

Working with Principals: 10 Partnering Tips for a Strong School Community

Working with principals is cited by PTA presidents as one of the major means to a successful year. PTA leaders are always looking for new ways to work with their principals. Try some of the ideas below, or use them to get your creative juices flowing!

1. **Ask your principal to host a “welcome” night.** For this event, all parents are invited to the school to hear the principal give an opening address, establish basic expectations for the year, and invite parents to ask questions. Provide a form on which parents can write their contact information, the best times to contact them, and preferred methods of communication. Your principal can provide the same contact information to parents.
2. **Invite your principal to become a member.** When you solicit your principal’s membership, talk about ways the PTA can help the school community embrace all parents and caregivers to implement successful school programs.
3. **Invite your principal to take part in developing the PTA’s plan of work.** The principal can work with the PTA to set goals for ongoing collaboration throughout the year.
4. **Make the principal-parent dialog visible.** Invite your principal to write an article for the PTA newsletter or listserv. Ask him or her to host coffees or “chats with the principal.” If other languages are spoken in your community, invite bilingual parents or caregivers to help with translating.
5. **Work with your principal to network with community resources.** Hospitals, community centers, banks, and libraries are among the organizations that can be tapped to offer free services or informational sessions to the school. Ask your principal for a prioritized wish list of services for the school and its families.
6. **Working with your principal, invite community groups and youth-service organizations to school.** Shows, sporting events, and showcases of service-learning projects publicize what students have accomplished. Ask these groups how you can work toward shared goals in support of the school.
7. **Conduct a fundraiser tied to specific goals of your principal and 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 your school or principal for awards .** Include parents in the recognition process. Consider National PTA’s Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification or the outstanding principal programs of the National Association of Elementary School Principals and the National Association of Secondary School Principals for your nominations.
9. **Encourage two-way messaging .** Establish a principal-approved voice-mail system in which teachers regularly leave voice-mail 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 in your school .** Form a task force of parents, your principal, and pertinent school district staff to examine the school lunch program (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 recommendations for change, if necessary.

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PTA Three for Me program

<http://www.pta.org/programs/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3274>

Three for Me is a PTA program designed to effectively involve parents and families in support of children and their education. This program will help PTAs and parents find different ways to volunteer at home, in school, and in the community—all which support student learning. This way, parents can volunteer when they have time during the day, in the evening or on the weekends.

Three for Me online resources include:

Creative ways to connect all families to their child's school and education

- Ideas to strengthen home-school-community partnerships
- Resources to motivate parent forum for program and idea sharing
- Helpful ways to track volunteers and the positive impact they are having on student success

Get **Three for Me** started at your school or organization today and put a new face on parent involvement.

Resources

Promise Cards in English and Spanish to distribute to families who promise to volunteer.

[Promise Cards \(fillable\)](#)

[Promise Cards \(Spanish\)](#)

[Promise Cards \(non-fillable\)](#)

Certificates to customize and distribute to families who donate their time to volunteer. Available in English and Spanish, as well as in black and white or full color.

[Certificate \(fillable\)](#)

[Certificate \(Spanish\)](#)

[Certificate \(non-fillable\)](#)

Benefits for Your School is a tip sheet for families to help them understand the value of their donated time.

[Benefits Tipsheet](#)

Visitor Badges in English and Spanish.

[Visitor Badge](#)

[Visitor Badge \(Spanish\)](#)

Additional Three for Me resources include a leader's guide and, a volunteer tracking spreadsheet, sign in sheets, and surveys that can be customized and downloaded.

[Leader's Guide](#)

[Volunteer Sign-In](#)

[Volunteer Badge](#)

[Volunteer Survey](#)

[Volunteer Hours Spreadsheet](#)

[Volunteer Survey \(Spanish\)](#)

[Language Not a Barrier for Hispanic Parents Looking to Help Children Succeed in School](#)
Information on how Hispanic parents have used PTA's Three For Me program