



American Association of Physics Teachers Physics Teaching Resource Agents

PTRA Oversight Committee Chair Report
Submitted by Jill Marshall
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High School Planning Task Force. The OC applauds the establishment of the task force to create a coordinated plan to provide services and opportunities for high school members and the high school community more broadly. It is important that AAPT has a coordinated plan to avoid duplication and gaps in its efforts. This plan should address the need for high school positions in the Executive Office and what resources and responsibilities will fall with the EO, PTRA, the Committee on Physics in High Schools and the Committee on Physics in Pre-High School Education, AAPT sections and external organizations such as IEEE and Q2Work. As Bob Hilborn pointed out in his 9/30/2019 email, "We don't want to be in competition with ourselves." We would suggest, based on its experience and connections that PTRA be expanded and supported to provide professional development to high school teachers, as its purview. This plan will guide AAPT efforts over an extended time and allow for longer-range planning.

We applaud the efforts of the K-12 Program Manager in obtaining the DRK-12 proposal which funded some workshops for K-12 teachers, in alignment with our mission to enhance the understanding and appreciation of physics through teaching. The PTRAs generally focus on K-12 and general physics teachers, especially those with composite certifications or limited physics background, a population often overlooked in AAPT programs. In keeping with this historical focus on the general physics teacher, the PTRA Director has applied for and received some NSF funding that aligns with our objectives. There have been two grants awarded (through UT Arlington) that will provide workshops for teachers and camps for students. The leadership on the grants consists of many AAPT colleagues and PTRAs, however there are opportunities for other members of the physics community to join the efforts as leaders or participants. With an infrastructure of strong PTRAs and physics colleagues, the leadership hopes to interest those in the physics community who are not part of AAPT to join our efforts which will provide a lasting impact on physics education.

The OC would encourage the AAPT EO, Board, and K-12 Manager to consider supporting the efforts of these grants by providing financial resources that would allow the project to extend its current impact. For example, with appropriate funding the project could extend by adding another workshop site or additional workshop leaders or student camps. Since the infrastructure will already be in place, this support would not be as expensive as trying to set up their own workshops or camps. PTRAs have already been supporting the AAPT efforts by providing quantum related workshops and sessions at several sections including PA, TX, UT, AL, and NY and these sessions have been reasonably successful. In fact, there are two quantum sessions at the TSAAPT meeting today, both have 25-30 people registered.



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PTRA is not just focused on quantum or high school. In June 2021, there will be a F2F workshop for elementary teachers at University of West Georgia. This site has a reputation for providing outstanding professional development to elementary teachers and since their funding lapsed they have been clamoring for more. The 3-day workshop will focus on light and will incorporate some basic principles of light, including quantum! There will not be any money donated to the continuation fund for these workshops as the elementary teachers typically do not have the resources to pay for this type of PD. We appreciate the efforts of Ann Robinson, Sharon Kirby, and Dave Todd to meet these teachers where they need help. They have a strong “following” of teachers who rely on their expertise and time.

Opportunities for PTRAs at this time are limited and challenging, as is the case in most situations. Some PTRAs are setting up and providing PD at their own expense, but that should not be the case and they should not be expected to continue providing those services without compensation. The OC and director are looking for ways to help provide support, but we encourage the K-12 manager and EO to assist in identifying areas and opportunities for these experienced master teachers. Currently, most of the opportunities are limited to online PD. In order to provide PD online, the resources need to be adapted, just as it had to be done in the classrooms over the past year. Although some progress has been made in this area, there is still a lot to be done.