



2023 NEW JERSEY PTA

OFFICER & REGION DIRECTOR ELECTIONS

As of January 30, 2023, the following are the current candidates for election at the
2023 New Jersey PTA Leadership Convention

Information for candidates that are self-declaring will be added to this packet when received.

President-Elect

Lisa Clarke (page 2).

Treasurer

Nancy Wallace (page 6).

Vice President of Leadership Development

Sarita Dodd (page 3).

Vice President of Advocacy

Jackie Gibbs (page 4).

Secretary

Veena Pai (page 5).

Region Director (5 Positions)

Jennifer D'Antuono (page 7).

Karen Diggs (page 8).

April Maxwell-Henley (page 9).

Carey Smith (page 10).

Kathleen Witcher (page 11).

LISA CLARKE

President-Elect



It is truly impossible for me to share my accomplishments with you in the limited space given, however, I will simply note that I have more than 30 years of service on all levels of PTA. My numerous titles speak to my experience and longevity, but they don't speak to the "why"!

The why; I have a strong sense of love and commitment for the children; the strong, the weak, the young, the old, the poor, the rich, the "A" student and the At-Risk student. I recognize they all deserve a chance to live up to their fullest potential and I strongly believe it is our responsibility to ensure they are given the opportunity to do so.

Though my resume speaks for itself, as a lifelong advocate, dedicated to fighting for the social, emotional, educational, and economic improvement for the children in our communities, I believe whole-heartedly that we must be the collaborative voice for all our children.

Having the experience, I know that I am a leader who will ensure that we work collaboratively with other parent groups, government officials, concerned stakeholders and others that support our mission. Support me if you too want to build a better future for our children.

[Click here for Lisa's Resume](#)

SARITA DODD

Vice President of Leadership Development



I am honored to be slated for Vice President of Leadership Development. I wholeheartedly believe in the PTA mission and have a great desire to help our Local PTA's be their very best for the children of their area and beyond!

My family's PTA involvement began with my great grandmother who passed down the love and importance of PTA to my grandmother then to my mother. My mother was an active PTA member who displayed advocacy and the empowerment of families throughout my life. The love of PTA was passed down to me and I have shared that love with my family. As a wife and mother of 4 beautiful children, PTA has been a big part of our lives for 23 years. I am the NJPTA Bylaws Chair, have served as Council & Local Presidents, Local VP, Chair of many committees and my local PTA Board transitional facilitator. I have 40+ years in customer service, marketing and management. I am experienced in bringing communities together to help advance towards diversity, Inclusion and equity.

I have and still look forward to creating and facilitating workshops, trainings, videos and manuals to help local PTAs, clients, and employees be and serve their best!

[Click here for Sarita's Resume](#)

JACQUELINE GIBBS

Vice President of Advocacy



It would be an honor to serve as Vice President of Advocacy and I'm grateful to the Nomination Committee for their 2023-2025 nomination. Advocacy forms the foundation of my 20+ years of dedication to the association. It is the core of who I am having served at the local, county, state, and national levels. Advocating for equitable and inclusive educational initiatives for all NJ children is my commitment. The State of New Jersey issuing a State Proclamation in recognition of our committee's state-wide program was my highest achievement while serving as NJPTA Family Engagement Chairperson. In addition, partnering with Bayer US LLC Data Sciences team hosting STEM+Families programs demonstrates my ability to build alliances for our children.

Now, as a NJPTA Officer, I continue to promote advocacy. On the National level, my involvement has included National Convention Workshop Creator & Speaker. My advocacy experience transcends PTA. I'm a servant leader, Member/Officer, for non-profit organizations including Delta Epsilon Foundation and Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. (TPO chapter) where we focus on student & community programming, mentorship, scholarships and other activities. My commitment to education is further expanded as an Adjunct Professor teaching students pursuing their Master's Degree in Data Analytics.

[Click here for Jacqueline's Resume](#)

VEENA PAI

Secretary

Veena Pai, feels privileged to be part of the largest child advocacy organization in the country.

As an immigrant and a mother, the opportunity to be involved in her children's education brought her to PTA. She has served in different capacities over the last seven years and looks forward to many more.

Veena is also involved in other community organizations. She serves as the SEPAG (Special Education Parent Advisory Group) Coordinator for her school district, a Troop leader for her daughter's Girl Scout Troop and a Den Leader for her son's Cub Scout Den (a Den for students who receive special services).

Volunteering is Veena's way of building a village for her children to grow up in!



[Click here for Veena's Resume](#)



NANCY WALLACE

Treasurer



Nancy Wallace is proud to be a member of the New Jersey PTA and has served in various positions on multiple PTA Boards for the past 16 years.

Nancy is currently the President of the Bergen County Council PTAs, where she works with over 65 local units. Nancy has held various positions on the Bergen County Council, including Treasurer and District Director, for the last 13 years and has been an officer on three local PTA boards.

Nancy currently serves as the 2023 NJPTA Convention Chair, is a member at large of the NJPTA Board of Directors, and sits on the Advisory on Finance committee, where her treasurer skills come in handy.

Nancy has worked for Data Trace Solutions for the past seven years as Property Title Researcher. Before joining Data Trace, she owned her own Title research company and dealt with all business aspects. She has been the Head Bowling Coach for the Hackensack School District for eight years. Nancy has one daughter who is currently in college and resides in Hackensack, Bergen County.

[Click here for Nancy's Resume](#)



JENNIFER D'ANTUONO

Region Director



Jennifer is a self-diagnosed volunteer addict. She has been volunteering for one organization or another since 2nd grade. Growing up in the 4-H program, volunteering at church, a PTA member since her oldest started Kindergarten, and in her town community - often rising to leadership positions. She has 2 children in the school system - Middle & Elementary, and has been involved in their school experience since the beginning - whether it was class parent, PTA member, or board member of the PTA. Jen joined the NJPTA board in 2021.

As a member of the NJPTA board, in the position of Field Service Representative for Region 2 (Middlesex, Monmouth, & Mercer County), Jen has made herself available to answer any questions local units may encounter. This includes navigating policy and procedures, navigating the election process, mediating through conflict resolutions, and educating membership and officers as needed.

Jen would like to continue and build upon the work she has done in Field Service.

Her goal is to work more with the councils and gauge interest in forming a council in Middlesex & Monmouth.

[Click here for Jennifer's Resume](#)

KAREN DIGGS

Region Director

Karen Diggs is a mother/grandmother of 6 children. She started her Journey after losing her parents when she decided to pursue her passion for a career in education through Walden University in 2019 by obtaining an MSW. Seeking a master's in social work is a progression of her aspiration to help create a paradigm where children, parents, guardians, and the community at large are concurrently developed.

Her interest in becoming a volunteer with NJPTA has permeated her life for as long as she can remember. Her mother influenced her choice to become a member and advocate for the children.

Following her mother's footsteps, Karen decided to enter the public school system as a security officer and work her way up the proverbial ladder.

She loves to see children develop into well-rounded young adults. This perspective led her to take on the role of President of the Essex County PTA for two terms. She worked with parents and guardians to ensure they understood their role as parent educators. She believes that assisting parents in building a clean and safe environment with essential resources

is critical to children.

She hopes to continue this work in her second term as Region Director.



[Click here for Karen's Resume](#)

APRIL MAXWELL-HENLEY

Region Director



I am grateful for the opportunity to serve as one of the Region Directors of the NJPTA! My journey with the PTA began in 2007. I have always had the “voice” that echoes miles away whether it was for a sporting event that my children participated in or advocating for what I believed to be morally right. I chose the perfect opportunity to advocate for not only my son but for all children when I accepted the nomination as PTA President of the Garfield East Elementary School in Willingboro, NJ in 2015. This was the stepping stone to the many volunteer positions I would encounter. In May 2015 I began service to the Burlington County Council PTA Board of Directors as the secretary and president of the Memorial Middle School PTA in Willingboro, NJ in July 2018. In May 2014, I received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Social Sciences and in 2016 a Master’s degree in Public Service Leadership/Non-Profit Management, both from Thomas Edison State University. It is evident that I am very passionate about child advocacy & anyone who knows me, knows my service to the community & others is a driving force in my life.

[Click here for April's Resume](#)

CAREY SMITH

Region Director



My name is Carey Smith, currently the Region 5 Director. I am excited to be renominated for the Region Director position for the next 2 years. I have been a local leader for the past 10 years, as a treasurer, and Parliamentarian. I enjoy working with all the local PTA units and their leadership, as well as future leaders. PTA is a great advocacy organization and has great potential and I am honored to be a part of it and continue as a leader on the State level.

[Click here for Carey's Resume](#)

KATHLEEN WITCHER

Region Director



The decades of service that both my parents, Leonard and Wilnora Holman, served in the PTA are the legacy that calls me to continue my volunteerism in an organization that remains viable. The PTA serves parents, teachers and the community throughout our country and beyond. It is a valued organization because it looks to address the needs of school, home and the community with attention to not only education, but inclusive of numerous cultures and ethnic backgrounds, with vigilance over safety and health issues and with an eye on concerns affecting the communities where we live.

Presently, the PTA sets the tone with a combination of collaboration, commitment, diversity, respect and accountability. I was enlightened and inspired by the recent virtual panelists for the Institute for Education Leadership. (IEL) that collaborated to discuss family engagement techniques and strategies. Recently I was also able to attend a virtual meeting on a subject I knew little about—Human Trafficking. I also have participated in the discussion of topics raised by the NJPTA's Education and Special Education Committee. This is a part of how the PTA expands its actions and activities to meet the current concerns.

I am proud to be a part of PTA. I will serve to the best of my ability.

[Click here for Kathleen's Resume](#)