

How might things look different in a Socially Distant World?

“Be open to ideas. It’s about listening to the community and realizing,
 ‘Oh, we hadn’t thought about that. Let’s try it!’”

PTA Communication Overview:

*Make sure to always include the PTA official logo on all communication.



(personalize the PTA logo with your PTA name at:

<https://www.pta.org/local-leader-kit/communications/pta-branding>)

****Make sure to always discuss your ideas and plans with your PTA President & school administrator(s) to make sure to have approval for all programs/events/logistics AND communication you are sending out.**



Consider having your PTA leaders send your Families, Students, & Staff a message of hope and inspiration to bring your community together. Let your potential members see the leaders that work so hard on behalf of all the children and families of your school!

Making Connections is Key to building a sense of community and support for your PTA.

Personal interaction is most effective to build relationships & make an impact!

Be Positive- use optimism, gratitude, & humor to help bring the community together!

- **WHO?** Who is your audience?
 - Parent, students, administration, staff, community
 - Assess the audience and the best way to reach out to those demographics
 - Bilingual families, community
 - Are you providing translations?
 - Does your electronic platform offer translation features?
 - Can you have a bilingual parent/staff member translate via phone conference while they can still see online meetings/presentations?
 - How will you tailor your message to reach the specific audience you are trying to reach?
 - Enlist the help of your PTA board, staff/administration, referrals to spread the word.
- **WHAT?** Communicate accurate information with a unified message. What is the purpose of your communication?
 - To Inform
 - About PTA (historically, part of state/national/advocacy)
 - What your PTA plans to do this year
 - Who is part of your PTA board
 - How can you reach someone on the PTA?
 - How to join?
 - Opportunities to meet other families?
 - ETC.
 - To Ask for people to:
 - JOIN,
 - Volunteer: Share talents
 - Share Ideas for future events
 - Share Resources
 - Share contacts within the community
 - Attend- meeting, event, planning sessions,
 - Promote your efforts to stay connected with your families, staff, & community.
 - Provide Calendar & reminders.
 - Provide a place for people to submit questions or get clarification of programs, resources, etc.
 - Collaborate with the District by sharing information about District and School Updates & District Community Outreach & Assistance Initiatives.
 - To Promote an event, resource, fundraiser,
 - To Take Action- Want audience to do something
 - Say THANK YOU-

- To your members for their support
 - To your volunteers for their assistance
 - To your Board for their hard work behind the scenes
 - To your teachers/staff/administration for assistance,support, membership
 - Community members/donors/partners
 - To ask for Feedback from audience
 - Follow up with the audience as to feedback received and what is the next step?
 - To support District and help parents find links to their information
- **WHERE?** Where can we find information
 - Website/social media/PTA leader contact information/PTA info email address
 - Calendar & reminders
 - Parent resources: school calendar, PTA welcome info,
 - PTA welcome packet information
 - PTA Membership information
 - Collaborate with the District by sharing where families can find District and School Updates? District community assistance initiatives.
 - Education Resources/ Guest Speakers/
 - Electronic- (see below)
 - Piggyback on School communications
 - Ask teachers share PTA info in their classroom communications
 - PTA Communications
 - MemberHub (communication to those that sign up for site &/or become a member
 - Outdoor signage, promotion
 - *As PTA leaders you can find information and additional leadership resources at
 - <http://ilpta-d37.org> Northwest Cook Region PTA
 - <http://illinoispta.org> Illinois PTA
 - <http://pta.org> National PTA
- **WHEN? Reach out often** (in a variety of ways to meet the needs of your diverse populations)
 - *Do you have a general schedule for communication?*
 - Monthly meeting (Is it Predictable? same week,day of week each month?)
 - Weekly “Electronic backpack” messaging
 - Monthly newsletter
 - Daily/weekly social media posts
 - PTA report included in Principal weekly email to entire school?
 - Social media shout outs, challenges, requests for posts, etc.

- **HOW?** Reach out in a variety of ways
 - Whether you are socially distant, virtually, on the phone or texting.
 - Spread the word by WORD OF MOUTH!!
 - “*Each one Reach one*”, Ask your PTA board, staff, and members to each reach out to someone else to spread the word (Invite others to refer a new membership, share information, to attend a meeting/event, share their thoughts and ideas, join them to volunteer or help out from home, etc.)
 - **Create Welcome Packet Materials** (to include with school New Student/Registration information:
 - Information on Mission & purpose of the PTA,
 - How to JOIN YOUR PTA,
 - contacts for PTA Leaders,
 - Info about your local unit programs,
 - Where to find a calendar of events
 - Explanation of events and when they fall in the year,
 - family resources,
 - How the PTA supports classroom learning through resources or support,
 - volunteer opportunities: in planning, at events, in classrooms, from home, etc.,
 - Advocacy efforts: History of PTA Advocacy efforts, what are current issues on education/health/wellness/safety/juvenile justice, and how families can get involved and advocate locally and on a state and national level

Articulating your PTA’s Value with your Stakeholders*: Parents, Students, Administrators, School Staff, Community and Business leaders:

WHAT IS IN IT FOR THEM? Personalize your message to each different Stakeholder with examples that are relevant to each group.

How can we explain the value of PTA, even when things will look so different this year? Take time to share your past successes and history with your PTA and school.

Work with your PTA board to set some goals for this year and brainstorm ideas to remain relevant and provide positive and impactful programs,resources and ways to support stakeholders* and bring your community together. Consider using the following 6 categories to focus on how you have and hope to bring the PTA to life for your individual stakeholders: Parents, Students, Admin/Staff, community

- Invitation-
 - WELCOMING ALL- Do you reach out to all demographics in your school community?

- Your PTA is working on behalf of ALL the kids at your school (and across the country through National PTA)
- Provide a Clear message about the PTA mission, your past success & PTA goals or hopes for this upcoming year.
- **Connect-**
 - what avenues do you use to reach out to others,
 - Personal interaction is most effective -How can you do it while socially distant? text, phone calls, in the neighborhood, etc.
 - In partnership with principal sending email messages to the entire school community or to the entire school staff,,
 - Send video messages, fun or serious? Informative? Offer Challenges? Provide Inspiration?
 - Utilize social media, emails, newsletters, blogs,
 - VIRTUAL Meetings/ Chat Groups/ Events
- **Gaining Insight-**
 - Ask for feedback, suggestions, idea sharing,
 - Utilize Surveys, Polls, Sharing sessions, Roundtable discussions,
 - Provide opportunities for people to reach out to leaders with ?s, Where can they get more info?

Articulating the Value of your PTA to your Stakeholders (Cont).:

- **Building Relationships-**
 - How do you foster relationships and collaboration, with families, school staff, & community members
 - Building community through social or educational events that bring your families together
 - Build relationships with school/staff? teacher liaison? emails?
 - How do you build relationships with the community- partnerships for programming, to sponsor events, bring outside expertise to you programming?
- **Relevant & Meaningful-**
 - What programs, resources do you provide to meet the needs of your families and community?
 - What programs do you provide that help bring your community together or feel a part of the school community?
 - What resources do you provide to help inform or educate
 - What
- **Making an Impact-**
 - What do you do to support overall success:
 - programs/resource to enhance student education and community building,
 - Parent education/involvement opportunities,
 - Help fund/support school activities/resources, Support staff,
 - Provide community outreach or service opportunities,

THIS IS THE TIME TO TOOT YOUR OWN HORN! Let everyone know all the great you have done and how you STILL want to be a positive and relevant presence for students, families, school, and community. How can we all work together to support & Build each other up during a time of uncertainty? We need your support through membership NOW MORE THAN EVER!

Electronic Communication Options/Platforms:

- PTA website
 - When possible, ask for your School Website to have a link to your PTA website, social media accounts, etc.
- PTA on Social Media (Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, etc).
- Email
- Mail Chimp, Constant Contact, etc.
- Ask Principal to help send PTA information to ALL SCHOOL community
- Text messages (available on MemberHub if members register with cell phone number)
- Phone Calls
- Electronic Newsletter/Backpack
- Electronic fliers
- Electronic surveys
- Utilize QR Codes
- MemberHub messaging to those that register to site or join your PTA
- Video chat
- Electronic Video Meetings (*see Socially distant online resources*)
- Conference Calls
- Utilize QR codes to share links to information, forms, etc.
- ZOOM
- Google Meet
- Go to Meetings
- Facebook Live
- Slack
- Conference Calls

PTA Communication with Parents:

All are WELCOME!

The role of PTA leaders at every level—local, state and national—is to engage all families and communities as we build our membership & further the PTA mission. The PTA is to be welcoming and inclusive for all children and families by honoring their differences as we advocate for the well-being of our communities.

Communication is not just a one-way street. **When possible, personal contact of any kind is the most personal effective in making connections, either virtual or at a safe distance.** Make sure you take advantage by:

- Reaching out & welcoming everyone: those you know and have yet to meet
- Be sure to reach out to all communities to get representation* in all demographics- All are important & welcome!
- Preparing to share what PTA has meant to you, your family, & school- it's impact, favorite memories, etc.
- Asking people to support your PTA through membership
- Invite someone to join you at an event, meeting, to join a committee or to volunteer with you
- Asking for feedback, ideas, suggestions
- Reaching out to your families and staff to give them the opportunity to share their unique talents to benefit your PTA and school.
- Making sure to acknowledge & thank your members &/or volunteers for their support & efforts- we couldn't do it without them!
- Making sure to communicate with leaders by sharing expectations, resources, providing guidance, brainstorming ideas & setting goals, and showing gratitude for all their efforts.

*PTA Diversity and Inclusion Toolkit:

<https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/uploadedfiles/2016-diversity-toolkit.pdf>

PTA Membership Campaign *For Your Child* customizable resources:

<https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/membership-campaign>

PTA Center For Family Engagement Resources: <https://www.pta.org/center-for-family-engagement>

Examples of Communication

- Brief letter or video from President explaining your mission focus for the year
- A list of PTA accomplishments and/or goals for the year
- Where can people find more information, ask questions, get leader contact info?
- Membership form or online link to MemberHub Store
- Explanation of Membership options
- Explanation of PTA programs/events/fundraisers and what month they take place

- PTA calendar of events, programs or activities
- Resources you provide parents/staff or additional resources to members (directory?)
- Ways people can share their time & talents by volunteering
- Photos or **graphics** to help sell PTA via social media
- **Member benefits** (local, state or national benefits to PTA members)
- Newsletter to help people be in the know...with PTA updates, parent education, resources, school info, ways to sign up or help, community resources, etc.

Video (can be emailed to families, links on websites, social media, scroll at school events/meetings, etc.)

- Create a short welcome video- introducing the PTA, mission, programs, how to join or get more information
- PTA slideshow(s) to create awareness about the PTA: programs, resources provided, Calendar of events, opportunities to get involved, advocacy efforts
- Example of a local unit made video showing benefits of PTA membership:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kvKKHVIMFE>
- Example of a local unit video- What does PTA do at a National Level:
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_f_hmepNqxA
- National PTA videos available on YouTube – (see links on Socially Distant List of Online Resources)

Ways to Collect Feedback-

- Surveys*
- Polls
- Digital or in person Suggestion Boxes
- Email
- Roundtable Discussions, Parent Chats, Listening Sessions (in person or online)

Possible Information Gained from Survey*

- What do our parents/teachers/school need?
- How can the PTA support school families?
- Past PTA Program Relevance in current climate?
- What are the most effective ways to communicate?
 - Email
 - Texts
 - Meetings
 - Social Meet and Greet events (virtual)
 - Social media
 - Through principal & teachers

- How can we provide programs to the school community if we cannot be in person? Which do you prefer?
 - Virtual?
 - Outside at a safe distance
 - Give ideas and have families do at home or in community and post pictures
- Would your family participate in a:
 - List options - yes, no, maybe
- Membership Benefit/Incentives
- Meeting Schedule (what day, time, meeting length, etc)
- Parent Education topics/Guest Speaker Ideas (share possible ideas and ask for more)
- Community Building Activities
- Virtual Programming Ideas
- Community Service ideas
- What kind of fundraisers would they be willing to participate in?
- Do they have a talent they would like to share (list of possible areas you need help, specific tasks,(ie computer support, website, social media, planning, etc.)
 - Amount of time commitment (one time only, wkly, monthly, #hours, etc.

School Administrators Assist with Communication with Parents:

- Keep open lines of communication between the Principal, office staff, and President and Board.
- PTA President (& President-Elect) meet periodically with the Principal. Plan for year, programs, communication, membership, involvement status, staff participation, updates on school changes, how both school & PTA can support each other
- Principal Attend Monthly PTA Meetings: provide school & district report, take parent concerns feedback to staff & Dist. Admin.
- Provide PTA leader opportunity to speak to teachers at teacher mtg about PTA programs & the importance of having their support
- ****Principal forward PTA Messages & links to the ENTIRE SCHOOL on membership, programming, events, fundraisers, volunteer opportunities, etc. (Emails, Remind Text Messages, or Robo calls)**
- Principal Share with Parents link to Online Survey/Feedback (*see above)
- Principal forward concerns of parents to School District Administration
- Provide Assistance in promoting the importance of teacher/support staff participation and Membership with PTA
- Provide assistance with school support for translations &/or reaching out to underserved populations
- Assist in providing ideas on parents/staff (possibly in underserved communities) to contact to share their unique talents in planning, executing, or becoming a future leader.
- Share any outside contacts/resource ideas for events, vendors, potential program partners, community members

Teachers & Staff Assist with Communication with Parents:

- Have a Teacher Liaison on PTA Board: to assist with teacher memberships, give grade level reports to parents at PTA meetings, & share PTA info with Teachers
- Teachers forward PTA messages and links in classroom newsletters and parent communication
 - Teachers Share with Parents link to Online Survey/Feedback:
 - How can the PTA support families
 - Program Relevance
 - Membership Benefit/Incentives
 - Meeting Schedule
 - Parent Education topics/Guest Speaker Ideas
 - Virtual Programming Ideas
 - Community Service ideas
 - Allow Room Parent to speak or present at Parent Orientation night to encourage PTA membership and share info about PTA
 - Provide Assistance with translations &/or reaching out to underserved populations

PTA Communication with Teachers/Staff:

- Share the importance of the collaboration of the Teachers/staff in the PTA & the NEED for their support through membership & assistance in promoting PTA membership, communication & programs.
- Provide special membership information to teachers spotlighting all that PTA does for them: appreciation, classroom resources, gifts, meals, volunteers, etc.
- Provide Teachers/Staff link to MemberHub Store to purchase members
- Have a Teacher Liaison on PTA Board: to assist with teacher memberships, give grade level reports to parents at PTA meetings, & share PTA info with Teachers
- PTA Educate Teachers with pertinent PTA Information describing:
 - all PTA programs,
 - PTA events,
 - PTA resources you plan to provide to students/parents/school
 - Any outside Parent Resources, Educational Opportunities, Supports,
 - Ask for their help to support the PTA by promoting PTA with their families
- Ask teachers to encourage their parents to become a member of PTA. Pass along link/contact information
- Teachers TAKE Online Survey/Feedback:
 - PTA Program Relevance
 - Staff Membership Benefits
 - Meeting Schedule/Possible Topic Ideas
 - Parent Education Topic ideas
 - Student Enrichment ideas
 - Support needed for classrooms
 - Resource request for classrooms

■ Volunteer Support Request for classrooms/projects/etc.

- Do teachers have any outside contacts/resources for events, vendors, potential program partners, community members
- Assist in providing ideas of staff/parents (possibly in underserved communities) to contact to share their unique ideas or talents & assist with planning, executing, &/or becoming a future leader.

Another Example of a Possible Inspirational Message from your PTA leadership to your community: families, teachers, community! Personalize the message to hit home a specific message to your target audience!

