



ALASKA PTA
Training Moment

NOVEMBER TRAINING MOMENT

Alaska
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Important Dates

- Saturday, December 5, 2009 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Leadership Saturday at the Alaska PTA office.



Bylaws

- Non-profit organizations can live and die by their bylaws. It is important to ensure that these bylaws reflect the organization and keep it out of legal troubles.
- Bylaws are like an official game plan on how a corporation is to be run and operated. Bylaws also state the rights and powers of the shareholders, directors and officers.



What is in the Bylaws

Contents vary but they typically include the following provisions:

1. The time and place for meetings of officers, directors, and shareholders;
2. How many officers, their terms, and their duties;
3. The fiscal year of the corporation;
4. Who is responsible and how the bylaws are to be amended;
5. Any rules on the conduct of business;
Inspection of the records book.



5 year renewal process

- Every 5 years each Local Unit is required to review its bylaws. It is suggested that the bylaws be reviewed by a Bylaws Committee on either an annual or biannual schedule just in case other changes need to be made.

Updating the Bylaws

- The # symbols are included in your bylaws. The **#Sections** are copied verbatim. They must be included in your bylaws exactly as they are written.
- You may mail, fax or E-mail (preferred) any proposed changes to the other sections to the Alaska PTA office for review prior to being voted on. Electronic submission is encouraged to expedite the process for all concerned. Your unit will receive a written response within two to four weeks.
- Remember all changes to bylaws require a notice to the membership. You must check the Article on Amendments to see how many days' notice it is. Bylaws require an approving vote of two-thirds. Make sure you submit the rationale for the change and make sure your board can explain what the difference is between the old bylaws and then new change.

Submission of Bylaws

- Mail **two** copies and one electronic version of the **final membership approved bylaws or amendments to the bylaws** to the Alaska PTA office. You must also include a copy of the unit meeting minutes that indicate a quorum was present when the bylaws or amendments were adopted and complete the signature information on the last page. The Alaska PTA office will then mail you the final copy for your records. This copy will have the signature of the State Bylaws Chair and/or State President.
- Amendments to bylaws should be on a separate form not directly written into the bylaws. For an example please email bylaws@alaskapta.org.

2009-2010 Reflection Theme is “Beauty Is. . .”


- Reflections is a cultural arts program through National PTA. It is open to all schools with active PTAs. The program encourages students in grades K-12 to express their thoughts and feelings through the creative arts. The program consists of 2 parts, the Reflections Program and the Reflections Theme Search.
- Artwork is first judged at the local level within each school.
 - Then those finalists are sent to the Regional Judging Event. Each school can submit only 6 Visual Arts, 6 Literature, 6 Photos, 6 Music, 6 Dance, 6 Film/Video for a total of 36 entries.
 - Please look at the Reflections Program Manual located on the Alaska PTA website: www.alaskapta.org for instructions on how to prepare entries.
 - Regional winners then proceed to the State Judging Event
 - **Deadline** for state entries is **February 5, 2010**
 - State winners will then proceed to the National PTA for judging
 - State winners will be honored at the Reflections Reception at the Alaska PTA Convention in April 2010

Building Successful Relationships

With

- Parents
- Teachers
- Principals
- Legislators

Excerpts from Building Successful Partnerships: A Guide for Developing Parent and Family Involvement Programs by the National PTA



To help people get involved, it takes the commitment of everyone to reach out, listen to each other, and work together.

Each of these groups—the parents, teachers, principals and public officials—should be considered as partners who can make important and unique contributions to this process.



Building Relationships with Parents

Studies suggest that it is not a lack of interest that keeps parents and families from becoming involved in their children's education. Often there are genuine barriers blocking the way to positive parent involvement. The challenge is to overcome these barriers and help parents become meaningful contributors and supporters.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Time

- Parents often cite time as the single greatest barrier to volunteering, attending meetings, and joining decision-making committees at their children's school.
- These activities often are scheduled at times that interfere with work or other obligations.
- Be flexible in scheduling meetings and events.
- Sponsor monthly community family events and use part of the time to hold a meeting to give information to parents and discuss important issues.

Not Feeling Valued

- Some parents are not sure they have anything of value to contribute.
- They may feel intimidated by principals, teachers, and PTA leaders.
- These parents may have had unpleasant school experiences or may have limited education or low literacy levels.
- Extend a personal welcome to parents who appear to be withdrawn or uncomfortable.
- Establish regular communication to build relationships with parents based on mutual respect and trust.
- Learn about their interests and abilities; actively seek opportunities at home or at school for parents to use their experience and talents to benefit the school in some way, and then value each and every contribution.

Feeling Unwelcome

- Parents may feel they are unwelcome in the school.
- Staff interactions, attitudes, and the physical appearance of some schools may convey an unwelcoming environment.
- Provide in-service training to help all faculty and staff develop an awareness of the importance
- of parent involvement and acquire the knowledge and skills to successfully interact with parents.
- Communicate to parents that they are welcome to visit during the school day, and that measures such as visitors passes are there for security reasons—not to make parents feel unwelcome.
- To make parents feel more comfortable visiting the school, post welcome signs in all languages spoken at the school at each entrance and on each classroom door.

Not Knowing How to Contribute

- Some parents believe they have talents but don't know whether they are needed or how to contribute them to the school or the PTA.
- Don't wait for parents to offer to help; seek them out.
- Have teachers and administrators meet to create a list of qualities and contributions that are needed from parents.
- Hold a parent meeting or conduct a survey to determine what kinds of teacher support and school policies parents think are needed to allow for positive parent involvement.
- Faculty and parents could share their list with each other and begin to discuss and form realistic expectations to more effectively use parents' many talents.

Not Understanding the School System

- Many parents are unfamiliar with the system and therefore do not know what their rights are or how they can become involved.
- Create a parent handbook covering rules, procedures, policies, and where to find answers to questions.
- Include names and numbers of contact people who can answer questions in specific areas.
- Include pictures and names of school administrators, staff, teachers, PTA officers, and other contact people.

Parents in Need

- Parents without adequate resources often feel overwhelmed.
- Families suffering from economic stress must address their own needs for food, clothing, and shelter before they can see clear to become more involved in their children's education.
- Provide information to help parents access and secure the health and social services they need for themselves and their families.
- Schools can develop and distribute to parents a directory containing information on available services and resources in the community and how to access them.
- After families' personal needs are met, schools can then help parents become involved in the education of their children.



Barriers for many families may also include:

Child Care

Child care may not be offered at meetings or school functions. At the same time, parents may be discouraged from bringing their children to events.

Language

Parents who don't speak English may not understand newsletters, fliers, or speakers at meetings.

Special Needs

Parents with disabilities may find it difficult or feel uncomfortable attending and contributing at meetings.

Transportation

Lack of transportation or access to parking at the school keeps parents from visiting or attending school activities.



Perceptions PTAs must overcome to build relationships

Snobbery and Exclusion

- Many parents view PTA or other parent groups as isolated and established cliques that exclude minorities and newcomers.

Resistance to Change

- Some PTA members, school administrators, and teachers may resist the idea of PTAs functioning in roles other than providing hospitality and financial support for school needs.

Lack of Sufficient Training

- Many present PTA leaders come into their positions with little or no advocacy or leadership experience.



PTAs Must Also Reach Out to Specific Populations

Culturally Diverse Families

- Developing a better understanding of families' cultures can help correct misconceptions and stereotypes and make schools more sensitive to families' needs.
- Any outreach provided to diverse families should focus on the family and not just individual members, promote a family's self-sufficiency, and emphasize their assets (Chang et al. 1994).

Fathers

- More mothers are now in the labor force. And in 2 million homes nationwide, fathers are the only parent living with their children. There is a growing recognition of the importance of fathers being involved in children's development. Schools need to try and include fathers in school events, meetings, conferences, and so forth, and actively seek a balance of mothers and fathers to serve on all school committees.

Single and Working Parents

- An increasing number of children live in single-parent and two-working-parents households due to many different circumstances, such as divorce or death. There are almost 15 million single-parent households nationwide. The outreach effort should be varied.
- PTA members can extend friendship and help to single parents by including them in carpools and child-care cooperatives and offering them information about community services.
- Schools can hold meetings, events, and conferences in the evenings or on weekends as well as offer before- and after-school programs, potlucks, and brown bag lunches.



Building Relationships with Principals

- The principal's leadership sets the tone and shapes the culture for the entire school.
- The principal's ideas and actions can provide the financial support and motivation needed to bring the entire school staff and faculty into the process of promoting strong parent-school-community partnerships.
- Two-way, ongoing communication is an important key to working with administrators.



PTAs should consider the follow questions as they begin to establish partnerships with principals.

- What can the PTA do to benefit all children and families at the school?
- What can principals do to help PTAs accomplish their goals?
- What can PTAs and principals do together to achieve success for all children and families?


A cooperative climate can be established by demonstrating a commitment to work with principals in areas that have traditionally been their sole responsibility. Showing this kind of support for an administrator can open the door to his or her reciprocal support of programs important to the PTA.



Building relationships with Teachers

Teachers are a crucial link in the partnership between schools and parents. Positive parent teacher relationships enhance parent involvement and benefit teachers. PTA can provide a bridge between parents and teachers and help build a positive relationship between the two.

- Positive parent-teacher relationships enhance parent involvement and benefit teachers.
- A PTA can provide a bridge between parents and teachers and can help build a positive relationship between the two groups.
- While working with teachers, it is important for PTAs and principals to acknowledge teachers' expertise and the enormity of their work. Set reasonable goals for teacher participation, and then build from there.

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- PTAs can work together with principals to advocate for teachers by helping the community understand the importance of supporting teachers' continuing professional education, especially in parent involvement and shared decision making.
 - PTAs and teachers can then work together to support teachers' efforts to work with parents.
 - PTAs can provide informal occasions for teachers and parents to get to know each other as individuals and partners.
 - PTAs can further strengthen parent-teacher communication and understanding by providing newsletters as well as workshops, events, and activities that bring these two groups together on a regular basis.



Public Officials' Role

PTAs can reach beyond their local school communities to include elected public officials as key players in efforts to increase parent/family involvement in education. Public officials, because they are elected, are generally concerned with listening and responding to their constituents.

Elected or appointed officials can include mayors, city council members, state school superintendents and other state education department representatives, state representatives, and governors. These officials have an important role in developing state and national policies and laws.

For additional resources:

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

<http://www.pta.org/1216.htm>

To address diversity within your PTA

http://www.pta.org/topic_improve_diversity_to_make_a_stronger_pta.asp

Alaska PTA offers training based upon the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships for PTA meetings, teacher in-service meetings or your community group.

Leadership Saturdays are held at the State PTA office on the first Sat. of each month from 10-2, for information and assistance.

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