



Program Handbook

Alaska PTA Program Handbook

Why Have Programs?

Programs that serve children, parents, schools, and the community are the cornerstones of a PTA. Consistently providing quality programs that are relevant to your school community's needs will:

- have a lasting effect on the families you serve
- help members to become more involved in issues affecting children
- attract more members to join PTA.

The main purpose of any PTA program should be to support student learning at home and in the school and to build relationships between and among families, school, and community. PTA programs can provide meaningful ways for parents to get involved. No matter what their background, parents who are involved with their children's education are more likely to see their children:

- Achieve higher grades and test scores
- Adapt well to school and attend regularly
- Have better social skills and behavior
- Graduate and go on to higher education

Through effective programs, PTAs can increase skills and knowledge, change attitudes and behaviors, and create opportunities for parents, families, and the community to support student success.



How to Have a Successful Program

The National PTA shares 10 suggestions for planning and implementing successful programs in their "PTA Programs Quick-Reference Guide" which can be downloaded at no cost at www.pta.org.

Here are some abbreviated suggestions that will help you have successful programs:

1 - Identify needs and priorities. All programs should reflect the mission of the PTA and address the interests and needs of your members. To determine the activities and topics that are most important to your school community, conduct a survey or hold a focus group meeting. This will give you valuable information from your membership to guide you in choosing the programs which would be most needed and supported by your families. There is a sample survey/assessment tool at the end of this Programs Handbook; there is also one in the Programs section that includes resources to help you in planning a program to fit each listed need at www.alaskapta.org

2-Establish goals for the program. After determining your needs and deciding on a program to offer, decide what you hope will result from hosting the program. Your goals will give you helpful direction as you plan and implement your program.

Sample Goals: Parents and staff will better guide children in making healthy choices about snacks. Children will have meaningful opportunities to explore the arts. Our families and staff will share and learn games to enhance math education.

3-Determine how best to deliver the program. If the program is an event, it will need a different format than a contest or an informational forum. If the program is sharing information, like tips for helping with homework, it might be better delivered through on-going newsletters or emails

throughout the year rather than a one-time class or presentation.

4 - Develop a plan and distribute the work.

Taking the time to determine what tasks need to be done and when is essential to having a successful program; equally important is assigning who is responsible for each task and how all involved in organizing the program will communicate with each other throughout the preparation process. As you look at the scope of your program and how it will be delivered, you also will see what resources are needed for the program, financial and otherwise. A “plan of work” can help you in the planning stages; several suggestions and forms to help you create a plan of work can be found in the “PTA Programs Quick-Reference Guide.”

5 – Get the word out. After you have gone to the effort to prepare a fabulous program,



make sure the potential participants know about it. Find the communication tools that work best in your school community – newsletters, flyers, emails, morning announcements, reader boards --and use several of them in a timely manner to make sure everyone targeted in

the goal is aware of the program and feels welcome to participate.

6 – Deliver the program. Make sure everything is ready to go before the event begins. If it is a meeting, start on time, stick to the agenda, welcome everyone and recognize special guests, distribute and collect some sort of evaluation/feedback tool, and finish on time. Stay around after the event long enough to answer individual questions and gather further feedback. Take the time to send thank you notes to recognize those who have helped. Programs that are not an “event” also benefit from thank you notes and feedback.

7 – Evaluate the program. The program organizers should meet to discuss what went well and what might be changed to make this program even better “next time.” Include the

responses you received from the participant feedback in your debriefing.

8 – Make a program procedures book. Keep all of your planning paperwork along the way. When the program is completed, you can combine your notes in a binder or folder to pass along to committees who are going to implement your program in subsequent years. The procedures book will be greatly appreciated by those who do not have to “reinvent the wheel” when they use it! Think about including: your timeline with all the tasks needed to complete the program, the budget, a list of supplies and resources purchased/used, donations received and from whom, program strengths and weaknesses, volunteers used, suggestions for improvement, and flyers and forms used.



9 – Share your success. A sometimes neglected, but very important, ending to every program is to report on how things went. Tell your school community in a newsletter about your program and the successes that occurred; tell your larger community in a letter to the editor of your local newspaper. In addition, share your great programs with PTAs all over Alaska through our Program Recognition—see the Forms section at www.alaskapta.org to find out how. Let other PTAs benefit from your experience.





Fundraising

“The primary emphasis in PTA should be the promotion of the

PTA Mission and the Purposes of the PTA. The real working capital of a PTA lies in its members, not in its treasury. Fundraising is not a primary function of PTA.” ---PTA Money Matters Quick-Reference Guide

Having said that, we recognize promoting the mission of PTA through programs understandably requires expenses at times. At the beginning of the year as your PTA and determines your goals, you will make decisions about the programs and activities you want to do to meet the goals. Along with your projects, the school staff may request funds from the PTA for a variety of worthy projects. You then create a budget based on the needs of the events you plan to offer. When you have determined the financial needs for the year, it is time to plan your fundraising efforts. Goals drive the programs/activities, and the programs drive the budget. If you will commit to this sequence, your fundraising will be much more successful.

When planning the year’s activities, PTAs should use the 3-to-1 rule: For every fundraising activity, there should be at least three non-fundraising projects or events aimed at helping parents, helping children, or advocating for school improvements.

Tie your fundraising activities to your goals. For example, a family dance is a great activity to generate funds for music or p.e. equipment. When such a fundraiser is promoted, be sure to let the school community know that the money raised will be used to purchase musical instruments or new balls and jump ropes. Parents and other adults in the community are more inclined to support fund raisers when they know the purpose.

One well-planned fundraising project will usually raise the funds needed to finance the year’s activities. We encourage you to reflect the high principles of the PTA in any fundraising event; aim for your events to have educational, social, or recreational value.

The National PTA has published a booklet, “PTA Fundraising Essentials,” that includes a variety of ideas and suggestions you may find helpful to your unit. You can order a copy for \$5 using the form included in this handbook.

A final note about fundraising: National PTA and Alaska PTA stand firm that children should never be exploited or used as fundraisers.

Tips for Newsletters

Communicating with your members is an essential part of being an effective unit. Whether you share information via school or your own newsletters, by paper or electronically, here are some ideas to help you be successful:



- 💡 Ask one of your most energetic, reliable, and creative volunteers to produce your newsletter.
- 💡 Set a deadline for articles at least a week ahead to give your editor time to create.
- 💡 Determine the purpose of your newsletter and always ask, “Do the readers really care about this?” before including each article.
- 💡 Be aware of elements affecting eye appeal—blank space, color, headlines, graphics, and organization; it needs to be easily readable.
- 💡 Identify your newsletter with a distinctive nameplate and by using the same color of paper each time it is printed.
- 💡 Include contact information in your newsletter for those who want to speak to someone about an article.
- 💡 **PROOFREAD!!!** Never send out a newsletter without having another set of eyes reading everything to check for clarity and correctness.

PTA Needs Assessment

Check topics that interest/concern you. If there is enough interest in a topic, we will try to provide a program.

Our School:

- What is NCLB?
- Home/School partnerships
- Nuts and bolts of how the school operates (budget, curriculum choices, etc.)
- Other _____

Education/things I'd like to learn:

- Computers; how to use
- Computers; how to troubleshoot
- English reading and/or writing
- Other _____

Parenting:

- Positive discipline ideas
- Communication helps
- Building self esteem
- Helping with homework
- Blended families
- Recreational activities for families
- Other _____

Community Involvement:

- Information re: school board meetings
- Legislative issues involving children/schools
- Community service opportunities
- Other _____

Curriculum/Content:

- Reading
- Math
- Science
- Social Studies
- Physical Education
- Music
- Art
- Foreign Language
- Other _____

Health/Safety:

- Substance abuse
- Bicycle safety
- School safety regarding violence
- Emergency preparedness
- Internet safety
- Nutrition
- Safe trails and walkways to our school
- Physical activity alternatives to TV, computer, and video games
- Other _____

Mark the events you would like to see our school offer/continue to offer:

- Talent Show
- Reflections
- Book Fairs
- Science Fair
- Family Nights (games, math, science, etc.)

Name _____
Phone _____
E-mail _____

I would be more likely to attend events if childcare were provided.

I would be willing to help with any of the circled events. (Please circle any of the above)

Alaska and National PTA Awards

ALASKA PTA annually conducts award programs to recognize the achievements of the local PTAs for demonstrating a commitment to parent/family involvement and excellence in education partnerships, program recognition, outstanding educator, and outstanding student leaders throughout Alaska. Following are descriptions of each award.

Alaska PTA Outstanding Educator Award

This award recognizes six outstanding educators, (one from each region of Alaska PTA), who demonstrate professional excellence and commitment to the Mission and Purposes of PTA. From the six region winners, one individual will be chosen as recipient of the Alaska PTA Outstanding Educator Award for the state.

Rules/ Eligibility

A local PTA unit in good standing may nominate one individual. Council, districts and regional PTAs are not eligible to nominate an educator. The nominee must be currently employed as a professional educator for any grade: preschool through senior high school. Preferably, he or she should also be a current PTA member. Retired nominees will be considered only if they retired within the current school year. An educator, who has been nominated previously, may be nominated again.

Alaska PTA Outstanding Student Leader Award

This award is available for local units to nominate a student who has been involved in the PTA/PTSA activities for the year. It requires a brief description from the Unit President of how the student has participated in PTA/PTSA activities, including contributions of service and leadership. Additionally, the student is required to write a brief essay on the following topic: .What do you consider to be the value of student participation in PTA/PTSA?

Alaska PTA Honor Unit

To receive the Honor Unit award the criteria requires a local PTA unit have well trained leaders, is responsive to its membership and

focuses its activities on the needs of children. In addition, the unit demonstrates basic financial management practices, which help preserve the non-profit status of PTA. These practices help each unit maintain its status as a Unit in Good Standing, which is required by Alaska PTA bylaws.

Eligibility

Each unit must successfully complete all three categories of the criteria as outlined on the application form. Honor Units will be acknowledged and will receive their certificates at the Alaska PTA Convention in April.

Alaska PTA Program Recognition

The Alaska PTA Program Recognition provides the opportunity for PTA/PTSAs to share their favorite and most successful ideas and activities. Descriptions of the projects or programs are sent into the Alaska PTA office annually. A Program Book is then made and distributed at the annual convention. The Programs Vice President uses it as a resource when giving workshops throughout the State. This is a great way to share local PTA success stories with new PTA/PTSAs in Alaska.

Application for Alaska PTA Awards

Applications must be on the official forms, and nominees must fit the above definition of each award.

Alaska PTA Study Grant

Each year Alaska PTA awards about \$1,000 in small grants to students who are members, or whose parents are members, of a unit in good standing with the state PTA. These study grants are for areas in which students excel, such as music, dance, theater, and other educational programs. Recipients are selected by May 15. Each student awarded a grant must complete a written report to Alaska PTA by January 1 of the following year. Alaska PTA will share this report at its next Alaska PTA Annual Convention.



Alaska PTA Excellence for Children & Commitment to Children Awards

The Alaska PTA Excellence for Children Award is given to persons in honor of their contributions to the welfare of children and youth. These awards have special significance as enduring symbols of outstanding service. The recipient need not be a member of PTA. The Alaska PTA Commitment to Children Award is given only to individuals who have already received an Excellence for Children Award or an Honorary Life Membership. (The Alaska PTA Bylaws were amended during the 1990 convention to delete the Honorary Life Membership and the Continuing Service Award. They are replaced by the Excellence for Children Award and the Commitment to Children Award.) These awards may be given multiple times to an individual, but not more often than once every five years.

The Alaska PTA Excellence for Children Award is an honor conferred upon an individual by the Alaska PTA, a PTA council, a local unit PTA, or another individual. The Alaska PTA Commitment to Children Award may not be given by individuals. An individual may not purchase either award for himself. The cost of each award is \$35.00. The recipient will receive a certificate, pin, and letter of congratulations from the Alaska PTA President.

The money received from these awards is used to fund the Alaska PTA Student Study Grant Program. There is not a deadline for these awards. Awards may be given at anytime throughout the year. Please allow three weeks for Alaska PTA office to process the applications.

Phoebe Apperson Hearst-National PTA Excellence in Education Partnership Award

The award program honors PTAs that demonstrate a commitment to parent/family involvement and excellence in education partnerships. The award is supported by an endowment funded by the William Randolph Hearst Foundations.

Goal of the Award

To recognize PTA units whose collaborative efforts with parents, families, educators, and community members promote parent/family involvement with ongoing programs that encourage student success.

Qualifications

Applications are sought from local PTAs that have accomplished the following:

- Conducted programs that encourage
- parent/family involvement and strengthen education partnerships
- Defined goals and priorities clearly
- Provided effective program evaluation
- Established, maintained or strengthened links with their state PTA as well as National PTA

Who Should Apply?

A local PTA in good stand with the state PTA and National PTA. Local PTAs may submit application to their state PTA and the State PTA may submit one application for national consideration.

Criteria

Interested applicants must submit the following for consideration of the award:

- Complete application form
- Responses to the Selection Criteria Questions listed on the application
- Letters of recommendation from the collaborative partner and one from a school principal, school district superintendent/director, or community leader.
- An original signature from the state PTA president is required.

Benefits

- Two expense-paid trips to the annual National PTA Convention, one for the PTA president or designee and one for a representative of the collaborative group
 - Participation in convention activities
 - A mention in National PTA publications
 - A cash award of \$2000 for use in a PTA program that promotes parent involvement
- There will be four honorable mention recipients who will receive \$500 each. The national winner and four honorable mentions will each receive a commemorative award. All applicants will a certificate of participation.

Applications

All forms for the Alaska PTA awards are available on the Alaska PTA web page, www.alaskapta.org The National PTA Awards applications are available on the National PTA website, www.pta.org

The deadline for all award applications except the Alaska PTA Study Grant is March 15, 2008.

Deadline for the Alaska PTA Student Study Grant is May 15, 2008.