

# **PTA, School, and Community Activities that Promote Inclusiveness and Diversity**

**Research shows that inclusive partnership practices have a statistically significant and positive influence on parental involvement and student success.**

As a school practitioner, you may serve the school community as a PTA leader, educator, classified staff member, volunteer, or contractor. School practitioners from high performing schools empower their members to action through investments in leadership, resources, professional development, and evaluation. You promote inclusive school, family, and community partnerships, and thus student success through:



## **Outreach Activities**

*Welcome, value, and inform all members; create a climate of support, mutual respect, and trust based upon the recognition that all members influence student learning and development. Commit to excellence for all where learning and development are key – high expectations and shared vision/values.*

### **Form respectful, trusting, and personalized relationships.**

- Introductions – always introduce family and community members to school/PTA volunteers and leaders.
- Meet and greet – greet parents in the morning and invite them to the parent room for coffee and discussion. Share information about what volunteers do. Let them know they are always welcome.
- Friendliness – say “hello” to everyone!
- Open door policy – be approachable and generous with your time.
- Generosity – welcome all parents to attend and/or volunteer at PTA events and workshops.

### **Engage in dialogue and inquiry.**

- Assess or survey needs, desires, concerns, attitudes, and opinions.
- Perform a needs assessment through person-to-person discussions and surveys.

### **Demonstrate cultural competency.**

- Understand and embrace the uniqueness of all individuals.
- Communicate in languages spoken at home and demonstrate an understanding of and respect for cultural values/traditions, etc.
- Unify the community to allow relationships to flourish and information to be shared.

## **Program and Operational Activities**

*Activities are most meaningful when they are organized in the best interest of all children.*

**Inform and unify the school community as partners in the educational process, preparing able participants to become active contributors.**

- In the interest of building relationships, discussions between home and school best occur in the parent's native language. Further, it is important that practitioners identify and bridge barriers to attendance and participation by providing for translation/interpretation, childcare, transportation, refreshments, coverage, and other such support as may be necessary.
- Hold frequent, well planned, and high quality activities.
- When planning, practitioners have most success when activities are prioritized based upon the needs of students, as well as expected and expressed measurable impacts. Additionally, the needs and limitations of both teachers and parents must be well understood and considered in program design.

## Engagement Activities

*Direct person-to-person interactions are most meaningful when leaders devote their time to supporting members of the school community: regularly facilitate, support, and reward the involvement of parents in the education of their children and their school.*

### **Facilitate with frequent two-way communication to verify understandings and confirmation of commitments.**

- Form close working relationships.
- Hold regular open discussions on progress.
- Make contact when concerns arise.
- Keep records of progress and provide reports such as *Attendance or Volunteer hours*.
- Make adjustments and allowances to plans as needed.

### **Support with clear written or verbal explanations.**

- Provide access to knowledgeable people who can answer questions.
- Demonstrate and model positive practices.
- Provide verbal encouragement.
- Provide resources (e.g., reference guides, materials, homework samples, etc.).

### **Reward with compliments and praise.**

- Show gratitude by giving thanks.
- Provide incentives, recognition and acknowledgments.

## Community Building Activities

*Activities in support of students are most meaningful when they embrace the traditions, values and assets of the local community.*

### **Expand the availability of enrichment opportunities for students in support of learning, physical and social development, health, safety, and citizenship.**

- Provide programs tailored to the local community.
- Build good citizenship by reinforcing values reflective of the community.
- Build awareness, acceptance, and respect for individual and cultural differences.
- Provide special outreach to reluctant or isolated parents/families (i.e., home visits, care packages, holiday baskets, etc.).

Source: Martin, J. D. (2009). How school practices to promote parental involvement influence student success. Claremont, Calif.