

INCLUSIVE PTA PRACTICES

Helpful links:

<https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/advocacy/position-statements/addressing-institutional-or-systemic-racism-ps.pdf>

<https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/runyourpta/2020/diversity/dei-guide-for-pta-local-leaders.pdf> - This could be a good place to start with your PTA Board and do a group self-assessment.

https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/diversity-outreach-2-pager_v3.pdf

Who do you represent?

You can't decide where you're going until you know where you are, so here are a few areas to explore:

- Racial backgrounds
- Ethnicities
- Cultural norms, preferences
- Socioeconomic factors
- Gender identities and/or expressions
- Sexual orientation
- Family structures
- Physical and neurological considerations
- Religious practices
- Military status (current or veteran)
- Workloads
- Geographies
- National origins
- Native languages

Reducing barriers to participation

Are the ways your group expects participation, or the unconscious judgments about how people participate, leaving out certain groups of people in your community? Think specifically about how to make participation more inclusive for people outside your community's majority culture. Being invited is different from being included.

- Use gender-neutral language in your communications. For example, instead of "Room Parents" use "Classroom Reps" or instead of "Doughnuts with Dad" use "Breakfast Buddies".
- Provide newsletters and email communication in the languages that are spoken in your school community. At events, having people who can speak Spanish (or another language) wear buttons to let people know. Provide translators, when appropriate.

- Consider using other communication methods, beyond email, such as texting via Remind App.
- Have a bilingual parent rep on your PTA Board.
- Make meetings disabilities-accessible, provide childcare, vary the meeting times/provide zoom links.
- Acknowledge the history of the land, buildings, or other physical spaces you use, particularly if there were Black, Indigenous, Latinx, or other citizens of color who were displaced.
- Learn more about the other cultures present in your school community, about the needs they have, their family structures, the holidays they celebrate. What would it take to get them involved with your board?
- Consider the nature of your interactions with families - are they transactional or relational? Different cultures may prioritize different types of relationships. For example, Latinx culture prioritizes relationships, which takes time to develop. Perhaps have different types of meetings, so that not all PTA meetings are for “business”. Have some more informal meetings to get to know each other.
- If you’re having a food event, coordinate with your school nurse or the principal to make sure there are options for kids who have allergies. And at an event where there might be neurological or physical barriers, talk to families about how to make the event accessible for all abilities.
- For Red Ribbon or Spirit Weeks, replace any “Crazy” days with “Fun” or “Unique” to be supportive of mental health and avoid any events or images that depict any cultural/natural hairstyles as “crazy”.
- Think about how money is solicited and the inclusivity of fundraising events. For example, instead of a prize for the most money raised, have a prize for most enthusiasm or participation during a Walk-A-Thon. Also consider eliminating incentives for contributing a certain amount of money and publicizing donors.
- Also, consider how some events, like food drives, ask families to bring in food items, or other materials, when they themselves may be in need of those items. And pay attention to the wording used and avoid phrases such as “less fortunate” or “needy”.
- For PTA events that cost money, such as a carnival, consider giving every student 10 tickets to start with. Of course, families can always purchase more tickets but doing so ensures that all students get to participate in the fun.
- Consider putting in a Student Scholarship Fund as a budget line item to help cover/reduce the costs of things such as yearbooks or class trips.