



BACK² School

ST. CLOUD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA
Back-to-School Information Packet
2023-2024 School Year

PTA EXECUTIVE BOARD PRESIDENT’S LETTER — 2023-2024

Welcome (back) to St. Cloud Elementary School!

Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to St. Cloud Elementary School, and for those returning, welcome back. I hope everyone was able to enjoy some time with friends and family over the summer and get some much needed rest and relaxation.

I’m excited to introduce myself as your PTA President for the 2023-2024 school year after serving as President on the PTA Executive Board this past year. My family and I moved to St. Cloud from NYC five years ago and we have been enjoying all that West Orange has to offer since we have been here. We have three kids, one going into 4th grade, one going into First, and a two and a half year old. My background is in ports and maritime engineering, where I work as a program manager for a consulting firm that provides engineering services to clients all over the world.

Since being part of the St. Cloud community and school, I have been so impressed by the teachers, faculty, staff, students, and parents/guardians. It truly is a wonderful place, dedicated to providing the best for our students and I’m excited to be a part of the PTA and help create fun and safe events for all our students this coming year. St. Cloud and the PTA are committed to supporting all of our families and want everyone to feel included as we work to provide the best learning environments possible for our students.

Also I wanted to thank the rest of the PTA for doing an incredible job leading the 2022-2023 school year. I look forward to building on so many of the past successes— in collaboration with the rest of the PTA Executive Board, St. Cloud administration and faculty, our PTA members, and families of St. Cloud.

If you have any questions or concerns please feel free to contact me or any member of the St. Cloud PTA Executive Board.

Brian Craine

President@stcloudpta.org

ST. CLOUD PTA MISSION

To positively impact the lives of the students, staff, and families by:

1. Providing programs and supports that enhance the educational curriculum
2. Advocating for the education and well-being of every student
3. Supporting diversity in our schools and community
4. Promoting partnership between parents and teachers to enrich the educational experience for all

BACK-TO-SCHOOL PTA CHECKLIST

- Visit our website:** <http://www.stcloudpta.org>, which has quick links to all the suggestions below.

- Purchase your 2023-2024 PTA Annual Membership** at the Online School Store:
<https://stcloudpta.memberhub.store/>

- Purchase your 2023-2024 School Supplies**
 - School Toolbox Fundraiser: [School Supply Kits for St. Cloud Elementary \(schooltoolbox.com\)](http://schooltoolbox.com)
 - District Supply List: https://www.woboe.org/.../690/STC_SchoolSupplies23-24.pdf

- Download the mobile app** for Givebacks (formerly Member Hub) on Apple App Store or Google Play Store

- Register with the St. Cloud PTA communications platform Givebacks.**
 - <https://stcloudpta.memberhub.com/join/5aeba8>
 - Once approved by PTA admin, you will have access to the student directory and other information from the PTA
 - **Update your info (children, grades, teachers) in our database**

- Follow the St. Cloud PTA on Facebook** at: <https://www.facebook.com/stcloudpta/> and **Instagram** at: https://www.instagram.com/stcloud_pta/

- Join your class Facebook page:**
 - Kindergarten: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1194249931522904>
 - 1st Grade: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/918995425472669>
 - 2nd Grade: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/stcloudkindergarten21.22>
 - 3rd Grade: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/256112805607826/>
 - 4th Grade: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/279305182745496/>
 - 5th Grade: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/223232248273499/>

- Complete the **Volunteer Survey** to get involved: <https://tinyurl.com/stcloudptavolunteers>

- Sign up to be a **class parent** and liaise between the teacher & the families by collecting class dues & helping to plan holiday celebrations & teacher appreciation: <https://tinyurl.com/2023classparent>

- Mark your calendar for the monthly **General PTA meetings** at 7:00 PM:
 - o September 19, 2023
 - o October 11, 2023
 - o November 15, 2023
 - o December 13, 2023
 - o January 10, 2024
 - o February 13, 2024
 - o March 13, 2024
 - o April 10, 2024
 - o May 15, 2024

Scan the QR Code to access our online checklist.

o June 12, 2024

PROGRAMS POWERED BY THE PTA

On deck for 2023-2024 school year (subject to change)

After School Enrichment Program (ASP)

Over 30 affordable enrichment classes offered after school during the Spring Semester, including: art, sports, dance, STEM and more

All School Family Events

Back-to-school Parents' Coffee (1 st school day)	St. Cloud Holiday Bazaar (December)
Back-to-school Family Social (September)	Scholastic Book Fair (December)
Trunk or Treat event (October)	Jaguar Jog (April)
Talent Show (November)	FunFest (June)

In-School Cultural Arts Assemblies & Programs

(Recent examples below)

Tanglewood Marionettes	Sky Dome/Earth Dome (environment show)
International Dance Residency	Bash the Trash (music performance)
Queen Nur (storyteller and singer)	Mad Science
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra	Support for Students Exercise Together (June)
Shakespeare Theatre of New Jersey	Support for Field Day (May)

Celebrating Graduating Fifth Graders*

District-wide Fifth Grade Dance	Field Trip to Liberty Science Center
St. Cloud 5 th Grade Party	Commemorative T-shirt
Yearbook	Graduation

Faculty Appreciation Efforts

Back-to-School Teachers Breakfast (September)	Holiday Faculty Luncheon (December)
BTS Night Staff Refreshments (September)	Teacher Appreciation Luncheon (Spring)
Scholastic Book Fair Teacher's Preview Breakfast (December)	

Diversity Council

The Diversity Council is a subcommittee of the Parent Teacher Association committed to understanding, addressing and holding school administration accountable to responding to diversity and inclusion concerns at the school, with the goal of making St. Cloud Elementary School a more inclusive place for our community to learn, grow and thrive. Programming includes:

Black Lives Matter at School (January/February)	#StCloudProud Block Party (January/February)
AAPI Week (May)	Pride Week (June)

* organized by the Fifth Grade Committee (a subcommittee of the St. Cloud PTA)

FUNDRAISING

The PTA needs YOU to power the programs and projects supporting St. Cloud School!

The PTA is a non-profit organization. All the programs, events and projects implemented by PTA are funded through fundraising, donations and participation fees (i.e. ticket sales, tuition fees). **The PTA annual fundraising goal is approximately \$45,000 — which translates to roughly \$125 per student.**

We do not receive funds from the West Orange school district, the national PTA or St. Cloud school.

Throughout the year, the PTA will implement various fundraisers and raffles to support our budget needs. However, we know that nobody likes to be nagged to give money, so we have several **evergreen fundraising programs** designed to streamline efforts and leverage external funding sources.

- A. **No Hassle Fundraiser:** We solicit cash donations (\$100+) through the *No Hassle Fundraiser*. This fundraiser is not about buying stuff, selling stuff or raffles, etc. It is a straightforward mechanism to generate funding for the PTA annual budget. Plus, your participation triggers special rewards for you! —such as: Scholastic Book Fair Coupons and free access to our annual FunFest. Remember to get your donations matched by your employer if your company has a gift matching program. [Donate to the No Hassle Fundraiser via the Online School Store on Member Hub.](#)

- B. **BoxTops4Education Program:** We participate in General Mill's Box Tops which makes a cash donation to St. Cloud for each Box Top certificate scanned from hundreds of product packages. Each box top is worth \$.10 for our school. Download the ALL-NEW [Box Tops app](#), shop as you normally would, then simply scan your store receipts to find participating products. The app will automatically credit your school's Box Tops earnings online.

The PTA earns approximately \$1,000 annually through this program. We have the potential to earn up to \$20,000, so start scanning those receipts and get your extended family and friends involved. (Read more about the program at <https://www.boxtops4education.com>)

We appreciate your support for the PTA fundraisers! Thank you in advance!

You are invited to join:

ST. CLOUD PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATION

Why join?

1. To get more involved with your child's school experience
2. To support the programs, events and initiatives of the St. Cloud PTA, including: **in-school assemblies, family events, the after-school enrichment program and other special projects.**
3. Voting privileges at general PTA meetings
4. An opportunity to save on everyday purchases via the national PTA's Member Benefits Provider Program (AARP, Hertz, Staples, etc.)

It's easy to join online! (Preferred)

1. **Get Communications:** Log-on to <https://stcloudpta.memberhub.com/join/5aeba8>
2. Once approved by PTA admin, you will have access to student directory, online school store, teacher hubs and other information from the PTA
3. **Pay your Annual Dues:** Visit <https://stcloudpta.memberhub.store/> and select the Dual-Adult Membership or the Single-Adult Membership and pay via credit card or PayPal.

Not online, but want to join?

1. Complete the paper form below
2. Submit the form to the St. Cloud School Office with cash or check (payable to St. Cloud PTA)
3. Mark envelope: PTA Membership 2023-2024

If you have any questions about the St. Cloud PTA or what to expect in the coming year, please feel free to contact our 2023-2024 Membership Chair, Raquel Hudson membership@stcloudpta.org.



PTA MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name(s) of Child/Children Attending St. Cloud: _____

Grade(s) and Teacher(s): _____

Parents/Guardians' Names: _____

Email Address: _____ Phone Number: _____

PTA Dues: (select one) Single Adult Membership \$12.00 _____ Dual Adult Membership \$20.00 _____

NEW TO ST. CLOUD SCHOOL?

Action Required: Register with stcloudpta.memberhub.com

The St. Cloud PTA uses an online communications platform called **Givebacks** to communicate with families and faculty of St. Cloud Elementary School. (This database is separate from the database maintained by the school district. You need to be registered with both.)

- Email blast functionality — used to send PTA notices to families
- An online family directory — great for planning playdates and parties
- An online school store — where you can **purchase your PTA membership** and **spirit wear**
- PTA calendar —to keep up with PTA activities and events
- Links and key contacts for St. Cloud school

To ensure your data is 100% accurate, add your family’s information to the St. Cloud PTA database on the Givebacks platform.

Go to: stcloudpta.memberhub.com

Note: All data is stored behind secure firewalls and can only be accessed by authorized users with a validated username and encrypted password. All data is viewed and passed using SSL encryption. You will have the option to control the visibility of your data within the platform. If you are asked for teacher information during sign up, leave it blank as you are not likely sure of teacher assignments at this time.

NO ACCESS COMPUTER? Submit this paper form to the St. Cloud office — Attention: St. Cloud PTA Communications (71 Sheridan Ave West Orange, New Jersey 07052)

Student Name: _____

Adult1 Name: _____

Adult1 Email: _____

Adult2 Name: _____

Adult2 Email: _____

*Please indicate if parents reside in different households.

Return to St. Cloud PTA Communications (71 Sheridan Ave West Orange, New Jersey 07052)

VOLUNTEERING

The PTA needs YOU to power the programs and projects supporting St. Cloud School!

A great bench of volunteers is critical for successful implementation of all the programs and initiatives powered by the St. Cloud PTA. Volunteering doesn't mean you need to dedicate endless hours to the PTA, or that you even be on site at the school to help out. We need volunteers for long- and short-term assignments, including one-time efforts like: event set up, baking, shopping, as well as leadership on bigger projects, such as: chairperson for Diversity Night or the Scholastic Book Fairs.

We also welcome the opportunity to tap into your special areas of expertise or knowledge, such as:

graphic design & printing
photography
accounting & finance
website & technology

database management
special events
project management
sales & marketing

fundraising & partnerships
writing & copywriting
social media
music & performing arts

If you have a special talent that you'd be willing to lend to the PTA effort, please complete this survey and let us know what kind of volunteering opportunities interest you.

<https://tinyurl.com/stcloudptavolunteers>

Are you interested in something bigger?

The PTA executive board includes parents who stay-at-home, run their own businesses, work full-time in demanding careers, and have multiple children.

Being busy is a modern-day condition, so we strive to efficiently manage the demands of the board positions, and to share the responsibilities among additional volunteers. We use video calls, text messaging and other tools to stay on track with projects and to reduce in-person meetings.

If you are interested in elevating the impact you can make on the St. Cloud School community, please be in touch with one of the current board members.



2023-2024 ST. CLOUD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA EXECUTIVE BOARD

President	Brian Craine	president@stcloudpta.org
President-Elect	Sunjana Thirumala Sridhar	vp@stcloudpta.org
Treasurer	Shweta Srivastava Tiffany Lawson	treasurer@stcloudpta.org
Secretary	Joy Hayward	secretary@stcloudpta.org
PTA Membership	Raquel Hudson	membership@stcloudpta.org
Ways and Means (Events & Fundraising)	Zohre Ruttledge	waysandmeans@stcloudpta.org
Cultural Arts	Alison Campo Ryan Stanley	culturalarts@stcloudpta.org
Communications	Sabrina Felici Hailey Barton	communications@stcloudpta.org
Diversity Council Co-Chairs	Jessica Harrell Rupal Goyal	diversity@stcloudpta.org
Diversity Council Clerk	Erica Barthelmy	diversity@stcloudpta.org
Spirit Wear	Dania DeSilva Thelma Ofori	spiritwear@stcloudpta.org
5th Grade Committee	Twanisha Siejkowski Denise Guanlao	fifthgrade@stcloudpta.org
Past President	Jennifer Craine	pastpresident@stcloudpta.org
After School Enrichment Program	Holly Williamson Becky Ackerman	asp@stcloudpta.org

F.A.Q. ABOUT THE ST. CLOUD PTA

Q. Who should join the St. Cloud Elementary School PTA?

A. Anyone affiliated with St. Cloud Elementary School can join the PTA. When you join, you become part of a school wide community committed to elevating the school experience your children have at St. Cloud School.

Our goal is to have 100% of the St. Cloud School families, faculty and administration staff among our active membership.

Many hands make for light work, and the PTA has plenty to do to enrich the lives of St. Cloud School students and families. Your annual membership dues, volunteering and participation in fundraisers help the PTA deliver a wide range of programs across the school year.

Q. I joined the St. Cloud PTA last year, do I have to rejoin?

A. Yes, each school year begins a new membership year. Your membership can be purchased online at stcloudpta.memberhub.store. As this is a new platform, returning members will need to register as well at <https://stcloudpta.memberhub.com/join/unwhxp>.

Q. If I join the PTA, does it commit me to volunteering or buying stuff?

A. No, volunteering and participation in fundraisers is always optional. However, we always need volunteers for PTA projects and events. And, the PTA uses various fundraisers to support programs such as: approximately 10 school assemblies, 10 family events, etc.

A. What happens at PTA meetings?

Q. Our monthly meetings are open to all parents/guardians of St. Cloud students as well as faculty and administrative staff — regardless of PTA membership status. Meetings are held on weekday evenings at the school. In addition to sharing updates on upcoming programs, these meetings feature a Principal's Report from Mr. Price and a Q&A session.

A. What is my membership fee getting me?

Q. Your membership fee helps fund programs, events and activities for St. Cloud School — and your PTA membership allows you to take advantage of discounts and offers from member benefits providers and sponsors affiliated with the New Jersey PTA.

Q. What is the PTA Executive Board?

A. The PTA Executive Board are parent volunteers who oversee the PTA activities and programs at St. Cloud School. Typically, Executive Board members serve for 2 years. Many board members have previously served as Class Parents or been a volunteer for a PTA program (like the Book Fair or Diversity Night), but not always. If you are curious about becoming a board member in the future, please speak to: Amy Oliver, president@stcloudpta.org

Q. I have an idea for the St. Cloud PTA. Who can I talk to about it?

A. We love new ideas!! Please speak to any member of the PTA Executive Board.

St. Cloud Elementary School



Hello Parents/Guardians of Fifth Grade Students,

Welcome to **Fifth Grade!** Being a Fifth grader at St. Cloud is such an exciting time and it's a milestone that comes with many special events.

The Fifth Grade Committee includes volunteer fifth grade parents who work together with the school staff to ensure that every graduating student has an extra special experience during their final year at St. Cloud. Throughout the year, the Fifth Grade Committee holds fundraisers to support fun events exclusively for the graduating class and to underwrite the cost for the yearbook. This upcoming school year's events will include the class trip as well as the graduation party and ceremony.

But, of course, we can't do it without you! **Please plan to get involved!** The success of the Fifth Grade experience for the Class of 2023 will be driven primarily by parent volunteers. We will need your help and will send regular invitations for you to get involved and support our fundraisers and events! We're counting on EVERY 5th grade family's participation.

We will schedule an initial meeting at the beginning of the school year (date and time TBD). At this meeting we will discuss the purpose of the committee, talk about the events for the school year and create sub-committees to lead the initiatives for the year (i.e., fundraisers, yearbook, graduation ceremony, etc.)

Immediate actions:

- **Join our Facebook group:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/526558427696533>
- **Yearbook!** Take a first day of 5th grade photo and start to gather images from your child's St. Cloud experience. Share them here: <https://tinyurl.com/stcloudyearbook2023>

Thanks in advance for all your help to make this last year at St. Cloud Elementary School a memorable one for our children!

The Fifth Grade Committee | fifthgrade@stcloudpta.org