

Student involvement in elementary and middle schools

PTA involvement is not just for high school students. An elementary, middle, or junior high school PTA/PTSA can provide enrichment, academic and cultural experiences for all students and help ensure that PTA/PTSA programs are relevant and serve the needs of the students and the school community.

A guiding philosophy for elementary and middle/junior high school PTA/PTSA:

- Invite students to take on age-appropriate positions on committees or on the board.
- Provide adult mentors for student board members.
- Adjust job responsibilities so students can become trained.
- Practice effective communication skills, including nonverbal communication.
- Encourage and allow student input in discussions of issues.
- Consider students' viewpoints – their ideas are valuable.
- Develop activities that include and are of interest to students and adults.

Adult responsibilities:

- Survey the school community to find out what type of activities students identify as having value and that will encourage their involvement.
- Elect student(s) to serve as member(s) of the nominating committee.
- Identify students by their function (e.g., chairman, co-chairman) and not by a label (student co-chairman).
- Involve students as equals in planning programs, membership enrollment campaigns, and in all action-oriented committees. Focus on doing "with" rather than "for."
- Provide an atmosphere of mutual respect between adults and students so that issues may be discussed honestly and resolved fairly.

Student Responsibilities:

- Communicate with adult members about the needs and concerns of fellow students. This will ensure clear, swift actions to remedy any problems.
- Interact with and motivate other students to plan meaningful programs and activities that will enhance the atmosphere on your campus, and help create a more positive learning environment for all.
- Represent students and PTA/PTSA at school board and other civic meetings, wherever student input is needed or requested.