

# Setting Up Your PTA For Year-Round Success

Overview: Some of this is common sense, and applicable to any PTA!

Some of the key components to factor in for a year round PTA include:

- SCHEDULING and PLANNING!
- Cooperation with Administration/Staff
- Good Communication
- Always "in"! There really is no down time.

- I. Scheduling and Planning - This is always a necessity, as with any PTA.
  - A. Validate every track!! This can become tricky, especially with Programs. This can also become rather costly. Some Programs are worth holding twice. (This can be best broken up to two tracks per session of performer. This works really well during track in/out weeks; you may just have to schedule for two different times during the year. If it is not affordable to do this, and a track must be excluded, they must be INCLUDED for the next performer/performance. No one likes to be left out!)
  - B. A calendar meeting with Administration and PTA is **strongly** encouraged! Have an idea of what Programs your PTA is interested in providing for your school. This will make planning for the year much easier!  
  
\*note: Selling Year-round calendars (beginning with June and ending with July) with important school (test dates, Field Days) and PTA functions (Book Fair, meetings) is a hit at our school! We also color code who is tracked out.
  
- II. Cooperation with Administration and Staff - Of course this is Important! Get an idea of what your school needs/wants!
  - A. A teacher liaison is a valuable resource. Encourage 2 Teacher Liaisons. They should be two different tracks. (For attendance Purposes! If one is tracked out and unable to attend, the other can.)
  - B. Polling teachers as to interest/effectiveness of particular programs is a valuable tool. It will help with planning- budget and calendar. (This may be most effective to do in late April/May so as to help with budget planning and calendar meetings.)

III. Good Communication - Never underestimate the need to communicate!

- A. Newsletters- This is an effective tool to communicate to the masses- think 1,000+ students! They all have parents/caregivers and most want to know what is going on!
1. Suggestion: 1 newsletter every 3-4 weeks, or as needed.
  2. Yet another: Email! It cuts down on paper, and if there's not much news, it still effectively gets the message out.
- B. Bulletin Boards- Post it somewhere obvious and accessible!
- \*Consider: You'll need volunteers for all of these! And you'll need to keep in mind that you'll need people from different tracks to take care of these things if some are tracked out/unavailable.

IV. YOU ARE ALWAYS IN! - There really isn't down time. In Traditional schools, there is definitely a break, from May to August. You will have phases when things will slow down, and you'll catch your breath! June/July (beginning of the year, busy with meetings/planning!) and from April to June of the next year will typically be peak months. From April to July are also busy because of transitions, particularly for new chairs. And speaking of board members...

- A. Have board members representative of all tracks. It is not necessary to have 2 V-P's/Co-chairs for everything. Try to have at least 1 board member from each track.
1. Presidents- Don't co-chair. It's a good idea to be very supportive/accessible to the new president. Also, nominate someone that is familiar with the workings of your PTA.
- B. Membership Drive- Your membership drive begins before the Traditional school year! You probably won't have membership cards in until 1-2 months after you've begun your drive. (Your membership drive will probably begin by June.)
- C. Budget talks- Suggestion: Have your budget ready to presented by the end of June.
- \*Another suggestion: Prepare to have your final budget presented at your school's Open House. This will let you know how much time you've got to get this figured out!  
(At our school, we do a PTA/Budget video to show at our Open House. This familiarized all tracks/staff with the plans and faces of the new board. We print a few copies of the budget for

each class, as well as ballots for each class. Votes are deposited afterwards by the teachers into a collection box. We've found this to be very effective.)

Final Thoughts: I cannot emphasize enough the importance of being calendar aware- Plan and Schedule! Being informed and prepared will be your most valuable tools. Of course this would apply to any PTA. Your biggest challenge will probably be to not leave anyone out!

**As your PTA transitions to a multi-track calendar OR as a new school opening with a newly formed PTA.....Keep in mind that simpler is best for the first year. This will provide you with an opportunity to spend a year "figuring out" your PTA operations. Don't try to do too much the first year; this will give you a much higher level of success overall. Strong PTA's are the key to the success of any school.**

GOOD LUCK! I hope you enjoy it half as much as I have!!

Mandi Loftis, Pres. '05-'07

West Lake Elem. PTA

[ptapresident@wlepta.org](mailto:ptapresident@wlepta.org)

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