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National PTA to Mobilize Parents for Common Core Standards *Receives \$1 million grant from Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to engage parents in four states*

CHICAGO (December 2, 2009) – National PTA is positioning itself as a key player at the front line of education reform. The association today announced a new three-year effort to mobilize parents to advance key education priorities, beginning with common core state standards—a voluntary, state-led, internationally benchmarked set of high academic standards in English language arts and mathematics. A \$1 million grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will help support the effort.

Beginning in January 2010, National PTA will educate and train PTA members and parents about the common core state standards, focusing early outreach in four states: Florida, Georgia, New Jersey, and North Carolina. National PTA plans to engage additional states as this work moves forward in mid-2010.

“Currently, there are disparities in the level of rigor because every state has a different set of standards. This reform effort will educate parents about the need for higher, clearer and fewer standards so that they know what their child should be learning in school and how they can support learning at home,” said Charles J. “Chuck” Saylor, National PTA President. “Parents should be able to rest assured that their child is up to par with their peers across the country and around the world no matter where they choose to raise their child.”

For decades, National PTA has taken action for children. Through this effort, the association is taking another step toward education reform by addressing common core standards. It is National PTA’s fundamental belief that every child, regardless of zip code, deserves an equal education, and all teachers deserve a set of clear, high standards.

“Education standards have historically been too vast and too vague to provide the focus required for students and teachers to achieve at high levels,” said Vicki L. Phillips, Director of Education, College-Ready, at the Gates Foundation. “National PTA and its five million members can be a

leading voice in the common core standards movement, raising academic expectations nationwide and preparing all students for success beyond high school.”

National PTA is committed to ensuring that all students graduate college- and career-ready. Earlier this year in June the association called for the creation of common core state standards and became an endorsing partner of the National Governors Association and Council of Chief State School Officers’ Common Core State Standards Initiative. In September, National PTA also offered its full support of the initiative’s draft college- and career-readiness standards.

To date, 51 states and territories have joined the Common Core State Standards Initiative. The full K-12 standards are expected to be finalized in early 2010.

“National PTA believes that there should be a level playing field among states, school districts and schools that will give all students the opportunity to be ready for their college and career. This effort will bring us one step closer to real education reform. It will ensure equity in education nationwide and will improve the level of rigor that will ultimately make the U.S. more competitive with other leading countries,” said Byron V. Garrett, National PTA’s Chief Executive Officer.

About National PTA

National PTA comprises millions of 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.