

PTA

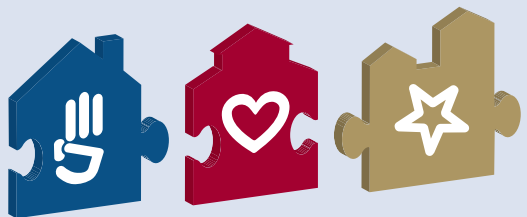
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Discover

The Power of Partnerships



A Guide to PTA's
Building Successful
Partnerships Process



Student grades and school pride are on the rise at Fremont High School in Sunnyvale, California.

Van Bokkelen Elementary School in Severn, Maryland—once on the verge of being taken over by the state—has now made adequate yearly progress for four consecutive years.

Despite high student-to-teacher ratios at Appoquinimink Early Childhood Center in Middletown, Delaware, kindergartners are getting the individual attention they need as early learners.



Family-School Partnerships

The PTA Way

Read on to learn more about building successful partnerships in *your* community!

See students soar! Get national recognition!

Building Successful Partnerships—The PTA Way



From Awareness...

When families, schools, and communities work together,

- * Student achievement improves.
- * Teacher morale rises.
- * Communication among parents, teachers, and administrators increases.
- * Family, school, and community connections multiply.

It doesn't matter who you are or where you're from. Family involvement at home and in schools promotes student success. And there's more than 30 years of research to back that up.

Inform your school community of the power of their involvement in children's development. Then, educate the community on ways to maximize their involvement.



To Action...

Involvement doesn't just happen; it must be encouraged, cultivated. Policies and programs that focus on what families, schools, and communities can do together to support student success are crucial.

Use the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships to develop, evaluate, and improve involvement practices at your school. Build successful family-school partnerships—the PTA way.



To Celebration.

Family involvement promotes student success. You can never say it enough. And when you see it happening at your school, celebrate!

Let your community know that it's not just studies about other schools that show the link between involvement and achievement—it's the experience at your school as well. Advertise your accomplishments in the community, and aim for PTA's national Phoebe Apperson Hearst Outstanding Family-School Partnership Award!

Building Successful Partnerships—The PTA Way



PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

The National Standards are PTA's framework for how families, schools, and communities should work together to support student success. Each of these standards is rooted in the value of mutual respect, trust, and courtesy.

-  **Standard 1: Welcoming all families into the school community**—Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.
-  **Standard 2: Communicating effectively**—Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.
-  **Standard 3: Supporting student success**—Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.
-  **Standard 4: Speaking up for every child**—Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.
-  **Standard 5: Sharing power**—Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.
-  **Standard 6: Collaborating with community**—Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

For the National Standards Implementation Guide, go to www.pta.org/bsp.

Building Successful Partnerships—The PTA Way

Make effective family-school partnerships a reality for your community, and see the difference it makes for students. The National Standards outline the key elements of involvement to address. The Building Successful Partnerships process gives you a flexible, open approach to achieving your goals.



Building Successful Partnerships—Awareness

Together, School Groups Boost Student Success

Fremont High School's Students for Success Peer Tutoring Club—a collaboration between the school's PTSA, National Honor Society, and teachers—is encouraging good study habits and raising student grades. Half of the regularly tutored students improved by a letter grade in at least one subject in just one semester! Plus, the program is making school cool.



Raise Awareness

Continually educate school stakeholders about the importance of family and community involvement in children's academic experience, and the vital roles they can play.

Stakeholders include parents, extended family members, other caregivers, teachers, school staff and administrators, community leaders, local businesses and organizations, and more.

Present the message about involvement not only to regular PTA and school audiences but also to local service and social clubs, town meetings, church groups, major area employers, etc. Tell them how they can help improve your school, raise student achievement, and benefit themselves and the rest of the community.

As you talk about roles and opportunities, introduce the National Standards and the Building Successful Partnerships process as tools for increasing involvement.

By reaching out to these groups and individuals, you'll build trust and ownership—gaining support for the school, the students, your PTA, and the work ahead.

Tip: Identify willing individuals from all stakeholder groups, backgrounds, and neighborhoods in the community to take leading roles in building successful partnerships. Each stage of the process offers stakeholders an opportunity to contribute according to their interests and abilities, whether it's by giving presenta-



Building Successful Partnerships—Awareness

tions, being part of a focus group, helping put together a newsletter or event, serving on the action team, talking one-on-one with potential partners, or something entirely different.

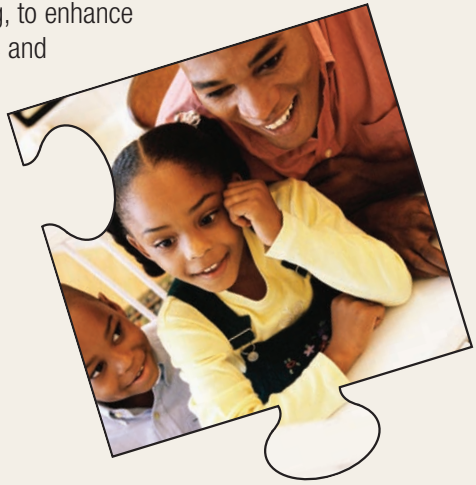
Resources

Go to www.pta.org/bsp to download resources for educating stakeholders about involvement.

PowerPoint presentations are available to give principals, parents, and other community members an overview of the National Standards and the research behind them, as well as practice-based information on how to strengthen family and community partnerships with schools.

There are also **handouts**, with specific tips for parents and teachers on partnering to support student learning, to enhance presentations, share through newsletters and websites, and use as takeaways at PTA and school events.

For a full list of resources, visit www.pta.org/bsp.



Collaborations with Community Engage Parents in School

PTA leaders at Van Bokkelen Elementary School knew that to improve student achievement, they needed to involve parents and the community—a challenge at this Title I school. Working with such groups as the Maryland State Department of Education, YWCA, Boys & Girls Clubs, and a community college, the school and its PTA introduced after-school programs, adult education, and resources to help families support learning at home. The school has become a community hub, and parents have gained confidence in their ability to partner in their children's education. The benefits of these changes can be seen in improved grades and test scores across the board, and in four consecutive years of making adequate yearly progress. Not bad for a school that used to be one of the worst performing in the state!



Take Action

With a shared understanding of what it takes for students to be successful in school, you and your school and community peers are ready to take action.

Work with your principal to create an action team that reflects the school community. Your team may include a teacher, librarian, parent, grandparent, student council president, neighbor from the community, representative from a youth-serving organization, and others.

Evaluate the current state of family-school-community partnerships at your school. Identify your strengths and weaknesses, as well as incentives and barriers to involvement. Using the school improvement plan as a reference, discuss how the strengths and weaknesses are impacting student achievement.

Then, create a clear, compelling vision for how families, the school, and the community can work together for student success. Apply the National Standards to your community's unique situation.

Building Successful Partnerships—Action

To make your vision a reality, develop an action plan to **align policies, programs, and practices** with the National Standards. Address the weakness and barriers you identified, and reinforce the strengths. As with any action plan, be sure to define measurable goals.

Periodically **assess your progress** to determine where improvements have been made and where further work must be done. Also, since a community's composition and needs are continually changing, continually assess the relevance of your work and the buy-in from the community.

Putting It Into Practice: Eastwood Elementary School in Decatur, Alabama, evaluated its communication practices and found that, among other things, there was no consistent method of sharing classroom information with parents. After looking at what several other schools did to facilitate teacher-parent communication, the action team selected an academic planner, approved by the principal, to become the schoolwide method for communicating homework, tests, and other classroom activities—making parents true partners with teachers in supporting student learning.

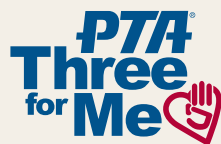
Resources

The **National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Implementation Guide** provides examples of what each standard may look like in practice, and can help in evaluating your school's progress in building successful

partnerships. The guide also includes action ideas for each standard, and stories of how communities are working toward success. The guide is available at www.pta.org/bsp.



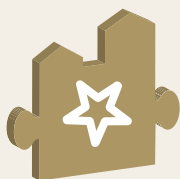
PTA **Three for Me** helps schools and PTAs organize involvement and tap into parents' talents and skills, and helps family members find ways to stay involved and support their children's schools. Go to www.pta.org/threeforme to get started.



Building Successful Partnerships—Celebration

Families Speak Up and See Results

When student-to-teacher ratios reached as high as 27:1 at the Appoquinimink Early Childhood Center, parents spoke up to ensure a better educational experience for their children. The PTA collaborated with families and school staff to explore solutions to the maxed-out classrooms; then, they presented the district board of education with a proposal. The board responded and took steps to ensure that the kindergarteners would receive the guidance and attention they needed to succeed.



Celebrate Success

Capitalize on your accomplishments! Your successes—big and small—are your PTA's best form of advertisement.

Publish stories in school and district newsletters, send press releases to local media, and post pictures and outcomes online to give stakeholders real-life proof of involvement's power to improve schools and benefit students. Success stories will show school leaders and current and potential members, donors, and partnering organizations why their involvement and collaboration is critical to student success.

The more you promote your successes, the more people will want to get involved—and the more your children will succeed!

Resources

The **PTA Report to the Community** is a template for highlighting your PTA's accomplishments in increasing involvement to support teaching and learning, and for introducing your plans to continue that effort. This report can not only continue to heighten awareness in your community but, combined with the reports of other communities, demonstrate to the nation the collective impact PTA is making on student achievement through family-school partnerships. Download the report template at www.pta.org/bsp.



Building Successful Partnerships—Celebration

Seek national recognition—and reward—for your collaborative efforts! Apply for the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Family-School Partnerships Awards:

Outstanding Family-School Partnership Award

For exemplary implementation of all six National Standards, one local PTA will receive a monetary award of \$2,000.

Family-School Partnership **Award of Excellence**

For representing the best in one National Standard each, six local PTAs will receive monetary awards of \$500.

Family-School Partnership **Award of Merit**

For demonstrating a commitment to building partnerships, all local PTAs that apply will receive a certificate of recognition.



Learn more at www.pta.org/hearst.



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About PTA

PTA is the largest volunteer parent organization in the United States. It comprises more than 5 million members devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization 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 is concerned with the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.

**Join PTA in Building Successful
Family-School Partnerships Today.**

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