

GOT STUDENTS?

It is very useful to involve students in your PTSA. Many students benefit from the leadership opportunities offered by the organization. Students can play a valuable role and offer significant insight into the issues facing today's middle- and high-school age students. Students can perform important services and gain understanding about the routine operations of a parliamentary organization. Public speaking practice can be gained. Oral and written communication skills can be developed. The positive effects of teamwork and membership can be learned.

Today's middle school and high school students can be a powerful addition to any PTSA unit. Teenagers are concerned about their communities, aware of social issues, and eager to be involved in implementing positive change. The PTSA at their school can be an excellent way to develop their abilities and to get involved in their communities.

THERE ARE SEVERAL THINGS THAT A PTSA CAN DO TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN STUDENT LEADERS:

- **Education** ~ Make sure that the student body understands that PTSA involvement is more than bake sales and bookfairs; emphasize the advocacy and the legislative activities performed by PTA.
 - **Incentive #1** ~ Many high schools now require documented community service hours as a prerequisite for graduation. Volunteer hours with PTA/PTSA can be credited toward this requirement.
 - **Incentive #2** ~ The California State PTA grants numerous scholarships every year to graduating seniors throughout the state. One of the eligibility requirements is PTA/PTSA membership.
- **Collaboration** ~ Meet with the Associated/United Student Body leaders. There are many ways that these two organizations can work together toward common goals.
- **Time** ~ Hold brief meetings on campus during the lunch periods or immediately after school (with administrative permission). Discuss the benefits of PTSA involvement. Discuss what is needed and how students can help.
- **Productivity** ~ When students decide to get involved, don't insult them by giving them menial jobs such as packet stapling or furniture moving. If they truly want to be involved, let them join and/or chair committees. They can be nominated and hold elected offices.
- **Issues** ~ "Take the pulse" of your community and your high school campus for the specific concerns in your area. Is drug abuse on the increase? Are "RAVE" parties a worry in your city? Do your students feel safe at school? Are nutritious and health-conscious food choices being served on campus? The PTSA can be instrumental in spotlighting these and other issues, increasing community awareness and implementing positive change. If involvement in your PTSA is perceived as interesting and relevant, you **will** attract student members.
- **Recognition** ~ Appreciate the work that your officers and members do. Congratulate them in your newsletter. Ask the editor of the student newspaper for a brief space to celebrate PTSA activities. Purchase an advertisement in the yearbook to honor and recognize PTSA accomplishments.
- **Networking** ~ If there are several PTSAs in your area, organize a student network. Your PTA council or your district may be able to offer assistance with this. Students working together throughout a community can have tremendous impact on issues and awareness. Invite your superintendent to one of these network meetings. He or she will be favorably impressed with the commitment and the energy demonstrated by your student group. Provide guidance to the students in their efforts to address and solve some of the issues facing their community.

**Recruiting and preparing student members for your PTSA is an imposing challenge,
but the rewards are tremendous. See for yourself. We dare you.**