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KANSAS PTA TO ADDRESS NEED FOR INCREASED DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION EFFORTS

Overland Park, Kansas – On the heels of National PTA’s statement on Tuesday, July 28th, addressing [institutional racism](#), Kansas PTA not only supports this position but seeks to aggressively incorporate Diversity and Inclusion action items into their ongoing work plan.

In May 2020, Kansas PTA brought on life-long Johnson County resident, Brian Brown, as the organization’s Diversity and Inclusion Chairman. “Brian brings a wealth of knowledge, experience, understanding and drive to take Kansas PTA in a new direction that will entail growth and increase involvement for Kansas parents, administrators and community leaders in the areas of Diversity and Inclusion,” stated Lauri DeNooy, Kansas PTA President.

Brian is excited to engage in his new role with Kansas PTA. Brian has worked in Healthcare for the last 14 years and currently sits on the Board of Directors for United Community Services of Johnson County, where he is a member of their Racial Equity and Inclusion Steering Committee. He has also served as the Northeast Johnson County Chamber of Commerce’s Government Affairs Chairman from 2014 thru 2019, Chairman of the Board for the Shawnee Chamber of Commerce in 2017 and most recently served on the Shawnee Mission School District’s Strategic Planning Steering Committee.

Eager to work with education stakeholders Brown had this to say, “The challenges of our current environment will leave a lasting and painful impression on our children, families, and educators unless we all decide to move forward...together. Kansas PTA will continue working from our values in an effort to listen more than we will speak. I encourage all stakeholders to actively educate yourself alongside us on issues related to anti-racism and to use your privilege (whatever privilege that may be) to serve and advocate on behalf of our young people. In the end, we will provide education and support efforts in areas of diversity, belonging, equity and inclusion - addressing issues of social injustice and institutional racism along the way.”

In an inclusive classroom, educators are aware of the diversity of students and work with students to create a safe and collaborative learning environment. Inclusive classrooms recognize students learn in different ways and have valuable perspectives to bring to the content being learned. In Kansas PTA’s upcoming Leadership Conference scheduled for August 22nd, a Diversity and Inclusion breakout segment will be featured for PTA leaders around the State of Kansas to engage in this dialogue.

Kansas PTA President, Lauri DeNooy is inspired by Brown’s leadership and passion. “I look forward to engaging our PTA units and families across the state to join us in diversity and inclusion conversations and education.”

Rachel Russell, a longtime Board Member of Kansas PTA is encouraged by this new focus being added to their organization. “The time is now for organizations and institutions that support childhood development and education to be a part of the conversation regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion. Explicitly for black and brown children, whom we've known for decades have been immensely affected by numerous systems that continue to disadvantage them due to systemic racism. I'm glad to see that organizations, like us be a productive advocate in the changes that are needed.”

Kansas PTA comprises thousands of Kansas families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of family engagement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c) (3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health and welfare of children and youth. For more information, visit <https://kansas-pta.org/>

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