

PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships – What Parents Can Do

PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships offer a framework for how families, schools, and communities should work together to support student success. Here are some ideas for how you can get involved in your child's school based on each of the six National Standards.

Standard One: Welcoming All Families into the School Community. Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

- Offer to do a presentation about your culture to your child's class
- Offer to teach school staff to greet your family and other from the same culture in your language
- Suggest that the school hang welcome signs around the school in different languages
- Volunteer to be a mentor to another family that may have language or cultural differences
- Make sure you introduce yourself to new families
- Offer to volunteer in the school office by setting up a help and support desk to help new families

Standard Two: Communicating Effectively. Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

- Make sure the PTA and the school staff are using different forms of communication to inform parents of upcoming events or changes in school policies. This may include: email, print, text messages, blogs, facebook and twitter.
- Establish regular communication with your child's teacher through email, phone calls, notes or visits. Don't wait until your child is struggling or be satisfied if everything is going well.
- Ask your child's teacher how they best liked to be reached (phone, email, in person) and communicate with them regularly that way.
- Participate in family involvement surveys conducted by PTA or the school. Every opinion matters.

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Standard Three: Supporting Student Success. Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

- Make sure you connect with your child's teacher at the beginning of the year to find out what your child should know and be able to do by the end of the school year
- Make sure you tell the teacher how your child learns best, what they do in their free time and what is going on at home
- Work with the teacher to understand academic learning goals
- Make sure you understand the school's standardized tests and how you can help prepare your child for these tests
- Collaborate with your child's teacher on academic units and offer your expertise for units of study
- Create a safe and structured place for your child to read and study every night.
- Make sure your child gets enough rest. This includes the older students.

Standard Four: Speaking Up for Every Child. Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

- Make sure you know the school's mission, goals and organizational structure
- Encourage your school to offer workshops for parents in the school about school funded programs, policies and resources
- Make sure you know about your rights as a parent under NCLB and other state and federal education policies
- Help other families exercise their rights under state and federal education laws
- Become a part of the school improvement committee that helps plan strategies to identify and resolve problems at school and improve academic performance
- Learn advocacy strategies and techniques and share them with other parents

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Standard Five: Sharing Power. Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

- Ask your principal or PTA to host a dialogue with families and school staff about issues and policies
- Attend school meetings about policies and budget
- Work with your PTA to involve a more diverse group of parents in its leadership
- Meet with local officials such as school board members and local police to learn about education priorities and community resources
- Join the school leadership team and recruit others to join as well

Standard Six: Collaborating with Community. Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

- Share information about resources in the community with other parents. If there's a website or newspaper at your school, ask someone at the school to post the information on those communication vehicles
- Reach out to community organizations and businesses you use and invite them to provide services, products and/or donations to the school