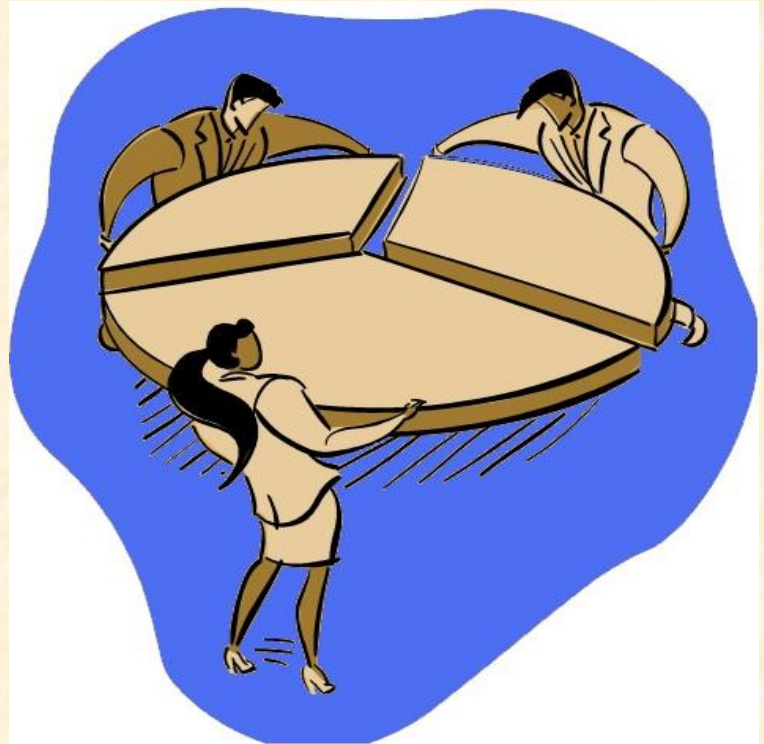


CT PTSA NEWSLETTER

Connecticut
PTSA[®]
everychild.onevoice.[®]



**111th Annual Connecticut PTSA
Convention and Exhibition**

April 1 & 2, 2011

Crowne Plaza Hotel, Southbury, CT

**PTSA
60 CONNOLLY PARKWAY
BUILDING 12, SUITE 103—HAMDEN, CT 06514**

www.ctpta.org

connecticut.pta@snet.net

FROM YOUR STATE PRESIDENT, MARNE USHER



Happy New Year!

I hope you all survived the snow; enjoyed your snow days and maybe got some snow fun in with your children! Even though both of my children are in college I still appreciate that snow day feeling of not having to go anywhere and being able to watch the snow fall and enjoy the quiet that accompanies it. But eventually we all have to get back to school and work so I hope you are all dug out.

As you come back from vacation and start your PTA activities this month I want you to think about membership. We all do a membership drive when school starts but do you continue to solicit members throughout the year? Do you approach new families that move into your school and welcome them into the school community and invite them to be part of your PTA family? Do you have membership information at all those wonderful events you are sponsoring at your school and do your parents know that those events are PTA sponsored? We do so much for our schools and our communities but we don't always toot our own horns about the work we do. So I want to issue you two challenges:

First, brag a little about the work that your PTA/PTSA is doing. Let people know that you brought the artist in residence to the school – not the district office. That the President's day celebration that all the classrooms had was coordinated by PTA room parents and paid for out of the PTA budget. We are often our own best-kept secret and we need to shout our accomplishments from the rooftops.

Second, I would like to challenge all of you to increase your membership before the end of the year. If your numbers are down from last year try to bring them up to at least match last years levels. If you are holding steady try to increase by 5 or 10 percent. Consider the areas you may not have looked at. How is your teacher membership and participation? Do you have any outside community members? Have you invited your Superintendent and the members of your school board to join your PTA?

Membership is the lifeblood of our association. Not only does it provide us with the means to do what we do but it also provides us with the numbers to be effective advocates. When we can go to Hartford and speak on behalf of our 50,000 members we have a strong voice. When we can go to DC and speak on behalf of our almost 5 million members we get heard.

I hope that when we have our annual convention on April 1st and 2nd you all will be there and you all will be receiving membership awards for your PTAs and PTSAs.

I hope that when we have our Day on the Hill in Hartford on March 9th that you will be up there speaking to your state legislators about the issues affecting the children of your community and of our state because you will be speaking from the position of strength that comes from having so many members behind you supporting you.

Last year we collected some data on the time you all give volunteering as PTA/PTSA members. In CT, PTA members last year gave just under a million and a half hours of their time to our children. The IRS values that time at \$20.25 an hour so, we donated \$26 million dollars in economic investment with our time alone. Never doubt that the work you do matters. It matters 26 million times over!! Join me in expanding our PTA family so our work can make even more of a difference for our children!!

Thank you for all that you do!

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Marne Usher". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

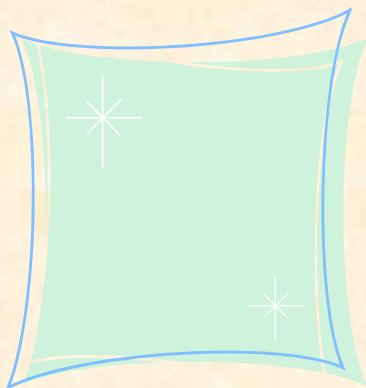
FROM YOUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR— SALLY BOSKE

Happy New Year to all! It is the beginning of a new year with new resolutions. I would like to give you two resolutions that are very easy for you to fulfill.

One: **Attend the Legislative Conference “Day on the Hill”**. On March 9th we will be joining our educational teammates, the Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) and the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) to advocate for the children of Connecticut. There have been many changes in Hartford and this is an opportunity for you to hear from the decision makers of our children’s future. Go to www.cabe.org and register for Day on the Hill. Also go to our website to find our 2011 Legislative Priorities.

Two: **Attend the 111th CT PTSA Convention**. Professional development is as important for our PTA leaders as it is for teachers, administrators and business professionals. None of us are born knowing how to be a PTA leader, but we can help you become a trained leader! You may remember answering a survey this year and we took your suggestions very seriously. As you look through this newsletter you will see descriptions of the workshops that we are offering this year and I think you will be as excited as we are. Remember that this is a legitimate PTA expense and your PTA should send as many people as possible.

Okay now you know the resolution to go back to the size you were when you graduated will not fly and the resolution to stop eating chocolate is really not going to happen, so let’s try to keep these two resolutions that at least have a chance of being accomplished with a little commitment on your part.



COMMITMENT DATES:

DAY ON THE HILL

THURSDAY, MARCH 9

CONVENTION DATES:

FRIDAY /SATURDAY, APRIL 1/2

From Don Romoser– Vice President of Membership



Happy New Membership!!

It's a New Year!! We all hope and plan for a happy, safe and prosperous year as it begins. For many PTAs, we look at January as almost halfway through our "PTA year." But as we look at that "halfway" mark, we should also look at what we have ahead of us.

For many, your Town budget season is ahead. And for all, the State budget season is here. It is a time when you want your PTA to be heard. This is the time to remind everyone that your PTA represents all of your members. And remind them of how many members you have!

Now is also the time to recruit new members. Their voice is your voice and visa-versa. PTA gives the voice to parents and families. Yes, there are many other benefits of being a PTA member, but our One Voice can be the most powerful.

So, as this New Year starts, consider that second push to attract new members from your school community. Reach out and remind all of your community what PTA does for them and, mostly, for our future – Our Children!!

As always, remember that membership is your PTA's power. More members = more minds = more volunteers = more voices = more power = successful kids!!

**Connecticut
PTSA®**

Just Between Friends Enhancements

At Just Between Friends, our promise is to simplify your life and strengthen your PTA. We take that promise seriously, so we listen to what units need and want from our system. We're happy to announce that we're starting off the New Year with several enhancements requested by units.

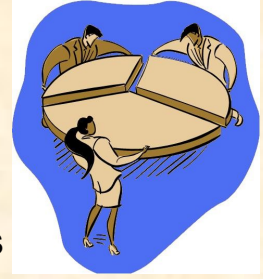
Calendar – We've enhanced our calendar with a fresh look and easy to change views. When a PTA leader sends out an email announcing an event or deadline, those events or deadlines will automatically appear on the household calendar. And, if the family has children in multiple schools or if parents are members of multiple PTAs, the calendar will consolidate those events and deadlines into a single place.

Membership Management – We've revised the "View your people" page. Now, you'll find it easier to search, faster to access information and you'll have the ability to view the data in different ways. You can even save your favorite views to use another time. This page has a new way to change groups, so the 1st time you open the page, you'll see a "tips" screen – which you can turn off whenever you like.

Look for future announcements about how we're enhancing the system to meet unit needs. And, by the way, did you know that units using Just Between Friends earn a share of the revenue derived from Just Between Friends sponsorships and advertising? It's not too late to begin earning for the upcoming semester. Get started today by visiting www.JustBetweenFriends.com/PTAquickstart and entering your unit. If you have any questions, just visit www.JustBetweenFriends.com and click on the "Contact Us" button. One of our friendly, knowledgeable customer service representatives will be happy to help.



Title: **The Places We'll Go...**



Connecticut PTA Presidents and Board Members,

Last year at my son's elementary school, the fifth grade class had a promotion theme revolving around the Dr. Seuss story, "Oh, The Places You'll Go." Needless to say it was a very apt and emotional theme, but also made everyone think about the future.

The future is what the 111th Connecticut PTA Convention and Parent Leadership Conference is all about. Yes, we acknowledge some of the accomplishments our members have achieved over the past year, but the primary theme is how to continue your growth as a parent and a leader.

With over 20 workshops and speakers, this promises to be the most educational and informative conference in recent years. Topics range from science enrichment to student involvement to effective communication with your children. Plus, there are always new sessions and ideas on improving your organization. The Convention promises to be the highlight of your current PTA year and a great way to begin the planning for your coming year.

Invitations and enrollment packages should be hitting your mailbox soon. Please take the time to look the information over and consider joining your fellow PTA leaders at the Convention. Parenting and leadership is done by example. What better way to lead than improve yourself for your organization.

Thank you for considering leadership development as an essential part of your mission. Thank you for your service to PTA. Most of all, thank you for your commitment and time for our children. Oh, the places we'll go...

Take care,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Donald R. Roman". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Vice-President - Convention
Connecticut State PTSA

The logo for Connecticut PTSA. It features the word "Connecticut" in a blue, sans-serif font above the word "PTSA" in a larger, bold, blue, sans-serif font. A registered trademark symbol (®) is located to the right of "PTSA".

INSTRUCTIONS:

Please complete the entire registration form (photo copy for each attendee).

Remember to fill out the reverse side of this form.

Submit a separate form for each attendee.

Form must be accompanied by a check to be processed. NEW – PayPal available. Pay by credit card at www.ctpta.org

PTA members must present a current membership card to obtain voting credential card.

Please let us know if you have any special needs or dietary needs.

This form must be received by the dates indicated to receive the discounted fees.

Detailed description of workshops on website www.ctpta.org

Mail to:

CT PTSA

60 Connolly Pkwy
Building 12,
Suite 103

Hamden, CT 06514

Connecticut PTSA 111th Annual Convention Registration Form

April 1 & 2, 2011 –Crowne Plaza Hotel, Southbury, CT

Print delegate name _____

Name of PTA _____

Home Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Daytime Phone Number _____

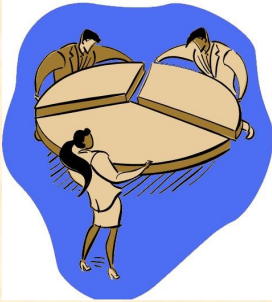
Email Address _____

Name for Badge _____

REGISTRATION TYPE: *Check Package, and Circle Corresponding fee.*

	Registration Received on or before 3/01/11 Member/non member	Registration Received on or before 3/15/11 Member/non member
Package Registration Fri & Sat – All meals including Friday evening	\$140/\$195	\$150/\$225
Friday & Saturday day only	\$110/\$140	\$120/\$160
Friday Only – day only Includes meal	\$65/\$85	\$75/\$110
Friday – day and evening	\$110/\$135	\$120/\$150
Friday – evening and Saturday – day only	\$110/\$135	\$120/\$150
Saturday Only - includes meal	\$65/\$85	\$75/\$110
Friday Evening Package - Includes dinner	\$45/\$50	\$55/\$60
Student Attendee	FREE Saturday only	FREE Saturday only
TOTAL AMOUNT DUE \$		

A1	B1	C1	D1	E1	F1
A2	B2	C2	D2	E2	F2
A3	B3	C3	D3	E3	F3



Information Education Workshop Parents

Friday, April 1, 2011

A1 – School Governance Councils (PI) – Find out how these councils can provide a remarkable opportunity for Connecticut schools to engage with families and community members in the essential dialogue about student achievement and preparing all students for success.

A2 – PTSAs and Boards of Education: Developing the Best Relationships – (RA) – Boards of Education are the governing bodies in all of Connecticut school districts. Learn how boards and their members operate and how to develop relationships with your board that will enable you to be most effective in helping students in your district.

A3 – Afterschool Alliance & Afterschool programs – (MB) If your PTA is thinking of or already sponsoring after school programs this information workshop is for you. Come hear about the successful programming that Greenwich PTAs have and share your ideas with others.

A4 - Your Kids Know ...Do you? Emerging Alcohol & Drug Trends – (MB) This hands-on training will explore new & unusual methods of using legal & illegal substances among Connecticut's youth. Participants will learn how to identify specific dangers that threaten today's youth. Tips on how to prevent substance use at home and in the classroom will be provided. Attendees will walk away with the newest information, techniques and resources available to help address youth substance abuse within the state.

B1–Communicating Effectively with your Child – (MB) Explore parent/child communication and the effectiveness/ineffectiveness of the communication

B2 - Transition process from Birth to Three through Adulthood with your Special Needs Child – (MB) Participate in discussion and receive tips and advice to navigate the process of transitions for families & children. Learn to navigate each level – elementary to high school and out. Learn your rights & your child's rights in IDEA.

B3 - The One Job They Never Train You For – (MB) More than 80% of people become parents, yet schools give little instruction about raising children, especially birth to five, when the child's brain is developing rapidly. The Ct Coalition for Child Development will discuss the need for schools to provide education in child development, child safety and parenting skills for all students. Curriculum and research on the subject will be provided.

C1 – Invention for Kids – STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Math) in Play! – (PI) Children are natural “tinkerers” and we want to keep them that way. Connecticut has a heritage of Yankee Ingenuity supported by the CT Invention Convention for 128 years. Have fun with us as we learn to invent together!

C2 - Perception is Reality – (RR, LD) Have you ever walked into a room where you felt like an outcast or not welcomed? Did you feel like the group was an “exclusive group”? Did you feel uncomfortable? Have you ever stopped and thought about your actions and/or behaviors could affect your PTA? Many PTA officers inadvertently set up a dynamic which is perceived as “Us vs. Them” without even recognizing it. In this workshop, you will learn what type of leaders you are and how important it is to have several different types of leadership styles to run an affective PTA. We will also brainstorm how to avoid these negative perceptions and how to positively welcome all individuals that share our common theme- Children

C3 – Survive the Drive (MB) – This workshop will present facts, science and behavior on preventing childhood injury in our communities. With this information and change in attitude, young people will approach the task of driving with reasoning and concern.

Saturday, April 2, 2011

D1 – Being a Sibling of a Special Needs Child – Hear from the “Real” Professional! – (MB) A panel discussion with question & answer period learning from and listening to siblings with special needs brothers and/or sisters. How it affects their lives. The good/positive and how it can be challenging. How they cope and how they benefit.

D2 - Navigating the Monkey Bars: Tips on getting a playground built at your school – (MB, FR, LD) Join three parents of the Spring Glen PTA to hear what the toughest hurdles were and what worked best.

D3 – The Importance of Parent Leadership in Education – (PI, LD) In this session, participants will focus on parent leadership within the continuum of opportunities for parent involvement in schools and communities on behalf of improved outcomes for students. The session will explore why parent leadership is important, opportunities for parents to lead and partner in schools as well as the skills and understanding necessary to become effective leaders, partners and active participants in education. Information about programs in Connecticut that provide leadership training for parents will be provided.

E1 – MADD Power of Parents, It’s Your Influence – This national program is supported by the National PTA and is available for CT chapters to share with their parents. Parents will receive a handbook on talking to children about alcohol. Learn how you can bring this program to your local PTA.

E2 - How and why does your PTA work? Going beyond the bylaws – (RR, LD, EM, BO) Did you get elected to a position, might want to run

E3 - Bribery, Blackmail and Guilt: The New Way to Find Volunteers – (RR, LD, SP) Work together to come up with ideas to get more members and volunteers. In this hands-on session you will share ideas that have worked and ideas that have not worked to get more members/volunteers.

F1 - 2011 Legislative Issues – (LD, MB) This session will provide a review of CT PTSA’s 2011 Legislative Platform, learn what issues the new Governor and the legislature are considering and what is happening in Washington. Updates will be provided on the different task forces CT PTSA is serving on.

F2 – Mine, Yours, Ours: Teen Dating Violence – (MB) Through education, training, activism and exposure to the arts, MYO engages students, middle school through high school, to address teen dating violence and domestic abuse.

Student Workshop – Saturday, April 2, 2011 – 10:45 – 11:45 am

Don’t Quit (Student Workshop) – (MB, LD) Students will perform a skit on why it is important to not only stay in school, but to participate in what the school has to offer. Hear from students themselves!

Parents Information Education Workshops

Check or Circle the Workshop
you would like to attend on the
Registration Form. On page 7.

2011 Convention Timeline

Friday

8:00 – 10:00 am	Registration	Main Foyer
8:00 am – 4:00 pm	Exhibit Hall	Southford Ballrooms C,D,E,
10:00 am – 12:00pm	Welcome and Brunch Election of officers Guest Speaker on School Climate National Representative	Southford Ballrooms A,B
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Exhibit Hall	Southford Ballrooms C,D,E,
1:00 – 1:45	Workshops	Great Hill A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A1 – School Governance Councils 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A2 – PTSA's and Boards of Education: De-veloping the Best Relationships 	Woodruff Hill A
	A3 – Afterschool Alliance & Afterschool pro-grams	Woodruff Hill B
	A4 - Your Kids Know ...Do you? Emerging Alcohol & Drug Trends	
1:45 – 1:50	Fitness Break	Hallway
	B1 – Communicating Effectively with your child	
1:50 – 2:35	B2 - Transition process from Birth to Three through Adulthood	Great Hill B
	B3 – The One Job they Never Train you For	Woodruff Hill A
2:40 – 3:25	C1 – Invention for Kids – STEM in Play	Woodruff Hill B
	C2 - Perception is Reality	Great Hill A
	C3 – Survive The Drive	Southbury Board Room
3:30 – 4:00 pm	Council of Presidents Annual Meeting	Woodruff Hill A
5:00 – 6:00 pm	Nutmeg Statewide PTA Annual Meeting	Great Hill A
7:00 – 9:00 pm	Leadership Dinner Welcome from National Representative Installation of new officers Speaker - Deb Faye Membership Awards Presentation Leadership Awards Scholarships Nutmeg Awards	Nutmeg Ballroom

2011 Convention Timeline—Saturday

Saturday

8:00 – 9:00 am	Registration	Main Foyer
9:00 am – 10:30 pm	Welcome	Southford Ballrooms A,B
10:45 – 11:30	Workshops	Woodruff Hill A
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • D1 – Being a Sibling of a Special Needs Child – Hear from the “Real” Professional! • D2 - Navigating the Monkey Bars: Tips on getting a playground built at your school. 	Woodruff Hill B
	D3 – The Importance of Parent Leadership in Education	Great Hill A
10:45 – 11:45	Student Workshop	Great Hill B
11:30 – 11:35	Break	
11:35 – 12:20	E1 – MADD Power of Parents, It’s Your Influence	Southbury Board Room
	E2 - How and why does your PTA work? Going beyond the bylaws	Great Hill A
	E3 - Bribery, Blackmail and Guilt: The New Way to Find Volunteers	Great Hill B
12:25 – 1:10	F1 - 2011 Legislative Issues	Woodruff Hill A
	F2 – Mine, Yours, Ours: Teen Dating Violence	Woodruff Hill B
	F3 - PIRC	



Save up to 20% on the cost of your electricity!

While you save money on the generation portion of your electric bill, you will also be supporting your Unit and the PTSA who will receive a commission based on all kilowatt-hours enrolled in the **CT PTSA Help & Save Discount Power Program**. The more kilowatts enrolled, the greater the financial assistance!

Who Can Enroll

Anyone with a CL&P or UI account is eligible to enroll, including businesses. The program is not limited just to PTSA members. Anyone who enrolls using your Unit's Coupon Code will save money and will be financially supporting your Unit. Ask your neighbors, friends and family to enroll to help.

Service & Billing Still Provided By CL&P or UI

You will continue to receive one monthly bill from the utility (CL&P or UI) and continue to pay that one bill just as you have been. You will see only two charges on your bill:

1. Discount Power will be listed as your electric supplier
2. Your new lower kilowatt rate!

Easy Online Enrollment

Visit www.CTPTSAdiscountpower.com to enroll, it takes only about 50 seconds! The account information required to enroll is located on your CL&P or UI bill so make sure to have your bill in front of you. The new rate will take effect after your next meter read date (listed on your bill). The sooner you enroll, the sooner you will Help & Save!

Customer Reward/Loyalty Program!

Residential accounts can also enroll in Points Engine! Earn redeemable reward points for all kilowatt-hours used! Enroll at www.PointsEngine.com.

- **FREE Enrollment**
- **No Fees**
- **No Credit**
- **Checks, No Obligations!**
-

www.CTPTSAdiscountpower.com

Visit www.CTPTSAdiscountpower.com
for FAQs. Also, feel free to contact
CT PTSA Help & SAVE Program Coordinator,
Doug Newman,
email: ctptsadiscoutpower@gmail.com
or cell: (203) 516-1006.



FAQs

Q: What is deregulation and what does it mean to me?

A: Deregulation allows for companies other than the public utilities to offer electric power to consumers. This allows for competition which results in lower prices.

Q: How much will I save?

A: You will see a savings in the generation portion of your bill. Reducing the cost of your electricity by up to 20%.

Q: Will CL&P or UI be upset if I choose an electric supplier?

A: No. CL&P and UI ENCOURAGE their customers to choose an electric supplier to help lower energy costs.

Q: Does Discount Power require a deposit?

A: No we do not.

Q: What do you mean by the generation portion of my bill?

A: There are two elements to your electric bill, one is the cost of the electricity and the other is the cost of delivering the electricity to your home or office. The generation portion of your bill is the cost you pay to buy the electricity.

Q: What is a variable rate?

A: A variable rate is a rate that may fluctuate on a monthly basis based upon current market conditions.

Q: What will cause your variable rate to change?

A: Wholesale market conditions are the biggest reason rates could change up or down. However, as a company we have certain systems and buying policies that should allow us to remain at or near the lowest price in Connecticut.

Q: How often can the variable rate change?

A: The variable rate will only change once a month (if it changes at all). We strive to keep our prices as stable as possible. Rate changes will take effect at the beginning of a month.

Q: How will I know if you change your rate?

A: Discount Power will be sending out a monthly newsletter to customers that chose to opt in for this service during enrollment. The newsletter will state what our rate will be for the next month. Additionally, our rate is posted on our website and at CTEnergyInfo.com.

Q: Is your monthly variable rate an all-inclusive rate?

A: Yes it is. But remember you will only get our rate on the generation portion of your bill.

Q: Will I get two electric bills?

A: No, you will still receive only one bill. That bill will come from the public utility (CL&P or UI).

Q: Do I have to call the utility and tell them to switch my service to DPI?

A: No you do not. The switch is seamless and Discount Power takes care of that for you.

Q: Do I pay Discount Power and the public utility?

A: No, you only pay the public utility, the public utility pays Discount Power.

Q: Will my bill look different?

A: No, your bill will look the same. The only difference you will see is Discount Power will be listed as your electric supplier.

Q: Who do I call if my power goes out?

A: You still call the public utility if your service goes out or you have any other repair issues.

For CL&P - 800-286-2000 For UI - 1-800-7CALLUI or 203-499-3333

Q: Do I have to sign any type of contract?

A: No, residential customers can cancel anytime. Commercial customers who are on a variable rate plan will not need to sign a contract. Commercial customers who want a fixed price, will be asked to sign a one year contract.

Q: If I cancel do I have to pay a fee or penalty?

A: No, Discount Power does not charge any fees for variable rate customers if you switch your service to another supplier.

Q: I have a deposit with my utility company, will I get that back?

A: Possibly, you will need to contact your utility to get your deposit back.

Q: When I switch, how long does it take before I see savings?

A: When you enroll, you are officially switched on your next meter reading. If your meter reading is on the 15th and you sign up on the 5th, you will be switched on the 15th. If your meter reading is on the 15th, and you switch on the 16th, you will not be switched until the 15th of the next month. Once you are switched, you will have to wait until the bill after you switch to see the change.

Q: When I switch do you need to install a new meter?

A: No, the switch is seamless. The only difference you will notice is that on your bill you will see Discount Power and a lower rate. There is no interruption of service.

Q: When I sign up with Discount Power, will my budget plan with my current provider be affected?

A: No, your budget plan will not be affected. You will go through the same contract renewal process when that time arrives.



OUTSTANDING SUPERINTENDENT AND PRINCIPAL PARENT/FAMILY INVOLVEMENT AWARD



The Connecticut PTSA would like to help you recognize a superintendent or a principal that demonstrates the importance of parent involvement. Research shows that family involvement promotes student success. Students with involved parents are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and pass their classes
- Attend school regularly and have better social skills
- Go on to postsecondary education

When families, schools and communities work together:

- Student achievement improves,
- Teacher morale rises,
- Communication increases,
- Family, school and community connections multiply.

One Principal and one Superintendent will be chosen each year for awards by the CT PTSA Executive Committee.

For more information on this award or to nominate a Principal or Superintendent please go to www.ctpta.org or email us at connecticut.pta@snet.net

Outstanding Superintendent and Principal Parent/Family Involvement Award

Research shows that **family involvement** promotes student success. Students with involved parents are more likely to:

Earn higher grades and pass their classes,
Attend school regularly and have better social skills
Go on to postsecondary education.

When families, schools, and communities work together:

- Student achievement improves,
- Teacher morale rises,
- Communication increases,

Please send us a letter stating why your superintendent or principal meets the following criteria:

Welcoming All Families into the School Community

When families walk into the school building they should feel they belong.

Can families develop personal relationships with teachers and staff?

Is the atmosphere family-friendly for everyone?

Are there many ways to volunteer even for parents who may be working two jobs or who don't speak English or have a car?

Build a respectful, inclusive school community:

School policies and programs should reflect and respect the diversity of the families in the community.

Does the school staff work with families to identify and address barriers to involvement (such as differences of race, education, and culture)?

Are events open to the whole family and offered at convenient times and places?

Sharing Power

Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs. *Strengthen the family's voice in shared decision making: Families must be full partners in making decisions on issues affecting their children both at school and within the community.*

Do families have a vote when decisions that touch their children are being made?

What governance exists to discuss issues of equity, such as which children are eligible for the gifted program?

Build families' social and political connections:

Every school should have a broad-based parent organization that offers families and school staff regular opportunities to discuss concerns with each other and with school leaders, public officials, and community leaders.

In what ways do the school and PTA/parent group connect families to local officials?

How do parties make sure the parent organization truly represents all families in both membership and its leadership?

Supporting Student Success

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Share information about student progress. Families should be informed of how their children are doing in school, as well as how the entire school is progressing. Questions that this standard addresses include:

Do parents and teachers communicate about student progress? Do parents learn what good work looks like for their child's age and grade?

Does the school use test results to inform parents which student skills need strengthening?

Support learning by engaging families. Families should be active participants in their children's learning at home and at school.

Are families invited to observe their children's classrooms?

How do schools help families strengthen learning at home? What after-school learning opportunities are there?

Communicating Effectively

Families and school staff engages in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning. Many ways that schools deliver information, such as handouts, newsletters, handbooks, and websites, do not provide an easy and routine way for families to respond. Even PTA/parent group meetings are often seen by school leaders merely as a way to get the message out to families. The most effective way to build a real partnership is to create regular opportunities for open, honest dialogue.

Share information between school and families. All families should feel that the school keeps them informed on important issues and that it is easy to communicate with teachers, the principal, and other staff. Creating a perception that a dominant group of parents is in the know while everyone else is in the dark reduces trust and stifles the free flow of ideas.

Does your school offer many different ways to communicate every day? Does the school or PTA survey families at least once a year to find out what's on their minds? Are the principal and other school administrators easily accessible to any parent? Do the school and PTA/parent group make it easy for parents and families to build connections and communicate with each other?

Candidate must be a PTA member.



60 Connolly Parkway
 Building 12, Suite 103
 Hamden, CT 06514

203-281-6617— office
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**REFLECTION ENTRIES WERE
 DUE TO THE STATE OFFICE
 BY JANUARY 31**

(EXTENDED DEADLINE DUE TO SNOW DAYS)

**Thank you to all PTA leaders for your
 hard work in putting together this
 program for your PTA!**

Save the Date—

**Thursday, May 19th— Awards Ceremony
 Hamden, CT**



**DAY ON THE HILL
 WEDNESDAY,
 MARCH 9TH**

CELEBRATE HISTORY— FOUNDERS DAY!

Founders Day (February 17) is a reminder of the substantial role PTA has played locally, regionally, and nationally in supporting parent involvement and working on behalf of all children and families. It is a time to reflect and take pride in our many accomplishments and to renew our commitment to be a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource, for parents and a strong advocate for public education.

National PTA's founders Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Alice McLellan Birney, and the founder of the Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, Selena Sloan Butler, were women of imagination and courage. They understood the power of individual action, worked beyond the accepted barriers of their day, and took action to literally change the world.

Can you imagine what it must have been like in 1897 when they called the first national meeting for this purpose? This was a time when women did not have the right to vote a (that came later with the 19th amendment on August 26, 1920), usually did not travel alone and were certainly not aggressive political leaders, but somehow these women were diligent in their cause and were successful.

As you read this newsletter we hope your unit has formed a committee to acknowledge this occasion. Some PTAs hold luncheon or dinner and invite the past presidents and others who have received recognition for their units. Other PTAs include the recognition in another school event such as concert or a meeting.

