

CHILD ADVOCATE OF THE YEAR RECIPIENTS

1996 - 2019



The Virginia PTA Child Advocate of the Year award recognizes an outstanding youth or individual PTA advocate, elected official, or a local unit, council or district PTA whose outstanding advocacy work has had a significant positive impact on the academic success, health and well-being of students and school communities.

1996 - Congressman James Moran, (D) 8th Virginia Congressional District was the first recipient for his work in sponsoring V-Chip legislation that passed through congress and became law. This bill had been proposed in a VA PTA resolution in 1995 that supported a means to block TV violence and to give parents a means to control their televisions.

1997 - Delegate Jim Dillard, (R) 41st House District, Virginia General Assembly was a teacher prior to being elected to the House of Delegates. As an educator, Delegate Dillard focused his efforts in the General Assembly at improving education with measures to reduce class size, give teachers planning time, and insure an education plan for special education students. Dillard also sponsored a Joint Resolution of the Virginia House and Senate to designate February 17, 1997 as PTA Appreciation Day.

1998 - Delegate Jerrauld Jones, (D) 89th House District, Virginia General Assembly was recognized for his work on juvenile justice reform. He also worked to ensure that those who worked with juveniles in the court system received special training for that work and that educational needs of homeless children were addressed.

1999 - Delegate Panny Rhodes (68th) & Senator Jane Woods (34th), were both recipients of the Child Advocate award this year. Both of these courageous legislators had a long history of supporting PTA positions on education and health issues in spite of opposition from other legislators.

2000 - Delegate Phit Hamilton, (R) 93^d House District received his award after working with the PTA for several years to craft a charter school bill that met the guidelines established by VA PTA and National PTA. Delegate Hamilton is a school administrator from Newport News and championed other educational reforms over the years, but his award recognized his independent thinking and determination to win over the education community to new possibilities for school choice within the public-school authority

2001 - Delegate William W. "Ted" Bennett, (D) Jr. 60th House District was recognized as a retiring member of the House Education committee. During his tenure, Bennett patroned several PTA issues including the independent review of SOL assessments and a requirement that the selection for the Board of Education include one domiciliary resident of each of the eight regional superintendents' study areas and one member-at-large as the nine members of the Board of Education.

2002 - Senator John Edwards, 21st Senatorial District, (D) former mayor of Roanoke and member of the Senate Education and Health committee championed the Character Education requirement which is included in all students' education in Virginia. In 2001, Edwards attempted to add community service to the existing Character Education requirement at the request of the VA PTA.

2003 - U.S. Senator John Warner, (R) a commendation for Senator Warner's key advocacy efforts to assure that the United States Congress provides full funding of the federal responsibility to support the educational needs of children with disabilities through the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). His advocacy effort will significantly improve the educational opportunities available for disabled children and helps to establish an environment in America and in the Commonwealth of Virginia which values the inclusion of all children in public education. Additionally, we commend Senator Warner's support of legislation passed by Congress that provides approximately \$42.1 billion for the Department of Education, a \$6.5 billion increase from the previous fiscal year funding level.

2003 - Governor Mark Warner, (D) for significant advocacy in Virginia to protect public education funding during a time of economic uncertainty, severe budget and fiscal constraints, and faltering economy. Spending on Virginia's children will be protected from budget cuts due to the governor's leadership, advocacy and recognition of the importance of a strong financial commitment to education. Governor Warner is also committed to improving education. His nationally recognized Partnership for Achieving Successful Schools (PASS) program focuses attention on underperforming schools and brings the resources of successful programs to help improve student achievement on the Standards of Learning (SOLs) at school that are at risk of not meeting standards.

2004 - Jean Bankos, Immediate Past President, Virginia Education Association (VEA) and Chairman, Virginia Education Coalition (VEC). Jean Bankos, a classroom teacher for 30 years, recently completed service as President of VEA and has served on numerous state and national committees and associations, including chairing the Virginia Education Coalition (VEC), a consortium of statewide education organizations of which Virginia PTA is a member. Her advocacy work on behalf of the public-school students of Virginia has taken her before state agencies and General Assembly committees to testify to the needs of public education in the Commonwealth. Students are in a much better position today because of Jean Bankos.

2004 - Ken Tilley, Executive Director, Virginia High School League (VHSL). Ken Tilley, a former high school coach and principal, joined VHSL, which oversees athletics in the state's public schools, in 1986 and became executive director in 1994. His dedication to high standards for student activities and competitions has led to excellence in academics, education and athletics at the more than 300 high schools in Virginia" benefiting over 150,000 boys and girls in 25 different sports.

2005 - Tom Jackson, President, Virginia Board of Education. Under Tom Jackson's tenure on the Board of Education, more than 92% (9/10) school divisions were fully accredited under the Standards of Learning (SOL), while only 65% were accredited prior to his leadership. He has been a proud champion of the Board of Education's first comprehensive Review of the Standards of Quality, a much-needed process that had not been accomplished for more than 15 years! As a result of this

effort, major new funding was allocated to public education. Mr. Jackson spearheaded developing the criteria and procedures for helping struggling schools meet the state's academic expectations.

2006 - Senator John Chichester, President Pro Tempore, 89th House District, Virginia General Assembly. Virginia PTA honors Chairman Chichester in part for the leadership role he played during the difficult budget negotiations in the 2004 General Assembly session. When those negotiations were over, about \$1.5 billion in additional funding for K-12 public schools had been added. The final budget fully funded re-benchmarking of Standards of Quality (SOQ), eliminated the federal and locally generated revenue deductions, and began meaningful progress on the board of education's proposed SOQ revisions by funding the state share of elementary resource teachers and secondary class size. Once again, the 2006 General Assembly found itself in an even more historic budget battle, and again Senator Chichester led the public school advocates and the Senate developed a budget to address transportation needs without threatening the general funds necessary for education, health and public safety.

2007 - Delegate Brian Moran, 46th District Virginia House of Delegates. Delegate Moran was the leading house proponent for record investments in education in 2004. As a "Friend of Education" he partnered with Governor Warner to invest \$1.4 billion in K-12 education to ensure Virginia schools remain top quality. Delegate Moran's work on halting the scourge of underage drinking and driving includes the introduction of a number of bills over his twelve-year legislative career. He has also been a fierce advocate for raising teacher salaries to the national average, carried legislation to create an Office of Children's Services Ombudsmen to provide the best service possible to our children with special needs and continues to monitor the Commission on Youth. Delegate Moran has been a leading advocate of improvements in our Juvenile Justice system including reforms to ensure fairness and equity and continues to work for the wellness and health of children, and to increase the number of guidance counselors in our schools.

2008 - Dr. Bill Cannaday, Virginia State Superintendent. He is a true child advocate, working for and supporting all children in the Commonwealth. Dr. Cannaday has also served as superintendent of Chesterfield County Public Schools, superintendent of Hampton Public Schools, as Hampton's director of secondary education and assistant superintendent for instruction for Hampton Public Schools and as principal of Huntington Middle School. Dr. Cannaday was recognized as the 2005 Virginia Superintendent of the Year, and honored twice as a regional superintendent of the year. Dr. Cannaday has always been a proponent of parental involvement in education and a great supporter of PTA.

2009 - Senator Edd Houck, Senator Houck has a long standing record supporting K-12 public education and is a proponent of parental involvement and a supporter of PTA. Faced with a difficult economic climate and even more difficult budget decisions, Senator Houck stood firm in his support of ensuring that no cuts to K-12 public education were permanent. He stood on behalf of students and school staffs everywhere when he urged law makers to look for options other than cutting SOQ funding when considering budget cuts. Senator Houck made sure Virginia PTA testimony was included in Finance Committee hearings so that lawmakers could hear our perspective on potential cuts. He has an open-door policy with Virginia PTA and continues to work closely and partner with our President, Legislation Committee, Capitol Committee and members.

2010 - Dr. Bob Grimesy, Superintendent Orange County

2011- Delegate Jennifer McClellan, Virginia House of Delegates 71st district.

2012 - No Award

2013 - Delegate Robert Tata, Virginia House of Delegates 85th District.

2014 - Delegate Tag Greason, Virginia House of Delegates, 32nd District. Del. Greason has carried a wide variety of legislation since his election including flexibility of school calendar for school boards, epinephrine in schools and most recently the SOL Reduction bill. The SOL Reduction bill (HB 930) not only seeks to reduce the number of tests but also encourages innovation in our accountability system. Delegate Greason is dedicated to including the parent voice in the process and understands the importance of family engagement. So certain of the integral part of the parent, Del. Greason named, in the law, PTA as a required members of the SOL Innovation Committee. Since his election, has worked tirelessly on issues affecting our students, teachers and schools, carrying common sense legislation and encouraging fair and thoughtful debate.

2015 - Dorothy McAuliffe, First Lady of Virginia, First Lady, Dorothy McAuliffe has dedicated her time to issues around school nutrition, eliminating childhood hunger and supporting Virginia's active-duty military and their families. Mrs. McAuliffe serves as Chair of the Commonwealth Council on Bridging the Nutritional Divide. The Council is focused on eliminating childhood hunger in Virginia, developing local agriculture markets, and promoting community efforts that link locally grown food, education, health and nutrition. She worked to secure funding for the Breakfast After the Bell program to help students start their school day with a healthy meal.

2016 - Lorraine Hightower, PTA advocate. Lorraine has dedicated her time to issues around creating effective family school partnerships, fully funding school district budgets and supporting dyslexic children and their families. Lorraine currently serves as Chair of Loudoun County's Special Education Advisory Committee and previously served as Chair of Loudoun County's Subcommittee on Dyslexia and has held a variety of PTA Officer positions at her son's elementary school including President. Under her leadership the Mountain View Elementary School PTA was awarded with the 2014-2016 National PTA School of Excellence designation and received the National PTA's Phoebe Apperson Hurst award for family engagement. Lorraine authored the 2015 Virginia PTA resolution on Dyslexia and is currently collaborating with four other state PTAs to submit a Dyslexia Resolution to National PTA. Lorraine was instrumental in helping pass a Dyslexia Teacher Training bill signed by Governor McAuliffe, which becomes effective in July 2017 and requires mandatory dyslexia training for all new Virginia teachers and any teachers requesting re-licensure.

2017 - Joan Wodiska Vice President Virginia State Board of Education, President of the Virginia School Board Association, Gubernatorial Appointee on the Commonwealth Council to Bridge Nutritional Divide and as Commissioner for Virginia with the Education Commission of the States. Mrs. Wodiska's work and influence, spanned more than 20 years, and influenced federal, state and local education policy. While serving on the Virginia State Board of Education, Mrs. Wodiska provided leadership while working on the high school redesign, replacing the A-F Report Cards with the new school quality profiles, revisions to standards of learning, quality, accountability and school accreditation. Mrs. Wodiska also worked tirelessly to help shift the culture and role of the State Board of Education and Department of Education to focus on partnering and supporting struggling schools and not just identifying weaknesses to focusing on continuous improvement and recognizing student growth. She was committed at every turn to incorporating the voice of the parent and

especially that of PTA members across the Commonwealth. Mrs. Wodiska also championed efforts to make childhood hunger a State Board priority and supporting increased state funding for additional school counselors, school nurses and assistant principals. She talked openly and often about the growing numbers of children living in poverty, the increased needs of children with disabilities, the additional hurdles for students who didn't speak English and the new realities of young people growing-up in today's modern world.

2018 - No Award

2019 - Delegate Christopher Peace, 97th District House of Delegates.

ABOUT VIRGINIA PTA

The Virginia PTA's twenty-one districts support 240,000 members at local PTAs in 1,025 schools across the Commonwealth. Hands-on, local support for PTAs in schools across the Commonwealth combined with robust training resources and a national advocacy platform, sets the PTA apart as the leader in supporting local school parent groups. Local PTAs play a crucial role in building strong partnerships between parents and administrators and creating a vibrant community of engaged parents which contributes to the educational success, health, and well-being of our children and communities. We speak with one voice for every child - not only in our local schools, but also in State Legislatures, the US Congress and in our State and National Departments of Education.