

“It takes a whole community to raise a child.”

- adapted from an ancient African saying

California State PTA recognizes that representative involvement of a diversity of stakeholder groups of all backgrounds enriches PTA leadership activities in ways that more soundly promote the well-being of all children, youth, and their families.

As advocates for children, PTA is most effective when we:

- Understand and embrace the uniqueness of all individuals.
- Identify and break down barriers that impede children from learning, or families from their full involvement in their children’s education.
- Create and work together on common goals that focus directly on the needs of the community.
- Include in our active membership a representation of all stakeholders including families from the multitude of ethnic, cultural, religious, economic and social backgrounds residing in the community.

In evaluating whether or not PTA is as effective as it can be ask the following questions:

- Are there underrepresented groups within the community that are missing from the PTA’s active membership and its leadership?
- Is there enough representation from all groups to give the unit the understanding needed to be advocates for all children?
- Does the way the public perceives PTA allow the association to attract a more diverse membership or lessen the ability to be heard as advocates for all children?

What is Outreach?

Outreach is, first, a commitment to create an inviting climate. Further, it is about forming respectful, trusting relationships throughout the school community and recognizing that everyone has value. Outreach is sharing and distributing important information about PTA and topics of concern that inform and invite action.

Outreach must be a priority for all of us. The greater the ability of PTA members and leaders to form positive one-on-one relationships with all community members, the greater their ability to generate positive impacts for all children, the school community, and the association.

Outreach efforts are successful when PTA leaders can develop community support with meaningful two-way discussions focusing on student success.

Outreach includes efforts that focus on enlisting the participation of parents, students, and community members in the educational process and establishing collaborative relationships focused on positive impacts.

Steps to Take

Using the languages represented within your community to communicate:

- Invite and encourage everyone to be a part, and assure everyone may play a role, because your community is your greatest asset.
- Invite involvement through one-on-one relationships focused on what can be achieved for children.
- Build a volunteer base that is representative of the diversity of the community, encompassing all languages and customs.
- Empower others with information, support, and resources focused on students’ needs.
- See the uniqueness of each individual.
- Work to build representative leadership and voice – support the democratic process. Is the PTA reflective of the greater community?

What to Do

- Form an outreach committee whose members are representative of the school and community.
- Survey the school and community members by questionnaire, telephone, or door-to-door. Find out what type of activities would interest all parts of the community. Find out what might prevent them from becoming involved: language barriers, transportation, baby-sitting needs, times of activities, etc. Find out what constitutes involvement to the people being surveyed.
- Develop an outreach plan in response to survey findings.
- Set reasonable goals. What do you want to accomplish?
- Develop activities that include and would be of interest to students, single-parent families, working parents, grandparents, senior citizens, people with disabilities, non-English speaking people, people of varied cultural, ethnic and social groups, and community business people.
- Provide translations and interpreters.
- Reach out through other groups to co-sponsor events or activities with
 - Other committees or chairmen within the PTA organization;

- Student leadership and school organizations;
- Community festivals, holidays, and celebrations;
- Parent advisory committees, such as local area councils, bilingual and booster groups to other unit, council and district PTAs in the community, area and state;
- Government and community groups and agencies, senior centers and civic organizations, cultural groups, local chambers of commerce and businesses.
- Promote and publicize activities through PTA newsletters, e-mail, website, fliers, local newspapers, personal telephone calls, public service announcements (PSAs), and other newsletters. Determine the most effective method of distributing printed material: mail, take home, handouts, or personal delivery by adult.
- Communicate opportunities beyond PTA activities to appreciate and learn more about cultures from around the world (e.g., museums, festivals, special events/activities, books, TV programs, videos and movies).
- The involved membership includes students, teachers, community, and extended family members, not just parents.
- People respond to fliers, newsletters and website information translated into all the languages within the school.
- Members talk and socialize together before the association meeting starts.
- Membership and outreach are part of all PTA activity planning.
- The PTA board and membership does not think in terms of “them” and “us.”

Refer to the

- California State PTA Position Statement, Inclusiveness and Diversity, Advocacy Chapter.
- *California State PTA Toolkit*, Membership Chapter, Membership Basics, and Outreach, Diversity and Inclusion sections.
- California State PTA brochure: *Outreach: Building Community Unity Through PTA*

Evaluating Outreach

Evaluate each activity while in progress or at its completion. Evaluate accomplishments at the end of the year. Ask members of the committee:

- Were outreach efforts successful?
- How could we improve our approach?
- Did those participating show an interest in the program?
- Will they come again? Will they bring others?
- Was it accessible to them?
- Will they become involved on the PTA board?
- What would they do differently?
- Were there conflicts in planning (scheduling, translators, facilities)?
- Was the program timely and of interest to the participants?
- How could more people be reached?
- What made the program a success?
- Were goals reached? Do goals need to be revised?

01/2011

You Know Outreach Has Succeeded When

- The make-up of the PTA reflects the make-up of the school community.
- There are some new PTA board members every year who represent all parts of the school community.
- New people are at each PTA association meeting, and many come to the next meeting.
- PTA members ask questions and make suggestions during association meetings.