

Strategies for filling boards

Start early by being inclusive and welcoming.

- At the beginning of the term, ask current board members to identify people who show strengths, skills and enthusiasm.
- Be aware of that person who is always early, willing to help in any way, is just behind-the-scenes everywhere. That kind of enthusiasm is a good trait in a PTA leader.
- Develop a list with short descriptions of the positions at your site (including time commitment) so that people know what they are being asked to do. Publicize these on websites and in newsletters. If you have sign-up sheets, do the same on them and in directories.
- Do an interest survey in which you ask what skills people have, what they want to be involved with, etc.

- Give a clear indication of the responsibilities of all positions and how much time may be involved.

- Promote training, resources and counterpart assistance so that volunteers know they will be supported.



- Encourage council/district officers to sit in or assist with presentations at workshops.
- Include any expectation of officer representation at leadership training workshops, council and PTA district meetings and/or the California State PTA annual convention. Have job descriptions available at training events.
- Always encourage board members to mentor others. Encourage board members to ask for assistants and delegate well so that others get a sense of what effort is involved in tasks and events.

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- Ask the principal and teachers to recommend people who have shown interest in being involved at school or in the classroom who may not have been approached by PTA.
- At middle/junior highs and high schools, be sure to be in touch with your feeder schools on a regular basis so that they know what your PTA/PTSA does. Then ask them to identify potential volunteers.
- Be sure to make clear when elections take place and the need to have people on board in spring and what a PTA misses if there are no officers in spring for the following year.
- Reach out to other groups to share information about how those leaders can be involved in PTA.
- Be positive about the personal benefits of the job: marketable skills, great leadership training, community respect, increased self confidence, computer skills, public speaking training, support and friendship from a great group of people, etc.
- Don't try to talk a reluctant individual into accepting a nomination.
- Don't whine or beg, and remember that no one wants a job where the incumbent complains about their job.
- Never try to “fill the board” just to have names in place. A vacancy at the time of the election may be filled by a nomination from the floor or later can be elected by the newly elected executive board.

Other things to consider:

1. Take an honest look at what you do and how you represent PTA. Is this why some might not join?
2. Don't be afraid of change, encourage it.
3. Consider one-time event chairs instead of a “programs vice president” who is in charge of all events.
4. Consider that one-time volunteers may get hooked.
5. Use interest or job skills surveys.

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6. Make the personal call asking people to consider being involved.
7. Ask again – “No” today does not mean “no” forever.
8. Challenge each board member to bring a new name for consideration.
9. Reach out to members of the school community who have no representation.

For district and council boards:

- ◆ Ask the superintendent for suggestions
- ◆ Get board lists from previous years and see if anybody might want to return. Track who has consistently gone to trainings and conventions and ask if they want to move to Council or District.

Find out from State VPs and chairmen which people from the units have been responsive, competent and interested.
- ◆ Try to look for small tasks that can be done to introduce someone to the council/district: Examples include the financial review committee, bylaws review committee, help with training set-up/sign-in, help with a speaker night, member of health committee, etc.
- ◆ Districts should meet with and develop relationships with council counterparts so the district gets to know more leaders than the council presidents.
- ◆ Do not be afraid to be “bold” and recruit students to fill-in on district/council boards, particularly where social media and technology is concerned.