PTA’s National Standards for Family-School Partnerships set the bar more than 20 years ago for how schools and parent organizations should work together to support student success.
Research shows...

Research shows that family engagement matters for student success. Students whose families are engaged are more likely to:

- Attend school
- Avoid discipline problems
- Achieve at higher levels
- Graduate

Research also suggests that family engagement is equally as important as school leadership or a rigorous curriculum to predict school improvement.

But, how to engage together in ways that reach all families and have a positive impact on student success?

A partnership project

Vision setting with school leaders and staff

- Why are we prioritizing family-school partnerships?
  - How does this connect to our values?
- What’s exciting about this priority?
  - What opportunities does it create?
- What does success look like?
  - What do you believe is possible?
  - What commitments need to be made?
- Goals for family-school partnerships
  - What’s most important?
  - What will be different?
How we’ll move through each standard

1. **Introduce the standard**
2. **Describe the two goals for that standard, along with key indicators that you’re on the right track to meet those goals**
3. **Zoom into one indicator for each standard and explore what things might be done to excel in that particular area**

The rubric assessment tool
Relevant resources

Now, set ONE goal
Standard 1 Welcome All Families

Goal 1: Build a Community of Belonging: *When families engage with the school and PTA, do they feel respected, understood and connected to the school community?*

School and PTA indicators:

- Learn about families and foster respectful attitudes
- Provide time, training, and resources for relationship-building
- Facilitate opportunities for restorations and connection, especially with historically marginalized families and students
- Use cultural and linguistically responsive engagement practices
- Invite families to contribute to the school community

Goal 2: Create an Inclusive Environment: *Do the school’s and PTA’s efforts encourage engagement with and among the diversity of families in the community?*

School and PTA indicators:

- Encourage school staff to see engaging all families as part of their responsibilities
- Create an accessible, family-friendly campus and/or virtual school
- Track family engagement data and regularly examine it to identify gaps in access
- Learn about and remove barriers for families to participate fully
Standard 1 Welcome All Families - Goal 1 example

Possible actions:
- Hold a workshop about asset-based thinking (vs deficit-based thinking) for families and staff
- Use a PTA or SSC meeting to have groups of people brainstorm lists of the reasons why strong partnerships with families are good for students and the school. Post the answers in a place where all can see them.

Standard 1 Things you can do

- Work with the school and PTA to train staff and leaders to hold relationship-building conversations with families
- Collaborate with your school to conduct listening sessions to learn how to help families feel respected, understood and connected to the school and PTA
- Ensure that your PTA and school are tracking input and participation by key demographics, so you know who has or has not been included
- Create opportunities for families to contribute based on their time, skills and passions
- Advocate for your school to make sure that front office staff, educators, administrators, and all others are using best practices in family engagement
- Ensure that opportunities for families to participate in the PTA are differentiated for families who are not available during typical school hours
- Ask the school to allocate time and resources to audit family engagement practices around cultural responsiveness
Standard 2 Communicate Effectively

Goal 1: Exchange Information Between School and Families: Are families able to receive and share information in culturally and linguistically sustaining ways?

School and PTA Indicators:

➔ Learn about and meet families’ communication preferences
➔ Address access by providing interpretation, translation, and/or accommodations
➔ Coordinate information-sharing across communication outlets
➔ Gather family input and report back with how input was used
➔ Foster transparency and enable families to follow-up
➔ Co-create engagement plans for times of crisis

Standard 2 Communicate Effectively

Goal 2: Facilitate Parent-Teacher Communication: Does the school and PTA promote communication between families and teachers?

School and PTA Indicators:

➔ Co-develop communication expectations with families and staff
➔ Provide time, training and resources for parent-teacher communication
➔ Solicit teacher and family feedback on how communication is going and what could be improved
Standard 2 Communicate Effectively

**Gather family input and report back with how input was used**
- Informally ask families for their input on matters relevant to their child’s education and the school community at large
- Convene parents, staff, and students to review the results and make recommendations to the SSC, PTA, ELAC, etc. for incorporation into your SPSA (School Plan for Student Achievement) and elsewhere it’s appropriate.
- Once plans are made, share back with families what happened as a result of their input, and invite them to continue sharing.

**Conduct family surveys that include inquiring about matters relevant to their child’s education and the school community at large.**
- Identify a team of staff and families to make recommendations for specific changes in policies and practices based on family input.

**Conduct focus groups, listening sessions and/or dialogue circles with families to gather input on matters relevant to their child’s education and the school community at large.**
- Implement recommended changes to policies and practices.

Possible actions:
- Work in partnership with the School Site Council, ELAC and/or other affinity groups to host a community meeting to ask for their input on a few specific areas, or what their priorities are for their child. Also send surveys for those who can’t attend.
- Convene parents, staff, and students to review the results and make recommendations to the SSC, PTA, ELAC, etc. for incorporation into your SPSA (School Plan for Student Achievement) and elsewhere it’s appropriate.
- Once plans are made, share back with families what happened as a result of their input, and invite them to continue sharing.

Standard 2 Things you can do

- Inquire about families’ communication preferences and ensure that your PTA differentiates communication to families based their preferences.
- Translate written and spoken communication to align with language preferences/needs of students and families.
- If you gather input from families, report back to them about what you learned from them and how their input is informing specific changes to PTA and school policies and practices.
- Designate an individual or individuals who are tasked with ensuring that all communication outlets utilized by families in your school community are streamlined and families know where to go for different information.
- Train PTA leaders on protocols for information-sharing, family outreach, and roles and responsibilities for family communication in times of crisis and disruption.
- Advocate for teachers to receive the time, training, and resources necessary to communicate with families in personalized and culturally sustaining ways.
Standard 3 Support Student Success

Goal 1: Team-Up For Student Success: Are families, students and educators on the same page about how students are progressing?

School & PTA Indicators:

→ Support educators to partner with families and students to set social, emotional, and academic goals
→ Provide an understandable and accurate picture of student progress, using multiple measures (classwork, rubrics, observations, assessments, etc.)
→ Ensure accessible, regular, two-way communication about student learning and wellbeing

Standard 3 Support Student Success

Goal 2: Support Learning by Engaging Families: Are families valued partners in their children’s learning at home and at school?

School & PTA Indicators:

→ Get to know students and families and their strengths
→ Invite families to contribute to classroom learning
→ Provide families guidance and activities to support social, emotional and academic learning at home
→ Promote learning and enrichment outside of school
→ Help families and students plan for the future
Standard 3 Support Student Success

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Possible actions:</th>
<th>Things you can do</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>● Suggest student-led conferences during P/T Conference Week, to help students own and lead their learning, as well as self-advocate for what they need. In these meetings, families, teachers, and students should set social, emotional and academic goals together.</td>
<td>● Encourage school leadership to communicate expectations and provide resources to staff for co-constructing social, emotional, and academic goals with students and families</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Suggest ways this small education team could regularly check in on progress together, identifying ways to support the students.</td>
<td>● Provide workshops for families to build their capabilities and confidence to support their child’s learning and social emotional well-being at home</td>
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Support educators to partner with families and students to set social, emotional and academic goals

Communicate to staff the importance of partnering with families and students to set social emotional and academic goals
Insist that goal-setting conversations with families follow the belief that families know their child best and are responsive to families hopes, dreams and goals for their child’s education
Communicate expectations to staff for co-constructing social, emotional, and academic goals with student and families
Provide teachers with templates and resources for co-constructing social, emotional, and academic goals with families and students

Provide teachers with data they need and time to engage in goal-setting conversation with families
Include reflection and planning for co-constructing goals with families and students as a standing agenda item in regularly scheduled meetings (grade level team meetings, staff meetings, etc.)
Prepare instructional coaches to support planning and implementation of practices to co-construct social, emotional, and academic goals with families and students in their routine coaching and/or observation/feedback cycles with teachers.

Articulate and monitor progress toward school-wide goals for collaborative goal-setting in School Improvement and/or Comprehensive School Plans
Implement school-wide practices for collaborative goal-setting with student families, such as student-led conferences and including goal-setting as standard practice in family conferences (i.e. parent-teacher conferences)
Allocate time during professional development days to build educator capabilities and confidence to co-construct social, emotional and academic goals with families and students
Allocate time in teachers’ schedules to co-construct social, emotional, and academic goals with families and students

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Standard 4 Speak up for Every Child

Goal 1: Navigate the School System: Are families knowledgeable and able to raise questions or concerns about their child’s educational experience?

School & PTA Indicators:

➔ Build school staffs’ skills to build trust and problem-solve with students and families
➔ Make it easy to understand how the school and district operate
➔ Comply with families’ rights under federal and state laws
➔ Connect families to resources that address their questions or concerns
➔ Make school staff and families aware of conflict resolution processes and apply them fairly

Standard 4 Speak up for Every Child

Goal 2: Address inequitable outcomes and access. Does the school and PTA remove barriers for families to be advocates for and with students’—particularly those who are most marginalized?

School & PTA Indicators:

➔ Encourage community and leadership among historically under-represented groups
➔ Share understandable, disaggregated data on school progress and practices
➔ Recognize and work to eliminate bias in family engagement practices and policies
## Standard 4 Speak up for Every Child

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Encourage community and leadership among historically under-represented groups</th>
<th>Identify groups and subgroups of families and students historically marginalized from the school community (racial, ethnic, linguistic, socio-economic, geographic, etc.)</th>
<th>Send targeted, differentiated communication to members of various groups and subgroups to learn about their perceptions of their current participation as formal or informal leaders and to survey their interest in serving in formal or informal leadership roles, and inquire about specific areas of interest</th>
<th>Follow up with targeted, differentiated communication members of various groups and subgroups to share informal and formal opportunities for leadership roles. Learn from members of the various groups and subgroups what barriers need to be removed and what the supports they need to be successful in informal and formal leadership roles. Ensure that members from underrepresented groups take the lead in informing, designing and implementing school improvement efforts.</th>
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**Possible actions:**
- Reach out to families from underrepresented group, families whose students have disabilities, ELAC families, etc. and ask how they think the PTA could be improved, especially to better meet the needs of families like theirs.
- Invite them to lead some of the improvement efforts and work alongside them in support.
- Ensure that your PTA’s nominating committee is specifically reaching out to members of these communities in efforts to make sure the PTA supports all students and all families.

## Standard 4 Things you can do

- Create and promote avenues (comment boxes, open forum time in meetings, etc.) where families can ask questions and share concerns.
- Provide families with a FAQ guide with answers to common questions, contact information and general guidance.
- Create the conditions for PTA leaders and families to speak about diversity, difference and systemic biases in family engagement.
- Provide workshops for families to build their understanding of families’ rights under federal and state laws and to build their capabilities and confidence to effectively advocate for their rights.
- Encourage members from underrepresented groups to take the lead in informing, designing and implementing PTA improvement efforts.
- Identify specific school personnel who can serve as a point of contact for families who need support navigating school and district bureaucracy.
- Advocate for the school to audit school and district operations and adjust policies and practices that adversely impact historically marginalized students and families.
Standard 5 Share Power

Goal 1: Strengthen the Family’s Voice in Shared Decision Making: Are families partners in making decisions that affect their children at school and in the community?

School & PTA Indicators:

→ Transparently and accessibly communicate about decision-making processes
→ Build shared knowledge about decisions that affect children
→ Give families and students voice in decisions that affect children
→ Identify and remedy power imbalances
→ Track data and fill gaps for representative input and power in decisions

Goal 2: Build Families’ Connections: Do families have a strong, broad-based organization that offers regular opportunities to develop relationships and raise concerns with school leaders, public officials, and business and community leaders?

School & PTA Indicators:

→ Connect families to local officials
→ Foster student and family leadership and civic engagement
→ Support the development of an effective family/parent organization that represents all families
Standard 5 Share Power

### Identify and remedy power imbalances
- Informally ask families about their experience, preferences and concerns about shared decision making in the school community
- Reflect on the degree of agency that the school has cultivated for families to hold power to inform decisions that impact their child’s education
- Examine leadership and staff beliefs about shared power with families, and the role that bias plays in ceding decision making power to families

### Possible actions:
- Work with the School Site Council to hold community meetings that specifically ask families about their priorities, look at data together to identify where support is needed, and invite families to make recommendations on what actions should be included in the SPSA (School Plan for Student Achievement).
- Hold working sessions to evaluate what common practices in the school exclude or silence families, and work together to propose alternate practices.

### Things you can do
- Ensure that your PTA’s calendar, programs, events and meeting structure reflect the priorities of all families and not just a vocal or involved few
- Create structures and processes for gathering input that are well-publicized and utilized by the PTA and school community
- Ask the school to disseminate data and information about school policies, practices and outcomes for student learning and social emotional well-being
- Build your PTA leadership pipeline so that fresh perspectives and diverse experiences are represented in your governance and ensure than no one PTA leader continues to hold power for too long
- Collaborate with school leaders to design decision-making protocols that incorporate the viewpoints and perspectives of families, staff, students and community constituents
- Collaborate with the school to identify and/or create opportunities for to build families’ capabilities and confidence for leadership development and civic engagement
Standard 6 Collaborate with Community

Goal 1: Build a Strong Foundation for Community Partnerships: Does the school and PTA have a plan for when and how to engage community partners?

School & PTA Indicators:

➔ Map community needs and assets
➔ Align partnerships to school improvement planning
➔ Work with partners to clarify roles and responsibilities

Goal 2: Connect the School with Community Partners: Do family and school leaders work closely with community organizations, businesses, and institutions of higher education?

School & PTA Indicators:

➔ Understand issues affecting the community and contribute to community-wide solutions
➔ Address student and family basic needs through community resources
➔ Build staffs’ cultural competence through community partnerships
➔ Act as a hub of community life
Standard 6 Collaborate with Community

Possible action:
- Designate a PTA leader who can collaborate with a staff member to identify a list of community-based organizations (CBOs) that can meet basic needs experienced by your community.
- Invite these CBOs to speak at your PTA meetings so families learn about their services.
- Make the list of relevant CBOs easily available to your community, and determine if there is a way to establish formal partnership with the school.

Things you can do

- Ask families about issues affecting the community and how the school and PTA can contribute to community-wide solutions
- Identify potential community partners that support family and school priorities
- Build relationships with “official” and “unofficial” community leaders to learn about the needs, assets and priorities of community partners
- Invite members of community-based organizations to participate in PTA meetings so families can learn about community organizations
- Partner with the school to explore ways, like creating community asset maps, that community partners can be connected to meet families’ and students’ needs
- Advocate for your school to become a hub of community life through models like community schools
Now what?