

Best practices: Ideas to encourage membership

Ask members to bring someone new to PTA meetings or events. Be sure to introduce special guests and welcome them. Consider inviting your spouse and other adult family members.

Look up old friends and previous PTA leaders. Pull out previous membership rosters and ask people whose membership has lapsed to join again. Have members think about other groups they belong to where they might encourage colleagues to join.

Make it clear that joining PTA does not obligate a member in any way. It doesn't necessarily mean going to meetings, fundraising or volunteering at school. By joining your PTA, they are supporting your work for ALL children.

Consider a contest. Reward "the most Dads" or "the most members representing community businesses."

Survey your school community. Do not repeat the same events and programs if they are no longer a priority or of interest. *Find out what your school and families want and need, and let your PTA be a relevant resource.*

Feature great programs. Enhance your school's arts class with the Reflections Program. Host a walkathon to demonstrate PTA's concern for children's physical well-being. *Ask those who attend your events and programs to join your PTA – because there wouldn't be a program without the PTA!*

Partner with those outside your school. Visit businesses or organizations in your community, tell them about the importance of PTA (the work PTA is doing) and let them know about the activities your PTA is planning. Invite them to join your PTA or partner with your PTA on an event or in offering a member benefit.

Be a consistent PTA presence. Have a table with membership brochures at every school function (orientation nights, school plays, musical performances, sporting events, etc.) and let people know what the PTA is doing for their children.

Sing your praises. Take every opportunity to share your successes and highlight your accomplishments. Write letters to the editor and report on your accomplishments at school board meetings. *Invite and involve the media in every major project that you do!*

Recognize recruiters. Recruitment is hard work, and it deserves to be recognized. Provide certificates of appreciation and thank recruiters publicly, at events and in your newsletters.

Roll out the welcome mat. Let guests know they are welcome to attend meetings and events. Think about a welcome committee so that each new person gets a buddy who can answer questions. Be sure to recognize new members at every meeting, and introduce them to your PTA.

Give new members a chance to shine. Rather than having the usual suspects manage your newsletter, science night, or family dinner and movie ... let a newcomer take the lead. *If you ask people to volunteer or sign up to assist in some way, be sure to take them up on their offer throughout the year.*