



Alaska PTA

Program Handbook

**If we ask... “Why have programs?”
We’re actually asking... “Why have PTA/PTSAs?”**

PTA/PTSAs were organized because caring people saw needs in schools and communities and in the eyes of children. Programs that serve young people, parents and a community are the cornerstone of a PTA/PTSA.

Programs are important because...

- ▷ Parents care about the schools their children attend and the education they receive;
- ▷ Research shows children are more successful when their parents are involved;
- ▷ Policy makers need parental input when making critical decisions;
- ▷ Families need support learning to navigate the school system;
- ▷ Schools benefit from community oversight; and
- ▷ Children need parents and community members united to solve problems and celebrate success.

Considerations when choosing programs are...

- Programs are driven by need and member interest and must align with the PTA mission;
- A need from a previous year may or may not be a priority for the current year;
- When asking PTA/PTSA members and the school community to identify needs, be as inclusive as possible;
- Be realistic focusing on programs your volunteers and resources can handle; be creative, new innovative programs inject life into a PTA/PTSA;
- Develop an annual calendar including state and national PTA programs plus the March 15th deadline to submit all of your HUGS items to Alaska PTA for recognition;
- When real needs are met, more people will want to participate.

Please don’t try to go solo!

It takes a team effort to plan programs and activities. One person cannot sustain successful programs alone. Solicit the talents, interests and expertise of others. Set realistic goals that meet the need of your community.

- ✓ Strong PTA/PTSAs rely on a variety of people;
- ✓ Recruit personally whenever possible;
- ✓ Contact volunteers as soon as possible letting them know you appreciate their willingness to help;
- ✓ Find out what interests people and plug them in;
- ✓ Use newsletters, e-mail or other resources to ask for help with specific programs;
- ✓ Create smaller, manageable tasks for those who can only help a little;
- ✓ Be punctual and on task at meetings and during programs;
- ✓ Always, always, always THANK, COMPLEMENT, and ACKNOWLEDGE volunteers publicly;
- ✓ If funds allow, budget for certificates or small gifts.

Eight Steps to Planning and Implementing a PTA Program
The following steps can help your PTA/PTSA with program planning.

1. Form a Program Committee or team.

A Committee, not just one person, works best to develop programs. Form a special committee or team to develop your program plans for the year. Your committee may include PTA/PTSA officers and members, educators and school officials, business and community leaders, and others who have a stake in the education and well-being of children and families in your community.

2. Identify priorities and the focus.

All programs and resources should reflect the mission of the PTA and the interests of your members. To determine the activities and information that are most important to your members, conduct a survey or hold a focus group meeting. Consider distributing the survey at the first meeting of the school year since attendance at the meeting is often the largest. Also, review past programs to determine what was successful.

Among the many ways to conduct a survey are the following:

- ▷ Printing a questionnaire in the school or PTA newsletter
- ▷ Posting a survey on the school or PTA/PTSA website
- ▷ Emailing and/or calling members and asking questions about their interests regarding programing

3. Set a goal.

After reviewing all survey responses, determine the topics or issues that are most important to your members.

Establish a goal for your program – what you hope will result from the program. It is important to make goals realistic and achievable.

Following are examples of goals:

- ▷ Provide families with information and resources on schools safety.
- ▷ Show parents how to help their children make good choices.
- ▷ Present facts on drugs and drug use, and give parents concrete suggestions on how to talk to their children about drugs.

4. Determine the type of program.

A variety of ways exist to provide parents and families with the information and resources on topics that are important to them. When you conduct your survey, ask what type of meeting, activity, or event people would enjoy, and in what format they would like information presented. Consider conducting your program in a number of ways in order to reach the most people.

Examples of possible formats include the following:

- ▷ Speaker, video, or panel discussion on a specific topic
- ▷ Newsletter article, information on the PTA/PTSA or school website, or fliers sent to parents and families
- ▷ Education fair around a specific topic such as health and safety or parenting skills
- ▷ Open house, parents' night, or other social activity

5. Plan the program.

Develop a checklist so that you address everything that needs to be done. Set a date, time, and place for the event or activity. Obtain a meeting site, and a license to operate (if necessary). Make sure the site has the necessary audiovisual equipment, lighting, chairs, and tables. Make arrangements for parking, refreshments, and childcare. Determine who will be responsible for all aspects of set-up, teardown, and clean-up. Obtain necessary resources (videos, booklets, brochures, and so forth) and invite speakers. Develop an agenda for the event in order to begin and end on time. Review goals to ensure that the activity, event, or resources meet the needs of the members.

6. Publicize the program.

Develop a plan to promote awareness of the program. Identify the most effective means to invite people to participate and attend.

- ▷ Print information in the school or PTA/PTSA newsletter
- ▷ Post information on the school or PTA/PTSA website
- ▷ Make personal telephone calls
- ▷ Post announcements at the school, local library, grocery store, bank, and so forth
- ▷ Circulate fliers in the community
- ▷ Arrange for public service announcements on local radio and cable-TV stations

7. Present the program.

Arrive early and check the room set-up and test all equipment. Have all necessary supplies and resources on hand. Welcome attendees and introduce and recognize special guests. Stick to the agenda. Allow time for discussion and questions. Start and end the program on time. Distribute a brief feedback form to all participants to evaluate the success and usefulness of the program.

8. Evaluate the program and follow up.

Following the program, send thank-you notes to speakers, panelists, and organizations that provided resources.

Look at the responses on the feedback forms to answer the following questions:

- ▷ Did the program meet the mission of the PTA/PTSA?
- ▷ Did the program meet the stated goal?
- ▷ How many members participated?
- ▷ Did members find the program useful?
- ▷ Did the program encourage action?
- ▷ How might the program have been improved?

Print the results of the program in a newsletter or post it on the school or PTA/PTSA website. Also, consider including a summary of the event and resources for those people who were unable to attend.

Fundraising

Where do we get the money we need for the programs we run?

Fundraising should reflect the PTA Mission and Values. Raising money just to raise monies is not an appropriate PTA/PTSA Program.

PTA Mission

Alaska PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

PTA Values

- ☞ **Collaboration:** We will work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to broaden and enhance our ability to serve and advocate for all children and families.

- ☞ **Commitment:** We are dedicated to children's educational success, health, and well-being through strong family and community engagement, while remaining accountable to the principles upon which our association was founded.

- ☞ **Diversity:** We acknowledge the potential of everyone without regard, including but not limited to: age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, legal status, marital status, mental ability, national origin, organizational position, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual orientation, and work experience.

- ☞ **Respect:** We value the individual contributions of members, employees, volunteers, and partners as we work collaboratively to achieve our association's goals.

- ☞ **Accountability:** All members, employees, volunteers, and partners have a shared responsibility to align their efforts toward the achievement of our association's strategic initiatives.

WARNING: Fundraising may be habit forming!

PTA/PTSAs follow the 3-to-1 rule... one fundraising activity to at least three non-fundraising programs aimed at helping parents or advocating for school improvements.

Best practice is to tie your fundraising activities to your goals. A spaghetti dinner could promote family activities, while selling candy might undermine your school and PTA/PTSA wellness program.

National PTA and Alaska PTA believe children are not fundraisers. Children are at school to learn and not responsible for financing their education. It is a public responsibility to

adequately fund schools. To help guide local PTA/PTSA's and school administrators navigate the fundraising maze, the National PTA has useful information on their Fundraising page of their website at www.pta.org plus in your Back-to-School Kit.

Pass It On!

- **Nobody likes to start from scratch**
- **Finish your program by updating the procedure book**

By developing or updating a procedure book for the next program coordinator/chair, your PTA/PTSA will be able to provide successful programs annually. Even if a program is not used for several years, it gives new boards a place to start. Finish your program by updating the procedure book.

A Procedure Book includes...

- PTA/PTSA name and program clearly marked on exterior unless submitted electronically
- List of content inside front cover
- Reminder that deadline to turn in completed book is no later than two to four weeks after program completion
- All handbooks and other resource materials
- Program budget and list of supplies purchased with PTA/PTSA money
- What supplies were used and what remain as PTA/PTSA property for future programs
- A report that includes the program goals, plan, timeline, program strengths and weaknesses, volunteers, suggestions for the next year and any other data that might be pertinent
- Any fliers, forms or materials that can be passed on which may be useful in running the program

Best practice for every officer or board member is to also “pass it on” by writing a brief report outlining their tasks completed, suggestions for improvements and pitfalls to avoid.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact your Alaska PTA Office or 3rd Vice President for Programs.

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We wish you success and satisfaction with your programs!