



PRINCIPAL

BASICS Resource Guide

2017-2018



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On front cover:

Angela Sugarek
Principal of Hogg Middle School
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Introduction

Principals play a significant role in a successful PTA. As a member of the Local PTA Board, the principal working side by side with the PTA President and other officers create the “PTA culture” on that campus. Communication, planning and delivery of meetings, programs and events will determine how members view the PTA’s relevance and value.

Evidence indicates that strong principal involvement makes a huge difference in a PTA’s longevity and effectiveness. Positive results are not accidents; they are the product of intentional efforts on behalf of the school staff and PTA volunteers.

It is critical for principals to understand the roles of the PTA and its leaders, and likewise, PTA leadership must be respectful of the principal’s role. When everyone is clear that the principal works for the school district and the PTA is a 501 (c)(3) member-governed organization with its own bylaws, the work of the PTA will go smoothly while maintaining the most important focus – the mission.

The vision of “making every child’s potential a reality” can and will be achieved through a solid working relationship between the principal and PTA volunteers. Trust, respect, compromise and transparency are key ingredients for the principal-PTA team which will ultimately produce a PTA that is the heart and soul of the campus.

Thanks to all of our principals for what you do and for your support of PTA!

About PTA

VISION Every child's potential is a reality.

MISSION To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

PURPOSES

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, places of worship, and throughout the community;
- To raise the standards of home life;
- To advocate for laws that further the education, physical and mental health, welfare, and safety of children and youth;
- To promote the collaboration and engagement of families and educators in the education of children and youth;
- To engage the public in united efforts to secure the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being of all children and youth; and
- To advocate for fiscal responsibility regarding public tax dollars in public education funding.

PTA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

- **Standard 1: Welcoming All Families into the School Community**
Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.
- **Standard 2: Communicating Effectively**
Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.
- **Standard 3: Supporting Student Success**
Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.
- **Standard 4: Speaking Up for Every Child**
Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.
- **Standard 5: Sharing Power**
Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.
- **Standard 6: Collaborating with Community**
Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.



A Winning Team: Principals and PTA

The principal's responsibility is to make parent involvement a school priority and create an environment that welcomes parents to the school, building a strong home-school partnership. The PTA should work with the principal to help achieve this objective.

POSITIVE PARTNERSHIP

The Principal and the PTA should create a positive partnership through:

- Communicating openly and honestly
- Understanding the roles and responsibilities of each other
- Establishing goals and visions, working collaboratively for student achievement
- Respecting each other's opinions and input
- Actively pursue parents and staff to get involved
- Building positive community relationships
- Commitment and building trust, to work toward a common goal

Effective partnership requires understanding the responsibilities and the roles of each participant. Parent involvement becomes a reality when there is strong support from the principal and when teachers build effective partnerships with parents to strengthen their participation in the school community. The principal, the teachers and the community are all team players, networking to make student achievement and parental involvement a reality.

The principal sets the tone, the climate and the professionalism of the school. The principal as a member of the PTA, works with the PTA to address issues, develops parent involvement programs and encourages family engagement. The principal and the PTA work together toward the mutual benefit of the school.

The principal should be familiar with the resources available to the PTA Leaders. The information in these resources is invaluable when working with the PTA.

PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN PTA

- Be an active member of the PTA Board.
- Be available to the community, schedule meetings open to the public at different times and invite parents to set up appointments to discuss concerns.
- Be active in the PTA and encourage teachers to become PTA members and to participate in activities and meetings
- Help the PTA keep its primary focus on the three principles of PTA – parent education, parent involvement and advocacy.
- Help evaluate the need for and use of fundraising dollars.
- Work with the PTA to solve problems and set goals that benefit the students.
- Help the PTA plan activities to accomplish goals.
- Work with the PTA to develop a program for volunteer training, and use parent and community volunteers who can help in all aspects of the school.
- Help parents stay informed on current issues in education.
- Recognize volunteers' efforts and appreciate the contributions of parents.

CREATING A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

To create a successful partnership the principal should:

- Join the PTA – encourage all school personnel to join the PTA.
- Be an active participant of board and membership meetings.
- Have open communication with the PTA president and the board. The PTA president and principal should meet prior to the end of the school year to establish the “climate” and “shared vision” for the next school year.
- Help the PTA identify their strengths and weaknesses before developing the plan and the goals for the new year.
- Make sure the PTA clearly communicates the use of PTA funds, especially after a fundraising event.
- Ensure the school calendar of events is shared with the PTA and coordinate dates of the PTA programs and projects.
- Promote the vision, mission and purposes of PTA

MAINTAINING A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

To maintain a successful and positive partnership, the principal and the PTA should:

- Keep the primary goal of PTA on education and advocating for students.
- Collaborately plan activities with PTA to accomplish the goals of the PTA.
- Develop a program that trains parents in: the policies and procedures of the school and school district, on current issues that influence the instructional program, on federal/state laws that affect the instructional program and any other topic of need.
- Keep each other informed.
- Maintain open, honest communication.
- Be positive and enthusiastic about the school.
- Keep things seen or heard in conferences or at school confidential. Encourage all volunteers to be sensitive to the ethical responsibilities regarding students and their privacy.

PARENTS BUILDING A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

- Encourage the principal to speak openly of his or her goals and concerns.
- Present PTA concerns and issues to the principal.
- Focus on education and how to benefit students
- Work with the principal or site-based committee to set goals.
- Be alert to staff and community talents and resources, and use them for the benefit of the entire school.
- Help the principal promote fair discipline for all children.

Working Together

PRINCIPALS	PTA PRESIDENTS
Attend all meetings	Invite the principal to all meetings and activities
Take time to plan with PTA president	Consult the principal on all plans early in the year
Inform your PTA president about school plans and needs	Build some PTA programs around school needs
Cooperate with the PTA in the use of school facilities	Plan effectively
Become confident that you know and understand PTA	Seek opportunities to understand your school better
Invite your PTA president to attend one or more faculty meetings	Inform everyone (staff and PTA members) about programs and benefits
Encourage teachers to participate in PTA activities and attend all meetings	Take care not to make too many demands or interfere with campus activities
Encourage families to become involved	Encourage families to become involved
Make your PTA feel welcome and part of your school	Train your volunteers on campus policies and procedures
Take care not to “dominate” the PTA	Work to be inclusive of all board members
Refrain from asking your PTA to buy equipment that should be purchased by the school district	Remember the mission of PTA and spend wisely
Guide your PTA away from activities that should be reserved for administration	Follow the chain of command, leaving administrative duties to the board of trustees and administrators
On common causes, educate parents and bring issues to their attention	Provide advocacy for common causes
Work well with others and give credit where credit is due	Work well with others and give credit where credit is due

Members

PTA members can be anyone who believes in the PTA vision, mission and purposes. Members who join locally are automatically part of National PTA and Texas PTA; they join nearly 4 million members nationwide and 500,000 members in Texas.

DUES AND MEMBERSHIP

The general membership is all individuals who have paid dues to the Local PTA for the current membership year. The membership year is August 1 through July 31. Local PTA dues are determined by the membership and are listed in the Local PTA bylaws for each PTA. Members must pay the local portion of dues, Texas PTA portion of dues, and the National portion of dues. Individuals who want to participate in more than one Local PTA must join each one separately, paying full dues to each.

Recipients of the Texas PTA Honorary Life Membership are exempt from paying the Texas PTA portion of dues for only one Local PTA of their choice per membership year. If they have received more than one Honorary Life Membership, they may register as a Texas PTA Life Member with as many Local PTAs as they have Honorary Texas PTA Life Memberships.

The principal should encourage the school staff to become PTA members and support the work of the association.

PRIVILEGES OF MEMBERSHIP

All PTA members:

- Can participate in PTA meetings
- Have a voice and vote at Local, State and National PTA meetings
- Are eligible to serve as an officer of the PTA
- Maintain membership in Texas and National PTAs
- Are privy to informed and trained leadership
- Have a unified voice to influence legislation affecting children and youth
- Have the opportunity to work for the education, health, safety and welfare of all children and youth

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

The Golden Apple Award is earned when a PTA recruits and reports 100% of school faculty as members by the published award deadline. Texas PTA's definition of faculty is: principals, assistant principals, teachers, counselors, and aides employed at the campus full-time. An award form must be submitted.

A Voice for Every Child recognizes PTAs whose membership is reflective of their student population. When a PTAs membership reaches 50%, 75% or 100% of student enrollment, they are recognized at the silver, gold and platinum levels!

The Texas PTA Honorary Life Membership Award is one of the highest honors presented to individuals for outstanding service to children and youth. The recipient does not have to be a pta member nor must the service for which the honor has been bestowed be connected with the pta. The only requirement for receiving a texas pta honorary life membership is that the recipient is making or has made a worthwhile contribution to the well-being of children and youth.

Local PTA

A Local PTA is dedicated to fulfilling the Purposes of the PTA. While a Local PTA is usually organized in a school setting, it is independent of the school and the school system, with its work determined by the needs of the community and the interest of the members.

Local PTAs:

- Are self governing, after having been chartered by the Texas PTA.
- Accept into membership in accordance with their bylaws, all individuals who pay dues as specified, and who subscribe to the Mission and Purposes of the National PTA.
- Are guided by the Purposes and protected by the basic policies of Texas and National PTA.
- Plan programs and activities to meet the needs of children and youth in their own local community.
- Study concerns that affect a broad area.

PTA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Officers
- Chairs
- Other (optional)
 - Council PTA Delegates
 - Historian
 - Teacher Representatives
 - Student Representative
- Principal or designee

Each Local PTA must elect a President, a Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer every year. A parliamentarian should be appointed by the board after yearly elections. A Local PTA may have more than these officers, the bylaws of each PTA lists who are elected officers of that PTA. Elections should be held yearly in the month listed in the Local PTA bylaws. Board members must have paid membership dues to the PTA prior to assuming office.

Standing committees perform a continuing function, and remain in existence permanently.

Committee Chairs and other board members are appointed by the president with the approval of the board. Board members may serve two, consecutive one year terms in the same office. Council Delegates may be appointed or elected. The process for selecting these representatives is located in the Local PTA bylaws.

Each Local PTA selects the standing committees needed at their school. Here is a list of suggested standing committees:

- Arts in Education
- Communications
- Fundraising
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Advocacy
- Membership
- Parent Education/Programs
- Volunteer Coordinator

Special committees are appointed as the need arises, to carry out a specified task. At the completion of the task, the committee ceases to exist.

DUTIES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Transact business in intervals between regular meetings
- Present reports at regular meetings
- Approve Plans of Work
- Create Committees
- Fill vacancies
- Prepare and submit budget to membership
- Approve routine bills within budget limits
- Complete records retention policy and present for membership approval
- Attend all meetings (board and association)
- Insist on financial accountability
- Encourage participation
- Complete FOUNDATIONS Leader Orientation and take advantage of training opportunities
- Adopt and sign ethics/conflict of interest policy

BOARD MEETINGS

The board should meet on a regular basis. The Local PTA bylaws state that the executive board shall meet prior to each regular meeting of the association. The board determines the time and place of these meetings at the first meeting of the year. Only members of the board may discuss and vote on items. Invited guests can attend meetings but they may not enter into discussion or vote.

The board should meet to make decisions and set goals that will be brought to the membership for their approval. Each officer and committee chair should report to the board any activities or issues. This includes the principal, they should give brief reports about the events and activities of the school.

The principal should be in attendance at all board meetings, as it is critical that they attend to understand the activities of the PTA and how these activities weave into the climate of the school. The principal works to ensure that the PTA's mission and goals are working and aligned to the strategic plan of the school. He or she is the direct liaison between the PTA membership and the school's staff.

ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

A PTA membership meeting is a meeting of all PTA members who come together to conduct the business of the PTA. All PTA members are encouraged to attend these meetings. The number and months of these meetings are outlined in the bylaws of the PTA. Texas PTA requires that all PTAs hold at least three meetings a year. Meetings are normally conducted at school.

At these meetings, the membership hears recommendations from the PTA leadership and then gives their approval or disapproval of the recommendations. Only those who are PTA members and who are in attendance have voting privileges at the meeting. There is no proxy voting.

The principal should be an active participant at the PTA membership meetings. By modeling the expectations and by being actively engaged in the vital partnership, parents, staff and community will come to expect total participation in the school to promote student achievement and a healthy, positive school climate.

MEETING AGENDA

- Call to order
- Opening Ceremonies
- Reading and approval of minutes
- Report of treasurer
- Correspondence
- Report of the Board of Directors
- Reports of standing committees
- Reports of special committees
- Unfinished business
- New business
- Program
- Announcements
- Adjournment

Governing Documents

BYLAWS

The bylaws of a PTA contain basic rules relating to the association as an organization in order to conduct the Local PTA's business and govern its affairs. Every member of the Local PTA should be given access to the bylaws, which includes the principal. PTAs should request a current copy of their bylaws from Texas PTA after August 1 each year. Bylaws must be reviewed and updated every three years, and submitted to Texas PTA for approval.

Your Local PTA bylaws:

- Are approved by the general membership and can only be changed by the membership at a membership meeting, after proper notice is given (30 days);
- Outline the basic policies and practices of the PTA;
- State the PTAs relationship with Texas PTA;
- Specify who can be members and the amount of the local portion of dues;
- Outline the election of officers and their duties;
- Define the number of meetings and the meeting months for the PTA;
- Specify the quorum for both membership and board meetings;
- State items regarding standing and special committees;
- Define Council PTA membership;
- Specify the fiscal year and the duties of the financial reconciliation committee; and
- Define how the document is amended.

STANDING RULES

Standing Rules are rules that relate to details of administration of a group rather than to parliamentary procedure. Standing rules cannot conflict or repeat what is in the bylaws. Standing rules:

- Are adopted as a need arises;
- Require a majority vote for adoption;
- May be amended by a two-thirds affirmative vote without previous notice or a majority vote with such notice; and
- May be suspended, unlike the bylaws, for a current session by a majority vote.

Examples of What Standing Rules Could Contain (Sample standing rules may be found at www.txpta.org):

- Additional board member duties;
- Specific information regarding signers on the bank account;
- Provision containing procedures for returned checks;
- Rules related to reimbursement for pta expenses (time frame for turning in expenses, no tax reimbursed, etc.);
- Requirements for insurance;
- List of who serves as delegates/attendees to texas pta annual meeting and training events;
- What expenses shall be paid for delegates/attendees to attend texas pta annual meeting and training events;
- Provision that the local pta will pay for the texas pta leader orientation that each board member is required to take;
- Provision for who shall attend a council pta founder's day celebration;
- Provision for the number of national pta life achievement awards or texas pta honorary life memberships and/or extended service awards, with appropriate pin;

- Recognition that might be awarded members for perfect attendance or students for specific accomplishments;
- Special awards to members for community involvement or special projects;
- Functions sponsored by the pta during the school year;
- Courtesies or sympathies extended by the pta – to whom and in what manner;
- Provision for baby-sitting for association meetings;
- Rules for scholarships (if a local pta gives scholarships, procedures dictated by the internal revenue service [irs] must be included in the local pta's standing rules.); Or
- Criteria for special committees, purchases or special projects.

STANDARDS OF CONTINUING AFFILIATION

Texas PTA establishes minimum requirements for PTAs to continue operating under the PTA brand via the Standards of Continuing Affiliation. These standards set out basic criteria for PTAs to attain Active Status annually, and to remain in Good Standing with the Association. It's important that all PTAs review the requirements and subsequent retention plan.

Any updates to these standards will be widely published and take effect on August 1 of each year, in conjunction with the new membership year and any changes to the bylaws template. The Standards of Continuing Affiliation for the current year are provided on the following page.



Local PTA Standards of Continuing Affiliation

Each membership year, Local PTAs must meet **both** of the following requirements to attain Active Status with Texas PTA. The membership year begins on August 1.

1. Remit to Texas PTA state/national membership dues for at least 20 members.
 2. Submit to Texas PTA the name and contact information (mailing address, phone number, and email address) of at least one current board member, preferably the President.
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Local PTAs must comply with **all** of the following standards to remain in Good Standing with Texas PTA. Local PTAs that do not maintain Good Standing will be subject to a Local PTA Retention Plan as described below.

1. Maintain Active Status with Texas PTA.¹ (see requirements above)
 2. Report all members and remit all state/national dues to Texas PTA each year.
 3. Submit to Texas PTA the name and contact information for each board member within 15 days of election or appointment.²
 4. Annually file Return of Form 990 Organization Exempt from Income Tax with the IRS, within 60 days of fiscal year end.
 5. Review Local PTA bylaws and standing rules (if applicable) every three years and submit to Texas PTA for approval.³
-

Local PTA Retention Plan (initiated when a Local PTA does not maintain Good Standing)

Notification: Texas PTA will notify the Local PTA of the action(s) required and allow the Local PTA 60 days, from the date of the notification, to attain Good Standing.

Restriction: A Local PTA that does not attain Good Standing within 60 days of the original notification will enter a restriction period. While in this restriction period, the Local PTA is not eligible for awards, programs or grants administered by Texas PTA or National PTA.

Intervention: If the Local PTA remains non-compliant after 45 days in the restriction period, Texas PTA will assign a Support Team to assist them, including the development of a written action plan to attain Good Standing. Restrictions will remain in place until an action plan is approved.

Restructure: For Local PTAs that do not attain Good Standing following the notification, restriction and intervention periods, Texas PTA will begin the process of restructuring the leadership of the Local PTA or revoking the Local PTA's charter.

1. Active Status is used to determine eligibility in many Texas PTA programs and services. Please reference specific program eligibility requirements to ensure your PTAs participation.
2. PTAs submit board member information to Texas PTA electronically via the Texas PTA website.
3. Bylaws are submitted via the Bylaws Submission Form found on the Texas PTA website.

Finances

PTA funds should always be used to further the PTA vision, mission and purposes. Appropriate use of funds should be in areas such as arts in education, environmental concerns, healthy lifestyles, parent involvement, family engagement and advocacy efforts on behalf of children and youth. The principal and PTA should work together to set goals that will benefit students and keep the primary focus on education rather than fundraising.

The PTA must adopt a budget at the annual meeting in the spring. All amendments to the budget must be approved by the membership at a membership meeting. Any disbursements must be in the approved budget.

All PTAs are organized under the Internal Revenue Code as 501(c) (3) nonprofit organizations.

- All funds raised by PTA belong to the PTA
- Membership has budget approval authority
- Budget must be specific and understandable
- Expenditures are guided by the Mission and Purposes of PTA
- Executive board has fiduciary responsibility to manage funds within the approved budget following proper procedures

Each PTA:

- Has a unique Employer Identification Number (EIN) for business and reporting purposes
 - Is exempt from paying sales tax on items purchased for use by the PTA, but
 - Must collect and remit sales tax to the Texas Comptroller's Office, when appropriate
- May hold two, one-day tax-free sales days per calendar year
- Must complete the appropriate IRS Form 990 annually

Financial guidelines exist to protect the PTA's assets - its volunteers, members and the PTA/school's good name.

- Detailed financial reports must be given at each board and membership meeting.
- The PTA must have a budget that has been approved by the general membership before any funds are raised or expensed.
- PTAs should adopt financial policies (i.e. check signing, electronic banking, credit/debit cards) to be added to their Standing Rules. Visit txpta.org/policies for required language and processes.
- Any gift cards purchased by a PTA should not exceed \$25 in value and must be retail-specific (i.e. branded cards of restaurants, stores, etc.). Generic cards (MasterCard, Visa, etc) are not permitted.
- Checks are never made payable to cash.
- Signers of the bank account shall not be related by blood or marriage and must not reside in the same household.
- Money is always counted by two people and verified by signature on an Itemized Receipt Form.
- All deposits are made as quickly possible.
- PTA funds are never deposited into personal accounts or into the school's activity account.
- Forms are used for all deposits and reimbursements.
- State and National portion of membership dues are submitted to the state on a regular basis.
- The treasurer should reconcile the bank statement monthly.
- A member of the PTA, who is a non-signer opens, reviews, initials and dates each bank statement before giving to the treasurer.
- Purchase insurance – liability, officer liability, fidelity bond, property
- The only person who may sign a contract, which binds the PTA, is the PTA president.

3-to-1 Guideline

National PTA recommends that PTAs use the 3-to-1 guideline when planning activities for the PTA. This simple step helps PTAs protect their 501(c) (3) status. For every one fundraising activity, there should be at least three projects aimed at helping parents or children, or advocating for school improvement.

GUIDELINE FOR USE OF PTA FUNDS

- Funds raised should be for a definite predetermined and budgeted purpose and must be approved by the membership
- Funds should be used to promote the Purposes of PTA
- All monies deposited in the PTA account belong to the membership
- All funds should be spent as allocated in the budget as approved by the membership
- It is the fiscal responsibility of the school district to provide for the curriculum and infrastructure needs of the students. PTA funds should never be used to provide curriculum materials, only support or enrichment items.

FINANCIAL RECONCILIATION

At the end of the fiscal year, the PTA books are closed for financial reconciliation. The purpose of the financial reconciliation is to review the financial transactions for the year to make sure that proper bookkeeping methods were followed. The current financial reconciliation checklist is available for download at txpta.org/governance.

The Local PTA bylaws state a financial reconciliation must be performed:

- At the end of the fiscal year
- When any authorized check signer is added or deleted from the bank account
- At any time deemed necessary by the president or three members

The president appoints, with the approval of the board, the financial reconciliation committee. This committee must not consist of less than three members; these members may not be signers on the bank account. They also cannot be related by blood or marriage and shall not reside in the same household as any authorized signers. The financial reconciliation committee report shall be adopted by a majority vote at the first membership meeting following the completion of the reconciliation.

990

All PTAs as nonprofits under Texas PTA group exemption are required to file a tax return annually regardless of activity or gross income level. Per the Standards of Continuing Affiliation, PTAs must file the appropriate Form 990 within 60 days of fiscal year-end. The type of 990 filed is determined by your gross income per fiscal year. Failure to file may result in the IRS revoking your non-profit status, significant IRS fees and ultimately loss of charter with Texas PTA.

2010 TAX YEAR AND LATER (FILED IN 2011 AND LATER)	FORM TO FILE
Gross receipts normally \leq \$50,000 Note: Organizations eligible to file the e-Postcard may choose to file a full return.	990-N
Gross receipts $>$ \$50,000 but $<$ \$250,000, and Total assets $<$ \$500,000	990-EZ or 990
Gross receipts \geq \$250,000, or Total assets \geq \$500,000	990

COMMUNICATIONS

communications@txpta.org

The Communications team manages and produces all Texas PTA communications, including *The Voice* (our quarterly newsletter), specialized newsletters (advocacy, healthy lifestyles, arts in education, environmental awareness, membership and field service), social media outlets and the Texas PTA website.

In addition to serving as Texas PTA's contact for all media inquiries, the Communications team also supports Texas PTA's training efforts by maintaining resource guides, quick-start guides, and other educational materials available through the online store.

FINANCE

finance@txpta.org

Texas PTA understands the responsibility of managing your member dollars, and the Finance team is charged with monitoring Texas PTA resources in accordance with the annual budget, as adopted by the board of directors.

Members of the Finance team are also available to support PTA leaders in their compliance with state and federal financial requirements, such as filing the annual 990 with the IRS, as well as sales tax filings with the State Comptroller.

MEMBER SERVICES

memberservices@txpta.org

The Member Services team gives direct support to PTA leaders and members. They provide assistance with member recruitment strategies, bylaws and standing rules, organizing PTAs and general questions on leading and managing a PTA.

The Member Services team is responsible for the development of recruiting resources that may be adapted for all levels of PTA – early childhood, elementary and secondary. Staff processes officer information, membership rosters and dues, and requests for copies of bylaws and standing rules. Staff also coordinates membership awards and the distribution of membership cards to Local PTAs.

PROGRAMS

programs@txpta.org

The Programs team is focused on connecting PTA members and leaders with the information they need to be successful, as well as developing programs. Whether your PTA is registering for LAUNCH, or requesting a Ready. Set. Achieve! parent education or faculty in-service program, the Programs team is available to assist you.

The Programs team is also your contact for student programs, such as Reflections, Camp Just Imagine and Texas PTA's scholarship program.

Texas PTA strives to secure adequate laws in the areas of school finance, education, health, welfare and safety. The legislative process can be daunting at both the federal and state levels and requires numerous communication avenues to be effective:

- Publishing monthly updates of legislative activity;
- Monitoring legislation and testifying at legislative hearings and State Board of Education meetings on behalf of all PTAs;
- Maintaining a strong communications network between PTA and state legislators.
- Informing members of pressing issues through email communications, and advising them when they need to call, email or write letters to their state legislators;
- Posting the current status of legislation on the Texas PTA website;
- Hosting Texas PTA's Rally Day; and
- Adopting legislative positions by majority vote of delegates at the Texas PTA Annual Meeting.

RALLY DAY

The Texas Legislature meets only for five months (January - May) in odd-numbered years. This brief meeting schedule condenses the timeline for many issues, and requires that our voices be ready and available. Texas PTA hosts Rally Day during February in each Legislative Session. This is a unique opportunity for PTA members to get detailed information on current legislation impacting students and public schools and to take their message directly to the policymakers. Rally Day is a free, one-day event held in Austin, so join us on the South Steps of the Capitol!

UNDER THE DOME

Stay up-to-date on the latest developments from the State Capitol and State Board of Education. The Under The Dome electronic newsletter is a seasonal publication that provides PTA members with detailed information on the status of pending legislation and policy, and the potential impact these decisions may have in their local communities. Visit the Texas PTA txpta.org/advocacy to register as an advocate, and receive important alerts and legislative updates.

Leadership Development

EMERGING LEADERS ACADEMY (ELA)

PTA's commitment to engage families and communities as powerful advocates for children reaches across all cultural and socioeconomic boundaries. ELA seeks to support a diverse group of volunteers who are committed to creating successful schools through these fundamental characteristics:

- Demonstrates a passion for our vision that every child's potential is a reality;
- Exhibits visionary and forward-thinking leadership qualities;
- Reflects professionalism, integrity and PTA values;
- Believes PTA should be an inclusive association for all;
- Strives to increase family engagement through PTA programs and membership; and
- Seeks personal development to provide long-term leadership within PTA and throughout their community.

PTA members interested in applying for ELA should visit the Texas PTA website for complete program and application information. Application deadlines occur in the fall of each year.

LAUNCH

LAUNCH is the signature training event for Texas PTA. While providing an opportunity for PTA leaders to receive comprehensive training for specific volunteer positions, attendees also have access to a wide variety of leadership and parenting workshops. PTAs can also walk away with a vast number of resources available in our exhibit hall, and networking opportunities with like-minded leaders from across the state.

Our statewide event attracts nearly 3,000 volunteer leaders, but Texas PTA has shown its commitment to reaching every PTA possible by providing additional conferences that are held on a regional basis. Detailed registration information for all LAUNCH events is available on the Texas PTA website.

Texas PTA's Annual Meeting will be held in conjunction with LAUNCH.

Family Engagement

NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

PTA supports the need for effectively involving parents and families in their child's education. Numerous research studies and years of experience in the educational field have demonstrated that involvement produces meaningful and lasting results. In 1997, PTA responded to the challenge of ensuring student achievement by issuing its own national standards for parent and family involvement. Using the most recent research and working with national experts, PTA updated the national standards in 2007.

Standard 1: Welcoming All Families into the School Community

Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

Standard 2: Communicating Effectively

Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

Standard 3: Supporting Student Success

Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Standard 4: Speaking Up for Every Child

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

Standard 5: Sharing Power

Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

Standard 6: Collaborating with Community

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

SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

School of Excellence is a recognition program established by National PTA in 2013 that supports and celebrates partnerships between PTAs and schools to enrich the educational experience and overall well-being for all students.

The path to excellence starts with a joint commitment of PTA and school leaders to work together to achieve PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. Through the School of Excellence program, your PTA and school will gain new ways to engage families in school decision-making, such as improvements to programs, practices and policies related to education, health, safety or the arts.

Parent Education

READY. SET. ACHIEVE! (RSA)

With our educational resources, Texas PTA is working to make parents, teachers and students aware of the potentially negative impact of bullying, unhealthy lifestyles or even modern challenges such as the Internet. Most importantly, we are raising awareness among families that positive adult-role models and supporting our children as parents and mentors can make a huge difference in the life of every child.

Ready. Set. Achieve!, Texas PTA's parent education initiative, is designed to provide relevant, meaningful resources to assist PTAs in reaching their goals through parent education. RSA programs are a significant benefit of having a PTA on your campus, as these programs are delivered at no charge to your PTA or your members. Texas PTA also provides access to promotional materials and translation equipment, upon request.

Texas PTA board and staff work together to continually update the program offerings and debut new *Ready. Set. Achieve!* programs each year at LAUNCH. Programs may be requested online via the Texas PTA website. Once requested, Texas PTA staff members will work with you to help ensure a successful program. Please note that you need the desired presentation date for completion of the online request.

Student Programs

Reflections

National PTA's *Reflections* program has encouraged millions of student to express themselves by giving positive recognition for their artistic efforts. Students may create and submit original works of arts within six categories:

- Dance Choreography
- Film Production
- Literature
- Musical Composition
- Photography
- Visual Arts

Qualifying students may enter each of the above categories in the Special Artist division. Please visit the Texas PTA website for overall student eligibility and Special Artist requirements.

Entries are first submitted and judged at Local PTAs, with a number advancing to their Council PTA or Region and then on to Texas PTA. Texas PTA advances a 36 entries to National PTA for the final, nationwide judging. Students recognized by Texas PTA are invited to attend an awards ceremony held during the spring, with top award winners performing live at LAUNCH each year.

Reflections Theme Search

Texas PTA participates in the annual *Reflections* theme search contest hosted by National PTA. Local PTAs may collect submissions from students and forward directly to Texas PTA. The deadline for Texas PTA to receive your theme submissions is November 1. Five entries are selected and advanced to National PTA, with the results announced in March.

Educational Scholarships

Texas PTA offers \$1,000 scholarships to graduating high school seniors in Texas who will be enrolled full-time in an accredited college, university, or a technical institute in the summer or fall semester immediately following applicant's high school graduation. All funds for the scholarships are provided by gifts to the Texas PTA Endowment Fund. Criteria, application and deadline information can be found on the Texas PTA website.

Kids First

Has your school community struggled to be inclusive of students with speical needs. Kids First is a turn-key program that gives students and families insight into the daily lives of those with unique abilities, such as autism, dyslexia and ADHD. Consisting of several hands-on experiences, Kids First is a great tool to help build a culture of understanding and acceptance.

This free downloadable guide is available on the Texas PTA website and can position your PTA as a leader in welcoming all families into your school.

Resources

Texas PTA is committed to providing our volunteer leaders across the state with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their role within PTA. Access to quality educational resources is a key component in supporting this success, as well as continuing to build strong Local and Council PTAs.

TRAINING

FOUNDATIONS courses provide a broad overview of “what” PTA is, and share important information that every PTA leader should know. All incoming board members are required, per the bylaws, to complete the *FOUNDATIONS: Leader Orientation* course prior to October 15th following their election or appointment.

FOUNDATIONS: Leader Orientation has two components that must be completed. There is \$10 course fee payable with the first component and this fee is reimbursable by your PTA.

Welcome to PTA is a high-level orientation to PTA that can only be taken online via the Texas PTA website at txpta.org/training.

Serving on a Local Board is the nuts and bolts of leading your PTA. This portion of the course is taken in person and provided by Council PTAs and Field Service Representatives.

BASICS contain detailed information to support volunteer leaders in their specific board position. Every board member is strongly encouraged to attend a BASICS course for their own position, as well as any other related positions.

BASICS include a workshop and companion Resource Guide, along with other supporting resources. The workshops may be available via webinar, at Texas PTA events such as LAUNCH, or locally through your Council PTA or Field Service Representative training opportunities. PTA Leaders can access the Resource Guides via the Texas PTA website or online store.

SPOTLIGHTS offer a short, in-depth review of some of the specific yet important topics and recurring PTA functions such as Bylaws and Standing Rules, Financial Reconciliations, Conducting a Meeting, and Nominations and Elections.

Training may be available via webinar, at Texas PTA events such as LAUNCH, or locally through your Council PTA or Field Service Representative training opportunities.

NEWSLETTERS AND ALERTS

PTA Leaders can stay up-to-date by visiting the Texas PTA website to subscribe to content-specific e-newsletters or *The Voice*, Texas PTA’s e-magazine.

These timely and relevant communications allow PTA Leaders to stay current with important issues and programs, such as:

- Helpful hints to make PTA leadership effective and rewarding
- Sharing PTA successes in engaging members of their community
- Status of legislative priorities and public policy initiatives
- Programming updates on healthy lifestyles, arts in education, and Schools of Excellence
- Availability of Ready. Set. Achieve! parent education programs
- Recognition opportunities through honors, awards and scholarships

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