



**SCHOOL OF
EXCELLENCE**

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Excellence Lesson IV

**Overview of Step 3: Build an Excellence Action Plan and
Check Back with Your Community**

Today we will discuss where you all should be in the program right now-Step 3: Build an Excellence Action Plan and Check Back with Your Community. The bulk of your time in the School of Excellence program will be spent in this step it is important to make sure you understand the goal behind this part of the program.

Agenda

- **Breaking Down Step #3: Build an Excellence Action Plan and Check Back with Your Community**
- **How to Build Excellence Action Plan**
- **Key Resources for Building Your Excellence Action Plan**
- **Frequently Asked Questions**

While today's Lesson focuses on the first portion of Step #3- Build an Excellence Action Plan

- I will provide a breakdown of the step in its entirety, so you know what is coming down the pike.
- I'll then how to build your excellence action plan with some tips and suggestions
- Before highlighting important resources, like the Roadmap to Excellence, that will help you find success in the program.
- I'll conclude with some quick frequently asked questions that will retouch on some of the important details from this Lesson

For those of you who have already developed and/or have begun implementing your action plan, we encourage you to review your plan and planning process based on this Lesson to ensure you are accomplishing everything you need to in order to find success and meeting the requirements necessary to complete the program and earn the designation.

Step #3 Breakdown

1 Build your Excellence Action Plan

Ensure plan is based on community feedback results, the Roadmap to Excellence and your chosen National Standard and Focus Area.

2 Implement your Excellence Action Plan

Implement your plan, document successes and adjust your efforts to account for new focuses or obstacles that arise in your community.

3 Check back with your community

Along the way, keep your community engaged and aware of your efforts. Use the required questions to check back with your community and measure progress.

Let's begin with breaking down Step #3 into (3) objectives:

1. **Develop your School of Excellence Action Plan:** Your main goal here is to build an action plan to increase and improve family engagement in your school community. Your plan should be developed in alignment to your community feedback results and the National Standards for Family School Partnerships, as well as one of the provided program Focus Areas.
2. **Implement your Excellence Action Plan:** Next you put into action the plan you create, aiming to have completed most of your efforts by mid-to-late April. Along the way document successes and adjust your efforts to account for new focuses or obstacles that arise in your community. You will have the opportunity to complete the optional Share Your Plans Form to share with National PTA and other participants your progress, plans and goals in the program.
3. **Check back with your community:** Finally, you will redeploy the required survey questions to understand the progress you have made. This is required. Along the way, keep your community engaged and aware of your efforts, so they can easily recall improvements in your school community. As part of your action plan, consider specific goals around gathering feedback to ensure you stay on top of this important part of the program.

How to Build Your Excellence Action Plan

Action Plan Requirements

- Develop a unique plan, specific to your community.
- There is no formula or perfect design, but plans must align to—
 - Community feedback results
 - Chosen National Standard and Goal
 - Chosen Focus Area

Getting Started

- Start with your PTA's community feedback—
 - Use notes and takeaways from your analysis to guide your planning
 - Find and deep dive into a relevant National Standard
 - Explore ideas and opportunities in your Focus Area
- Consider how your feedback and the National Standards can improve your PTA's existing plans, efforts or goals

There is no required format for your action plan, rather your Excellence Team should develop and implement your action plan in the format and manner that will drive the most change in your community. However, each Excellence Action Plan should be aligned to

- Your Community feedback results, meaning any areas of opportunity or areas of success that were revealed
- Your chosen National Standard, the Standard you will focus on in the program should be relevant to your community feedback because all the questions are aligned to the Standards and Goals.
- Your chosen Focus Area, there is flexibility around your focus area in the program, as the purpose behind selection (1) area of focus is to encourage your PTA to really dive into the work, rather than taking small disparate actions across a number of different areas.

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Because your community feedback is the foundation of your efforts in the School of Excellence program, it only makes sense to begin action planning there.

- Remember the analysis you did as part of Step #2? Now it is time to make use of those notes and takeaways to improve or enhance. Start broad with several opportunities or ideas and begin to narrow down your brainstorming as you consider how you can make improvements specifically related to the relevant National Standard
- As part of this, we recommend you deep dive into your National Standard using the many resources provided by National PTA and the Center for Family Engagement. These tools, will give you ideas and help you in implementing your plans.
- As mentioned, your Focus Area is a guidepost and you do not need to be beholden to your selection. However, your PTA's action plan should focus in on one area and you can find a myriad of ways to do that using the Roadmap to Excellence, which we will explore shortly.

Finally, consider how your feedback and the National Standards can improve your PTA's existing plans, efforts or goals. If your PTA already has a plan for the year and have begun those efforts, **DON'T REINVENT THE WHEEL!** There is no sense in building an action plan for the sake of it. Instead, take what you learned from your feedback and use all the resources provided through the program to update and improve your PTA's current plan with best practices in mind.



To get you started on this step, National PTA provides a wealth of tools and templates in the Excellence Toolkit. For example, Excellence Lesson II is a deep dive into analyzing community feedback, which will be critical to building your action plan. The Toolkit will remain your 1-stop shop for success in the program

Some of your key, Step #3 resources include our online Roadmap to Excellence, which compiles highly relevant resources from National PTA and partner organizations that are aligned to the Focus Areas. Starting with the Roadmap to guide your PTA’s research and planning, removes the guessing and ensures your PTA is building a plan that is aligned to vetted resources, programs and ideas that will set you up to succeed in the program. Not only do we provide resources around the focus areas, but you can also deep dive in each of the National Standards.

Along with the Roadmap, we have provided a customizable template action plan that will help you construct an action plan with the program requirements built in.

Of if you’re interested in additional project management tools, you can check out the SMARTIE planning tool which is a great resource for breaking down your action plan into individual steps and reachable goals. If you’re looking for inspiration and real-world examples, you review sample action plans from past School of Excellence designees, to see how they approached building an action plan.

Even with all these resources, your PTA is encouraged to approach action planning and project management using the tools, methods and style that works best for you! We also encourage you to take advantage of the resources around you – your school district, your administrators, your State PTA, etc.. As long as you are basing your efforts in the Standards and your community feedback - there are so many ways you can take your action planning to the next level!

Step #3: Frequently Asked Questions

Is there a required format?

- *No, use whatever format works best for your PTA and Excellence Team.*

Where do we begin in action planning?

- *Your survey results and your chosen National Standard, as well as your Focus Area from Step #2. You can also build a plan based on your PTA's existing efforts.*

Do I need to create a new initiative or programming?

- *No! The program meets PTAs where they are. Don't reinvent the wheel. **Capitalize on your current strengths.***

Now, let's wrap up this overview of Step #3 with some frequently asked questions that hit on some of the important things to remember from this Lesson.

First is there a required format? No. You should use whatever format, tools, materials, etc. Work best for your PTA and excellence team to help you find success in building and all-star excellence action plan.

Where do we begin with action planning? Your survey results and your chosen national standard as well as your focus area from step number two. You can also build an excellent action plan based on your PTA's existing efforts as long as your work remains aligned to your community feedback and the national standards.

Do I need to create new initiatives or programming in my excellent section plan? Absolutely not. The program is meant to meet TAs where they are. There's no need to reinvent the wheel, just capitalize on your current strengths and efforts to make sure that you are building your PTA up and helping you create it long lasting and impactful school improvement changes.

Are we required to submit our plan to National PTA?

- *No, but there will be an opportunity for you to share your plans through the program platform.*

Should we take pictures or document the work?

- *Yes! It is not required but **pictures, videos and other media can help engage your community.***

Is there a specific timeline for action planning?

- *No, but **work backwards from June 15** to ensure your plans are implemented before redeploying the survey.*

What if we don't implement everything in our plan?

- *That is okay! Consider strategic goals vs. ambitious goals to **prioritize what you can accomplish.***

Are we required to submit our plan to National PTA? No, but there are opportunities for you to share your action plan through the program platform in order to let national PTA know and other program participants as well, once you are doing in the program and the successes you've had so far.

Should we take pictures or document our work? While it's not required, pictures, videos, and other media can go a long way in helping engage your community and keeping them abreast of the work that you are doing and making sure that they are aware that those efforts are aligned to the school of excellence program and ultimately achieving the school of excellence designation.

Is there a specific timeline for action planning? No, but most of your plans should be implemented by mid to late April so you have enough time to gather community feedback once again and measure your progress in the program. We generally recommend working backwards from June 15, which is the deadline for the community impact form in which you will verify that you redeployed the required questions and share with national PTA your successes in the program.

What if we don't implement everything in our plan? That's okay. Consider strategic versus ambitious goals along the way and re-prioritize what you need to, so you can accomplish things this year. Remember that the designation is for two years. So anything that you don't achieve this school year can be worked on in the following school year and enhanced with the Adam Momentum you receive from the School of Excellence designation.

Agenda

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Today, we mainly explored the first portion of Step #3 Building an Excellence Action Plan. Thanks for tuning in! Hopefully, you are leaving this lesson with an idea of how to build your Excellence Action Plan and knowledge of the tools and resources your PTA has available for supporting this work.

Stay tuned for future Excellence Lessons as we further deep dive in Step #3