

Roles and Responsibilities of Parent Associations and Parent –Teacher Associations

Session Overview

The Office for Family Engagement and Advocacy (OFEA) in collaboration with parent leaders have designed this professional development session to provide participants with more information about Parent Associations (PAs) or Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs):

- The overall role of the school's PA or PTA;
- The roles and responsibilities of the PA or PTA Executive Board and the mandatory officers;
- The do's and don'ts of PA or PTA
- Best practices employed by successful PAs and PTAs
- Support provided by the Office for Family Engagement and Advocacy (OFEA)
- Available resources for PAs and PTAs

Parent Associations: A Foundation for Parent Involvement

- State Education Law 2590, Section h.15. (a) requires the “establishment of a Parent Association (PA) or a Parent -Teacher Association (PTA) in each school under the Chancellor’s jurisdiction and that each district do the same”.
- Every parent (by birth or step), legally appointed guardian, person in parental relation and foster parent to a child currently attending a public school is an automatic member of their school’s PA or PTA. There is no need to join the PA or PTA and payment of dues may not be used as a condition for membership and/or running for PA or PTA office.
- Parent Associations and Parent-Teacher Associations are one important way for parents to support public education and their local school communities.
- Parents are the Department’s primary partners in education and are strongly encouraged to take an active role in their school’s PA or PTA.

The Role of the PA or PTA: Building Relationships and Capacity for Parent Involvement Within Our School Communities

The primary role of the Parent Association or Parent-Teacher Association is to provide a forum through which parents can become more involved in the education of their children. The PA or PTA may fulfill this role in a number of ways, including:

- conduct outreach to its members to determine the needs and interest of membership;
- plan activities designed to attract and recruit more parents to build a robust parent involvement program;
- help to provide access to information and available educational resources to all the parents in the school;
- identify issues of concern and work with educators to address these issues;
- provide opportunities for professional development for its parent membership (e.g., CR A-660 requirements);
- partner with other members of the school community (e.g., Parent Coordinator, Learning Leaders) to offer services to families and share resources

The Role of the PA or PTA: Building Relationships and Capacity for Parent Involvement Within Our School Communities

- engage in the school-based decision making process through involvement and active participation on School Leadership Teams;
- hold and support fund-raising activities to benefit the children and association;
- establish a Family Resource area within the school for sharing information and materials with members;
- sustain parent involvement and participation in school activities
- establish multiple communication systems (e.g., newsletter, e-mail account, websites, phone trees) to ensure regular contact with members

Role of the PA or PTA Executive Board: Providing and Promoting Leadership for the Association

• The mandatory PA or PTA Executive Board officers are the 1) President, 2) Co-Presidents, 3) Recording Secretary and 4) Treasurer. These mandatory officers also serve as the voting selectors during Community and Citywide Education Council elections.

PA or PTA Executive Board officers:

- are elected annually by the membership of the parent association or parent-teacher association.
- are expected to provide the leadership needed to move the goals and objectives of the PA/PTA forward.
- should make every effort to build and sustain relationships within the school community to garner support for school programs
- serve as representatives for the school and its membership on district, borough and citywide organizations (e.g., Presidents' Councils, District Leadership Teams, Chancellor's Parent Advisory Council)
- share the leadership responsibilities regarding the execution and transparent conduct of PA or PTA membership business

Role of the PA or PTA President or Co-President

- conducts and chairs at all PA or PTA meetings, unless otherwise specified in the PA or PTA's bylaws;
- assists the association in moving forward with the decision-making process through the use of consensus building and parliamentary procedures;
- coordinates the work of the Executive Board officers and committees of the association;
- co-signs all PA or PTA checks;
- serves as the primary representative to the Presidents' Council/Borough High School Council;
- serves as a core member of the School Leadership Team;
- meets regularly with the other Executive Board officers to plan agendas for association meetings, consultation and information sharing;
- encourages parent involvement and sets the tone for maximum member participation;
- appoints chairpersons of PA or PTA committees (fund-raising, hospitality, etc.);
- assists with the June transfer of all PA or PTA records to the incoming Executive Board;

Role of the PA or PTA Recording Secretary

- records motions, votes, decisions, financial activity, reports and abbreviated discussion at all association meetings (minutes);*
- reads and provides access to relevant correspondence to association members;*
- prepares responses to all incoming correspondence;*
- maintains an accurate file of all incoming and outgoing correspondence;*
- prepares all meeting notices and agendas for distribution at association meetings;*
- receives all of the association's mail and directs mail to the appropriate Executive Board officer;*

**These duties may also be assumed by the PA or PTA Corresponding Secretary*

Role of the PA or PTA Recording Secretary

- prepares minutes providing a summary of the association's action regarding agenda items at all meetings;
- distributes minutes at each association meeting for review and adoption by the membership;
- maintains a central file of all association records on school premises in a secure location;
- forwards a current list of newly elected officers to the Principal each spring;
- assists with the June transfer of records to the incoming Executive Board officers;

Role of PA or PTA Treasurer

- keeps records of all income received by the PA or PTA;
- keeps records of all expenses the PA or PTA;
- provides a Treasurer's report at each PA or PTA meeting;
- works with the Budget Committee to develop an annual budget for the PA or PTA;
- prepares the January Interim Financial Accounting Report; June Annual Financial Accounting Report and all other monthly reports (i.e., fund raising, Treasurer's monthly report);
- deposits money in the PA/PTA checking account (in accordance with the association's bylaws);
- co-signs all PA/PTA checks;
- assists with the June transfer of PA/PTA financial records

Recordkeeping

The PA or PTA Executive Board is responsible for maintaining and safeguarding the records of the association. Chancellor's Regulation A-660 (CR A-660) requires that all records of the PA or PTA must be kept on school premises.

These records include but are not limited to: Employee Identification Number (EIN) and Tax Exempt Certificate for the association, checking account information, checkbooks, cancelled checks, deposit slips, copies of vendor contracts, inventory lists, invoices, bank statements, ledgers, receipts, paid and outstanding bills to vendors, monthly Treasurer reports, January Interim and June Annual Financial Accounting reports, fund raising activity reports, Principal's PA Status Reports, CR A-660 G.1 and G.2, budget, amendments to the budget, audit reports; all PA correspondence, bylaws, amendments to the bylaws, meeting notices, attendance sheets and minutes.

**All records are the property of the association or council and must be retained from administration to administration. Any and all of these records must be made available to the membership and/or school and Department of Education officials upon reasonable request.*

June Transfer of Records

The June leadership transition meeting. (official transfer of records) is required in order to ensure a smooth and transparent transition of leadership and seamless PA or PTA operation. At least two meetings are recommended to ensure completion of the process.

These meetings should be structured in a way that allows for discussion and an overview of all PA or PTA transactions for the school year, both financial and operational. Access to and a complete review of all PA or PTA records during these meetings is required. Although the incoming Executive Boards do not take office until July 1st, it is extremely important that they be provided access to all records listed above and have a working knowledge of the status of the organization.

In addition, all keys to PA filing cabinet(s) and other possible storage areas should be relinquished by the outgoing Executive Board members to incoming PA or PTA Executive Board members prior to July 1st. PA or PTA Executive Boards are encouraged to seek the assistance of the Presidents' Council or Borough High School Federation/Council for assistance throughout this important transition period.

The Do's and Don't s of the PA or PTA

All PAs and PTAs have the following rights:

- ✓ Governance (*free to operate without interference or supervision provided they fully comply with the Chancellor's Regulation A-660, bylaws and the law*);
- ✓ Set Policy (*provided that policy does not violate the Chancellor's Regulation A-660, bylaws and the law*);
- ✓ Choose their own representatives (subject to the requirements of Chancellor's Regulation A-660 and their bylaws);
- ✓ Access to information and consultation (relating to student achievement and the operation of the school)
- ✓ Request assistance to facilitate mailing home information to its members (and distribution of literature through the children)
- ✓ Free access to space (*8 hours per month*) in the school building for activities/events that occur during extended hours (after school) and security;
- ✓ File a grievance for the enforcement of these rights

PAs and PTAs are not:

- ✓ Entitled to a "parent room";
- ✓ Permitted to acquire or use an ATM, credit or "P" card;
- ✓ Allowed to use the school's EIN or Tax Exempt Number for purchases;
- ✓ Permitted to keep PA or PTA records in their homes (or their cars);
- ✓ Allowed to keep PA or PTA funds in an unlocked drawer (in a brown paper bag);
- ✓ Permitted to act as the sole signatory on checks drawn against the PA or PTA account;
- ✓ Allowed to make checks out to "cash"
- ✓ Encouraged to act as cliques and drive away other parents;
- ✓ Encouraged to have the same PA or PTA President for ten years

Best Practices for PAs and PTAs

- Be inclusive, not exclusive!
- Build and nurture relationships with other parents and members of the school community!
- Support your parent leadership!
- Each one, teach one! Information is only powerful when you share it.
- Learn from each other and model what you've learned!
- Build the capacity of the organization!
- Ask for help when you need it!

OFEA Support for PAs and PTAs

- OFEA is available to provide assistance and guidance to PAs and PTAs upon request, however, PAs and PTAs are encouraged to reach out to the Presidents' Council or Borough High School Council as a first step.
- OFEA has developed a number of training materials (including the SPA series) and other resources which are posted on our website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/OFEA/default.htm>.
- All materials are available in these eight languages (Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, Haitian Creole, Korean, Russian, Spanish and Urdu).
- Additional SPA training dates include: 6/18, 6/21, 6/28, 7/9, 7/12, 7/17 and 7/19.
- For more information about how OFEA can serve your organization, please feel free to contact your District Family Advocate, Borough Director or e-mail us at OFEA@schools.nyc.gov.

Other OFEA Summer (Saturday) Parent Academy Professional Development Topics

- Roles and Responsibilities of Presidents' and Borough High School Councils
- Role of Community and Citywide Education Councils
- Fiscal Management and Responsibilities
- Recordkeeping
- Overview of Title I Parent Involvement Requirements
- Writing and Revising Bylaws
- Budget Planning
- Team and Capacity Building
- Effective Leadership and Outreach
- Sharpening Your Advocacy Skills

Other Resources for PAs and PTAs

- Presidents' Councils and Borough High School Councils
- Borough Directors
- District Family Advocates
- Community and Citywide Education Councils
- Office for Family Engagement and Advocacy
- <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/OFEA/default.htm>