

# Defining the Difference

**T**he term "PTA" is commonly used to describe any parent group, and many parents, teachers, and administrators are unaware of the distinct differences between PTA and other parent organizations.

## All parent groups are not the same

- ❖ PTA is a not-for-profit organization and the nation's original and premier parent involvement group in schools.
- ❖ PTA has more than 23,000 local units and nearly 6 million members.
- ❖ PTA units are supported by a national and state structure that provides valuable information, resources, and training.
- ❖ PTA believes parents are *more* than fundraisers.
- ❖ PTA works with parents to advocate for proper funding, leadership, and instruction for all schools and school districts.
- ❖ Chartered PTA units are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.
- ❖ Local PTAs are eligible for discounted insurance for events that are not covered by their schools.
- ❖ PTA provides a free data collection system.

## PTA membership is open to everyone

- ❖ PTA is inclusive of all people who care about children and schools.
- ❖ PTA builds bridges between homes, schools, and communities to help children succeed academically and personally.

## Local PTAs make their own decisions

- ❖ Local units select the priorities, programs, and activities that address the needs of their schools.
- ❖ There are no mandated programs from the national or state organization, though relevant programs, helpful resources, and a network of support are provided.

## Relevant programs

PTA national programs are free, user-friendly, and created with leading experts on topics of importance to PTA members. These programs include

- ❖ **Building Successful Partnerships**—Presenters, programs, and materials that strengthen parent involvement.
- ❖ **Parent Involvement Schools of Excellence Certification**—A program that recognizes schools for successful parent involvement practices.
- ❖ **Phoebe Apperson Hearst—National PTA Excellence in Education Partnership Award**—An award that recognizes local PTAs for their collaboration with families, schools, and communities.

- ❖ **Reflections Program**—An annual program that allows youth to express themselves through the arts.
- ❖ **Three for Me**—A volunteer program that encourages parents to volunteer three hours per year in their children's schools.

The PTA national office also provides resources, workshops, and materials to support

- ❖ Back-to-School
- ❖ After-school programs
- ❖ PTA Teacher Appreciation Week
- ❖ PTA Take Your Family to School Week
- ❖ Student achievement
- ❖ Child nutrition and wellness
- ❖ Prevention of violence and bullying

## Fundraising

*PTA Fundraising Essentials*, published annually, is filled with ideas and resources to help PTAs organize fundraising activities to support their initiatives.

## Dues and benefits

PTA members pay minimal dues to support local, state, and national efforts to improve the education of all children. In return, members receive valuable resources, information, and training.

## Benefits of affiliation for your local PTA include

- ❖ Discounts from corporate supporters on supplies and materials
- ❖ *PTA Quick-Reference Guides* on leading a PTA, membership, finances, and programs
- ❖ Reproducible brochures, marketing templates, public service advertisements, and PowerPoint presentations
- ❖ *Our Children* magazine
- ❖ Reproducible parent involvement newsletters, in English and Spanish

- ❖ *PTA Fundraising Essentials*
- ❖ A Back-to-School kit with resources and materials to use throughout the year
- ❖ Tools to help implement local and national PTA programs
- ❖ The PTA Unit Achievement Award recognition program
- ❖ The annual PTA National Convention
- ❖ Resources from national partners and sponsors of PTA

## Benefits of membership for individual members include

- ❖ Online resources, including select articles from *Our Children* magazine
- ❖ Electronic newsletters that keep members informed on current education, family, and legislative issues
- ❖ Special discounts and offers from national and local member benefits providers
- ❖ Online leadership training through e-learning courses
- ❖ Discounted rates for the PTA National Convention
- ❖ The Member-to-Member Network, connecting PTA members to members of Congress
- ❖ Additional benefits from the state PTA

## A united national voice for children

Not all decisions affecting a child's school happen at the local level, and the Mission of PTA is to address the educational and social needs of all children. For more than a century, PTA has been a driving force in national education policies and programs. Today, PTA continues to champion the importance of parent/family involvement, safe and nurturing environments, and proper funding, curriculum, and leadership in our public schools.

For a Spanish-language version of this document, go to [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org).