

The Teacher Vice President of a Local PTA/PTSA

Your PTA Board includes as an officer a Teacher Vice President elected by your general membership according to the local bylaws Article VI.

Teacher Vice Presidents should become familiar with the Purposes, Mission, bylaws, policies and programs of PTA. They should act as a liaison and communication link between your PTA Board and the faculty.

PTA Presidents and Teacher Vice Presidents should meet soon after their election to decide what the plan of work for the Teacher Vice President will be during the year. Remember that teachers' time in school is valuable. While involving your Teacher Vice President on your Board, be considerate of their school responsibilities. Also remember that communication is important. Teacher Vice Presidents should communicate what they have time to do, and the PTA President should communicate what he/she would like them to do. As PTA Boards and teachers communicate and support one another, the Mission of PTA can be more fully accomplished in your school.

The following are a few suggestions about Teacher Vice Presidents:

- Teacher Vice Presidents should attend monthly PTA Board meetings. Meetings should be scheduled when they can attend. If your teacher is available to attend only a portion of a meeting, schedule him/her to be on the agenda during that time.
- During PTA Board meetings, Teacher Vice Presidents inform the PTA Board of concerns teachers in their school have. Teacher input is vital to decision-making concerning the school and your PTA.
- Teacher Vice Presidents may want to ask the principal to be on faculty meeting agendas in order to report what the PTA is working on and what concerns your PTA Board has.
- Teachers can give valuable advice about programs or ideas PTA Board might want to work on within the school.

- Teacher Vice Presidents should lend support to yearly membership drives. They should encourage faculty members to join PTA in the school in which they teach, as well as, the school their children attend.
- Teacher Vice Presidents keep the faculty informed during the legislative season about the bills the PTA supports or is concerned about. Teachers could be activated to make phone calls and write letters to legislators.
- Teacher Vice Presidents should take the lead in fostering the parent-teacher partnership within the school. The following pages deal with this partnership and can assist Teacher Vice Presidents.

Partners in Education: Teachers and the PTA

T - for teacher - is the PTA's middle name. Teachers are the crucial link in the partnership between school and parents. Every major study of education has shown the importance of parent involvement. Parent involvement is enhanced by a positive parent-teacher relationship, and the PTA is an effective means of bringing parents and teachers together.

Through PTAs and PTSAs (Parent-Teacher-Student Associations), parents and teachers work together to achieve the PTA Purposes:

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship
- To raise the standards of home life
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth
- To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social, and spiritual education

A teachers' knowledge and leadership can help the PTA serve children better. In turn, teachers look to the PTA for help and support in their important work of educating children and youth.

Building a Partnership: The Teacher's Role

Parent involvement increases when there is strong support from the principal and when the teachers build effective partnerships with parents to strengthen their participation in the school community. Some proven ways teachers encourage parent involvement include:

- Setting a friendly tone with parents in notes, phone calls, and newsletters. This encourages parents to see themselves as equal partners in the job of educating their children.
- Establishing a regular means of communicating with parents throughout the school year - weekly classroom newsletters, teacher-parent journals, good news phone calls, or Friday folders.
- Setting a clear policy on homework - its purpose, how much time it should take, how parents can help.
- Making sure parents understand classroom programs and policies and the importance of parent support.
- Supporting parent and community volunteers in the school.
- Attending PTA meetings, serving on committees and in leadership positions, and joining in PTA programs and projects.
- Discussing PTA programs at teachers' meetings and gathering tips about successful programs at other schools to share with the PTA.

- Alerting the PTA to parents' needs. Working with the PTA to provide parent involvement opportunities in school and at home.
- Sharing with the PTA issues of concern to teachers, current topics in education, and the need for changes to meet future goals.

Building a Partnership: The PTA's Role

Educating children is a shared responsibility. Teachers need the understanding and support of their partners in education: parents and community members. The PTA helps to strengthen this partnership in two main ways:

1. The PTA Encourages Parents to be Involved in Their Children's Education:

- Making parents aware of school policies and programs.
- Helping parents understand the importance of their support of school rules and procedures.
- Educating parents in parenting skills and ways to support children's learning at home.
- Strengthening parent-teacher communication and understanding through newsletters, workshops, events, and activities.
- Providing informal occasions for teachers and parents to get to know one another as individuals and as partners in education.
- Conducting volunteer programs in schools.
- Assisting parents through outreach programs and referrals to community resources.
- Encouraging parents and community members to unite to improve the lives of children and youth through programs that address problems.

2. The PTA Fosters Community Support of Education:

- Working to maintain a strong public school system with quality education for all children and youth.
- Supporting training for teachers, principals, parents, administrators, and community members in their roles as shared decision makers at local schools.
- Working for school budgets that include items such as adequate funding for teachers' salaries.
- Urging communities to support teachers' continuing professional education and helping explain the importance of such programs.
- Providing opportunities for parents to focus on school and student successes in exhibits, open houses, awards ceremonies, performances, and other events.
- Encouraging parents and community members to inform themselves about education issues and to understand and support necessary changes in the schools.
- Helping schools connect with the home, providing family and community information, and networking with other local organizations.

How the National PTA Supports Teachers Programs:

The National PTA continually monitors children's well-being so that it can respond to their needs through programs for parents and teachers.

Teacher Appreciation and Awards:

Each year, the National PTA recognizes excellence in teaching through programs such as Teacher Appreciation Week and the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Outstanding Educator Award.

Utah PTA offers the Utah PTA/KUED "Golden Apple Award" for Outstanding Educators, which recognizes professional educators currently working with students in grades preschool through 12th. Six winners are selected based on their relationship with students, parents, PTA and the community. They participate in the annual television program and receive a generous award.