

What is a PTA Council?

A 'council' is a group of local PTA units organized under the authority of the state PTA for the purpose of promoting conferences, communications, leadership development, and coordination of the efforts of such local PTA units.....Each state PTA may create or establish councils in counties, cities, or other areas designated by its board of managers/directors.

*National PTA Bylaws,
Article 5, Section 8*

PURPOSES OF COUNCILS

Councils play an important role in the PTA. They provide support and assistance to the PTA units within their areas and are a valuable resource of guidance and information. Councils provide the following services:

- Interpret, promote and support the basic policies of the PTA
- Coordinate the efforts of local units within their areas
- Make people aware of the need for action through the united strength of local PTAs
- Promote the use of State and National PTA publications, programs, and projects
- Provide in-depth background information on current issues related to the lives and education of children and youth
- Assist the local units, when asked, in understanding and carrying out action requested by resolutions adopted at State and National PTA conventions
- Build local unit and public support for local, state and National PTA legislative action
- Provide opportunities for PTAs to address issues, which include but reach beyond the local school community
- Strengthen PTA leadership by providing leadership development
- Enhance communication among local units, the council and the state
- Represent the interests of their member local units and the State and National PTA before school districts within their geographic areas and other appropriate provider organizations or advocacy groups
- Provide a forum for public information and debate on issues affecting children and youth, for candidates for public office and for legislative/public policy matters

SUGGESTED COUNCIL PROGRAMS, SERVICE PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

- Present parenting workshops
- Form study groups – school curriculum, finance, education reform, parent/community involvement
- Publish council newsletter which includes unit and school district information
- Initiate and carry out studies of important issues
- Host coffees or other such gatherings when important issues arise, such as school closings, bond issues and tax levy proposals
- Support school bond issues and tax levies
- Support or oppose legislation that affects the health, education or welfare of children and youth
- Establish a parent resource center

- Sponsor a school board candidates' meeting
 - Establish a communications network such as a telephone tree or call hotline
 - Develop a council calendar; include unit and school events
 - Provide a clothing and shoe bank
 - Showcase new PTA programs and materials at council meetings to generate interest and local unit activity
 - Coordinate a Reflections Program showcase
 - Institute a council scholarship program
 - Provide an information table or booth at school and community events
 - Coordinate or cooperate with community activities, such as drug awareness and safety programs, seasonal activities, environmental clean-up campaigns, or recycling projects
 - Print note cards or pads, using student artwork
 - Develop educational enhancement programs
 - Develop procedures for helping local units when school district structure is changed (merging or start of PTAs)
 - Sponsor a career conference
 - Provide information regarding scholarship and grant availability
 - Work to fulfill educational directives such as: abolishing corporal punishment in schools; securing adequate immunization for all children before entering school; opposing tax credits and deductions for elementary and secondary school tuition
 - Provide workshops addressing the following: bylaws review and revision; budget and finance; legislative advocacy activities and other education related expenses for public school students; nominating committee and election procedures; parliamentary procedure
- Councils may work with community agencies to secure or extend services such as the following: health care and mental health clinics; sex education programs; substance abuse programs; preschool screenings; dental clinics; latchkey/childcare programs; voter information and registration; recreational programs.
 - When considering working in cooperation with other organizations, councils should be sure that the proposed activity does the following: promote the PTA Objects and Mission; conforms to basic policies; does not conflict with or duplicate PTA programs or projects; has been presented to the council for approval.
 - Cooperation should **not** include: fundraising for other organizations; helping with membership enrollment of other organizations; contributing funds to finance the work of another organization.

COUNCIL MEETINGS

Every council decides the *number* of meetings to be held during the year and specifies this in its bylaws. Meetings should be held often enough to accomplish council work but not interfere with local unit meetings or overburden council and unit leaders.

Council meetings should do the following:

- ❖ Meeting the needs of the individual units and the council as a whole
- ❖ Increase the effectiveness of the member units
- ❖ Provide support
- ❖ Encourage the sharing of ideas
- ❖ Strengthen the relationship between the local PTA unit, council, district, region, State PTA and National PTA
- ❖ Provide opportunities for local leaders to work together and network with each other

Topics that may be covered in regular council meetings include the following:

- ❖ Leadership development programs
- ❖ Explanation and discussion of materials sent by State PTA and National PTA
- ❖ Committee reports
- ❖ Specific projects
- ❖ Membership promotion and enrollment plans
- ❖ Founders Day activities
- ❖ Board of Education reports

