



April 18, 2020

**Message from the Hawaii State PTSA President...**

I woke up with a heavy heart this morning, for today was the scheduled date of our 93<sup>rd</sup> Annual Hawaii State PTSA Convention and Reflections Awards Banquet. In the scheme of all the changes we have had to make during the current public health crisis, this is minor compared to all the other losses our communities are experiencing. That being said, I mourn the loss of this gathering of great leaders dedicated to improving the lives of Hawaii's keiki and the annual celebration of our artistic Reflections' winners.

With the announcement by the Hawaii DOE that students will not be returning to traditional classroom setting this school year, some of our "in limbo" status has been cleared. We can now plan for how we will wind down this school year and begin preparing for the eventual reopening next year. As always, the safety and well being of our students, families, and educators is our top priority.

At this point, the Hawaii State PTSA convention has been canceled and we are looking into alternative methods to conduct the one order of business (elections) that is required by our bylaws. Our board's goal is to still recognize this year's Reflections Art Program winners. At this time, we are working on a virtual art display, with plans to hold in person, island specific awards ceremonies once it is safe to gather again.

Our executive board has been working with other education leaders across the state to ensure that our students' needs are top of mind at the DOE and with our local and national leaders. As always, we are here to offer you support during these times and share helpful resources. Our board is currently working to revise our [COVID-19 leadership guidelines](#) to better meet the needs of our local units now that schools will not be resuming this school year. We will be sharing important information regarding elections, board transitions, and end of year requirements via our website, [www.hawaiistateptsa.org](http://www.hawaiistateptsa.org), by early this week.

Most importantly, we want you to know that we understand that all these changes can be overwhelming. Most of us are being asked to function very differently than we have done before. Educators are being asked to provide lessons in new ways where with limited resources, parents are being asked to assist with their children's learning in ways where they may not feel confident, and students have lost the stability school provides, as well as the social support they receive through their friends. For many, these changes are intensified by additional factors compounding an already stressful situation.

Despite all these changes, we will push through. We must take care of our loved ones and ourselves, while working toward the goal of safe and healthy communities. For every challenge there is opportunity. The biggest lesson Hawaii's keiki can take away from this experience is unconditional love and resilience in times of hardship. That should be our primary goal as parents, care takers, educators, and leaders.

So while we are missing out on the opportunity to gather together today as PTSA ohana, please remember that we are still working towards our common goal to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. As always, our strength is in our united voice for children.

On behalf of the Hawaii State PTSA board, I wish you health and wellness and mahalo for all you do for Hawaii's keiki.

Warmest regards,  
Liz Sager  
President  
Hawaii State PTSA