Overview

PTA’s mission is to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Our mission requires that diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) be central to our work and used in our day-to-day decisions and actions.

This tool is designed to help local PTAs chart a path forward on their DEI journey. It is an accompanying tool to National PTA’s Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, which defines what these terms mean and why they matter for our mission.

Using the DEI rubrics below, your PTA can assess where you are—and where you are headed—on your DEI journey:

- **At the Beginning stage**, PTAs are “color-blind” or “identity-blind,” either by design or default, and do not lift up issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in any regular or routine way. PTAs may take the position that paying attention to diversity or demographic disparities shifts attention away from shared goals or concerns.

- **At the Emerging stage**, PTAs are focused on building membership and leadership comprised of individuals from different backgrounds and experiences. A primary goal is diversity and representation to better reflect the increasingly diverse constituencies that the PTA represents and seeks to serve.

- **At the Intermediate stage**, PTAs are focused on culture and creating an environment in which everyone is comfortable sharing and contributing their experiences. The primary goal is inclusion and internal change in behaviors, policies and practices.

- **At the Advanced stage**, PTAs are focused on systems to improve equity. The primary goal is integration of an equity lens into all aspects of the association’s work. This involves making internal and external changes and regularly evaluating processes, programs and operations to understand if they truly achieve the association’s mission and desire for fairness.

Diversity, equity and inclusion cannot be the stand-alone work of one committee or even a small group of individuals. It is the work of every PTA member who decides to serve the families and children in their community. As such, this tool helps connect the dots between DEI and every PTA’s efforts around:

- **Membership**
- **Programs**
- **Advocacy**
- **Governance and Leadership**

At the end of each section of this DEI rubric, we also provide reflection questions that PTA leaders can use in their planning, training, and family engagement efforts.
## PTA Local Leader Guidance for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beginning:</th>
<th>Emerging:</th>
<th>Intermediate:</th>
<th>Advanced:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Color/Identity-Blind</td>
<td>Focused on Diversity</td>
<td>Focused on Inclusion</td>
<td>Focused on Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are not aware that dominant groups (e.g., White, English-only speaking, middle class, straight, Christian, etc.) have power in the PTA</td>
<td>Are aware that dominant groups (e.g., White, English-only speaking, middle class, straight, Christian, etc.) exist in the PTA’s culture, but expect people to adhere to dominant organizational norms</td>
<td>Expect members of dominant groups (e.g., White, English-only speaking, middle class, straight, Christian, etc.) to acknowledge and work to reduce barriers to the success of underrepresented groups in the PTA</td>
<td>Intermediate plus: Lead internal processes, practices, and culture to eliminate bias and disparate treatment, without placing undue responsibility on members from under-represented groups to explain or defend themselves or their communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership is not representative of the communities served</td>
<td>Membership is not yet representative of the communities served, although some progress has been made</td>
<td>Membership demographics reflect the diversity of the communities served (in race/ethnicity, languages, income, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.)</td>
<td>Efforts to focus on DEI in membership is ongoing and evolving based on changing demographics and communities served</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have not determined which demographic group(s) are missing from membership and the barriers keeping them from being engaged</td>
<td>Have identified which demographic groups are missing and have a plan to address the barriers that prevent them from being engaged</td>
<td>Have adjusted internal norms and behaviors to create an inclusive environment where diverse voices are respected</td>
<td>Things to look for:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Things to look for:</td>
<td>Efforts to promote PTA membership based on community input</td>
<td>Efforts to promote PTA membership based on community input</td>
<td>Specific goals to promote equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Assumptions that everyone who wants to be a member of PTA knows about PTA already</td>
<td>• Adjusted meeting times and/or locations</td>
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<td>Revised bylaws and/or policies to maximize new membership in underrepresented groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>• PTA communications and activities focused on volunteering and/or fundraising</td>
<td>• Translated materials</td>
<td>• Translated materials</td>
<td>Membership sponsorships to remove financial barriers for members from under-resourced groups</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Partnerships with organizations and leaders that engage underrepresented groups</td>
<td>• Member trainings and dialogue on diversity, equity, and inclusion</td>
<td>Formal feedback from members and potential members that is published for members to see</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Things to look for:</td>
<td>• Has data to inform progress on DEI (e.g., surveys, membership demographics, program participation rates, etc.)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Questions</td>
<td>Things to look for:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ What stage is your PTA when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion in membership?</td>
<td>• Efforts to promote PTA membership, generally</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>▶ What is one thing you want to focus on to improve diversity, equity and/or inclusion in your membership efforts?</td>
<td>• Specific goals to increase diversity</td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
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**Reflection Questions**

> What stage is your PTA when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion in programs?

> What is one thing you want to focus on to improve diversity, equity and/or inclusion in your programmatic efforts?
## Reflection Questions

- What stage is your PTA when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion in advocacy?
  - **Beginning:** Color/Identity-Blind
    - Fear that lifting and prioritizing issues of inequities will create conflict
    - Do not have members from underrepresented populations at the table to discuss policy and advocacy
    - **Things to look for:**
      - PTA not focused on advocacy, or only minimally focused on issues that benefit “all”

- **Emerging:** Focused on Diversity
  - Believe that diverse representation is important, and push past their discomfort to discuss issues of difference and diversity in policy and advocacy issues
  - Understand disparities in children’s educational success, health and well-being exist and work to increase member knowledge about these disparities
  - Acquire one-time feedback from underrepresented families and communities to inform policy and advocacy plans
  - Have intermittently developed relationships with community members from identities/backgrounds currently or traditionally underrepresented; engage these partners in transactional initiatives
  - **Things to look for:**
    - Food pantries or other services
    - Statistics on the state of community problems or demographics shared with members
    - Presence of policy and advocacy plans that address underrepresented groups

- **Intermediate:** Focused on Inclusion
  - Create and sustain behaviors and practices (e.g., shared norms, vision, values) to foster an inclusive environment that encourages and values differing viewpoints in decision making about policy and advocacy priorities
  - Have solid understanding of demographic disparities that exist in children’s educational success, health and well-being and their root causes
  - Have consistent relationships with community members from identities/backgrounds currently or traditionally; engage these partners as trusted advisors
  - **Things to look for:**
    - Training for members on issues around inequitable systems and policies (i.e., food insecurity, discipline practices, etc.)
    - Policy forums and roundtables focused on DEI-centered policy issues
    - DEI-centered policy issues clearly elevated and communicated to stakeholders

- **Advanced:** Focused on Equity
  - Act upon opportunities to speak about diversity, difference, dominant culture and systemic biases inside and outside the PTA
  - Expect and support members to work with underrepresented communities to co-design advocacy and policy approaches to problems
  - Progress of DEI-centered advocacy initiatives are tracked and shared with members to hold PTA accountable for their efforts
  - **Intermediate plus:**
    - Testimony or mobilization to change free/reduced meal models to increase access
    - Transparent processes to vet, write and vote on DEI-centered policy and advocacy issues
    - Legislative committee is diverse and well-connected to the community
    - Top priorities in advocacy plans determined by those in underrepresented communities

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### GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

#### Beginning: Color/Identity-Blind
- Have not determined which demographic group(s) are not represented in PTA governance and leadership, or have determined that these groups require too much effort and/or change to recruit into leadership

**Things to look for:**
- Rotation of the same PTA leaders year after year
- Nominating Committee typically asks people they know to run for office
- Complaints that elections are unfair

#### Emerging: Focused on Diversity
- Have started to collect or analyze data by demographic group (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, primary language spoken, etc.) around governance and leadership, but it is not yet representative of the schools and communities served
- Leadership has made a conscious decision to increase knowledge around DEI by seeking and requiring training

**Things to look for:**
- Diversity & Outreach Committee
- Diversity & Outreach workplan includes a few initiatives focused on diversity
- Diversity training provided to governance once or twice a year
- Training and tools focused on underrepresented group statistics, outreach and intercultural communication, and unconscious bias

#### Intermediate: Focused on Inclusion
- Have a significant number of people of color and/or other traditionally underrepresented groups in governance and leadership positions
- Shift the PTA’s norms and practices so that diverse lived experiences are welcomed and can meaningfully contribute
- Provide training and coaching/mentoring to members to improve their skills to work across difference and inspire better thinking and solutions

**Things to look for:**
- Nominating Committee has criteria for cultural competence
- Mentorship programs for new leadership from underrepresented communities
- Intentional efforts to encourage diverse PTA leaders to run for leadership even if “against the slate”
- Ongoing DEI training throughout the year
- Training and tools focused on constructive conflict, active listening, inclusive leadership, and interrupting bias
- Baseline data to assess Diversity and Outreach workplan

#### Advanced: Focused on Equity
- Those filling leadership position reflect the diversity of the communities served (in race/ethnicity, languages spoken, ability, income, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.)
- Leadership engages all members in organization DEI work; through ongoing training, ensures that all understand their role in creating an equitable culture
- Assess and remove the structural barriers that keep underrepresented groups from seeking or attaining leadership in PTA

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**Things to look for:**
- Nominating Committee is intentional in reflecting communities served in governance and leadership
- Removal of slating and/or delegate processes for elections
- Revised election procedures to maximize participation (i.e., mail-in or electronic voting, etc.)
- Vendors and partners selected with a DEI lens

### Reflection Questions

> What stage is your PTA when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion in governance and leadership?

> What is one thing you want to focus on to improve diversity, equity and/or inclusion in your governance and leadership efforts?
How to Get Started

At this point, you may not know where your PTA is in your diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work, or the precise path your PTA will take on its journey towards equity. Know that uncertainty in the DEI journey is expected. Here are a few actionable steps you can take to advance DEI in your PTA:

1. **Name DEI as a strategic priority for your PTA.**
   Define and communicate how diversity, inclusion and equity helps PTA achieve its mission. The more you connect the reasons—the why—for doing this work to your mission, vision, values and strategies, the more critically important it will feel to everyone in your PTA and community. Look at the nature of local issues and consider how those will be impacted by making DEI a strategic pillar for your efforts.

2. **Establish a shared vocabulary.** Use National PTA’s definitions to start a conversation in your PTA. Where are there points of agreement? Divergence? What training and support may be helpful to your volunteers to understand a larger context for these definitions?

3. **Identify diversity, inclusion and equity champions at the leadership level.** Your local volunteers are critical to your PTA’s DEI journey. These can be either formally elected or appointed leaders or those who lead through influence in your PTA. DEI champions encourage other PTA members to engage in the work by speaking to and modeling its importance, through effective storytelling and building strong relationships.

4. **Open an authentic and ongoing dialogue about DEI work.** There are many ways to engage in effective conversations on diversity, equity and inclusion. Host a brown-bag lunch about DEI efforts with community stakeholders from your local schools and recruit an external facilitator with experience holding these conversations to ensure the discussion is managed objectively and effectively. Connect with Jan Harp, Domene Diversity and Inclusion Award winners and use their stories to start a conversation about DEI within your PTA. Brainstorm new ideas and discuss how the approaches of other PTAs might apply to your efforts.

5. **Break down your data. Start looking at your numbers.** The only way to get a clear picture of inequities and outcome gaps and successes is to review your membership activities, programs and policies, and collect, examine and report relevant data. Hold yourself and your PTA’s membership and leadership accountable for DEI.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Sources: