

PTA Great Idea Bank FAQs

Q: What is the new PTA Great Idea Bank?

A: The PTA Great Idea Bank that existed as an online-accessible database of ideas on key PTA topics has been replaced with a more vibrant, user-friendly and interactive social network. This network, found at www.ptagreatideabank.org, is built on the Ning.com platform. Ning is a well-financed, five-year-old company that provides people a free tool for creating social networks. Ning has more than 29 million users on more than one million networks. It has become a popular option for many non-profit associations' social networking needs.

Q: What has happened to the old PTA Great Idea Bank?

A: The old database still exists and ideas from it will be used to occasionally seed discussion in the PTA Great Idea Bank social network. You can see an example of that here:

<http://www.ptagreatideabank.org/forum/topics/student-book-exchange>

Q: Why was this transition made?

A: This social networking platform is more user-friendly than the online database. The new PTA Great Idea Bank is a truly interactive experience and users can more easily add ideas, comment on other people's ideas, ask questions, and interact with one another. For years now, the trend in online communication has been toward building community, which is what the new PTA Great Idea Bank does. The transition was guided by a committee that met earlier this year.

Q: What about the bulletin boards? Aren't they the same thing?

A: Not exactly. The social network is also more user friendly, versatile, and expandable than the bulletin boards. The system hampered participation and some topics had not seen posts since last summer. On a technical note, the boards were constantly inundated with bogus applications for membership, generated by spammers seeking to post content on the boards. This was not only dangerous but time-consuming to handle.

The boards will officially shut down August 31, 2009. Notices have been posted and new, valid applicants to the bulletin boards have been informed.

Q: Are the Great Idea Bank discussions moderated?

A: The social networking environment is moderated to a degree. GIB administrators will monitor conversations and posts, but will only delete content that is deemed inappropriate or considered advertising. Ning.com has a strong privacy and terms of service policy (found here: <http://www.ptagreatideabank.org/main/authorization/termsOfService?previousUrl=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.ptagreatideabank.org%2F>). This policy is augmented by the PTA Great Idea Bank user policy, posted in a box at the bottom of the home page.

Q: Is there a user guide available?

A: Yes, it can be downloaded from the link found in the upper left corner of the home page or at [PTA.org/GIB/PTA Great Idea Bank User Guide.doc](http://PTA.org/GIB/PTA%20Great%20Idea%20Bank%20User%20Guide.doc)

Q: How can I use the Great Idea Bank?

A: (Internal) You can form groups around specific topics or projects (examples: Healthy Lifestyles or the Miami National Standards Pilot Program). You can reply to discussions relevant to your content area or expertise. You can start discussions centered on specific areas. You can refer people to PTA resources

but don't make it a hard sell. This is not the venue for this kind of marketing and promotion. The community will react against it.

Explore the Great Idea Bank and see how conversations evolve to determine how you might best interact with our members and potential members.

Q: What is the objective of the PTA Great Idea Bank?

A: The most important goal of the Great Idea Bank is to create a vibrant interactive community, fueled mostly by the participants, not PTA. PTA benefits by hosting this community and starting conversations. People will find value in the conversations and even camaraderie fostered by this social network and will associate that value with PTA. This platform will provide a way for PTA to answer questions, provide resources and promote programs, but that is all secondary to building the community. Users come first here.

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