times ahead of us.

Washington State PTA is a reasonably barebones operation. We have 4 employees at the office, support from a handful of contractors, and over 100 state-level volunteers, including our board of directors. Our expenses are about as tight as possible, and we are now focusing time and energy on generating non-dues revenue. We have always relied heavily on members for our income through membership dues and event registration fees. We are changing that paradigm. This past year, the board created a new Resource Development committee. We now have a development plan to build on our corporate support, seek grants, and start a direct donation program. As we put these pieces in place, we will share what we learn with our volunteer leaders via articles in the Leadership News.

Before 2020, we held a small handful of webinars every year. We planned to build this program to give our volunteer leaders more training options. As you know, when the pandemic hit, everything changed. Three years later, we have a robust online training program. Our second annual online Autumn Leadership Launch last August had well over 400 registrants participating in a vigorous training conference designed to help you serve your members at local and council PTAs across the state. In addition, we held almost 40 webinars throughout the year. And we have just launched an online learning management system where volunteer leaders can access the training they need throughout the year at their convenience.

While shifting our training program online, we also changed our work environment. In 2019, our office staff, consultants, and board members started using MS Teams to keep ourselves connected and organized. In 2020, we expanded this use to include all our state-level volunteers. This change has increased our flexibility, inclusivity, and productivity. Best of all, volunteering for the Washington State PTA is now easier than ever.

One colossal step we took last year was to implement an awards management system. This online tool makes it much more accessible than ever for our members and volunteer leaders to submit candidates for our various student programs, the awards of excellence, and individual awards. It also makes the judging process very straightforward and as objective as possible. We are delighted to have this system in place and expect to increase member participation for many years.

While all this online activity has almost magically changed how we operate, the last three years taught us how precious interpersonal interaction is. The May 6-7 spring conference highlighted the value of in-person events. Almost 350 members joined us at the Hilton Bellevue for workshops, training, networking, dancing, and board games. The energy was electric. We also held several in-person region conferences last year and hope to have more this year. These events are invaluable for the training and the chance to connect with other PTA leaders from your area. These connections form a web of support to help local and council PTA leaders face the challenges and share the rewards of volunteer service.

In building our 2023-2026 strategic plan, we toured the state to determine how things were going for volunteer PTA leaders. What we found fills us with hope. We learned that things are going well. The

energy and enthusiasm of our new, young leaders runs very high. As we rebound from the pandemic, parents and families want and need PTA to help them come together and meet their children's needs. This is very exciting and speaks to our core purpose. We exist to give our families voice, empower them, and they guide us as we work together to improve our lives and our world. Thank you for being a part of the Washington State PTA.