



HOLD AN INCLUSIVE PTA MEETING

When scheduling PTA meeting dates and times, consider possible conflicts, religious holidays, and work limitations that might prevent some from attending. Possibly alternate days of the week and times of the day when scheduling PTA meetings. Meetings could be offered at two times on one day, such as 11:00 am and 7:00 pm. Survey the school community to find best ways to reach most families.

Assure your meeting location, restrooms, and other needed facilities are accessible to all attendees. A location easy to find makes for prompt arrivals of attendees. Use signage that is clear and legible by all. If the meeting is outside the school, consider locations that are near public transportation and have ample parking.

When publicizing the meeting, consider digital access limitations when sending out fliers electronically and provide printed notice when needed. Ask teachers to include a reminder on the day of the meeting when children write their homework in their agenda planners. Send out by email and post on the PTA website, Facebook page, and other social media platforms. Ask room parents to reach out to their rosters. Have handouts with all monthly meeting dates at school and PTA events. Assure digital and paper fliers are sent in all spoken languages in your school. When using any electronic translation such as Google Translate, try to have a native speaker proofread the translated flier for accuracy.

Thoughtfully set up the meeting space. All those who attend should be able to have a good view of speakers, screens, etc. so all attendees are able to see, hear, and engage with each other. Have all handouts, sign-in sheets, etc. near the entrance and easily accessible. Consider seating arrangements that make everyone feel equally engaged and significant rather than classroom style or the PTA Board facing the audience. Board members, when possible, can spread throughout the space to mingle and meet other members. When holding a virtual meeting, ensure microphones are placed in locations able to pick up the voice of anyone speaking so those attending virtually can hear them.

For the meeting environment, leaders need to be open-minded, presentable, and approachable, making others feel comfortable. Always realize the significance and responsibilities of leadership roles and how they can impact perceptions and recruitment of members and future leaders. Consider PTA Board members taking turns greeting attendees as they arrive at meetings. Acknowledge new members and attendees as they come in. Name badges make it easier to properly address individuals and learn their names. Take the time to learn how to pronounce names correctly. Correct pronunciation of names is more than a common courtesy. It is a significant sign of caring and inclusion. Consider having crayons, coloring books, and activities for children accompanying their family members to quietly entertain themselves. Adhere to the meeting agenda, lay the ground rules at the start of the meeting, and treat all with respect and consistency. Allow opportunities in the agenda for feedback and attendee engagement when appropriate, making it clear to all that their suggestions are welcome. Avoid terms that may offend others. When holding a virtual meeting, assign someone to check and address the chat.

If food or beverages are provided, proper sanitary precautions need to be observed. Be sure to take into consideration dietary and religious restrictions as well as food allergies. Provide clear and accessible packaging information and ingredients for those purposes. Serving tables should be accessible to all attendees.

Finally, collect contact information and follow up regarding topics or issues that need to be addressed later. Unless people feel heard, they are unlikely to return to future meetings. Reach out and thank any newcomers. Remember the first time you went to a meeting or did something outside of your comfort zone? Make the effort to engage and follow up to create lasting relationships and future leaders!