

parents
teachers
students
& community
are the **basics**
of every PTA

volunteer coordinator
resource guide
2015-2016



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INTRODUCTION

The role of the volunteer has been in our society for many years. School districts throughout the state are realizing the need for volunteers in public education today. Using volunteers in schools creates cooperation between the home and school. And, bottom line, parent engagement increases student achievement.

The lists of needs a volunteer can fill are endless. That special talent cannot be purchased. Every community has available talent and resources that will benefit the school. People will be more supportive of public education when asked to share some of their time as volunteers. The volunteer does not have to be a college graduate. He can be a young or retired person. A volunteer can be many things: a role model for the student, an extra pair of hands to help the teacher or staff and a liaison between school and community.

Volunteer programs are organized by the schools and PTAs to provide the best learning environments for children. Since many school districts around the state have paid professionals to serve as volunteer coordinators, the person who is chosen to be the local PTA Volunteer Chair must be prepared to work hand-in-hand with the paid staff. The PTA Volunteer Chair must be well informed on school policies and the volunteer program, accept the responsibility to coordinate volunteers and display a positive attitude toward parental engagement and the community. The chair should be able to get along with people and enjoys working with people. It is vital that this chair works to see that each essential link is in place connecting the students, the community, the school staff and administration with the volunteers. When these steps are achieved, the volunteer program will be a success for everyone involved.

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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, community and place of worship.
- To raise the standards of home life.
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.
- To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

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.

POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

The Volunteer Chair works with the principal, the teachers, the volunteers, and the school district's volunteer coordinator. Duties include:

- Promoting good relations between school and community.
- Attending volunteer workshops or training sessions.
- Determining and implementing the best methods for recruiting volunteers.
- Surveying potential volunteers in order to meet the needs of the school.
- Arranging for general orientation of all volunteers and routines for recordkeeping.
- Helping each volunteer become familiar with the school policies, people, programs, and the building itself.
- Explaining the volunteer program to the teachers in faculty meetings and individually.
- Surveying the teachers and staff to determine their needs for volunteer help.
- Correlating the needs of teachers and staff with the interests and abilities of volunteers in making assignments.
- Providing a variety of experiences for the volunteer.
- Challenging the volunteer with assignments of increasing responsibility.
- Keeping volunteer files current and in order.
- Completing necessary volunteer service reports and submitting reports to district personnel.
- Supervising and evaluating the ongoing volunteer program.

PROCEDURE BOOK

A procedure book serves as a permanent record of activities and ensures an ongoing PTA program of work. It contains materials and information needed for the job. When compiling your procedure book, ask yourself, “If I knew nothing about the job, could I do it with this procedure book?”

A PROCEDURE BOOK:

- is vital to the effectiveness of an on-going chair;
- is a record of a year’s plans and activities;
- keeps you organized and focused; and
- makes tasks easier for those who follow you.

HOW TO COMPILE A PROCEDURE BOOK

- Use a loose-leaf folder or notebook.
- Separate sections with tabbed dividers.
- Include Suggested Table of Contents (see following).
- Additionally, keep all correspondence and records in CD and flash drive format to keep better records of past and current activities.
- Note: Be sure to turn over the procedure book and all CD/flash drive records of past works to the new chair at the completion of your term in office.

SUGGESTED TABLE OF CONTENTS

DIRECTORY

- Your name, address, telephone number and year served
- Address of Texas PTA Office and telephone number
- Address of National PTA Office and telephone number
- Name, address and telephone number of Local PTA president and board members
- Name, addresses and telephone numbers of Council and Texas PTA officers or chairs with comparable responsibilities
- Names, addresses and telephone numbers of committee members
- Resource people, related agencies and organizations in the community

JOB DESCRIPTION

- Responsibilities of your job
- Month by month “To Do” List

PLAN OF WORK

- Copy of approved Plan of Work

FINANCIAL REPORTS/FORMS

- Local PTA Budget
- Treasurer's Reports
- Voucher forms
- Tax exempt forms
- In-depth breakdown of expenditures for your job

BYLAWS/STANDING RULES

- A current copy of the Local PTA bylaws and Standing Rules (a copy of these items can be requested from Texas PTA)

EVENTS, PROJECT, PROGRAM

- List on separate pages each event, project and/or programs including dates, responsibilities, expenses and an evaluation form.

REPORTS

- Reports – include reports given by your office (list each title separately)
- Forms – include all forms sent by your office for awards at Council, Texas or National PTA

VOLUNTEER HOURS

- Use a calendar to keep track of your hours and turn them into the volunteer coordinator.

PTA MATERIALS

- Handouts and updates received from Texas PTA, Council and Local PTAs
- Agendas and minutes

EVALUATIONS

- What were your successes? Why?
- What projects failed? Why?
- What person, groups, materials were most helpful?

RECOMMENDATIONS

- This section should contain any recommendations to your successors.

PLAN OF WORK

At the beginning of each term all board members are required per the bylaws to complete and present a Plan of Work to the board for approval.

A Plan of Work is a detail list of all goals and expenses that a board member has for their term of office. Plans of Work must be approved before any expenses can be incurred for a position.



Plan of Work Plan de Trabajo

Officer/Chairman Name:

(Nombre de Oficial/Presidente de Junta) _____

Position:

(Posición) _____

Year:

(Año) _____

Reproduce as needed for the appropriate number of goals.

(Se puede reproducir para metas adicionales.)

Responsibilities/- Duties: (Responsabilidades)		Committee Member s: (Miembros del Comité)	
Goal: (Meta)		Evaluation Process: (Proceso de Evaluación)	

Specific Action Steps (Proceso Especifico de Acción)	Start Date (Fecha de Empezo)	Completion Date (Fecha de Terminación)	Budget (Presupuesto)

Resources: (Recursos)	
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DUTIES OF THE CHAIR

- Study Local PTA bylaws, standing rules and other materials that have been received from the former chair.
- Prepare a Plan of Work based upon the committee's recommendations. See the appendix of this guide for the Plan of Work form and a sample, completed form. Present this plan to the executive board for approval. If the plan requires PTA funds, advise the treasurer so the Budget and Finance Committee may consider the item for budget appropriations.
- Keep a procedure book on file to pass on to your successor.
- Keep an up-to-date list of local, statewide, and national resources.
- Take advantage of training opportunities for Chair and committee members.
 - Local PTA training opportunities and resources – Local PTA board orientation, Council PTA Officer and Chair Training, Texas PTA's Summer Leadership Seminar and Family Engagement Conference, and the Texas PTA and National PTA websites.
- Assess the volunteer needs at school
 - Meet with the principal to plan ahead for the needs of the school, determine priorities, and set dates for volunteer recruitment.
 - Meet with and work with the teachers, staff and principal, or those who will work closest with the volunteers.
 - Survey teachers and staff to find out what they need, then survey parents to learn about their talents, interests, and skills.
- Work with and train principals, teachers and school staff on effectively using and supervising volunteers.
 - Inform staff and teachers about the goals of the volunteer program.
 - Hold meetings with volunteers and staff.
- Set goals and objectives for volunteers.
- Recruit volunteers.
- Conduct volunteer training and orientation.
- Recognize volunteers.
- Evaluate volunteer performance and program success at end of year.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED

WHO CAN BE A VOLUNTEER?

Schools and PTAs have depended on the stay-at-home parents as their primary source for volunteer's way too long. Although many parents now work full time, there are still vast reservoirs of talent and potential that often remain untapped because schools do not approach this perceived barrier in creative ways.

Working 9-to-5 is not the norm for many people. Schools often overlook the large population of adults who work second and third shifts (which are predominantly evening hours), weekends, or flexible schedules as potential daytime volunteers. Parents who do not work a traditional 9-to-5 schedule can volunteer their time in the evenings, on weekends or at home.

WHY DO PEOPLE VOLUNTEER?

- To feel needed
- To learn something new
- To explore a career
- To get to know a community
- To help someone
- To gain a skill
- To test themselves
- To become an “insiders”
- To earn academic credit
- To repay a debt
- To keep busy
- Because there is no one else to do it
- As an alternative to giving money
- To feel good
- To have an impact
- To be part of a team
- To make new friends
- To share a skill/talent
- To gain status
- To demonstrate commitment to a cause
- Because they are asked
- For fun
- To do one's duty
- To keep skills alive
- Guilt
- To fill a gap
- To have an excuse to do something you love
- To see that resources are well allocated
- For recognition
- To be a watchdog

HOW DO YOU RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS?

Hold recruitment meetings, be creative, consider holding meetings:

- At the school
- In the evenings
- First thing in the morning
- At local companies
- At senior citizen centers
- At retirement communities
- At apartment complex community rooms
- At local colleges

Also consider these techniques:

- Use the school's automated phone call system
- Speak at civic meetings and organization meetings
- Attend chamber of commerce meetings
- Talk to high school classes, clubs or organizations
- Use marquees in the community and at the school
- Place fliers in local businesses
- Attach fliers to report cards

Place announcements on:

- school website
- PTA website
- Facebook
- Twitter
- in church bulletins

At these meetings, explain the importance of, as well as the need for, volunteers in schools.

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERS

The purpose of a volunteer program is to provide support within the school so that the individual needs of students are better met. In a well-developed volunteer program, volunteers are welcome in the school and their support and assistance are sought.

BENEFITS FOR THE STUDENTS

- Adult role models
- Enriched learning experiences
- Opportunities for exploration
- Additional individualized and personalized attention
- Learning reinforcement
- Increased motivation and improved self-concept
- Variety of skills and knowledge taught by volunteers
- Skills for communicating with adults
- Appreciation for the talents and contributions of parents and community volunteers

BENEFITS FOR THE VOLUNTEERS

- Involving the school community
- Providing active support for quality education
- Assisting students to achieve
- Learning new skills
- Boosting self-esteem
- Sharing knowledge and talents
- Providing experience for student volunteers who wish to enter the career field of education
- Feeling welcomed and valued at school
- Gaining self-confidence in their ability to be role models for children
- Increasing understanding for the teacher's role and responsibilities

BENEFITS FOR THE TEACHER

- Added enthusiasm to classroom by having an assistant provide extra programs, reports, decorations that correspond with lessons
- Relief from clerical duties
- Awareness of and appreciation for volunteer's talents and interests
- Skills for how to organize, train and effectively use volunteers
- Increased time to devote individual attention to students because of volunteers' assistance
- Networking with parents and community members

BENEFITS FOR SCHOOL

- Parent understanding and cooperation
- Positive public relations and community attitude toward the educational system
- Skills for working with business partners, community volunteers, and mentors
- Knowledge and use of community resources to enrich classroom instruction
- Community support
- Released teacher time to provide additional instructional time

BARRIERS TO SUCCESS

There are many false assumptions that interfere with providing successful volunteer opportunities. This misconception persists in spite of the fact that parents, teachers and principals agree that volunteer programs are effective, beneficial and bring increased resources to the school. Some of these barriers are listed below:

CONFIDENTIALITY – Principals and teachers are concerned with a volunteer’s ability to maintain confidentiality. Volunteers need to be better informed and trained on school policies in order to feel more confident in their roles.

DISCIPLINE – Potential volunteers often feel that little or no direction is provided about their authority in this area or the type of discipline that is expected. This situation results in teachers and principals feeling disappointed with a volunteer’s unwillingness to appropriately discipline students while volunteering. Discipline guidelines and expectations need to be thoroughly covered in volunteer training.

TIME – Potential volunteers often think that they have to volunteer for a day or two a week, providing a range of opportunities that are flexible will help you engage volunteers. The key is to offer flexible opportunities, ask principals and teachers what items can be done after school, at night or on the weekends.

WORKING WITH PEOPLE – A lot of times, people think that being a PTA volunteer is all about working with children and teachers, and, sometimes, potential volunteers are not comfortable with being alone with others' children or teachers. Not everyone is a people person, so make sure you think about the diversity of volunteers when you are reviewing volunteer opportunities. Volunteers can create the PTA website or Facebook page and design leaflets and posters for projects at the school. Try to involve the volunteers in all aspects of the association.

DISABILITIES – Potential volunteers with disabilities may feel there is not a place for them because of their disability. Make sure to use positive publicity that includes pictures of disabled volunteers and encourage people to get involved. Explain that they do have something to offer and their contribution would be valued highly often solves this problem.

CHILD CARE – Not all parents with small children have child care, so child care can be a barrier to volunteering.

LANGUAGE – Parents who speak other languages can help in all kinds of ways. They can help translate materials to distribute to non-English speaking families, they can provide translation for meetings, and they can even help in the school office with translations. In addition to using their native language to help the PTA, volunteering is a great supportive environment for learning English.

CLIQUEs – Many parents have preconceived ideas equating parent groups with cliques. PTAs have to actively reach out to counter the idea that their group is an exclusive club and they are working hard to welcome new volunteers. Personal connections can serve to breakdown cliques. See *Tips for Eliminating Cliques*.

KNOWLEDGE – Recent research suggests half of us would volunteer if we were asked, but we are never asked. Potential volunteers often say that they would volunteer, but they don’t know when volunteers are needed. Many teachers and principals believe that if parents were interested in volunteering, they would come forward on their own. Parents often believe that more effort should be made to recruit volunteers for jobs that match their skills and interests.

PTAs can work with principals and teachers to overcome these barriers and assumptions to create meaningful and valuable volunteer programs. Adequate training recruitment retention and recognition will help establish a well-rounded volunteer program.

KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Having a successful volunteer program is a team effort. The following players must believe in volunteer efforts and the benefits that a successful volunteer program can have on the students, faculty, parents and community.

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS – who understand, encourage and fully support the volunteer program.

TEACHERS – who are committed to working with volunteers in a variety of capacities.

PARENTS AND FAMILY MEMBERS – who understand how important volunteers are to the school and their children’s educations.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS – who are willing to support and volunteer at the school

IDENTIFY YOUR RESOURCES

When recruiting volunteers, don't forget about these key people:

- Parents
- Grandparents
- Brothers, sisters
- Extended family members
- Civic groups
- Women’s clubs
- Fraternal organizations
- Retired teachers
- Senior citizens
- College students
- High school students
- Alumni
- Local business members

BEST PRACTICES

A volunteer program provides an opportunity for the volunteer and the teacher to work hand-in-hand to achieve the goal of providing the best learning experiences for children. With educational costs soaring and financing uncertain, there is a very real need for schools and PTA members to work together. The volunteer program is an effective solution to many school concerns.

A volunteer is defined as “one who offers himself for a service of his own free will.” Being a volunteer is much more, of course. It means doing things for other people, working with PTA friends on a worthwhile project, and receiving the personal satisfaction that cannot be compared to monetary rewards.

One of the greatest things about doing volunteer work is that, no matter what your talents might be, there is always a place for everyone.

STEP 1. ASSESSING VOLUNTEER NEEDS AT SCHOOL

- Define needs assessment
- Identify individuals/groups who need to be a part of a needs assessment
- List ways of getting information
- Determine content and questions of assessment questionnaire/survey
- Determine outcomes

Needs assessment consists of gathering and interpreting information to formulate goals and objectives. This assessment:

- Helps prevent school volunteer programs from becoming superficial.
- Ensures that the program really benefits the school and the community.
- Documents the program concerns to be addressed.
- Provides information about recruiting and assigning volunteers according to skill, knowledge, interests and other factors.

See the Appendix of this guide for a sample Needs Assessment Survey.

The Volunteer Chair should meet with the principal to plan ahead for the needs of the school, determine priorities, and set target dates for recruitment.

The Volunteer Committee needs to meet regularly and work with the teachers, staff and principal, or those who will work closest with the volunteers. Teacher/staff commitment and involvement is crucial to the inception and long-term success of any volunteer program. See the Appendix of this guide for a sample letter to the teachers, plus a Teachers' Request for Volunteer Help form.

Once teachers and staff have been surveyed to find out what they need, volunteers should also be surveyed to learn about their talents, interests, and skills. Surveying both provides the most accurate way for developing relevant and meaningful opportunities for parents to volunteer. *See the Appendix of this guide for a sample volunteer survey.*

DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION

1. Set Your Goal

The goal sets the general purpose of the program. An example of a general goal would be “to improve children’s reading performance by involving volunteers in the classroom.” Another example might be “to

recruit senior citizens to aid teachers in the classroom.” You might have one, two or three goals, but remember to make them Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely (SMART).

2. Set Objectives

The objectives will be specific steps towards your goal. For example, if your goal is to involve senior citizens in one-to-one work with children, your objective might be:

- Assess school’s needs for one-to-one help with children.
- Recruit enough volunteers to fill those needs, or enough volunteers to start a small pilot project.
- Orient, place and train your volunteers. Give them a time-limited assignment, one or two months, until you can assess the success and failures of your program.
- Provide ongoing training, recognition and communication opportunities for volunteers.
- Provide ongoing evaluation of the project by all involved—staff, parents, volunteers, and children.

3. Decide on Activities to Fulfill Objectives

For example, if you wanted to recruit senior citizens for one-to-one help with children:

- Survey teachers, including librarian, school nurse, etc. to assess children’s needs for one-to-one help.
- Develop volunteer job descriptions for senior citizens that meet needs of school staff.
- Survey your neighborhood for senior citizens’ groups and agencies.
- Develop ties with senior groups and agencies servicing seniors.
- Hold reception and orientation for interested seniors and survey potential volunteers on their interests, experience and abilities.
- Match seniors with teachers needing help.
- Plan to retain volunteers—set up another meeting for two weeks after most placements are made. Immediately after placement of the volunteer, the Volunteer Chair should make personal or telephone contact with each volunteer placed and with each teacher working with a volunteer.
- Provide for ongoing recognition, evaluation and communication opportunities through personal contact, telephone calls, emails, etc.

4. Consolidate Your Plans

Make an overall list of activities to take place during the time limit set for your program, whether it’s a couple of months, a semester, or an entire year. The different activities should make it possible to accomplish the program in the time allotted. Otherwise, the plan needs to be revamped or priorities need to be set and cutbacks made. There’s always next time.

5. Establish a Time Line

This is the timing of activities in relationship to each other, and the assignment of activities to specific persons with specific times they are to be done. If this is done well, with enough people taking responsibility for the various jobs, and the time of jobs well coordinated, your program should operate smoothly.

STEP 2. WORKING WITH AND TRAINING SCHOOL STAFF

Principals can serve as the overall supervisor of a school’s volunteer program. PTAs can work with principals to encourage them to:

- Inform staff and teachers about the goals of the program.
- Make space available to volunteers.
- Provide a consistent place and process for volunteers to sign in, and list the hours served.
- Hold meetings with volunteers and staff.

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- Assist in providing training to teachers and staff on the appropriate roles of working with and supervising volunteers.
 - Offer a staff development session on the value of parent engagement in the school.
 - Work with a team to put a parent engagement policy in place that includes the volunteer program.
 - Periodically evaluate the program by performing a checklist of current practices to be sure the needs of the students; teachers, parents and school are being met.
 - Help put together a volunteer informational packet for teachers, staff and volunteers.

Many teachers may be reluctant to take on volunteers if they perceive them as an extra burden rather than as a help. Teachers may also feel their competency or capacity to maintain control over their classroom may be challenged by a volunteer's presence.

Providing adequate training to principals and working with teachers to inform them of appropriate roles, uses, and supervision of volunteers is essential for a successful volunteer program.

All teachers and staff who intend to use volunteers should also go through an orientation with the principal and Volunteer Chair, covering such things as:

- School goals and objective of the program
- Campus rules and guidelines
- Clarification of the roles of the teacher and the volunteer
- Sign-in and record-keeping procedures
- Security background checks and the need to coordinate all volunteers through the PTA Chair
- Reasons for respecting confidentiality
- Expectation for how a volunteer handles discipline in the classroom
- Explanation of how to handle problems with a volunteer
- Realistic expectations of a volunteer
- Emphasis on professional commitment and non-judgmental attitude
- Question and answer time

Teachers will want the volunteer to use their own standards of acceptable classroom behavior and performance; therefore, specific training in those areas will be left up to the teacher. However, the Volunteer Chair is there to help with specific training needs, when necessary. In addition, all volunteers should also receive training from the Volunteer Chair before entering the classroom.

ADVICE ON TEACHER PREPARATION FOR VOLUNTEERS

Once teachers are assigned a volunteer, there are many things that they need to do to prepare. They need to determine

- What kind of assistance do they need?
- Do they want clerical or instructional help?
- Will the volunteer work with an individual or a small group of students?
- What subjects will be covered?
- Will they have assignments that working volunteers can help complete at home?

The teacher should make lists of their needs and ways the volunteer can help them meet those needs. Here are some preparation activities that teachers may undertake to get ready for a volunteer program:

- Determine the most beneficial way volunteers may be of help in their classrooms.
- Request volunteers through the Volunteer Chair
- Meet with the volunteer and explain the volunteer assignment.

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- Offer the volunteer a chance to observe the class
 - Prepare their students in the class if the volunteer will be working with the class.
 - Plan the work the volunteer is to do before he/she arrives.
 - They should provide materials for the volunteer(s) to use, if necessary.
 - Remind volunteers of any confidentiality issues.

Teachers need to remember that no matter how much volunteer assistance they have, it is important to remember that the teacher is solely responsible for:

- Diagnosing a student's needs and progress
- Prescribing instructional programs
- Contacting parents
- Evaluating a student's work on a formal basis
- Selecting appropriate materials
- Providing initial instruction
- Writing comments on papers that go home
- Disciplining students
- Counseling students
- Initiating and/or determining the why, the how, the where and the when

Teachers and volunteers need to remember that teachers hold the legal responsibility for the students' well being. Therefore, the volunteer should not be left in charge of the class. Volunteers may supplement, but not replace, paid staff.

PROBLEMS WITH A VOLUNTEER?

Volunteers, like teachers, are individuals with their own personality, interests, and needs. If a situation arises where the teacher becomes uncomfortable with a volunteer's work in the classroom, they should notify their principal. These problems can usually be easily resolved, but neither the teacher nor the volunteer has failed if a reassignment needs to be made. Careful planning and clear understanding of expectations will usually prevent such problems.

EVALUATING YOUR VOLUNTEER

Evaluation by both the teacher and the volunteer is an important part of the volunteer program. If, at any time, it becomes apparent that the program is not working smoothly, the volunteer or the teacher needs to go immediately to the Volunteer Chair or the principal and explain the situation. The volunteer program should be designed to help, not create work.

DO

- Make volunteers feel welcome
- Be generous in offering praise, encouragement and support.
- Plan enjoyable experiences through which volunteers can establish good relationships with children.
- Make instructions clear with adequate time allotted.
- Provide guides, keys or corrected papers for explanation.
- Be honest and open about your concerns
- Give volunteers proper notice of schedule changes.

DO NOT

- Leave volunteers in charge of the class.
- Give volunteers more than they can handle in the allotted time.
- Expect volunteers to do things they are not trained or prepared to do.
- Expect volunteers to change their schedules without proper notice.
- Expect volunteers to be disciplinarians.
- Expect volunteers to be just housekeepers.
- Assign duties that belong to the teacher.

STEP 3. SETTING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

It is important that assignments are carefully selected, productive, meaningful, and closely matched to the volunteers' interests, skills, and motivation for volunteering, in order to ensure long-term engagement on the volunteers' part and a successful program. Volunteers want to feel that they are making a real contribution, that they are needed, and that their jobs are valued and important. PTA volunteer coordinators, teachers, and school staff must work with each other to develop creative and specific job descriptions for volunteers.

A job description gives a volunteer a clear definition of the job, as well as expectations. It also clarifies the job for the faculty and staff that will train, work with and supervise the volunteer.

GOAL

Goals should be SMART – they should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely.

Some goals for a successful volunteer program could be:

- Recruit 10 volunteers by October 1
- Complete a program needs assessment survey by September 30

DEVELOPING JOB DESCRIPTIONS

PTA volunteer coordinators, teachers and school staff must work with each other to develop creative and specific job descriptions for volunteers. The descriptions should include the following:

- A title that describes the volunteer's responsibilities
- The position's importance to the school and the benefits the volunteer gains from the experience
- The qualifications needed to successfully do the job
- The person(s) to whom the volunteer is responsible
- Detailed descriptions of the volunteer's tasks.
- How a volunteer will be trained to prepare for an assignment
- The length of time required for the position, such as, how many hours per week for how many weeks.

STEP 4 - RECRUITING VOLUNTEERS

Recruitment is one of the most challenging steps in the process. Everyone is a potential volunteer regardless of race, creed, religion, experience, educations, income, age or disposition, and will most often volunteer in some way, if asked. Promotion of the need for one's service is the key to recruitment. Recruitment should be creative and far-reaching. It should take place throughout the year to replace volunteers as well as to enlist additional assistance for new programs.

Recruitment is the process of engaging volunteers for service, and it is often the most challenging part of the program. No matter how well a school volunteer program is planned, it will fail without a strong recruitment strategy. Two recruiting issues need to be addressed: (1) Who can be a volunteer (2) How to reach out and find volunteers.

WHO:

- Teachers and administrators should consider the range of skills available from adults who hold jobs in hospitals, fire and police departments, television and radio stations, etc. that can be applied to day or evening school programs.
- Adults who work in the evening for computer services, newspapers, and restaurants are good prospective afternoon volunteers.
- Adults who work on the weekends in places such as parks, museums, libraries and churches possess a wealth of talents to contribute to schools and usually have one or two full days off during the week.
- Self-employed adults, such as consultants, artists or musicians, may have flexible schedules that can accommodate daytime or evening volunteering.
- Senior citizens are another under used, yet highly talented, pool of knowledgeable adults with unlimited skills that are easily adapted to school curriculum and programs. Furthermore, by volunteering at school, seniors can provide meaningful contact that helps build understanding between and appreciation for other generations.
- Students are another source of volunteers that goes untapped. Most students are eager to participate; most are looking for community service hours for their student organizations.

POTENTIAL RESOURCES

Potential resources are the people and materials you hope to draw from to assist in the planning and implementation of your program. Where do you find this support? What resources are available inside and outside your school/community that can help expand and enrich your program?

Now that the program has direction, getting it going required people resources. Try not to lock yourself into what has happened in the past. Brainstorm, explore, be creative and let yourself go.

Believe it or not, our resources are unlimited. However, in order to reap the benefits, you must be open to exploring what resources are inside the school in your community and in the community-at-large. Once you discover what resources are there, you will be in a better position to determine who can help you to accomplish your program goals.

HOW:

You can arrange meetings at local work sites, senior centers, or retirement communities. At these meetings, volunteer coordinators or teams can talk with prospective candidates about the importance of, as well as the need for, their involvement with the school. Other methods of delivering this message can include the following:

- Posters, pamphlets/fliers, and brochures posted or distributed at community supermarkets, banks, churches, and so forth.
- Notices on community bulletin boards or in newsletters, newspapers, bills, bank statements, payroll checks, coupon booklets, and so forth.
- Booths or exhibits at local stores, malls, community fairs, etc.

AWARENESS ACTIVITIES

Awareness activities will vary by target population and the message you want to convey. The following is a list of common awareness activities:

- Breakfast meetings with business groups and chambers of commerce to outline partnership elements such as advocacy, staff development, curriculum development, instructional support, etc.
- Newsletters, brochures, other printed materials

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- Presentations to the local chamber of commerce board of directors
 - Presentations to local corporate volunteer councils
 - Meetings between representatives of a successful partnership and a potential partner
 - Video presentations, computer bulletin board
 - Guest appearances on television and radio talk shows
 - Advertisements in local press
 - Editorial and feature articles in journals, periodicals and newspapers

STEP 5: TRAINING AND ORIENTING VOLUNTEERS

Once you have new volunteers, training and orientation are crucial. They can ease anxiety and confusion, alleviate fears, and increase the chances that volunteers will have a long-term relationship with the school

Orientation and training sessions set a welcoming tone and create support for volunteers. The sessions should be relevant, hands on, and geared toward the specific skills and responsibilities of each volunteer. Orientation sessions should familiarize volunteers with:

- School facilities
- School staff and teachers
- Philosophy and mission of the school and the volunteer program
- Operating policies and procedures for the school and school district
- Security – review procedures for district background checks as well as security procedures for the campus.
- Overall plan, purpose and vision of a district-wide volunteer program, if there is one.
- Recording of volunteer hours.

TRAINING

The training sessions should be held at varying times to accommodate everyone's schedules. The supervising teachers or staff should give input into or, better yet, be a part of the training sessions along with the PTA Volunteer Chair. They may be done one-on-one, in a small group or a large group. Trainings are focused, short-term, specific and practical. The purpose of the training provided and its expected outcomes should be made clear to the participants. They should never feel that the training is a perfunctory repetition of orientation.

The purpose of training volunteers is primarily to provide skill development in order to assist teachers and students. Training also includes opportunities to define the volunteer role more clearly through numerous activities. It gives the volunteer time and assistance in self-growth and development. This in turn provides motivation, greater self-confidence and improved performance. Poorly prepared volunteers are more likely to be undependable, require excessive teacher supervision and will probably not remain in the program. Volunteers, who are well trained, on the other hand, are highly regarded by teachers who transmit the message to volunteers that they are valued members of the educational team.

ORIENTATION

Orientation is a way to help volunteers become familiar with your program and your school. It can be done one-on-one, in a small group or a large group. Plan at least a 1 ½ - 2 hour session. *See the Appendix of this guide for a Sample Orientation Agenda for Volunteers.*

Orientation sessions should familiarize volunteers with the following:

- **School facilities** – provide a map and tour of the building and grounds. Point out important places such as the restrooms, lounge and PTA room.

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- **School Staff and Teachers** – Introduce volunteers to the principal, teachers, and office and custodial staff. An individual visit with the staff member or teacher with whom the volunteer will work to discuss specific responsibilities and a schedule is recommended.
 - **School Philosophy, Mission, Operating Policies and Procedures** – Provide a job description and information on confidentiality, ethics for working with students and staff, student discipline, dependability, attendance expectations of volunteers, and recording volunteer hours. Provide a handbook for volunteers to keep. During orientation, provide a time for questions, discussion, and completing forms.
 - **Security** – Before any volunteer begins service at a school, school administrators or staff should run a routine background check on each potential volunteer, just as they do with other school personnel. It is not a state requirement, but most school districts require that all volunteers who come in contact with students go through a background checks.
 - **Sign-in/Sign-out Procedures** – Most school districts have district-wide procedure for visitor sign-in/sign-out, this includes volunteer sign-in/sign-out procedures. If your district does not have a process for volunteers to sign in and out, speak with your principal to determine the best procedure for your school. This may be the principal’s office, the volunteer coordinator’s office, the school office or the volunteer workroom. The principal and/or volunteer office must know where the volunteer is working in case they need to be contacted and in emergency situations. Name tags, parking, hours and record keeping and other logistics should also be covered.
 - **Additional Opportunities for Training** – Encourage volunteers to attend Texas PTA Summer Leadership Seminar, and Annual Convention, Area PTA Annual Meetings, and Council PTA events.

STEP 6: RETAINING AND RECOGNIZING VOLUNTEERS

While volunteer may choose to become involved for many reasons, their continued commitment and motivation does not come from a paycheck, but rather from a deeper kind of gratification. Retention is the art of keeping volunteers in your program and encouraging their annual re-enlistment. From their first contact with your program, volunteers should develop a motivational feeling of belonging. A major strength of your program is a core group of satisfied volunteers who return year after year.

To develop and sustain a feeling of belonging and satisfaction among volunteers, it is important to do the following:

- Provide ongoing training for volunteers. Many volunteers want to learn new skills that they can market when seeking new jobs or career advancement.
- Allow flexibility within the program. Many volunteers look forward to the opportunity to try new assignments and to work with different people.
- Train teachers to work with volunteers. Teachers who are trained to work with volunteers are prepared for the volunteer and appreciate the contributions made to the instructional program. Many problems can be avoided when teachers are knowledgeable about volunteer services.
- Share documentation of volunteer contributions with volunteers whenever possible. Include before and after pictures of special art or school beautification projects and other concrete evidence that volunteer services do make a difference.
- Provide feedback about performance and recommended changes when necessary. Keep a notebook for the volunteer with articles and suggestions about teaching, discipline and human relations techniques. Volunteers want to do the best job possible and appreciate the supervision and the fact that you care.
- Develop informal and formal recognition activities throughout the year that will demonstrate to volunteers that their efforts are appreciated.
- Train continually, and monitor teachers and staff to ensure that they are effectively working with volunteers.
- Treat volunteers like colleagues.

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- Regularly show appreciation to the volunteer for his efforts.
 - Include the volunteer in planning activities.
 - Maximize the volunteer’s time. He should know what you want him to do before class begins.
 - Show interest in the volunteers, and they will show an interest in the school and the volunteer program.
 - Assign jobs that will keep them busy and interested.
 - Always have a job for the volunteer.
 - Assign tasks that will increase skills and knowledge.
 - Maintain high standards of training and education for volunteers.
 - Evaluate the job of the volunteer often so that it does not become stale.
 - Incorporate the ideas, suggestions and experience of the volunteers when possible.
 - Should a volunteer begin to show lack of interest, change his assignment and add more responsibility.
 - Evaluate the reasons for previous volunteer departures.

RECOGNITION

Recognition is the extension of appreciation for service rendered. Keep in mind that recognition is a very personal thing, and each volunteer should be recognized in a way that he or she feels is appropriate and rewarding. Some individuals desire public recognition; others prefer recognition from their peers. But everyone wants some kind of acknowledgment of a job well done. We all need to know what impact our service has had on the issue or concern that prompted our involvement.

Volunteers work at schools for many reasons. However, they do not get a paycheck. For most, their reward is a high degree of satisfaction from the volunteer performance. The volunteer’s “pay” is often the welcoming smile of a student and the warm day-to-day relationship with staff members and other volunteers. This satisfaction comes from within the person. But a “thank you” from students, teachers, administrators and the volunteer coordinator will provide great motivation and satisfaction.

Give public recognition for the contributions of school volunteers. This allows the community to recognize the importance of volunteer service and reinforces the positive aspects of the volunteer program as a whole.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Share your PTA newsletter with the community and send copies of it to the mayor and city council, school board, civic associations, other community leaders and organizations.
- Give your local newspaper frequent feature articles describing the work individual volunteers do in exceptional situations.
- Nominate exceptional volunteers for community awards. Reward outstanding volunteers with “scholarships” to seminars and conferences.
- Schedule annual volunteer recognition events. They are excellent public relations events and provide an official way to say thank you.
- Send short notes of appreciation throughout the year. These are especially appreciated when the student send them. Personal recognition of each volunteer’s unique contribution is just as important as public recognition—in some cases, more important.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION TIPS

Volunteer recognition starts with knowing your volunteers, continues as you strive to meet your organizational goals and keeps going while you have fun together. With your volunteers and staff, take a look at the present mission, dream about the future and wrap that into your recognition program.

VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

(A Year-Round Responsibility)

A volunteer's pay is recognition and assurance that he is an equal partner in your program. Recognition, therefore, should be an integral part of the management process so that people feel valued and good about themselves and their organization.

Here are suggestions to recognize and encourage your volunteers:

- Greet the volunteer by name; encourage students to use volunteer's name.
- Thank the volunteer personally each day, noting special contributions.
- Set a time to talk with the volunteer when children are not present; speak briefly with the volunteer each day before departure.
- Use the volunteer's special talents, knowledge and interest in assigning tasks.
- Give the volunteer increasing responsibilities and more challenging tasks.
- Share articles and books of mutual interest on child development, learning styles or the content area in which a volunteer works.
- Include the volunteer when planning class activities.
- Include the volunteer in staff meetings and in-service training when appropriate.
- Send a letter of appreciation.
- Take the volunteer to lunch.
- Call or write when a volunteer is absent or ill.
- Invite experienced volunteers to train newer volunteers.
- Seek training opportunities for the volunteer, perhaps by providing a PTA scholarship to a volunteer conference or workshop.
- Write an article on volunteer's contributions for your volunteer newsletter, school newspapers, or community paper.
- Ask the volunteer coordinator or school community relations staff person about a feature story on volunteers for the newspaper, radio or television station.
- Nominate your volunteer for a volunteer award.
- Celebrate outstanding contributions or achievements.
- Commend the volunteer to supervisory staff.
- Ask volunteers to help evaluate the program and suggest improvements.
- Ask volunteers to evaluate the performance of volunteers; share their comments with the volunteers.
- Help plan a recognition event—an assembly, reception or luncheon; invite the superintendent, school board, administrators, parents and community leaders.
- Accommodate the volunteer's personal needs and problems.
- Enable the volunteer to grow on the job.
- Write a letter of recommendation when the volunteer requests it.
- Plan to recognize the "Volunteer of the Year" for each campus.
- Celebrate "Love Your Volunteer" week -- teachers and staff show appreciation.
- After school socials – have door prizes.
- Host an "End of Year Dinner" – awards and slide show of volunteers.
- Schedule a covered dish supper with teachers.
- Say "thank you" often.
- Take time to have a little chitchat from time to time.
- Smile—be creative!!

Your recognition will be ineffective if it does not say, “thank you” in a way that a volunteer can hear. No two people are alike in their motivations. Here are some tips on what “paycheck” is appropriate for each motivator. But remember, the volunteer himself will be the best source of information on what satisfies him or her.

STEP 7 - EVALUATING VOLUNTEER PERFORMANCE AND PROGRAM SUCCESS

As with any successful program, there needs to be continual evaluation that results in improvements. Through surveys, questionnaires, observations, and personal interviews, the program’s general success at meeting the needs of children, teachers, staff, and volunteers can be assessed. These methods also can be used to assess the individual performance of each volunteer, the effectiveness of orientation and training sessions, and the volunteer program’s procedures and recruitment strategies.

Evaluation is the process of collecting and interpreting data to determine accomplishments, strengths and weaknesses of your program.

Evaluation is conducted at two levels:

- To determine the effectiveness of the program as a whole.
- To determine the effectiveness of the individual components of the program.

Too often, program developers avoid the evaluation process. They see it as intimidating, time consuming, or unnecessary paperwork. But a properly conducted evaluation may be the most effective evidence you can use to convince persons of the value of your program.

EVALUATION USES

- Gain additional support
- Demonstrate effectiveness
- Identify weaknesses and strengths
- Improve services
- Determine future planning
- Track statistical data
- Apply for grants
- Apply for Blue Ribbon Schools award
- Report parent engagement to Texas Education Agency (TEA) or school district

Evaluation does not take place only at the end of the school year. It is an ongoing process from the very beginning of your program planning. When program objectives are determined, the process of preparing for evaluation design is begun. Well-written objectives will provide the standards you can use to measure accomplishments. At the end of the school year, compile the information collected with the objectives developed at the beginning of the year.

All participants in the school volunteer program need the opportunity to evaluate the program.

If the Volunteer's motivator is	Then reward the volunteer with:
Praise	Thanks you's, small gifts, praise for their work especially in front of others, public recognition, reference letter, letter thanking their boss or family.
Affiliation	Social get-togethers, name badges, team projects; have a special T-shirt made for special events; post a list of all volunteers in public areas; display their photo; say "we" and "us," not "you,"
Accomplishment	Certificates of accomplishments at stages, such as 5, 10, 15 hours, years, steps reached, projects completed, people served, meals delivered, etc.; concrete, perhaps physical projects with a recognizable and reachable end; a place to put or mark completed projects.
Influence	Leadership roles, titles/rank insignia, opportunities to talk to others about the cause, photos with the superintendent or principal, " _____ of the Year" award; ask for advice, listen and be open to their ideas, and use some of them.

LEGAL CODES

WHY THESE LEGAL CODES ARE IMPORTANT

Volunteers need to understand these acts and how they are protected under them. These acts lend credibility to every PTA volunteer program. The Texas act protects volunteers who are “rendering services” in a recognized capacity. This law can add strength and validity to your program by:

- Requiring all volunteers to go through a criminal background check in order to be recognized as a volunteer.
- Requiring volunteer to sign in according to school procedures, in order to be recognized as “rendering service...at a school-sponsored or school-related activity.”
- Requiring volunteer to keep track of the date, time and duration of service.

These laws are for the protection of the volunteer, but they also work to protect the children in our schools. This keeps volunteers who have not gone through the volunteer system from walking in and performing unrecognized volunteer acts. This information should be included in your volunteer orientations.

TEXAS GOVERNMENT CODE 2109 – USE OF VOLUNTEERS

Gov’t Code 21.09.003

School districts shall develop a volunteer program. In developing the program, the district shall consider volunteers a resource that requires advance planning and preparation for effective use. If practicable, each district should include volunteers in addition to paid staff in planning the implementation of the program.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS AND GUIDELINES

A volunteer program shall include:

- An effective training program for paid staff and prospective volunteers.
- The use of paid staff to plan and implement the volunteer program.
- An evaluation mechanism to assess the performance of volunteers, the cooperation of paid staff with the volunteers, and the overall volunteer program.
- Follow-up studies to ensure the effectiveness of the program.

Gov’t Code 2109.004(a)

A volunteer program may:

- Establish a program to reimburse volunteers for actual and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of volunteer services.
- Establish an insurance program to protect volunteers in the performance of volunteer services.
- Cooperate with private organizations that provide services similar to those provided by the district.
- Purchase engraved certificates, plaques, pins, and/or other awards of a similar nature that do not exceed \$75.00 per person in value to recognize special achievement and outstanding service of volunteers.

Gov’t Code 2109.004(b)

This section applies to a volunteer or person who has indicated, in writing, an intention to serve as a volunteer with the district or shared services arrangement.

This section does not apply to a person who volunteers or is applying to volunteer with the district or shared services arrangement if the person:

- Is the parent, guardian, or grandparent of a child who is enrolled in the district or school for which the person volunteers or is applying to volunteer;
- Will be accompanied by a district employee while on a school campus; or
- Is volunteering for a single event on the school campus.

A volunteer may not perform any volunteer duties until:

- The volunteer has provided to the district a driver's license or another form of identification containing the person's photograph issued by an entity of the United States government; and
- The district has obtained from the Texas Department of Public Safety (DPS) and may obtain from any other law enforcement agency, criminal justice agency, or private consumer reporting agency all criminal history record information that relates to a volunteer.

VOLUNTEER PROTECTION ACT

PTA, as a volunteer association, would not exist if it were not for the devoted individuals who volunteer to carry out the work and mission of the association. Many volunteer associations and other types of volunteer organizations have been adversely affected by the potential of liability actions against volunteers. Because the federal government realizes the importance and need for volunteers, it has passed the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 to reform laws that provide certain protections from liability abuses related to volunteers serving nonprofit organizations and governmental entities.

Under this law, volunteers, but not the organizations they serve, cannot be held liable for negligent acts or omissions that occur during the course of their duties. However, if someone were injured because of a volunteer's willful and wanton misconduct, including the influence of drugs or alcohol, this protection would not apply.

In order for a volunteer to take advantage of this protection, four criteria must be met:

1. The volunteer must have been acting within the scope of his or her responsibilities in the non-profit organization.
2. If required by law, the volunteer must have been properly licensed, certified, or authorized by the appropriate authority in the state in which the harm occurred.
3. The harm caused by the volunteer must not have been due to willful or criminal misconduct, gross negligence, reckless conduct, or a conscious, flagrant indifference to the rights or safety of the individual harmed by the volunteer.
4. The harm caused by the volunteer must not have been due to the operation by the volunteer of a motor vehicle, vessel, aircraft, or other similar vehicle.

For example, a PTA holds a catered event and uses PTA volunteers to help serve food.

If people were to come down with food poisoning from the catered food, the volunteer food servers could not be held liable for it. While people could still sue the PTA or the caterer, the individual volunteers and their personal assets would be protected.

This act does not preclude a state from enacting provisions that are even more protective of either volunteers or nonprofit organizations.

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Students, as active and equal members of PTAs and PTSAs can provide valuable suggestions and opinions regarding youth-oriented programs. They will bring a new burst of energy and enthusiasm to your unit and its projects. In return, you will be developing the leaders of the future. They will also broaden your volunteer base.

Ask these questions regarding student engagement:

- Does your PTSA feel student engagement is valuable?
- Do PTSA meetings conflict with students' classes or other activities?
- Does your school's staff support student engagement?
- Does your PTSA offer programs and activities that interest students and encourage their participation?
- Does your PTSA allow students to hold elected offices?
- Does your PTSA's leadership development program address student engagement and participation?

BENEFITS OF STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

- Provides a new perspective on your PTA's ideas and programs.
- Gives students the opportunity to participate in the planning and execution of PTA programs. Young people's viewpoints and ideas are essential because all PTA programs focus on youth.
- Puts the PTA Purposes into action.
- Gives students a better understanding of adults, and adults a better understanding of students.
- To teach students useful skills, such as parliamentary procedure, public speaking and conflict resolution.
- Introduces students to the legislative process through your PTA's involvement in legislative activities.
- Provides your unit with information on student interests and problems. This will make your programs more effective.
- Encourages students' personal growth and development.
- Increases the number of skilled volunteers in your PTSA so you can conduct more programs.

BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

- Provides an important student perspective for PTSA ideas and programs because you know what's happening in your school.
- Provides you with an open forum for discussing students' needs in your school. You'll be expressing your views to people who share your concerns about education, including teachers and administrators who make the final decisions.
- Allows an opportunity to speak for yourself, instead of being spoken for.
- Enables you to make a difference in your community and school through involvement in programs that address issues you are interested in.
- Creates a direct connection to your state PTA and National PTA, which gives you a voice at both the state and national level.
- Allows you to participate in meetings and forums with your PTA officers that are important to you. Learning means doing in PTSA.
- Develops leadership skills, such as how to run a meeting, strengthen your decision-making skills and become comfortable with public speaking.
- Provides a deeper understanding of public education and how it works.
- You will have equal opportunity, equal responsibility and an equal vote.
- Makes contacts that may prove useful after you graduate.
- Provides an opportunity to meet people and to get involved in your school and your education. You can make an impact on school policy or have a voice in determining the direction of your education.

SEVEN STEPS TO STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Certain legal restrictions may apply to student involvement. For more information, refer to the Texas PTA Policy on Local and Council PTA Bylaws on the Texas PTA website.

1. Discuss student engagement with your PTA's board.
2. Once your board has agreed to actively recruit student members, have them make a formal commitment to youth involvement. This should be in the form of a motion or an action item. Consider whether a change in your bylaws is necessary. *For more information, refer to the Texas PTA Policy on Local and Council PTA Bylaws on the Texas PTA website.*
3. Promote student membership. Advertise PTSA, PTSA activities, the advantage of student participation, etc. to students, parents, teachers, and the community.
4. Include students on PTSA committees.
5. Develop and implement programs that involve both students and adults. Make sure students are included in the initial planning stages as well as in the execution of the project.
6. Allow students to have an active voice in your PTSA. Listen and give consideration to what students have to say, even if their ideas seem unorthodox or impossible to implement.
7. Elect students as officers.

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF STUDENTS

RECRUITING:

- Ask for help. Most students are willing to help if asked.
- Stress PTSA results. They want to know, "What's in it for me?"
- Publicize all PTA achievements, benefits and upcoming activities through surveys, newsletters, forums or social events.
- Set up a bulletin board with pictures and notices of PTSA programs in a high-traffic area of the school or community.
- Keep people who make referrals informed of PTSA programs for students.
- Telephone parents to explain what their child will be doing or make a home visit to meet parents personally.
- Make a presentation before the student council, stressing the advantage of PTSA membership for students. Enlist the council's support, and listen to members' ideas for involving students.
- Use current student members as a recruitment/public relations team.
- Have a student be membership committee chair or help with your membership drive.
- Emphasize that PTA can be fun, using logos, T-shirts, music and drama.
- Hold recruitment drives in which every student member agrees to bring another student into the PTSA.
- Make students realize that their membership is an integral part of your PTSA, not just a temporary goal. Students should be part of the recruitment process as well as its result.
- Conduct programs, projects and activities geared toward students.
- Concentrate on attracting students who might not ordinarily participate.
- Involve students in the National PTA Reflections and Texas PTA One World Environmental programs, so they see how PTSA activities relate to special interests.
- Stress how they will feel good about helping the school and community, enjoy being with friends and learn new skills.

RETAINING:

- Provide students with the means to evaluate their PTA experiences.
- Avoid segregating student members. Students should be full members, enjoying full privileges, paying full dues and accepting full membership and responsibility.
- Everyone must have the attitude that student engagement is going to work. Students, parents and teachers must be willing to work together.
- Practice effective communication. Be understanding, patient and sensitive. Just as youth have much to learn from adults, adults have a great deal to learn from youth. Create a supportive atmosphere in which students and adults listen to one another, express their views openly and share their expertise.
- Implement a student recognition or award system. Students deserve to be recognized and rewarded for their contributions to PTSA. Fair criteria must be developed. For example, students should be rewarded for leadership, vision, and dedication, instead of “token” activities such as selling candy or working a booth.
- Implement a “student support system” in which veteran student and adult members provide new recruits with motivation and encouragement, direction and foundation for student growth and development, a sounding board for stress and frustrations.

HELPFUL HINTS

Sample Orientation Agenda for Volunteers

- I. Welcome and Introductions
 - a. Volunteer Personnel
 - b. School Personnel
- II. Philosophy and goal of volunteer program
- III. Administration
 - a. Guidelines
 - b. School Policies
 - i. Local policy matters relating to volunteers
 - ii. Local school policies:
 1. Dress code
 2. Place to work
 3. Taking children from the classroom
 4. Sending things home
 5. Disciplining students
 6. Parking
 7. Checking out procedures: library, textbooks, audiovisual, supplies, materials
 8. Teacher's lounge
 9. Eating and smoking in building
 10. Sign-in procedures
 11. Identification
 12. Absence procedures
 13. Traffic patterns
 14. Use of custodial services
 15. Use of telephone
 16. Rewards and gifts
 17. Placement in child's classroom
 - c. Emergency procedures
- IV. Responsibilities
 - a. Points to Ponder
 - b. The Three R's – Responsibilities, Respect for Confidence, Reassurance
- V. Rights
 - a. To be treated as a co-worker
 - b. To have a suitable assignment
 - c. To know as much about the program and the school as possible
 - d. To be trained for a specific job when training is necessary
 - e. To continue to receive training on the job
 - f. To receive sound guidance and direction
- VI. Additional Related Topics
 - a. Do I know to work with people?
 - b. Getting along with the student

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- VII. Tour of Facility
 - a. Classroom Observations or Demonstrations
 - b. Facilities
 - i. Cafeteria
 - ii. Library
 - iii. Lounge
 - iv. Restrooms
 - v. Workrooms
 - vi. Office
 - vii. Audiovisual room
 - viii. Bookroom
 - ix. Parking Areas
 - x. Supply Room
 - xi. Other

Volunteer Viewpoint

If you want my loyalty, interest and best efforts, remember that...

1. I need a sense of belonging, a feeling that I am honestly needed for my total self, not just for my hands, nor because I take orders well.
2. I need to have a sense of sharing in planning our objectives. My need will be satisfied only when I feel that my ideas have had a fair hearing.
3. I need to feel that the goals and objectives arrived at are within reach and that they make sense to me.
4. I need to feel that what I'm doing has real purpose or contributes to human welfare—that its value extends even beyond my personal gain or hours.
5. I need to share in making the rules by which, together, we shall live and work toward our goals.
6. I need to know in some clear detail just what is expected of me—not only my detailed task but where I have opportunity to make personal and final decisions.
7. I need to have some responsibilities that challenge, that are within range of my abilities and interests, and that contribute toward reaching my assigned goal and that cover all goals.
8. I need to see that progress is being made toward the goals we have set.
9. I need to be kept unformatted. What I'm not up on, I may be down on. (Keeping me informed is one way to give me status as an individual.)
10. I need to have confidence in my superiors—confidence based upon assurance of consistent, fair treatment, or recognition when it is due and trust that loyalty will bring increased security.

I brief, it really does not matter how much sense my part in this organization makes to you—I must feel that the whole deal makes sense to me!

*By J. Donald Phillips, President of Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Michigan

Volunteer Needs

Remember, it is important that you establish and maintain a good relationship with your volunteer. To do this, it is necessary to understand the needs of the volunteer and how these needs can be met.

1. Volunteers need encouragement. They often feel very insecure in their new role as a volunteer. They may have doubts about their abilities to relate to the child or children assigned to them. They will be frightened and nervous just as a teacher is frightened and nervous the first day of school when everything and everyone is new. Encourage them to relax. Try to put them at ease.
2. Volunteers need to be treated with respect. They are giving their time because they are interested in the educational process. They need to be respected for their willingness to help and for their special abilities.
3. Volunteers need to feel wanted and needed. You need to let volunteers know they are wanted because of the assistance they give you with certain tasks.
4. Volunteers need help and direction. Even though there is a tutor-training program, tutors still need a lot of help. Some will need more help than others. Volunteers need to know what is expected of them. If you intend to help your volunteer a great deal in the beginning and then expect him/her to carry on alone, that should be clear from the beginning. Don't let the volunteer wonder whether to wait for teacher direction or to use his/her own initiative.
5. Volunteers need praise. When the volunteers' efforts are successful, let them know. Let a tutor know that you noticed that a student finally can tell the difference between a short "e" and short "i" sounds. Let the tutor know that another student took home a library book for the first time this year after the student's interest in dinosaurs was aroused during a tutoring session. Praise from the teacher and actual success in the tutoring session are often the only rewards a volunteer receives.
6. Volunteers need meaningful assignments. Volunteers who feel their time and talents are being well used are dependable and reliable.

Tips for Eliminating Cliques

Allow People to Help – New volunteers are often given the crummy jobs. New people get assigned to clean-up, for example, they get the perception that there's no room for their contributions.

Wear Name Tags – People feel awkward when they think that everyone knows everyone else. Name tags are a simple tool for making visitors feel more comfortable. They also put second and third-time volunteers at ease if they forget people's names from month to month.

Create a Welcoming Committee – Designate one or two PTA members as the welcoming committee. These welcomers greet new faces, help gauge where newcomers' interests are, and try to match them to a committee or project.

Serve Refreshments – Create a hospitality committee that sets up a refreshment table at PTA functions.

Match Seasoned Volunteer with New Volunteers – Team new volunteers with seasoned volunteers. This strategy also helps spread out new volunteers among all the volunteer possibilities.

Be Visible – Make sure a representative from the PTA attends the various events held at the school, ask to speak at these events for a few minutes to recruit new volunteers. Briefly tell parents and teachers the kinds of volunteer opportunities there are at the school.

Send Different People to Events – To fight the perception that the pTA is the same people all the time, rotate the people who are going to talk on behalf of the PTA at school events. If parents see a lot of different faces, they will think I can be involved too.

Recruit – Ask people to volunteer.

Build Diversity – Increasing the diversity of the PTA will help get rid of illusions that the group is a clique.

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.

FOUNDATIONS

FOUNDATIONS courses provide a broad overview of “what” PTA is, and share important information that every PTA leader should know. In addition to the courses offered for all board members, Texas PTA has also created a series of brief *FOUNDATIONS* courses that provide general information for many Local PTA board positions. It is important to note that these position-specific courses are not meant to be comprehensive training, rather a quick review of each position for newly-elected or prospective nominees. Other than *FOUNDATIONS: Leader Orientation*, all *FOUNDATIONS* courses are web-based presentations.

ALL BOARD MEMBERS

- Council PTA Board Orientation
- Inclusiveness
- Leader Orientation
- Local PTA Board Orientation

POSITION SPECIFIC

- Arts in Education
- Communications
- Environmental Awareness
- Fundraising
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Historian
- Legislative Action
- Membership
- Parent Education Programs
- Parliamentarian
- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Volunteer Coordinator

BASICS

The *BASICS* series contains detailed information to support volunteer leaders in their specific board position. Texas PTA strongly encourages every board member to attend a *BASICS* course for their own position, as well as any other related positions.

BASICS courses are currently available for face-to-face presentations during LAUNCH and through your Council PTA or Field Service Representative, as well as scheduled web-based trainings hosted by Texas PTA. In addition to the training presentation, all *BASICS* courses have a companion Resource Guide, Quick-Start Guide, and Duties-at-a-Glance. These guides are available via download from the Texas PTA website or for purchase through Texas PTA’s STAR Co-op (online store). Courses marked with an asterisk (*) will debut at a future date.

- Arts Education
- Communications
- Environmental Awareness*
- Fundraising
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Legislative Action
- Membership
- Parent Education / Programs
- Parliamentarian
- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Volunteer Coordinator

SPOTLIGHTS

PTAs have many unique programs, processes and responsibilities as healthy, thriving non-profits. *SPOTLIGHTS* courses offer an in-depth review of some of these most important and recurring PTA functions.

SPOTLIGHTS courses are available during LAUNCH and through on-demand, web-based presentations hosted by Texas PTA.

- Bylaws and Standing Rules
- Conducting a Meeting
- Financial Reconciliation
- Nominations and Elections

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