
PTA Culture & Successful Leadership

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Big Picture – What is PTA?

LAPTA proudly serves as a member of the Louisiana Department of Education's Parent and Family Engagement Task Force. The LDOE acknowledges the powerful role families play in a child's educational journey. Research consistently shows that when families are engaged, students earn better grades, attend school more consistently, and are more likely to graduate. PTAs are at the heart of this priority. They advocate for every child, fund essential programs, and create a strong network of caring adults committed to helping students thrive. When PTAs are active, students succeed.

Represent the PTA brand with intention and integrity. Create a welcoming PTA culture by focusing on relationships. Look for needs and take the lead in finding solutions. Be intentional about connecting with parents, students, staff, and the community. Greet people at events, introduce yourself, and invite them to join PTA. Share ways they can get involved. When people feel seen, valued, and connected, they're more likely to engage and that's when the magic happens.

Leadership Skills

Leadership skills include intelligence, self-confidence, determination, integrity, motivation, and sociability. Emotional Intelligence includes social awareness, self-awareness, self-regulation, and successful relationship management. Pace yourself, delegate, and avoid burning out. Evaluate your strengths and weaknesses of the following:

- 1) Technical Leaders possess specialized skills and excel in managing day-to-day operations. They are detail-oriented, efficient at completing tasks, and adept at following directions. Their focus is on functionality, problem-solving, and ensuring assignments are completed accurately and on time.
- 2) People Leaders excel in building relationships and nurturing a positive team culture. They understand their team members as individuals, fostering an atmosphere of trust, empathy, and open communication. These leaders are skilled at adapting ideas to meet the needs of others and are attentive to the emotional and social dynamics within a group or organization. They value collaboration and work to ensure that every voice is heard.
- 3) Conceptual Leaders are visionary thinkers who focus on the big picture. They are driven by ideas, purpose, and long-term impact and enjoy working with abstract concepts, crafting strategies for growth, and defining the values, mission, and philosophy of an organization. They are skilled at visualizing systems, setting goals, and designing workflows that support innovation and sustainability.

Conflict Management

Most conflict tends to revolve around **communication breakdowns**. Engage in direct conversations with the involved parties to get to the root of the issue. Pick up the phone. To effectively problem solve, cultivate an open and friendly environment and respect others; clearly define expectations for desired outcomes; offer private correction and public recognition and praise; actively listen to all parties involved; and investigate problematic situations from multiple perspectives. Set boundaries. Don't give them power over your happiness. Don't pick up what they're putting down. Be direct and brief when communicating. Use the new Termination of Membership for truly difficult people and know that it might lead to lawsuits. See the Dignity Index for guidance on how to best handle disagreements and hurt feelings.

For school level complaints, the PTA does not have the authority to address those. Direct the person to the school district's official policy. Typically, the "chain of command" is 1) teacher, 2) principal, 3) principal's supervisor, 4) superintendent, and 5) school board. Managing conflict effectively can quickly yield positive outcomes.

Plan for Future Leaders

Always look for future leaders. Build the pipeline now. Identify role needs and skill sets. Build a path that starts easily at the base level and works up to bigger roles. Identify people who bubble to the top and then build relationships with them, pointing out their potential. Keep communicating with them because it takes time for people to see how they might fit. Build a respectful and trusting culture that people want to be a part of.