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GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC RELATIONS

WHAT IS PUBLIC RELATIONS?

Public relations is more than getting an interview in your local newspaper or on your local television or radio station. It encompasses all communication vehicles used by your local PTA. Public relations includes fliers, brochures, use of PTA websites, use of social media, email, your reputation in the community, communications among PTA members, and a presence in the media. Public relations can help attract new members, increase attendance at PTA meetings, and create public awareness of your PTA programs, events, and activities. It should be an integral part of all your PTA efforts.

Public relations is often said to be the job of everyone in PTA. This is a true concept since public relations is crucial to marketing your PTA and your PTA programs. Good public relations practices will help you attract support and volunteers and help them embrace the mission and goals of your PTA. Every PTA should have a public relations position on its board. The public relations individual will work closely with the PTA president and the PTA board to guide and direct the Public Relations Committee in creating and implementing a successful public relations and membership campaign based on the needs assessments and goals determined by the PTA board.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS POSITION

1. Be a PTA member and serve your full term as elected by the PTA membership or appointed by the PTA officers.
2. Learn and know all you can about the PTA—its history, goals, programs, policies, PTA Day at the Capitol, activities, publications, websites, social media involvement, and meetings.
3. Consult the Utah PTA communications web page for information about how to perform your public relations duties
4. Act as an aide to the president and perform such duties as delegated or assigned by the PTA officers or president.
5. Work closely with the PTA president and Membership Chair and assist board members to promote events.
6. Submit to the PTA officers a recommended budget to cover costs of the Public Relations Committee's projected campaign and plans for the year.
7. Attend all scheduled PTA board and committee meetings, Utah PTA conventions, and outreach training meetings.
8. Know and work with your council, region, and Utah PTA public relations.
9. Form and chair the Public Relations Committee. Elect a vice chair and secretary for the Public Relations Committee. Meet regularly and delegate responsibility as you facilitate, lead, supervise, and coordinate the work of that committee in publicizing your PTA/PTSA programs and activities.
10. Present recommendations for Public Relations Committee to the PTA board.
11. In partnership with the Public Relations Committee, develop and implement a successful public relations membership campaign for your PTA for the current school year.
12. Keep informed of all activities and programs of your PTA.
13. Plan and carry out PTA Founder's Day activities and celebration in February.
14. Take every opportunity to publicize and spotlight what your PTA is doing.
15. Serve as a liaison between your PTA and the media.

16. Write and submit media releases to the president to be checked before releasing to the media.
17. Send pictures of your PTA events to Utah PTA to show on the website and social media.
18. Evaluate public relations campaign and report to PTA president and Executive Committee.
19. Collect volunteer hours of members and consultants serving on the Public Relations Committee and report them at each PTA board meeting.
20. Guarantee that recognitions are acknowledged and thank you notes are sent.
21. Maintain all PTA social media accounts.
22. With the help of the Public Relations Committee, create marketing displays to use at meetings and events.

KEYS TO A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

The Public Relations Committee establishes the public relations goals for the PTA for the current school year and, in coordination with the Membership Chair, implements the membership campaign and evaluates its success. The elected public relations individual serves as the head of the Public Relations Committee. As the committee chair, responsibilities will include obtaining public relations plans from each board member in charge of specific programs or events for the PTA, including things such as the membership campaign, PTA sponsored meetings, Reflections, carnivals, Red Ribbon week, book fairs, and any other PTA activity. The Public Relations Chair and committee may help these board members create their public relations plan for the year. The Public Relations Committee will establish a public relations timeline for implementing its membership campaign for the year.

The Membership Chair should serve on the Public Relations Committee. The public relations plan should be based on input from the president, the PTA board, the Membership Chair, and commissioners, as well as needs assessments from your PTA membership. The Public Relations Committee should proactively communicate events and programs throughout the year. Social media is a great tool to get the word out about events and programs.

FORMING A PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE:

1. Committee Size
 - ♦ Size varies depending on the size of your PTA, publicity channels, and needs of the local, council, region, or Utah PTA.
 - ♦ A successful Public Relations Committee is not a committee of one.
 - ♦ Most Public Relations Committees include from four to eight regular members.
2. Committee Composition
 - ♦ The Public Relations Committee Chair will be the elected public relations representative.
 - ♦ A local PTA public relations representative should include parents, teachers, principal, and the PTA president.
 - ♦ Local PTSA committees should include at least one student.
 - ♦ The membership representative should be included.
 - ♦ Community liaisons and consultants may be asked to be a part of your Public Relations Committee.



HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL PUBLIC RELATIONS CAMPAIGN

1. **Set Clear Objectives for your PTA:** Start by defining the specific goals you want to achieve with your PR campaign. For a local PTA organization, these goals could include increasing parent involvement, raising awareness of critical educational issues, or promoting upcoming PTA events. Ensure your objectives are specific, measurable, and attainable.
2. **Identify Your Target Audience:** Determine who your primary audience is within your local community. Your audience may include parents, teachers, school administrators, and students. Understand their needs, concerns, and interests to tailor your message effectively.
3. **Develop a Compelling Story for your PTA:** Craft a story that resonates with your target audience and encapsulates the mission and values of your PTA organization. This narrative might focus on the positive impact of parental involvement in education, the benefits of PTA membership, or the importance of community support for the local school. Make your message clear, relatable, and emotionally engaging.
4. **Select the Right PR Tactics for your PTA:** Choose PR tactics well-suited to your PTA organization. Consider the following tactics:
 - ◆ **Newsletter and Website:** Maintain an informative and updated PTA website and newsletter to communicate with parents, teachers, and the community.
 - ◆ **Social Media Engagement:** Use platforms like Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram to engage with your local community and share important updates and stories.
 - ◆ **School Events:** Organize events and workshops related to education, parenting, and community involvement.
 - ◆ **Local Media:** Contact local newspapers, radio stations, and TV channels to promote PTA initiatives and events.
 - ◆ **Collaboration:** Collaborate closely with teachers and school administrators to align your efforts with the school's educational goals.
5. **Measure and Adjust Your PR Campaign:** Implement appropriate metrics to gauge the effectiveness of your PR campaign. This could include tracking the number of PTA memberships, event attendance, website visits, or social media engagement. Regularly assess these metrics and adjust your PR tactics as needed to maximize your outreach and impact within your local community.

Remember that for your PTA organization, building strong community relationships is key. Your PR efforts should aim to foster a sense of involvement, support, and collaboration among parents, teachers, and the broader community, ultimately benefiting the educational experience for students.

WORKING WITH THE MEDIA

Be selective about the story ideas you send to your local media. If you bombard the media with media releases about stories that are not news, editors may begin to ignore all communications from your PTA. Local newspapers (online or print) can be a great way to communicate with the target audience in your community. You can informally reach out to news editors, or utilize media releases.

MEDIA (PRESS) RELEASES

All PTAs should send out media releases. Send the media release to a specific media representative one week prior to the event. Attach any brochures or other material related to the event. If possible, limit the release to one page.

A release is designed to spark interest, not tell the whole story. Call the reporter or editor to see if the release was received and offer to provide additional information before, during, and after the event.

How well the media release is written is almost as important as the information it contains. The most important information comes first, with less important details in later paragraphs.

Be sure to include the following in all media releases:

1. Who, what, when, where, and how. Cover these points early in the release.
2. Be brief. Keep the releases short using simple language and sentences.
3. Double-space. Leave at least one inch margins on all sides.
4. Avoid editorializing. Just state the facts. Tell it like it is.
5. Use only formal titles, not common titles. On second mention, refer to both men and women by their last names.
6. Proofread. Check and double-check spelling, grammar, and punctuation.

WRITING MEDIA (PRESS) RELEASES

1. A heading stating MEDIA RELEASE, name of the PTA, and school address.
2. FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE or FOR RELEASE ON. The media release should be typed in capital letters upper right portion of the page. Directly below these words indicate the date for release.
3. A contact person. A name with a daytime telephone number should be included near the top of the page so reporters can call for additional information.
4. A short headline. A title with capital letters (example: PTA PRESIDENT ELECTED) that gives a quick preview of the contents of the release.
5. A dateline. This is the city (City, UT) from which the release is issued. Place this at the beginning of the first paragraph.
6. Use the PTA logo
7. End marks. If the release is more than one page, place the page number and release headline at the top of both pages (example: Page 2 - PTA President Elected).
8. At the end of the release, put ### marks centered after the last paragraph to let readers know the release ends.



SAMPLE MEDIA RELEASE

Utah PTA
5192 South Greenpine Dr.
Salt Lake City, UT 84123
801-261-3100
utahpta.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Jan 27, 2024

Utah PTA is proud to report to the Governor and Legislature that Utah PTA supports Utah communities, schools and children.

The value of the Utah PTA Volunteer Hours for February 2023 through January 2024 is based on the average estimated value of volunteer time nationally for 2022 which was \$29.95 per hour as determined by the “Independent Sector's Value of Volunteer Time.”

The estimate helps acknowledge the army of PTA volunteers who dedicate their time, talents, and energy to making a difference in our communities, our schools, and to making a difference in the lives of children.

Utah PTA receives reports three times annually from the PTA local schools, council PTAs, region PTAs and state PTA volunteer giving the hours donated by all volunteers throughout the state:

The schools, councils, region, and state volunteers who reported hours from February 2022 – January 2023 totaled 735,543 hours. Based on the 2022 estimated value of volunteer time the total donated time at \$29.95 per hour is \$22,029,512.85.

We hope that all Legislators will acknowledge the work done by the PTAs and parents in their communities.

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SOCIAL MEDIA IN COMMUNICATION

Creating engaging social media content and increasing engagement for your PTA is essential for fostering a strong community and achieving your organization's goals. Here are five keys to help you with this:

- 1. Know Your Audience:**
Understand the demographics, interests, and needs of your local PTA community. Tailor your content to address the specific concerns and interests of parents and teachers in your area. Create personas to help you visualize your target audience and their preferences.
- 2. Share Relevant and Timely Information:**
Keep your content fresh and relevant. Share information related to local school events, updates, important dates, and educational resources. Utilize a content calendar to plan and schedule posts in advance, ensuring you cover important topics and stay timely with your updates.
- 3. Visual Appeal:**
Visual content tends to perform well on social media. Incorporate eye-catching images, infographics, and videos to make your posts more engaging. Visual content can convey information quickly and encourage users to stop scrolling and pay attention.
- 4. Encourage Interaction:**
Foster a sense of community by encouraging comments, likes, and shares. Ask questions, conduct polls, and run contests to stimulate conversations. Respond promptly to comments and messages to show your commitment to engaging with your audience. Early engagement—likes, comments, and shares—with a post ensures more people will see your content. It is essential that board members engage with your posts early to ensure that more people will see your posts in their feeds.
- 5. Consistency is the Key:**
Remember that consistency is key. Regularly update your social media accounts, engage with your audience, and adapt your strategy based on analytics and feedback. By implementing these keys, you can create engaging social media content and increase engagement within your local PTA unit.



UTAH PTA SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

THE PURPOSE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS TO:

- ♦ Promote PTA, membership, or PTA events
- ♦ Direct traffic to the PTA website for more information, encouraging participation and membership
- ♦ Promote best practices
- ♦ Provide accurate, relevant, and up-to-date information

CONTENT

The Utah PTA Executive Committee shall approve the site and assign the responsibility for monitoring content.

Passwords must be given to three board members. Content on all social media outlets used by the PTA shall:

- ♦ Be civil, cordial, and relevant
- ♦ Be welcoming to all families
- ♦ Not use explicit or profane language and acronyms of explicit expressions
- ♦ Not use offensive language, including but not limited to ethnic, religious, and racial slurs
- ♦ Not air grievances with PTA, school board members, school administrators, teachers, PTA members, students, or other individuals
- ♦ Not further an issue or product for personal or professional gain
- ♦ Not include documents that are for members only, such as bylaws, minutes, and financials, unless access is protected and available only to members of this PTA
- ♦ Not endorse, promote, or solicit on behalf of a business, product, or service
- ♦ Not endorse a candidate or political party
- ♦ Not include comments and posts intended as advertising
- ♦ Be verified for access
- ♦ Obtain permission from individuals prior to posting photographs and videos
- ♦ Know individual school district policy for social media use

Check with the school district's communications administrator for the guidelines on the photo release policy, or obtain a signed photo release through the PTA before publishing any photo or video.

NOTICE

Utah PTA and its locals, councils, and regions are encouraged to post the following information on their social media site so visitors are aware of the expectations.

- _____ PTA is a noncommercial, nonsectarian, nonpartisan association that does not endorse any candidate or political party. This PTA does not endorse non-PTA products or services.
- Solicitation, or anything that resembles solicitation, shall not be posted on this site. If complaints are received about content or if the PTA deems content to be advertising, that content will be removed regardless of whether the content is relevant to our members.
- Offensive or inappropriate content will not be tolerated and will be removed and author will be banned from the site.
- Posts endorsing candidate for office or any political party shall be removed immediately.
- This site is not the appropriate place to express complaints and grievances. If you have a concern please contact a member of the Utah PTA Executive Committee.

UTAH PTA/PTSA STUDENT SCHOLARSHIP

Information

APPLICATION DUE TO THE UTAH PTA BY MARCH 1, 2025.

Utah PTA supports public education. Utah PTA believes that all students have the right to an education at a public school. A student who desires to further their education in an institute of higher learning or technical school following their graduation should have the opportunity to do so. We realize that for students to further their education it requires funding. It is our privilege and honor to give \$1,000 scholarships to four Utah seniors. Utah PTA would encourage students who are seniors to apply for this scholarship. The Scholarship Application is an online form that can be found at: utahpta.org/student-scholarship-application

The application must be completed in one setting. It cannot be saved and finished later. Please see what needs to be completed below:

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Applicant must be graduating from high school in the current school year.
2. Applicant must be accepted to a college, university, or vocational school.
3. Applicant must be a current PTSA/PTA member.
4. Applicant must have at least 3.0 cumulative GPA.
5. Applicant must fully complete the application with requested attachments.
6. Scholarship must be used within one year. (Deferred admissions accepted.)
7. Applicants may receive only one (total) scholarship from Utah PTA, including all of its programs. Winners of this scholarship will be ineligible to receive additional leadership scholarships, etc. from Utah PTA.
8. Winning applicants will be required to supply Utah PTA with their university ID, student number, or social security number for correct payment to their student account at the designated school.

PLEASE INCLUDE WITH THIS APPLICATION:

Be prepared to submit:

- A. Two letters of recommendation describing your character and qualities developed during your school years from teachers, leaders, coaches, etc.
- B. Please be prepared to answer the following essay questions. There is a limit of 250 words for each answer.
 - ♦ Question 1) How has your participation in PTSA impacted your life? How has it made a difference at your high school?
 - ♦ Question 2) Describe a time in your life when things did not go the way you planned. How did you respond? Or, describe a challenge you have experienced and how you overcame it.
 - ♦ Question 3) Where do you see yourself in five years?
 - ♦ Question 4) If you could change one thing, whether about the world or about yourself, what would it be? How do you plan to use your post-secondary education in this endeavor?
- C. A PDF copy of your official high school transcript.
- D. A PDF copy of your resume that includes extracurricular activities, humanitarian efforts, PTSA involvement, work experience.



Dear Scholarship Applicant,

PTA is the largest for child advocacy voice in the state of Utah. PTA works directly for children and advocates for them with local, state, and national governments.

In helping every child achieve their goal for higher education, it is the pleasure of Utah PTA to be able to offer four \$1,000 scholarships.

Utah PTA offers these scholarships to support students focused on a career goal. Utah PTA supports education and believes strongly in post high school education.

All eligible students are encouraged to apply for this opportunity from Utah PTA.

Sincerely,



Corey Fairholm
Utah PTA President

