



# **The PTA and the PRINCIPAL HANDBOOK**

**A Guide to Knowing  
about and Working with  
Your PTA**

## CONTENTS

The Principal and PTA	2
PTA vs. Other Parent Organizations: What's the Real Difference?	3
How to Work with Your PTA	6
Basic Dos and Don'ts	8
Roles and Rules	10
The Principal and President Working Together	14
Building a Partnership with Parents	15
Ten Partnering Tips	17
Two Roles of the Parent	18
Listen to Each Other	19
PTA Election Do's and Don'ts	21
National PTA School of Excellence	23
PTA Trainings & Conferences	24
Do you Participate in Reflections?	25

## THE PRINCIPAL AND THE PTA

Teamwork has become the model for success in business and industry. It is the key to success in education as well. Teamwork begins at the local school with a partnership between the principal and parents. When parents and the principal work together, they can lead the way to success for all students.

What does it mean for the PTA and the principal to work as partners? It means that each understands his or her responsibilities, and the other's. It means setting goals and working cooperatively to achieve them. It means respecting each other's opinion, not expecting automatic approval from the other and not withdrawing support if opinions differ. It means reaching out to all parents and school staff to help our children and youth reach their potential

*"The principal is the educational leader and spokesman for his or her school and the school community. It is the principal's leadership that sets the tone of the school, the climate of learning, the level of professionalism and the morale of the staff, and the degree of concern for students."*

*Statement by the National PTA Board of Directors*

Colorado PTA Believes

We Have the BEST Principals and Teachers in Colorado!

**Simply the Best!**

## **PTA vs. Other Parent Organizations: What's the Real Difference?**

"PTO" is a term used to describe generic parent organizations that are site based and work only for their individual schools. PTA is a trademarked name that stands for "Parent Teacher Association." We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit whose primary role is to advocate for all children.

### **IRS REGULATIONS**

Occasionally we hear parents or principals say they would like to dissolve their PTA and form their own non-profit, fundraising organization, feeling a non-PTA will be easier to manage. Not true, in fact we make it easier for you! All 501(c)(3) non-profits must abide by the same IRS rules. All must file taxes, have insurance, bylaws, and officers. PTA simplifies these processes and provides support if you have questions or problems.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

PTA membership dues are very low, \$10 per year for most local units. Local units remit \$6.25 per member to Colorado PTA which is distributed the following way: \$2.25 to National PTA, \$3.00 to Colorado PTA, and \$1.00 to Regions or Councils. In return, local units receive materials, training, access to programs, grants, awards and members have the knowledge that PTA representatives from across the country, are going before Congress, our state legislatures, and local school boards to fight not only for adequate funding of our schools but for reasonable and realistic (not to mention funded) mandates for teachers. For example, did you know that Colorado PTA advocated AGAINST Senate Bill 191? Or that Colorado PTA was the lead plaintiff in a lawsuit against the state when the legislature passed a voucher law?

### **NETWORKING**

Locally, it is your PTAs that have the networking capabilities and support to campaign for mill levies and ballot initiatives that benefit our schools and our children

**Here are some other reasons your school benefits more from having a PTA:**

- **FINANCIAL HELP:** It is not uncommon for PTA to receive phone calls from other parent organizations asking for help with the IRS or embezzlement. Only PTAs provide the support to help walk you through financial difficulties.
- **SUPPORT:** Dealing with a conflict? Have questions about the operation of your local unit? PTA's support system ensures our local units receive the help they need to run smoothly. With other parent organizations, you're on your own.
- **EVERYCHILD.ONEVOICE:** Our tagline says it all. We are a powerful voice for children, 5 million members strong.
- **REFLECTIONS:** The National PTA Reflections Arts Program (started in 1969 by a Colorado PTA president) engages more than half a million students each year.
- **PROGRAMS:** PTA has programs like Healthy Lifestyles, Schools of Excellence, and more!
- **INSURANCE RATES:** PTA makes certain our local units receive the best rates for the best coverage and appropriate coverage for specific events.
- **ADVOCACY:** PTA helps parents and citizens learn more about local, state, and federal public policies affecting children and schools.
- **AWARDS & RECOGNITION:** PTA provides grants, awards, recognition, and scholarships at all levels!
- **BENEFITS:** Member benefits and discounts at [www.copta.org](http://www.copta.org) and [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org).
- **VOLUNTEERS:** From your local unit president to the state PTA president on up to the National PTA president, we are a core of volunteers focused on the education, health, and well-being of all children. We are the largest child advocacy organization in the world working to ensure all our children have the opportunity to lead successful, happy lives and to reach their full potential.

*This is who we are. We are PTA.  
We speak for every child with one voice*

## **HOW TO WORK WITH YOUR PTA**

With thanks to Minnesota Elementary School Principal's Association

Each year as the summer winds down, PTA boards around the state meet to form a plan of action for the coming school year. That plan should include what programs and services the PTA will provide its students, how much money it will take to support that plan, and how to raise those funds. With district dollars dwindling, many principals look to the PTA to cover shortfalls in their budgets.

While PTAs want to do everything they can for their children and their schools, there are legal limitations to what a PTA can and cannot fund. The national PTA issued the following guidelines to help clarify the lines that have become blurred as to the vision, mission and purpose we follow and how PTA funds should be used.

### **PTA VISION AND MISSION**

PTA's vision is making every child's potential a reality. PTA's mission is to be:

- A powerful voice for all children,
- A relevant resource for families and communities, and
- A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

### **PTA PURPOSES AND HISTORIC GOALS**

- To promote the welfare of the 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.

## HOW PTAs WORK

- The national PTA organization is a separate legal entity having both a Federal tax number (FEIN) and IRS 501(c)(3) exempt status.
- Each local PTA unit elects a separate board and officers, and only the elected officers can contractually bind that unit and only for their term of office.
- PTA budgets can only be ratified and approved by a vote of the membership (not just the board).
- PTA funds raised by PTA members belong exclusively to PTA and can only be used for purposes approved by its members through the budgetary and amending process. Approved uses of funds should be in line with the mission and objectives of the PTA body as a whole.

## WHAT PTAs ARE NOT

PTAs are not a supporting organization for the schools where they hold their meetings. Supporting organizations often contract directly with school districts to act on behalf of the schools and are subject to school oversight and approvals for such items as their budgets.

Teachers or members of the school system holding office in local units may not officially represent the school system on the PTA's board. Such an arrangement comprises a conflict of interest and will be used to demonstrate that the local unit is acting as a supporting organization.

PTAs are not an additional funding resource for goods, services, and payroll for public schools. School funds should be supplied by governmental entities. PTAs advocate for the adequate funding of schools from governmental sources. They do not replace funds not supplied by governments.

PTAs are not to pay bills handed over by the principal of the school. If the membership agreed to a purchase using PTA funds, the check must be written to the school for the school to purchase.

Local unit PTAs exist to provide enrichment for their children, school, and local community and to advocate for children.

**PTAs are not intended to be solely fundraising organizations for their schools.**

## **BASICPTA DO's AND DON'Ts**

**In the "Do" category** the basic premise to remember here is that the PTA funds need to impact the greatest number of students possible.

- PTAs funds may cover the cost of classroom or grade level educational field trips.
- PTA funds may cover educational assembly speakers.
- PTA funds may cover classroom enhancement via teacher requests. One note: if an item is purchased, like headsets or software so kids can learn a second language, those materials do not belong to the teacher, but to the classroom. The items stay in the classroom if the teacher transfers, retires, or leaves the school for any reason.
- There is a gray area in sport and playgrounds. PTAs are discouraged from purchasing playground and sports equipment because of the liability to which they expose the unit. There are two options available though, if the PTA membership votes to purchase equipment:  
1) The PTA can purchase the equipment and then "sell" to the school; 2) The school may purchase the equipment and ask the PTA for reimbursement. In both cases there must be a letter from the school clearly accepting ownership and all liability for the said equipment. If this cannot happen, then the PTA should not make the purchase.

The very basic rule is that if the school district typically funds something, the PTA should not.

**In the "Don't" category** the basic premise to remember is this: PTAs are not to replace, but to supplement.

- PTA funds should not be used to purchase personal gifts, equipment for staff lounges and lunchrooms or furnishings for principals' offices. (Personal gifts include, but are not limited to, baby showers, bereavements, weddings, or birthdays.)
- PTA funds should not be spent on textbooks, office supplies, maintenance or school renovations or additions. This can, however, also be a gray area. Many PTAs in Colorado have purchased marquees. These should be handled similarly to playground equipment, with the PTA reimbursing the school.

## HANDLING OF PTA FUNDS

This is not meant to be a complete list, just the basics.

- PTA funds must be deposited into the PTA's account as soon as possible following an event or fundraiser. No individual PTA member **may ever** take PTA funds home with them.
- At least two members must count money.
- PTAs must have two signatures on every check.
- Have the bank statement reviewed and signed by a non-check signer at each meeting.
- Signers of PTA accounts cannot have disbursement authority over school/school district funds.
- PTA funds may NEVER be deposited into a school or district account or school safe. PTAs are stewards of charitable dollars. As such, each PTA must be able to directly track all of their expenditures. This cannot be done if PTA funds are deposited into a school's general account.
- Checks may NEVER be written to a principal or a teacher without express advance approval of the membership and proper receipts, etc.

In closing, you know that PTAs do not want to disappoint you or say "no" to any teacher requests. There is a reality here, though. You can help PTAs avoid uncomfortable situations, lawsuits, and possible revocation of their non-profit status by not pressuring PTA leaders to bend the rules. We all want the best for our children. Let's concentrate on what PTAs can do for our schools instead of what they cannot.

You can also help by being a champion for your PTA. Please encourage teachers to support and participate in PTA and its functions. You too! Parents and students love to see teachers and principals at events. We take the "T" in PTA very seriously. Together we will enrich every child's educational experience.

Most important, Colorado PTA thanks you for your collaboration and support of the work we do for all of our children!

## **The Principal's Role with Regard to PTA**

In many of Colorado's PTA units, the principal is encouraged to be an appointed officer. This is an honorary position on the board meant to reinforce and enhance the partnership and collaboration between you and your PTA.

If you are not an appointed officer of your PTA, make sure you are scheduling regular meetings with your president and/or Board so that you remain informed regarding PTA activities, fundraisers, events, etc.

We appreciate that our principals become dues paying members themselves!

### **Your PTA Is . . .**

- A 501(c)(3) Non-Profit under the umbrella of Colorado PTA, and National PTA.
- An autonomous organization within your school and community.

### **Your PTA Board Is . . .**

- Responsible for the day-to-day management of your PTA.
- Responsible for the finances of your PTA.
- Elected by your PTA membership.
- Responsible for appointing committee chairs.
- Responsible for communicating with members, families, teachers, and staff.

### **Only Your PTA Membership Can . . .**

- Approve and/or amend your PTA's budget
- Plan and direct PTA sponsored activities.
- Approve changes to your PTA's bylaws
- Vote to support or oppose ballot initiatives (NEVER candidates).

**Each of these requires a vote of the membership and not just a vote of the board or executive committee.**

## **Your PTA Must . . .**

- Have a president and secretary to remain operational.

(Exceptions may be made when your PTA is receiving the aid of Colorado PTA.

- Remain in good standing with Colorado PTA.

This requires:

- A yearly officers' list
- Financial review completed within 30 days following the close of the PTA's fiscal year.
- Paid insurance
- IRS 990 or 990EZ
- Membership reports and paid membership dues (\$6.25 per member) by November 1 and February 1
- Updated bylaws (every three years)
- PTAs with gross income over \$25,000 per year must register with the Secretary of State Colorado - Charitable Solicitations Act
- Have two signatures on ALL checks.
- Have the bank statement reviewed and signed by a non-check signer and submit a report at regular meetings .

Forms and more information may be found on [www.copta.org](http://www.copta.org).

Failure to remain in good standing may mean disqualification from programs and ineligibility to receive awards.

## **IMPORTANT RULES TO REMEMBER**

- No communication with regard to the PTA may be sent without the knowledge and consent of your PTA's president (and vice versa, depending on your preferences as a principal).
- PTA mail sent to the school may only be opened by elected officers of your PTA.
- Only your PTA membership can approve a yearly budget (usually in the Fall) and changes to that budget may only be made by the membership.
- Only PTA officers may be signers on your PTA bank account.
- Signers of PTA accounts cannot have disbursement authority over school/school district funds.
- Your PTA's EIN number may not be used for purposes other than projects under the control of your PTA's officers.
- Your PTA's EIN number may only be used with approval by the Board and all signatures for documents need to come from an officer.

## **PTA AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEES**

- According to state law, a member of your PTA must sit on your school's accountability committee. (If your accountability chair is also a PTA member, this is fine).
- The PTA representative on your accountability committee must provide reports to the PTA board and membership.

## **YOUR PTA, TRAININGS, AND CONFERENCES**

Local unit PTA officers and members are not only encouraged to attend PTA trainings and conferences, they are expected to. Paying to attend PTA conferences and events is considered an acceptable use of PTA funds. Trainings and conferences help your PTA develop strong leadership and ensure your PTA is operating correctly. They also allow your PTA the opportunity to network with other schools and serve to inspire and energize our PTA leaders. Please encourage your PTA's officers to attend these events! Principals are also welcome and encouraged to attend!

## **YOUR PTA, ADVOCACY, AND LEGISLATION**

Your PTA should have a member or officer who is the Advocacy Liaison. Advocacy Liaisons receive information from National PTA and Colorado PTA on current issues, including legislation, that affect our children. This role is vital as an informed membership means a stronger, louder voice when we advocate for our children!

Your Advocacy Liaison is able to attend meetings of the Colorado PTA Legislative Committee, in person or by teleconferencing/ These meetings are the 2nd Monday of each month at 6:30 pm at the Colorado PTA office. All are welcome!



## **YOUR PTA AND SOCIAL MEDIA**

Your PTA can and should have a website, Facebook, and other social media accounts independent of the school. All are great tools to help engage parents and members. Suggest that your PTA's Board sit down and talk about some basic guidelines to follow when utilizing social media.

## PRINCIPAL AND PTA PRESIDENT WORKING TOGETHER

The principal and the PTA president represent two important groups in the school: staff and parents. Here are some suggestions for nurturing this important partnership.

- \* Meet weekly at an agreed upon time. Discuss issues. Review plans for events. Keep each other informed
- \* Work out problems or misunderstandings in a direct, honest way. Keep an open mind. Listen to each other.
- \* When working with parents and community, be positive and enthusiastic about your school. Develop a win-win attitude. Celebrate each other's accomplishments!



A working partnership between the principal and the PTA, dedicated to the welfare of all children and youth, can strengthen family life and improve education for all of our children.

## BUILDING A PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

It is up to the principal to make parent involvement a school priority. All major studies have shown that parent involvement in education is one of the keys to quality education.

The principal can welcome parents, to the school by following some of these suggestions:

- ◆ Being available to the community. Scheduling meetings open to the public at different times and days, including evenings and weekends. Inviting parents to set up private appointments to discuss concerns.
- ◆ Working with your PTA on your school's "Welcoming Environment" to make parents feel welcome and comfortable in school - the first step toward parent involvement.
- ◆ Showing parents and teachers how to use conferences to build parent-teacher-student teamwork. Making sure conferences are held at times when parents can come.
- ◆ Being sensitive to how a family's home life may affect how parents feel toward school. For example, a parent who is struggling to keep a family housed and fed may have difficulty concentrating on a child's school problems.
- ◆ Being active in the PTA and encouraging teachers to participate, too.
- ◆ Helping the PTA keep its primary focus on education rather than fundraising. The principal and the PTA can work together to solve problems and set goals that will benefit students.
- ◆ Helping the PTA plan activities to accomplish specific goals. For example, encouraging the PTA board to plan events that promote children's well being, home- school cooperation, and community betterment. These events often strengthen the school's business and community relationships as well.

- ◆ Working with the PTA to develop a program for training and using parent and community volunteers, who can help staff enrich all areas of the school.
- ◆ Helping parents stay informed on current issues in education. Referring parents to helpful books, magazine articles, radio or TV programs. If there is a parent resource center in the school or local library, then suggesting materials to be included.
- ◆ Recognizing PTA volunteer's efforts. Appreciating the contributions of parents.
- ◆ Encouraging constructive discussions with parents that build confidence in the school's leadership and strengthen parent partnerships.

## **OTHER IDEAS TO PROMOTE YOUR PTA**

- Encourage your teachers and staff to join your PTA.
- End your "All Calls" with a message encouraging parents and families to join your PTA.
- Add "Join 'your school's name 'PTA" to your email signature.
- Add an encouragement to join your school's PTA in messages sent home in Friday folders and other communications.
- Make sure your PTA has a membership and information table at every school event.
- Encourage your PTA's officers and members to attend Colorado PTA Leadership training opportunities.
- Encourage your PTA to work toward and apply for Colorado PTA and National PTA awards

## **10 PARTNERING TIPS FOR A STRONG SCHOOL COMMUNITY**

1. A principal can host a "welcome" night where all the parents are invited to the school and the principal gives an opening address, establishes basic expectations for the year, and invites parents to ask questions. Provide a form on which parents can write their contact information, best times to contact them, and preferred methods of communication. The principal can provide the same information to parents.
2. Parents can establish PTAs that are inclusive and representative of the school community's culture, family structures (single parent, blended, etc.), and abilities. PTAs must value and embrace all parents and caregivers in order to implement successful school programs.
3. The principal can take part in developing the PTA's goals for the year. The principal can work with the PTA to set goals for their collaboration for the year.
4. Make the principal-parent dialogue visible. The principal can write an article for the PTA newsletter or include a message on "all calls." The principal can also host coffees or "chats with the principal," inviting bilingual parents to translate as necessary.
5. The PTA and principal can network with community establishments (hospitals, community centers, banks, libraries) to provide services or informational sessions for the school. Before moving ahead, provide the PTA with a list of priorities regarding services for the school and its families.
6. Invite community groups and youth service organizations to school shows, sporting events, and showcases of service-learning projects, thus publicizing what the students have accomplished. Ask these groups how you can work toward shared goals in support of the school.
7. Carry out fundraisers tied to specific goals relevant to the whole school community. Examples of such PTA fundraising goals might include campus beautification, providing school playing fields, or underwriting classroom field trips.

8. Nominate the PTA, volunteers, and teachers for awards. Consider National PTA's Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification,

9. Encourage two-way messaging. Establish a principal-approved voicemail system in which teachers regularly leave two-minute voicemail messages for parents about the classroom curriculum, and parents can leave messages for teachers as they strive to support their children's homework and study habits.

10. Promote health and nutrition. Form a task force of parents, the school principal, and pertinent school district staff to examine the school lunch program. (This refers to schools not participating in the federal school lunch program.) Look at the time allotted for lunch, the food options available; and the accessibility, pricing, and placement of healthy foods. Make recommendation for change if necessary.

### **THE TWO ROLES OF PARENTS: Child's First Educator and School Partner**

Parents share responsibility for their children's education. Involved parents are those who:

- \* Send to school a child who is ready and eager to learn, self-disciplined and prepared to accept the authority of school staff. Parents make sure the child understands and follows school rules.
- \* Supervise home work assignments as needed. Seek the advice of teachers to understand their children's growth and learning. Share information that will help school staff plan for their children.
- \* Learn about school programs, curriculum, regulations and procedures, and actively support them.
- \* Show commitment to education by attending parent-teacher conferences, open houses, PTA meetings, student concerts, and other school programs whenever possible.
- \* Understand the work for the passage of school funding initiatives.
- \* Understand the need for professional development programs for teachers. Attend programs to learn about current issues and trends in education, when possible, to open the way for informed discussion, mutual respect and teamwork.

### **PRINCIPALS LIKE PTA PRESIDENTS WHO-**

- ◇ • Plan with the principal.
- ◇ • Keep channels of communication defined and operating.
- ◇ • Respond to requests for help.
- ◇ • Respect the areas of responsibility.
- ◇ • Foster good home-school relationships.
- ◇ • Understand the school's policies and procedures.
- ◇ • Show thoughtfulness and pre-planning in the use of school facilities.
- ◇ • Consider school schedules when planning PTA activities.
- ◇ • Always include principal or representative in meetings.
- ◇ • Listen to suggestions with an open mind

### **PTA PRESIDENTS LIKE PRINCIPALS WHO-**

- ◇ • Believe in and support PTA.
- ◇ • Attend PTA meetings, including executive committee meetings.
- ◇ • Cooperate with the PTA in use of school facilities.
- ◇ • Make the PTA feel welcome and a part of the school.
- ◇ • Help PTA and the school work toward mutual goals.
- ◇ • Keep PTA informed on school programs, problems and needs.
- ◇ • Help with program planning and cooperate in money raising projects.
- ◇ • Encourage teachers to join the PTA, help with program planning, and participate in the activities.
- ◇ • Stress the importance to teachers of disseminating timely PTA notices.

**PRINCIPALS BELIEVE THAT PTA PRESIDENTS WHO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS DO THESE THINGS -**

- ◇ Provide for more parent participation in PTA programs and activities.
- ◇ Work to secure better attendance at meetings.
- ◇ Use time and energy wisely.
- ◇ Secure a balance between organizational matters and student-oriented activities.
- ◇ Plan ahead the time and types of meetings and projects.
- ◇ Work with the principal - never bypass him/her.
- ◇ Encourage teacher participation in PTA planning.
- ◇ Emphasize the usefulness of reports that highlight accomplishments and provide suggestions for future work.
- ◇ Be sure plans are clear as to what is entailed in a job to be done.
- ◇ Give credit when and where it is due.

**PTA PRESIDENTS BELIEVE THAT PRINCIPALS WHO IMPROVE RELATIONSHIPS DO THESE THINGS -**

- ◇ • Encourage teachers to join the PTA and to attend PTA meetings and socialize with parents.
- ◇ • Encourage parents to join the PTA and volunteer in the school.
- ◇ • Work to create a welcoming environment.
- ◇ • Offer leadership - guide, but not dominate the PTA.
- ◇ • Be decisive and accessible.
- ◇ • Be informed about PTA policies and procedures and encourage PTA leaders to carry out the policies.
- ◇ • Help to increase parent attendance at meetings.
- ◇ • Know parents in an open, friendly way.

## PTA ELECTION DO'S AND DONT'S

With the school board elections and potential ballot initiatives, it's important you and your members are aware of the laws around what your PTA can and cannot do.

1) PTAs **CANNOT** support/endorse/oppose candidates. This is IRS law. If your PTA endorses a candidate you not only jeopardize your PTA's non-profit status but the non-profit status of every PTA in Colorado.

2) PTAs **CAN** support or oppose ballot issues. If your PTA wishes to take a position to support or oppose a ballot initiative you must have a majority vote of your membership (not just your Board) and you must give your membership fair notice that the vote will take place (7-10 days).

**501(c)(3) Status and Law.** Because PTA is a 501c3 non-profit corporation, the IRS does not allow PTA to support candidates. It is legal for PTAs to inform voters of an election and list ALL the candidates who are running. PTAs may hold candidate forums, as long as ALL candidates are invited.

**Advocating for an Initiative.** Colorado PTA prefers that local units help ballot issue campaigns by providing volunteer assistance with such things as literature distribution, yard signs, phone calling, etc., rather than making monetary contributions. Voter registration drives are encouraged.

**Campaign Donations.** The IRS does not allow local units to contribute more than "an insubstantial amount" of their gross revenue to ballot issue campaigns or lobbying. This is generally viewed as being between 2% and 5% of gross revenue. (Please note that this refers to the total amount given to all ballot issues and lobbying throughout the year.) Because all local units are part of the Colorado PTA's 501c3, a transgression in this area by one PTA unit jeopardizes all units in the state! If a unit believes that it can reasonably make a financial contribution, it is vital that a vote be held at a unit meeting and the decision be recorded in the minutes.

**Rent the Table or the Room**

Advocating for PTA's position or passing out literature on ballot issues may be done at school events/on school property only if: 1) A table is rented for passing out literature and/or 2) The room is rented if you are advocating for or against an issue at a meeting.

**Don't Use School Resources**

No school resources may be used for printing, mailing, or distributing literature advocating PTA's position on ballot issues. Literature with PTA's position may be copied at a location off of school grounds and may be mailed or handed out off of school grounds or at rented tables at school events. When mailing literature advocating PTA's position, the mail may be sent only to PTA members.

**Educate Voters**

As a non-profit organization, PTA's primary role is to educate. But PTA strongly encourages voter participation, since one of the purposes of PTA is to "secure adequate laws for the protection of children and youth," and part of the mission of PTA is to "support and speak on behalf of children and youth in schools, in the community, and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children."



**National PTA School of Excellence** is a recognition program that supports and celebrates partnerships between PTAs and schools to enrich the educational experience and overall well-being for all students.

As a **National PTA School of Excellence**, families feel welcomed and empowered to support student success, and PTA is a key partner for continuous school improvement.

The path to excellence starts with a joint commitment of PTA and school leaders to work together to achieve [PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships](#).

Through the School of Excellence program, your PTA and school will gain new ways to engage families in school decision-making, such as improvements to programs, practices and policies related to education, health, safety or the arts.

### **What does it take to become a National PTA School of Excellence?**

1. Enroll your PTA between **April 1 and Oct. 1**. You will receive the "Getting Started Guide," which describes program components, including your first steps to gather feedback from families and set goals with your school partner.
2. Survey your school community and share the results with National PTA by submitting a Family-School Partnership Scan by **Nov. 1**
3. Receive a customized "Roadmap to Excellence" containing recommendations that respond to your specific results from the Family-School Partnership Scan.
4. Complete the National PTA School of Excellence application before **June 1**
5. Celebrate your excellence! All National PTA School of Excellence recipients will receive a toolkit to support celebration activities.

## PTA TRAINING AND CONFERENCE DATES

### COLORADO PTA'S ANNUAL LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

#### Usually in February

\$35 per person (lunch included)

Join Colorado PTA

for a day at the state capitol.

You'll have the opportunity

to meet your legislators,

visit the house and senate floors,

attend workshops, and more!



### COLORADO PTA'S ANNUAL CONVENTION



#### Usually in April

\$250 per person, includes five meals and overnight stay.

~ Features over 35 workshops! ~  
*training, inspiration, collaboration*

~ More than 40 exhibitors! ~

~ Networking Opportunities! ~

~ Inspirational Keynote Speakers! ~

Budget to bring your whole board!

Plus, Region and Council trainings are offered in the Summer and Fall for incoming officers to learn the basics of running a PTA. Check with the Colorado PTA office for dates and locations.



PTA REFLECTIONS

## Does Your PTA Participate in the Reflections Program?

PTA believes all children deserve a quality arts education and encourages students to pursue artistic expression through participation in its annual Reflections Program. The program offers students the opportunity to create works of art for fun and recognition. Students in preschool through grade 12 are encouraged to submit works of art in six areas: literature, musical composition, photography, dance, video production, and the visual arts (which include art forms such as drawing, painting, print making, and collage). We also have a "Special Artists" category!

In its more than 40 year history; the program has encouraged millions of students across the nation and in American schools overseas to explore their artistic talents. The Reflections Program was started in 1969 by then Colorado PTA President Mary Lou Anderson.

The goal of PTA's Arts in Education programming is to be a resource for PTA leaders in partnering with schools to provide opportunities for all students to explore and be involved in the arts. The arts—and the National PTA Reflections program—support student success and serve as a valuable tool for building strong partnerships in your school community.

When PTAs and schools work together to support arts education, they:

- Encourage all students—despite individual challenges—to explore ideas, express their individuality and support their peers in a positive way;
- Provide all students with an academic advantage by increasing student engagement and teacher effectiveness, which leads to increased school attendance rates and social connectedness among students; and
- Enhance family engagement by connecting families and schools to one another and to their communities.
- Schools and PTAs committed to quality learning in the arts can identify opportunities together for families to take an active role in support of arts education.

Colorado PTA participates in the National Reflections Program. Last year we had more than 1,000 entries! Student works and projects are submitted through any PTAs/PTSAs in good standing. Entries compete progressively, beginning with their local PTA/ PTSA, and moving up to the Region or Council PTA, Colorado PTA, and National PTA levels.

PTA believes that all children deserve opportunities to explore and be involved in the Arts. The National PTA Mary Lou Anderson Grant Program provides matching dollar funding to local PTAs to support in school and after school arts enhancement programs in local communities. PTAs serving at-risk student populations are particularly encourage to apply. For more information, including grant deadlines, please visit [pta.org/reflections](http://pta.org/reflections)

# Colorado **PTA**<sup>®</sup> *everychild. onevoice.*



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