

The Power of Partnerships Family Survey

Dear Families,

The best way to make sure every student in our school succeeds is to build a strong partnership between families, the school, and the community. The survey below gives you the opportunity to tell us what our school is doing well to support this partnership and what we can do better.

If you would like to help tally and analyze the results, please let us know.

—The Family Involvement Action Team

<Provide the names and contact information of the team members here.>

Welcoming All Families into the School Community

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. When I walk into the school, I feel the school is inviting and that this is a place where parents “belong.”	<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. The school’s policies and programs reflect, respect, and value the diversity of the families in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
3. Students at the school are treated fairly no matter what their race or cultural background.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
4. I feel welcome at PTA/parent group meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

Communicating Effectively

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5. The school keeps all families informed about important issues and events.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
6. The school makes it easy for families to communicate with teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
7. The school communicates with families in multiple ways (e.g., e-mail, phone, website).	<input type="checkbox"/>				
8. I can talk to the school principal when I need to.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
9. My child’s teacher communicates with me on a regular basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>				
10. It’s easy to get a translator if I need one.	<input type="checkbox"/>				

The Power of Partnerships Family Survey, continued

Supporting Student Success Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 11. My child's teacher keeps me well informed about how my child is doing in school. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 12. I understand the academic standards my child is supposed to meet and how the curriculum is linked to those standards. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 13. My child's teacher and the school give me useful information about how to improve my child's progress. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 14. All students are challenged to do their best. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Speaking Up for Every Child Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 15. If the school can't help me, they will connect me to someone who can. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 16. I understand the rules and requirements for student dress, language, and behavior. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 17. The school keeps me informed of my rights under federal and state laws and policies and helps me exercise those rights as needed. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 18. I feel empowered to advocate for my own child's and other children's success in school. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Sharing Power Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

- | | | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 19. The school consults with me and other families before making important decisions (e.g., changes in curriculum, school policies, dress code). | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 20. The school provides opportunities for families to develop relationships and raise concerns with school leaders, public officials, and business and community leaders. | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Collaborating with Community Strongly agree Agree Neutral Disagree Strongly disagree

- | | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 21. The school connects students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and community improvement initiatives. | <input type="checkbox"/> |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|

Comments _____
Your name (optional) _____

PTA engages families, boosts student achievement

Sheila Ragland, president, and Susan Hans, president-elect, Ohio PTA

The purpose of PTA is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. We believe family engagement is key to achieving that goal.

What is family engagement? Family engagement is the shared responsibility among parents, administrators and teachers in making decisions, setting goals and achieving desirable outcomes for students. It is any interaction that provides two-way communication among parents and school staff. We know students do better in school if their parents consistently relay the importance of education.

PTAs emphasize that message through communications and programs based on National PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships:

- Standard 1 — Welcoming all families into the school community: Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued and connected to each other, school staff and what students are learning and doing in class.
- Standard 2 — Communicating effectively: Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful

communication about student learning.

- Standard 3 — Supporting student success: Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development, both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.
- Standard 4 — Speaking up for every child: Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children to ensure students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.
- Standard 5 — Sharing power: Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence and create policies, practices and programs.
- Standard 6 — Collaborating with community: Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services and civic participation.

How PTAs facilitate engagement using these standards

First, PTAs welcome all families into the school community. That effort starts at the beginning of the school year when we invite parents to a social or community service event or the first regular PTA meeting. These events can include ice cream socials, picnics or school supply donation weekends such as Stuff the Bus. In addition, PTA presidents speak at kindergarten and new family orientations, open houses or a coffee with the principal. It also is important for the PTA president to welcome the teachers back to school. The PTA president often shares with teachers how PTA makes all families feel welcome and discusses plans for the year.

To encourage effective communication, PTAs use a variety of ways to reach as much of the school population as possible. We use social media, email, phone calls or a Web page or Web link to the PTA page on the school website. PTAs also issue monthly print or electronic newsletters that feature school and PTA news. The first PTA newsletter of the year should include a volunteer form so everyone has an opportunity to help. On that form, PTAs ask for the best way to communicate with each parent or family. PTA meetings and



The National PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships help local PTAs focus on communication and programs that connect parents and school staff.

programs are open to everyone, including staff and administrators. At those events, we try to help families feel comfortable in the school building and encourage interaction with staff. We also recognize that not all families are able to regularly participate in meetings and events, so we offer opportunities to volunteer at home or contribute a talent on an occasional basis.

PTAs hold events throughout the year that support student success and promote the well-being of all children. These events might be a Fathers Walk, summer reading celebration, Grand Friends Day, family fun bingo night, student art show, literacy night, cultural heritage celebration or carnival. In February, PTAs are encouraged to participate in Take Your Family To School Week, which highlights activities that focus on families being together with staff in the school setting. PTA programs should reflect the diversity of the community. We believe the school atmosphere should be inviting and a place where families from all cultures and socioeconomic strata belong.

How do PTAs speak up for every child? As an issue-oriented organization, we provide parents with one of the most effective ways to become involved in their child's, and every child's, education. PTA is the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the nation and we are dedicated to educating parents on state and national issues affecting children and families. PTAs host speakers to let parents know how legislation affects their schools and children. Recently, Ohio PTA sponsored a statewide conference call with U.S. Sen. **Sherrod Brown** (D-Ohio) about the Elementary and Secondary Education Act legislation, giving parents and educators across Ohio an opportunity to engage with an elected official at the national level. The Ohio PTA and National PTA websites are valuable resources for information

on current legislation and policy issues.

PTAs are good communication channels between schools and parents. PTAs encourage shared decision making by providing opportunities for families to develop relationships with school building and district leaders. These ongoing relationships give families formal and informal ways to raise concerns. PTA meetings offer a place where school leaders can share building and district information and seek parental feedback on issues. A PTA and school district can hold forums where district leaders speak to parents about changes taking place in the school community. Consistent two-way communication with families builds trust in and support for their schools.

Fostering collaboration with the community is achieved through PTA members, who typically are involved in other local community organizations. PTAs help new families feel welcome in the school community. Our events and meetings allow time for families to establish social relationships after PTA business is conducted. PTA members contribute their talents and time and use their community connections to find resources for career planning and other enhanced learning programs. PTAs encourage civic responsibility by sponsoring candidate nights during local elections and participating in community service projects.

PTA is 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. Family engagement and connecting parents with school and community is the heart of its mission. ■

Editor's note: You can learn more about the National PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships at www.pta.org/nationalstandards.



Clean Fuels For Schools

What is The Clean Fuels For Schools Initiative?

The Clean Fuels For Schools initiative is part of a public, private partnership developed to cooperatively assist in the development and integration of "best technology" and adoption of "best practices" to improve Ohio schools energy security, economic stewardship and environmental impact. The CFFS specifically works with Ohio schools to adopt new "clean" standard for the fuel storage tanks and the use of the new high performance fuels. This program is offered to Ohio Schools with fuel storage and dispensing capability.



THE NEXT GENERATION OF FUEL IS HERE
www.HPCDFuel.com

The purpose of the Clean Fuel For Schools initiative is to:

- ✓ Provide a healthier environment for children by reducing the emissions coming from diesel-powered buses
- ✓ Reduce the maintenance cost and extend the life of your school buses by eliminating the contamination and poor quality of fuel
- ✓ Reduce fuel use annually by using a highly refined fuel

The 5-year Objective of the Clean Fuel For Schools initiative is to:

- ✓ Reduce 10 Million gallons in fuel for Ohio Schools
- ✓ Decrease 200 million of lbs. of school bus emissions by 2020



Eliminate fuel contamination

Eliminate fuel-related damage

Reduce fuel consumption by 10%+

Dramatically reduce emissions