

## The principal and the 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 the community, be positive and enthusiastic about your school.
- Develop a win-win attitude. Celebrate each other's accomplishments.

Both positions are difficult at times. Remember the value of humor in keeping things in perspective.

## Get Connected with PTA!

## About the Illinois PTA

The Illinois PTA, with over 140,000 members state-wide, is a volunteer organization dedicated solely to the welfare of children in their schools and communities. Illinois PTA was organized on May 30, 1900, and has since worked diligently to support public schools and to ensure that all children have equal opportunities and access to education. The Illinois PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.



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PO Box 907  
Springfield, IL 62705-0907  
800-877-9617  
Fax: 217-528-9090  
[www.illinoispta.org](http://www.illinoispta.org)

# Illinois PTA®

And

# Principals



## Working Together For All Children!

## Teamwork in Education

Teamwork has become the model for success in business and industry. It is also the key to success in education. Teamwork begins at the local school with a partnership between the principal and parents leading to success for all students.

What does it mean for the PTA and the principal to work as partners? It means:

- Each understands his or her responsibilities and the other's.
- Setting goals and working cooperatively to achieve them.
- Respecting each other's opinion—not expecting automatic approval from the other and not withdrawing support if opinions differ.
- Reaching out to all parents and school staff to help our children and youth reach their potential.

## The principal builds 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:

- Be available to the community. Schedule meetings open to the public at different times, days, evenings, and weekends. Invite parents to set up private appointments to discuss concerns.

- Work to make parents feel welcome and comfortable in school — the first step toward parent involvement.
- Plan for and encourage parent-teacher conferences. Show parents and teachers how to use conferences to build parent-teacher-student teamwork. Make sure conferences are held at times when parents can come.
- Be 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.
- Be active in the PTA and also encourage the teachers to participate.
- Help the PTA keep its primary focus on education rather than fund raising. The principal and the PTA can work together to solve problems and set goals that will benefit students.
- Work 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.
- Help parents stay informed on current issues in education through reading, radio, and TV. If there is a school or library parent resource center, suggest materials to include in these areas. Encourage parents to utilize these resources
- Recognize PTA volunteers' efforts. Appreciate the contributions of parents.
- Encourage constructive discussions with parents that build confidence in the school's leadership and strengthen the parent

## The PTA and parents build a partnership with the principal

More and more, parents want to take an active role in their children's education. Being a member of the PTA gives them a way to work together in partnership with the principal. Here's how:

- Encourage the principal to speak openly about his or her goals and concerns.
- Present PTA and parent concerns and issues to the principal. Develop a forum that allows for frank and open discussion.
- Focus on education and the best ways to work together for the benefit of students.
- Work with the principal or site-based management council to set goals. Plan programs that will help achieve these goals.
- Be alert to staff and community talents and resources. Draw on these resources for the benefit of the entire school.
- Help the principal promote fair discipline for all children. Volunteer to help write a discipline code for the school if one does not exist.
- Work with the principal to develop annual school reports and budgets. PTA volunteers can speak in support of budgets and other issues in front of the school board and local government.
- Keep things seen or heard at school confidential. Encourage every volunteer to honor the ethical considerations and legal responsibilities regarding the privacy of students and their records.