



Parent Involvement Equals Student Achievement



by Byron Garrett, National PTA Chief Executive Officer

During another hotly contested presidential election, the nation's largest child advocacy organization remains steadfast in its own campaign and calling for the support necessary to improve the education system.

That's why we support the urgent call at the Education Summit to reinforce the fundamental role of parents in their children's education. Simply put: parent involvement equals student achievement. For parents to be engaged and make informed decisions, however, they need information about their child's academic progress in a timely manner and in easily understandable terminology.

We'll continue to make the urgent call for these principals as we bench the bake sale and return to our roots of being a relevant leading voice for all children from the playground to Capitol Hill.

My recent selection speaks volumes about the course PTA is taking. Once known as the "Congress of Mothers" the organization appointed me, an African-American male to carry out its mission in 2008 and beyond. The fact that I'm writing as the National PTA's new chief executive officer sends a robust and significant statement to the public about our path.

For generations, PTA has championed passing child labor laws, the defeat of polio, desegregation of schools, and establishing a juvenile justice system. These are great feats that will stand the test of time, no doubt. But our nation faces even tougher challenges today. The reality is that there is an urgent wake up call in society today. America is in crisis. Not merely because of the economy or because of rising food and gas prices. America is in crisis because our nation's public schools face a devastating achievement gap, widespread funding shortages, and uncompromising federal mandates... All of which have a direct affect on our nation's economic future. Most importantly, America is in crisis because our children don't have the schools they need to grow up and learn in. In case you've missed it, education is an economic development issue for our country as it is for those who lead us around the globe.

We will continue to focus on and provide resources to families that help them meet the needs of every child in this country. In short, PTA will stay the course on its Campaign for Kids providing a voice for those who are voiceless. Although children do not cast ballots at the polls, they vote every single day. Every day kids across this nation vote with their feet to drop out of school which is the epicenter of the crisis we face.

Education experts have shown that there is a positive and convincing connection between family involvement and student achievement. Don't be fooled this election cycle. As a parent, a caregiver, an extended family member or contributing citizen, we must rise to the occasion to meet the needs of every child in this country. Regardless of your gender, race, ethnicity, or socioeconomic status, you have a duty, an obligation to ensure that every child's potential becomes a reality. PTA will continue to lead the charge for this campaign for kids and welcome you to join over five million like minded advocates. The very future of our nation is at stake and you must be part of the solution.

To learn about parental engagement, go to [the PTA's website](#).