



PROMOTE DIVERSITY IN YOUR SCHOOL

As a powerful voice for ALL children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for the education and well-being of EVERY child, PTAs are well-equipped to foster the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their schools and community. Our diversity is our strength! PTA volunteers who are “intentional” in their DEI efforts are most likely to experience great outcomes that benefit all children and their families rather than just isolated patches of success.

A great place to start DEI work in your school is through establishing PTA as a sanctuary for all families to be able to gather information, express opinions, concerns, and needs, and feel heard and embraced. PTA can be a resource empowering those traditionally less likely to be engaged in their children’s learning and well-being by organizing parent or guardian trainings and events as well as sharing information on relevant topics. Analyze the diversity and level of inclusion and equity in your PTA’s membership, governance, programs, and advocacy efforts. Identify areas of success and other areas in need of more work. Set goals and action plans to address each of these areas.

Form a DEI Committee in your unit with clearly defined charges and goals that are periodically reviewed and updated. PTA needs to seek a diverse membership that reflects the diversity of the student body and community it serves through “targeted outreach” efforts. Consider which groups are less likely to join your PTA or participate in meetings and events. To achieve successful outreach, we need to educate ourselves regarding cultures, traditions, challenges, and restrictions of groups we aim to reach.

Address issues that matter the most to those you need to engage. Ensure PTA’s advocacy efforts represent all children including those typically marginalized and those whose families may not be equally engaged. PTA’s advocacy initiatives must be non-political and non-biased. Create a welcoming environment for conversations considered difficult, with a clear understanding that we may not agree on everything but must agree to uphold PTA’s mission and values and our collective goal to serve and to keep all children safe. Engage in ongoing meaningful conversations with school and district administration, school boards, and other stakeholders that recognize the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all decisions.

PTA leadership should also be representative of the student body and community it serves. In their constant efforts to seek new volunteers, PTA leaders are encouraged to recruit leaders from underrepresented groups. When recruiting diverse leaders, consider the “whole person” such as individual interests, passions and expertise, color, gender, cultural background, or spoken languages. Recruiting people in areas of PTA work that they are passionate about and interested in is more likely to set them up for success and encourage them to grow as leaders. Recruitment does not end with identifying individuals with leadership qualities. It is important to set them up for success and offer support while providing them with the space they need to put their own personal stamp on their work. Establish fair and equitable practices in all areas of PTA’s work, including decision making, nominations, elections, appointments, participation, events, topics, and services. Such practices establish trust and respect for the organization as a whole and its leadership.

Assure that all PTA meetings and events reflect a welcoming and inclusive environment for all. Most importantly, if leaders are reminded of PTA’s mission, vision, and core values as the focus and purpose of all PTA work, they are on the right path to applying the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion in their service to school, community, and to EVERY child with ONE voice. Refer to *How to Hold an Inclusive PTA Meeting* and *How to Organize an Inclusive PTA Event* later in this section.