



Excellence Lesson VII

Exploring responses to the Share Your Plans Form.

Welcome! In Excellence Lesson 7, we will dive into the work a few PTAs are doing in to enhance family engagement in their community through the School of Excellence program.

Key Elements of an Excellence Action Plan

- **Action plans will**

- align to community feedback gather in Step #2
- uniquely support each community's needs
- embed and rely on best practices through the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships
- Create long lasting and transformative change for the *entire* school community

As a reminder, Excellence Action Plans are based on each PTA's community feedback as gathered through Step #2 and are customized for each community's unique circumstances during the program cycle. The information gathered through the required questions aligns directly to the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, which PTAs incorporate into their programming to create long last and transformative change for the *entire* school community.

Nichols Hills PTA Oklahoma

"We realized that all the resources in the world will not matter if no one knows we have them."



Focus Area:

- Education & Enrichment

National Standard:

Communicating Effectively

- Supporting Student Success

Summary:

- New options to access information (text & online), expanded translations or the option to translate and regular meeting opportunities
- Recruited teacher members and liaisons to ensure they could access improved communication strategies

Nichols Hills PTA in *Oklahoma* is working in the Area of Education & Enrichment and is focusing on Standard 2: Communicate Effectively.

The community feedback Nichols Hills PTA gathered revealed a common response of “unknown” related to resources, opportunities to be involved, processes to encourage communication between the school and families. To work towards resolving this, the PTA is diversifying the options by which they provide information both virtually and in-person and new ways for families to access the information in their native languages. They are also actively recruiting teachers to be members of PTA and in the leadership roles so they can have access to these communication lines so that all (3) elements of the PTA – Parents, Teachers and the unit itself – are working together to benefit the community.

By changing up their standard processes with communication and intentionally including new stakeholders the PTA is now in a much better place to engage with families and the school because more folks are aware of how to enact change and be an active advocate for the school.

**Ocoee High
School PTSA**
Florida

*"We aim to bridge the gap
with non-English-speaking
parents."*

Focus Area:

- Health, Safety & Well-Being

National Standard:

- Welcoming ALL Families
- Communicating Effectively

Summary:

- In actively trying to address health concerns like vaping, partnered with principal, teachers, and parents to develop new strategies
- Used translators, technology and listening sessions to bridge gaps with non-English-speaking parents

Nichols Hills PTA in *Oklahoma* is working in the Area of Health, Safety & Well-Being and is focusing on Standard 1: Welcoming ALL Families.

Ocoee PTSA has engaged with key community stakeholders to discuss issues and develop and implement effective solutions around health concerns like vaping. Utilizing tools like Duolingo, Babbel, Google Translate, and dedicated translators, the PTA aims to better include non-English-speaking parents in their community. The PTSA partnered with the School Advisory Council and the principal to host an ESOL night that provided translators to facilitate meaningful discussions and better address and understand the concerns of non-English-speaking parents. The event was well attended with 20-25 parents ESOL parents.

Their PTSA's efforts to engage families in the preferred language highlights that efforts that focus on inclusion can enhance work in many different areas outside of traditional DEI efforts. By including these families in conversations around vaping, they ensure their *entire* community benefits, which allows for a more thorough and long-lasting impact on the prevalent issue of vaping.

Highland Middle PTSA *Washington*

"When families feel heard, understood, and empowered, they become active participants and powerful advocates for their children's education."



Focus Area:

- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion

National Standard:

- Sharing Power

Summary:

- Actively worked to improve connections with Spanish-speaking families related to an upcoming district policy concern.
- Utilized phone and 1:1 conversations in preferred languages to educate on the issue and invited all families to voice their opinion.

Highland Middle PTSA in *Washington* is working in the Area of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and is focusing on Standard 5: Sharing Power.

A recent district proposal suggested consolidating Highland Middle School with another community. As a Title 1 school, the PTSA knew the proposal, if enacted, would have a significant impact on marginalized and at-risk students. Thus, the PTSA focused on strengthening family voice and built connections to give every family a voice. They used phone and 1:1 conversations with families in their preferred languages to raise awareness of the proposal and ensure people understood the situation and its potential impact. To amplify family voices, the PTSA encouraged families to attend community forums and over 150 parents attended the listening session. As a result of this mobilization and collective voice, the district decided to pause the consolidation process.

Highland Middle PTSA attributes a crucial role to Spanish-speaking families in helping to pause the proposal, which demonstrates the critical impacts that come from PTSA's Share Power to ensure *all families* have an active and equal role in advocating for the school and their children.

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Thanks for tuning in!

**Email Excellence@PTA.org with
any questions.**

Thanks for tuning into this Excellence Lesson! We are excited to continue sharing the amazing work PTAs are doing in the School of Excellence program. Stay tuned for more Excellence Lessons and, as always, email Excellence@PTA.org with any questions along the way.