

School of Excellence Program Leader Quotes

Selected quotes from 2020-2022 National PTA School of Excellence Program Leaders about the School of Excellence program and impact on PTAs and school communities:

CALIFORNIA

“This program has given me the opportunity to get to know my administration, staff and students. It positions the school community to engage while developing a voice for the children.”

—Jag Patel, Arlington High PTSA

“Participating in the School of Excellence program is beneficial to your school community and helps improve connections. Thank you for providing tools and information to make our school a better place.”

—Jemima Dutra, Avocado Elementary PTA

“Participating in the School of Excellence Program was a great way (especially during COVID times where kids weren't on campus) to connect with the families and know where we should be putting our best efforts.” —Dawn Mortazavi, Alderwood Elementary School PTA

“The program helps PTAs with resources to identify needs of our schools, families and communities. The program also helps identify key areas to help families get and stay involved in their children's education.” —Amy Watson, Chapman Hills Elementary PTA

“Win or lose, there is a lot of information out there that can help your PTA find new ways to increase membership, volunteerism, and reach more members of the community. Participation alone has already made us—and I am sure many others—a better PTA.” —Stephanie Cole, Tierra Bonita Elementary PTA

“I think it helps your school community see the value of PTA and how it helps to strengthen relationships and enhance learning that leads to better outcomes for all students.”

—Ellen Tillman, Ardenwood Elementary PTA

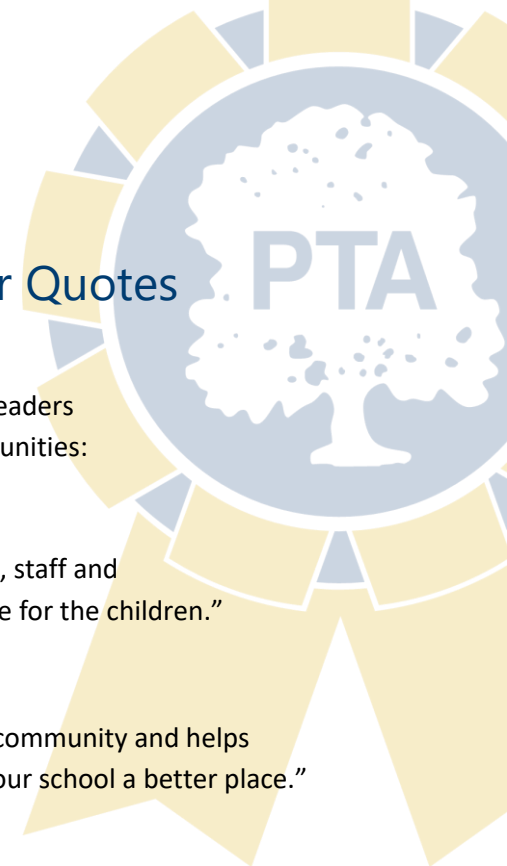
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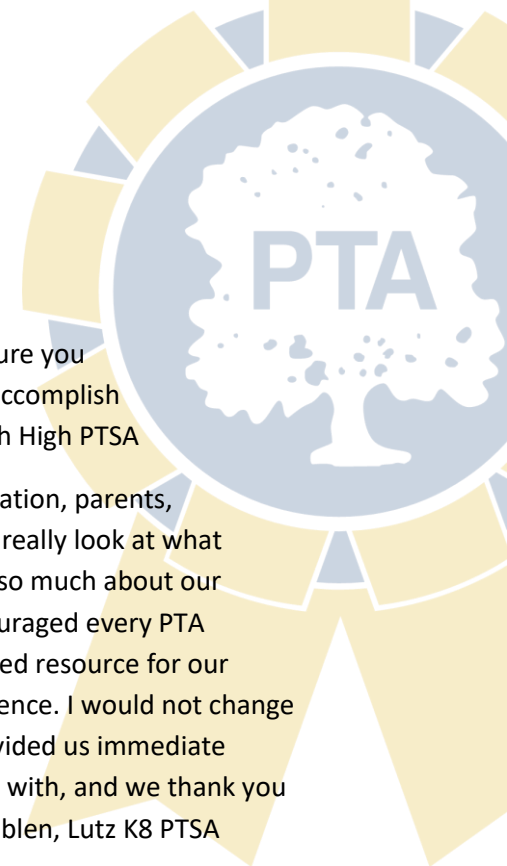
“It helps provide structure to planning, helps support the creation of metrics and goals, provides a community of other PTAs to gain knowledge from, and provides support during difficult moments. We always felt that the program team was accessible and available when we had questions and/or needed support. We appreciate your work and efforts.” —Meredith Schuchard, Redding Elementary School PTA

EUROPEAN

“The School of Excellence program truly gives additional value and a sense of pride to the school. This also keeps the school striving to provide great services and programs that are well communicated between the students and parents. Because of the program, our school was able to focus on finding new ways to conveniently communicate with our parents and our virtual students.”

—Carolynne Pebbles Sambolanay, Kaiserslautern Middle School PTSA





FLORIDA

“It's an excellent program and it helps you keep focused on goals and makes sure you are successful. I think it's wonderful, it keeps us focused on what we want to accomplish and helps us see how successful our school has been.” —Audrey Dennerly, Tech High PTSA

“Any PTA that is looking to improve their relationship with students, administration, parents, guardians and their community should do this program. It forces a PTA unit to really look at what they are doing well and what areas they can improve upon. Our PTSA learned so much about our organization as a direct result of participating in the SOE program. I have encouraged every PTA president I meet to try it. It has been invaluable in helping us in become a valued resource for our parents and teachers and it has really strengthened our commitment to excellence. I would not change anything. National PTA's response during the pandemic was amazing, you provided us immediate guidance and showed such understanding of what the local units were dealing with, and we thank you so much for permitting us to continue our journey to excellence.” —Erica Hamblen, Lutz K8 PTSA

“It is the gold standard, and it makes the mission of the PTSA very clear and gives a roadmap to getting there with ideas, tools and resources. Collaboration is the key to creativity and problem solving and School of Excellence is a very collaborative process within our own school and with other schools striving to achieve similar goals. I would say it's been a very positive experience with people who are very encouraging and can add perspective to the challenges we face.” —Francisca Puga, Miami Palmetto Senior High School PTSA

“For us, it was a way to open the communication channel with our new Principal, a tool to show families that even during a complicated year, PTA, teachers and School Administration can sit together and find solutions for the students.” —Alessandra Saligoi, Eugenia B. Thomas K-8 Center PTA

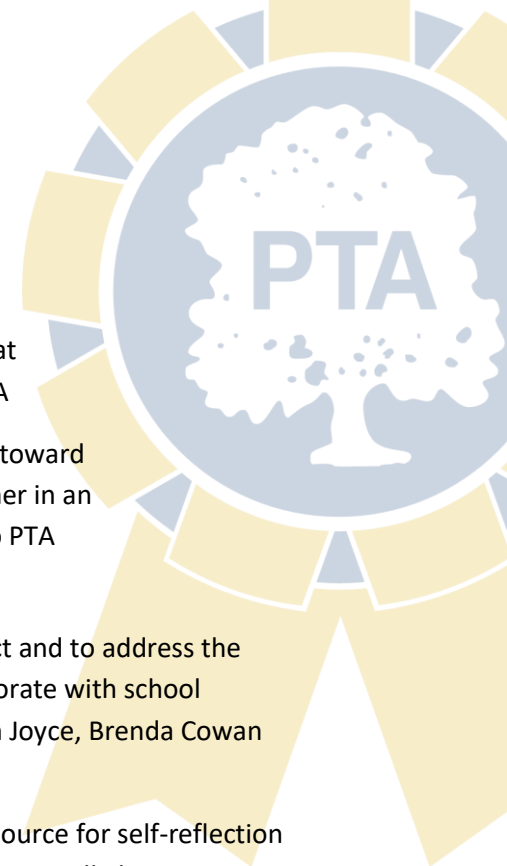
“It helps narrow down an area to focus on, instead of trying to do too many things and not finishing them. It also guides you to the process of creating new programs to benefit your students.”
—Norma Maiz, Grady Elementary PTA

“Schools should participate in the SOE program if they want to make their school a better place for students and staff...so glad I decided to make this goal a reality.”
—Cristina Cage, Oakstead Elementary PTA

“It definitely encourages a deeper level of thought when planning projects for the year. It is good to have specific guidelines to consider that help to enhance family engagement.” —Jennifer Bailey, Allan F. Keeth Elementary PTA

GEORGIA

“It helps us identify areas for improvement where we can focus on. We were able to collaborate more closely with our school to attain the same goal. I enjoyed learning from other PTA participants.”
—An Goh, Lindley Middle School PTSA



ILLINOIS

“The National PTA School of Excellence Program is an outstanding program that supports the enrichment of educational experience.” —Joan Chiao, Dewey PTA

“This provides a framework in which you can guide your programs and efforts toward well-intended goals. It allows an opportunity for teachers and parents to partner in an effort to improve children’s educational experience.” —Julie Haake, Twin Echo PTA

KENTUCKY

“PTAs should participate to have a framework to focus their growth and impact and to address the changing needs of their school communities. It also gives a clear way to collaborate with school administration and faculty for the shared goal of family engagement.” —Karen Joyce, Brenda Cowan Elementary, PTA

“It is a good chance to evaluate and see what you can improve, and a good resource for self-reflection among our school community. Thank you for the opportunity.” —Julie Beck, Stonewall Elementary PTA

MARYLAND

“The program provides the structure, tools and impetus to do an honest evaluation of your PT(S)A, identify areas for improvement, develop and implement a plan of action, then reevaluate, make further improvements and celebrate your successes! —Laura Mitchell, Parkland Magnet Middle School PTSA, Inc

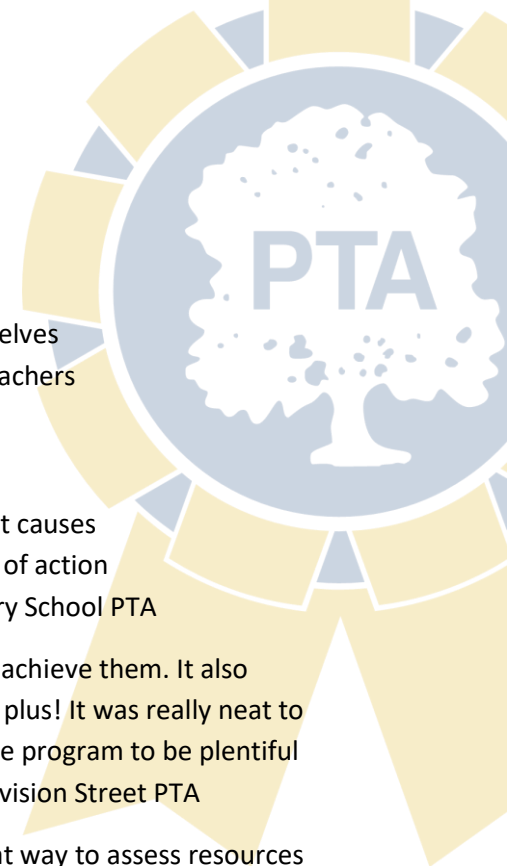
MICHIGAN

“This program allows every family to feel like they have a voice in the school their child attends. The survey gives the school and PTA a chance to get information on how the parents feel. It raises awareness about what PTA is at the school and keeps parents more focused on improvements for the school. I think it is also positive feedback for the district, community and school to know that a school has earned this recognition.” —Tammy Luty, Farmington STEAM Academy PTSA

“A PTA should participate in the School of Excellence program because it brings together the collaborative efforts of students, families, teachers, support staff, and administrators for the common goal of producing a climate of inclusion and quality school programming. The National PTA School of Excellence program came in handy during the global crisis everyone endured. It helped to provide structure and clarity at a time that was incredibly uncertain.” —Jennifer Johnson, Norup International School PTSA

NORTH CAROLINA

“It really has you take a step back and evaluate what you’re doing right and wrong. Sometimes we just do things because that’s how it was always done.” —Lynette Fox, Morgan Elementary PTA



NEW JERSEY

“A PTA should participate in the School of Excellence program to better themselves so they can deliver a more engaging and inclusive partnership with parents, teachers and community.” —Fran Czylek, Highland Avenue School 10 PTA

NEW YORK

“I think a PTA should participate in the School of Excellence program because it causes the school to think about the real needs of the community and to make a plan of action that will address those needs.” —Jessica Lynch, George Washington Elementary School PTA

“The School of Excellence program helps to set goals and create a roadmap to achieve them. It also allows PTAs to obtain recognition and be eligible for awards, which is always a plus! It was really neat to have a goal set and to take steps to complete it. I found the reminders from the program to be plentiful and we were given support as needed throughout the year.” —Kelly Savalli, Division Street PTA

“If a PTA feels like it needs to grow or wants to change in any way this is a great way to assess resources and perceptions within the community. There were questions that brought up things for us to work on that I honestly had never thought about before! If there is any skepticism in decisions, this process provides hard data that will help in showing a community why decisions were made. This also really helped to bring the full community into the fold without just a few people making all of the decisions.” —Rachel Arno, Charlton Heights Elementary School PTA

PENNSYLVANIA

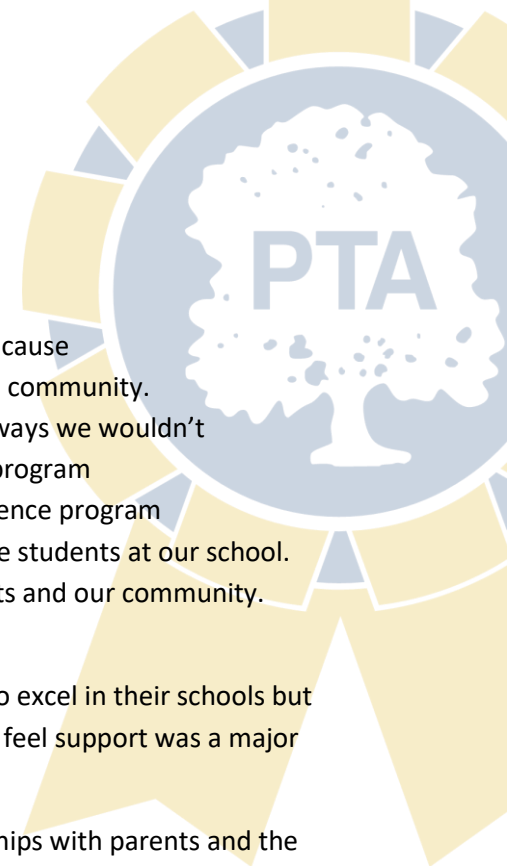
“School of Excellence was a roadmap for us to make sure that we were not just doing the same things that we always did as a PTA. It was making sure that we were asking members what we were doing well and where we needed to improve. That alone is big for some units that have maybe become stagnant.” —Carla Buxton, Independence Elementary PTA

SOUTH DAKOTA

“It adjusts your focus to strengthen family-school partnerships and bridges the gaps where needed to create a better community for all families.” —Erin Doering, Mike Miller Elementary PTA

TENNESSEE

“I loved the partnerships we built just going through the process! This program was probably the most rewarding initiative our PTA endeavored upon and we are collectively OVERJOYED by our accomplishments and so grateful for the PARTNERSHIPS we've developed!” —Ashleigh Bunn, Ruby Major Elementary PTA



TEXAS

“I think every school should participate in the School of Excellence program because truly does encourage and help you to make positive change in your school and community. Our family engagement and partnership has been completely transformed in ways we wouldn’t have thought of, because of our participation in this program. I love how this program holds us accountable and reminds us why we are all here. The School of Excellence program challenged us and helped us to be better advocates for all children, not just the students at our school. It also helped us to develop a stronger partnership between the school, parents and our community.”
—LaToya Shelton, Phillips Elementary PTA

“The support and webinars helped past and present members not only want to excel in their schools but also within their own PTAs. Having a space to bounce ideas, ask questions and feel support was a major plus.” —Denishea Williams, Lake Ridge Elementary PTA

“It shows commitment to your community to better your school and relationships with parents and the community.” —Dominique Harvey, Westchester Academy for International Studies PTA

“PTAs should participate because this guides them as they intentionally think about the work they do to fulfill the mission of our organization. The steps are easy to follow and naturally helps your PTA sets its goals for the school year.” —Tarah Lantz, Hickey Elementary PTA

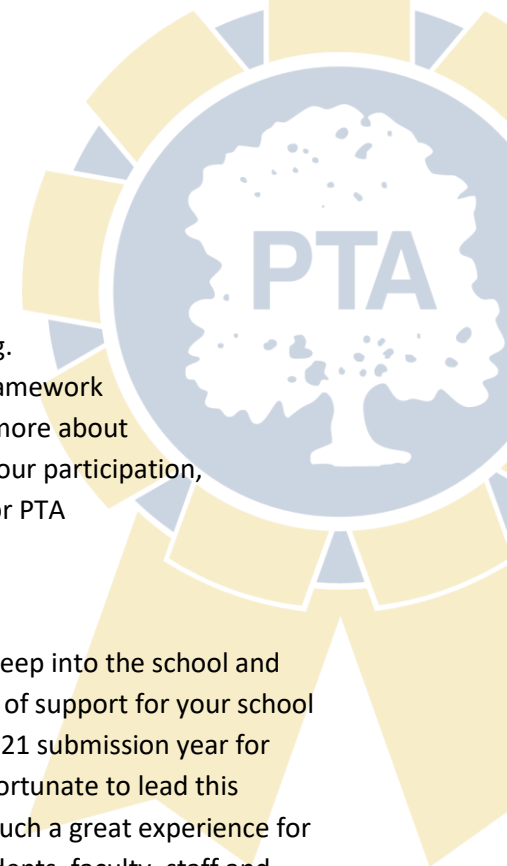
“The School of Excellence program provides a great roadmap to strengthen family-school partnerships, which is critical. Choosing a specific focus area and objective that is meaningful to the school community provides the opportunity to make a positive difference in the lives of students, staff and families. We look forward to continuing some of the great programs we implemented this year and focusing on other areas next year and beyond.” —Sommer Ludwig, Wyatt Elementary PTA

“It truly helps PTAs to focus on the mission of the Association and better understand and align to that mission. This was an awesome learning experience for us as PTA Leaders and as a school community.”
— Rhonda Black, Cedar Hill Collegiate Preparatory Elementary PTA

“The School of Excellence program is a way to refocus on what is important. The program can help your PTA look at policies, practices, events, and communication to make sure it serves the goal of transforming the partnership between families and the school. The program helped us make sure everything we do is intentional and helps support our overall goals. The program is excellent. Thank you for making it available and being so supportive along the way!” —Sarah Kissel, Brinker Elementary PTA

“The School of Excellence Program helps you to see where you can make a change in your PTA or what area you should work on to better your school community.” —Crystal Matovich, Keiko Davidson Elementary PTA

“PTAs should participate because it really enlightens you on the tremendous feedback and progress that you make throughout the process that you might not necessarily have encountered doing what you always do.” —Ashleigh Taylor, Windsor Park Elementary PTA



UTAH

“Anything a school can do to understand PTA and its purposes is strengthening. Participating in the School of Excellence program is a great way to learn the framework of PTA and its vision in helping students. We definitely know and understand more about the amazing work that PTA is trying to accomplish for our children because of our participation, and I'm betting there is still so much more we can learn.” —Jill Turner, Windsor PTA

VIRGINIA

“The School of Excellence application process allows for the PTA to really dig deep into the school and PTA relationship and fine tune key areas (positive and areas for improvement) of support for your school community (teachers, parents/family staff and especially students). This 2020-21 submission year for the School of Excellence was a second time around for our high school. I was fortunate to lead this endeavor each of these two times. The School of Excellence opportunity was such a great experience for our board members and allowing this experience to feel connected to our students, faculty, staff and families. Our final survey received over 700 responses. Great feedback and support from such a great school that our unit is fortunate to support through PTA.”

—Amber Sloan, Floyd E Kellam High School PTSA

“I believe that participating in the program allows a school to see where the families’ perceptions measure up to your PTA perceived perceptions. It also allows a PTA to see where it should shift its focus to better meet the needs of its school community. I loved the opportunity to listen to other school's ideas and learn new ways to reach families through our phone and zoom sessions.” —Amy VanSkyhawk, Simonsdale Elementary PTA

“PTAs should participate in this program to help identify needs and better understand the power in PTA. We are not just the fundraisers; we can be and impactful piece of the student's education!”

—Sara Murphy, Herndon Elementary PTA