

PTA And The Community

One of PTA's Standards for Family School Partnerships is:

"Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation."

Partnerships that connect a school with businesses, hospitals, colleges, service clubs, social service agencies, youth organizations, public housing projects, labor unions, churches, and other community groups can turn a neighborhood into a thriving place to live, work, and raise a family. Many school districts are creating full-service community schools that offer one-stop resource centers for families and residents. Schools are opening their doors and allowing their communities to use facilities and meeting rooms as a way of applying school resources to solve problems.

There is one main goal for this standard: Parent and school leaders should work closely with neighborhood associations, government agencies, businesses, and universities to strengthen the school. These collaborations should make resources available to students, school staff, and families and build a family-friendly community.

Getting Started

- Establish a core of partners in and around the school based on the results you want to achieve.
- Build trust among the partners and an understanding of the contributions each organization can bring, as well as their limitations.
- Develop a shared vision among the partners for what type of success the partnership will produce.
- Make sure partnership activities strengthen families and link to student learning.

What Parents and PTA Leaders Can Do

1. Host a community resource fair that highlights programs that support the cultural, recreational, academic, health, social, and other needs of families.
2. Reach out to senior/retired citizens and invite them to volunteer at the school or attend school events.
3. Work with the local newspaper to promote special events that are happening at the school. Include these events on your social media outlets.
4. Invite school alumni to participate in an "alumni sponsors" program through which they volunteer time or make a donation to the school.
5. Develop paycheck-size cards with tips for how parents can foster their children's success. Contact employers about including the cards with employee's paychecks.

What School Leaders and Staff Can Do (PTAs can assist with any of these suggestions.)

1. Sponsor an annual Give Back Day on which students go into the community to perform needed work or services.
2. Include in the local chamber of commerce newsletter a request from the school district superintendent for local employers to encourage their employees to attend parent-teacher conferences and other involvement activities.
3. Invite local businesses to sponsor community resource workshops for teachers during the summer to help them learn about the educational, cultural, and business resources in the community.
4. Host a community breakfast at the school for local businesses and civic leaders.