

Welcome to your school's PTSA

Thank you for being willing to serve the students at your school by being a part of your PTSA. In addition to your position guides, this guide will provide some needed background information, as well as general guidance for anyone serving through the PTSA.

About PTA & Utah PTA

National PTA® is the oldest and largest child advocacy association in America. For 125 years, PTA has worked with school communities and decision makers to solve the toughest problems in our nation's history. PTA is a network of millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of family engagement in schools.

PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit association that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who supports the PTA mission (To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children), and wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.

Utah PTA is a non-profit grassroots child advocacy association made up of parents, teachers, and students. Utah PTA is an affiliate of National PTA and is organized in Utah at local, council, and state levels. Utah PTA has over 73,000 members in 2022.

Levels of PTA

NATIONAL: National PTA includes all 50 states, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands, Washington DC & even a DoDEA Europe Chapter serving schools on military bases in Europe.

STATE: Utah PTA supports about 670 PTAs & PTSAs all across the state.

REGION: In Utah, this usually consists of all of the schools in your school district.

COUNCIL: In Utah, this would consist of nearby schools that either all feed into the same high school, or are schools of the same grade levels (i.e., all high schools or all middle schools).

LOCAL: The local school level is the most important level of PTA. The school level is where activities & service occur, fundraisers happen and much of what PTA is about can take place.

In Utah, all local PTAs at the secondary school level are designated as PTSAs, requiring student interaction with the adult PTSA Board in some fashion.

PTSA Meetings

There are monthly PTSA Board meetings for your adult board. Student PTSA meetings will vary. Some schools have a class during school, but most are held after school. You can meet weekly, monthly, or however it works best for your student group.

How to make meetings interesting

It is important to keep students engaged so that they keep coming back. An issue most groups face is the loss of attendance halfway through the year. Making sure that students stay engaged with the group is key to keeping their involvement. Here are some ways to keep PTSA student members coming back:

- Have an icebreaker at the beginning of each meeting to get students talking with each other.
- Having guest speakers from local organizations, or other school clubs, that want to team up with your PTSA is helpful in making meetings less redundant.
- Have multiple speakers instead of just the student chair speaking. Let students report and talk about the activities they are in charge of.
- Include educational videos about leadership or a monthly topic.
- FOOD! Setting aside part of your PTSA's budget to purchase food for meetings will incentivize attendance.

5 Tips for Growth

Outreach is vital to any group's success. Make sure to spend some time with your PTSA board to brainstorm new ways to attract new members. Below are five tips on how you can most effectively grow your membership:

1. Incentivize your meetings! Bring food to your meeting. Bring in outside organizations to speak to your group. Schedule icebreakers at the beginning of your meetings.
2. Personal Invitations: Make personal invitations to your meetings to hand out to other students at your school. Make sure the invitations include meeting time and date and what PTSA is/does.
3. Target lower grades: Make it a goal to reach out to incoming students. New students want to be involved, so making them aware of how amazing PTSA is will hopefully encourage them to join.
4. Bring a Buddy campaign: Have each member bring a friend to a meeting. Each member who brings a buddy gets a prize.
5. Announce PTSA to your school: Work with school administration and/or SBOs to schedule a time that you can speak during morning announcements, or during assemblies.

Making Connections

The Utah PTA Student Leadership Committee is committed to serving student PTSA groups across the state. The Utah PTA is a wealth of information, from statewide PTSA events, to service project ideas, to access to scholarships and awards. Not only does the state have a focus for the year, but its officers are trained to provide support and mentorship. A few ways to connect include joining Utah PTA social media groups, especially the Utah PTA Super Secondary page, interacting with state officers, and attending state PTSA events.

Whenever possible, one of the student officers at your school should also be a member of the Utah PTA Student Leadership Committee. This will help your PTSA keep informed about State PTSA activities, and it will also allow your PTSA to have some influence on those events. It's also a great opportunity to meet students from other schools across the state. State meetings are held once a month, usually in the morning on the second Saturday. Members can attend in person at the Utah PTA Office, 5192 S. Greenpine Dr., SLC, or there is an option to attend via Zoom or other online options. Please contact the Utah PTA Student Leadership Commissioner, Todd Hougaard, to apply to be on this committee. His contact email is todd@utahpta.org.

Faculty/Student Club Connections

Establishing strong connections with faculty and leadership clubs in your school is also important for the success of your PTSA. Whether it is a foreign language club, student council or the journalism department, club connections matter. The more people involved in a project, the more impact the project makes. Need advertising support for a PTSA project? Partner with your media department to film a video announcement or write a story for your school's newspaper. Looking to increase school involvement? Student council can be your cheerleader. School faculty also can make announcements before classes and provide valuable advice.

*This PTSA Student Officer Guide has been created using the Key Club Officer Guide as a template. Refer to keyclub.org for more information.

5 Qualities of Successful Student Leaders



Envision by WorldStrides

Do you have what it takes to effectively lead and inspire a group of your peers? As a student leader, you have the opportunity to develop skills that will prepare you for success in school, college, and life. Besides being personable and opinionated, exceptional leaders always:

Stay authentic. Leaders who are authentic are trusted because they are unwavering, especially when faced with the challenges of popular opinion. Remember to always stay true to yourself and the values you believe in.

Keep an open mind and always listen. Open communication and consideration of all ideas fosters a creative and collaborative environment. A good leader is someone who is comfortable handling suggestions and adapting to changing situations.

Know how to delegate tasks to achieve common goals. A successful leader knows when to take the reins. When it comes to important projects and deadlines, know when and how to allocate responsibility to those around you and be willing to go above and beyond to get it done.

Learn from mistakes to improve for the future. Even if this isn't your first time (as a student leader), there will most certainly be times where the plan goes wrong. Be prepared for the worst, take responsibility for the outcome, and stay optimistic. A quality leader learns from experience and proactively plans for the future.

Seek knowledge. Leaders are continuously developing their skills so they can continue to inspire their constituents.