

Junior High/Middle School Conference

Making Meetings Meaningful: Increasing attendance at Junior High (Middle School) PTA meetings



Make connections

Make sure to introduce everyone. One of the greatest things to get out of PTA meetings is connections. Stress the connections too in “advertising”.

Try different days of the week and different times of day for your meetings.

Make more effort to announce that PTA **meetings are open to all parents**, not just those chairing a committee; remind them that attending a meeting is NOT committing to volunteering.

Work on a collaborative project for the school.

Give parents the chance to tackle a PTA pet project while participating in the meeting, like assembling teacher appreciation goody bags or painting rocks for the school garden.

Start a PTA book club. Plan a monthly book club discussion at the end of each meeting.

Add social time afterward for people who want to stay and get to know each other.

If you can support the technology try some virtual meetings. Sometimes parents of older kids seem to have more places to drop off and pick up.

Adult “bribes”

Offer no cost prizes: prime parking spots at events, front row seats at school events, homework passes, tokens given at the meeting that kids can use at the school store.

Give prizes donated by local businesses to attendees.

Provide translation services

Incorporate workshops. Ask parents what topics they would like to hear more about or discuss in round tables.

Offer babysitting at meetings

Hold a themed meeting around a holiday, upcoming school event, or other occasion to create a buzz that increases attendance. (A few decorations and a suggestion to wear something festive.)

Speakers or parent education programs

Share a common program with the other junior highs in the district. Each JH chooses a fall date to host, say “parent role in a school crisis”, prior to the presentation you adopt your audit/ budget and then roll into the presentation. Each JH can host the topic and build the interest.

At the end of the year invite feeder school parents to a meeting. Can have a panel of “ask a current 7th grade parent” about the transition from 6th to 7th grade.

Is there a parent or group of parents willing to offer their services for a **group parent workout session**?

Invite a vendor you use to preview items or offer samples of items at a meeting.

At the beginning of the year host an “ask the principal/ teacher” panel after a regular PTA meeting for incoming/ new parents. Try to keep regular business short and then spend more time with the panel for questions. Do not forget the PTA sign-up table.

Invite High School speaker to answer questions about the transition to High School.

Host a panel of selected 7th grade students and **invite 6th grade parents and students** to attend the panel discussion.

Include “testimonial” from a current PTA parent “why I’m involved”, “what PTA means to me”, or “why I help out” – periodically and share that in a regular newsletter.

Provide homework help for parents. Invite your school’s math teacher to review the basics for parents (Common Core, anyone?)

Kids-focused events

Host a spelling bee “semi-final” and invite the parents. If it’s at the end of the school day ask parents to stay to elect the nominating committee (10 minutes).

Hold a staff/student basketball game – with PTA business at half time.

Invite a group of students or group to perform or lead the pledge at the beginning of your meeting and invite parents to stay for the meeting.

Have a different grade level of students make a presentation each month, such as reciting poems they have written. Parents are notified ahead of time when their children will be performing.

Art fair (Reflections) – **display kids’ artwork** and invite parents/ families to come view and attend meeting.

Combine meetings with other school events. Hold in conjunction with another event such as an open house, movie night, dinner, cakewalk, book fair, or performances by the choir and band.