

CT PTA Symposium & EXPO 2026



Connecticut
PTA
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"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."
— Helen Keller

Workshop Presenters:

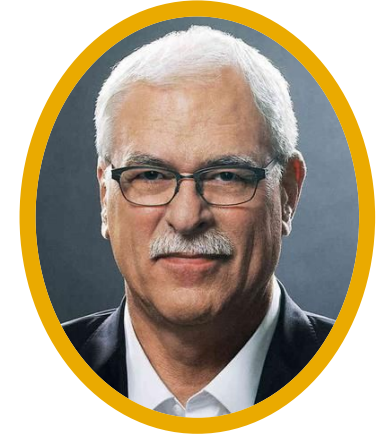
Lisa La Belle - Vice President of Membership

Sarah O' Dell - President Elect

Myke Halpin - Director of Events

Membership

- WHO CAN JOIN?
- WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS
- BUILDING VALUE FOR FAMILIES
- LISTENING TO YOUR COMMUNITY
- RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION STRATEGIES
- EQUITY CENTERED MEMBERSHIP GROWTH
- CREATING A WELCOMING PTA CULTURE
- RETAINING MEMBERS YEAR AFTER YEAR
- MALES IN PTA
- REACHING UNDER REPRESENTED FAMILIES
- BUILDING A COMMUNITY THROUGH ENGAGEMENT
- GIVEBACKS- FOR ALL PTAS- FREE



"The strength of the team is each individual member. The strength of each member is the team."
— Phil Jackson



Who can Join your PTA or SEPTA?

**Anyone that believes in the Mission of PTA!
Membership is open to everyone!**

Invite your families, community members, staff, anyone



*TO MAKE EVERY CHILD'S POTENTIAL A REALITY
BY ENGAGING AND EMPOWERING FAMILIES
AND COMMUNITIES TO ADVOCATE FOR ALL CHILDREN*

Why Membership Matters

Key Points

- Membership is the foundation of PTA's voice and impact.
- Strong membership increases advocacy power.
- More members create stronger school-family partnerships.
- Membership supports programs, scholarships, and leadership development.



Membership is more than collecting dues.
Every member strengthens the PTA's ability to advocate for children and families.
A growing membership base creates a more representative and effective organization.

"Volunteers do not necessarily have the time; they just have the heart." — Elizabeth Andrew

How Dues Support the Mission





Building Value for Families

Educational Value

- Family workshops
- Student enrichment programs
- Advocacy resources

Social Value

- School community events
- Family engagement opportunities
- Networking with other parents

Leadership Value

- Skill development
Volunteer experience
- Community leadership opportunities

Listening to your Community

- Successful PTAs listen to the unique needs of their school communities before planning programs and initiatives.
- By seeking input from families, students, educators, and community partners through conversations, surveys, and open communication, PTAs can better understand what matters most.
- Listening first helps ensure that PTA efforts are meaningful, inclusive, and responsive, creating stronger partnerships and a greater impact for every child.



Listening to your Community

How do you listen?



Conduct Community Surveys

Send short surveys to families, students, and staff throughout the year to identify needs, interests, and priorities.



Host Listening Sessions or Coffee Chats

Invite families, caregivers, and school staff to informal discussions where they can share ideas, concerns, and suggestions in a welcoming environment.



Attend School and Community Events

Set up a PTA table at open houses, concerts, sporting events, and family nights to have conversations and gather feedback from attendees.



Create Ongoing Feedback Opportunities

Provide multiple ways for people to share input year-round, such as suggestion boxes, QR codes linking to feedback forms, email, or social media polls.



Build Relationships with School Stakeholders

Regularly meet with students, teachers, administrators, support staff, and community partners to understand emerging needs and ensure PTA programs reflect the entire school community.

Recruitment and Retention Strategies

Traditional Recruitment

These are all great places to always host a PTA table. Have flyers of upcoming events, always membership; forms with ways to join. Show your parents what the PTA does throughout the year to support all!

- Back-to-School Nights
- Open Houses - Have a PTA membership table. Give away a door prize ticket. anyone who joins gets a ticket!
- Kindergarten Orientation - Great place to meet new parents who WANT to help.
- School Events
- Parent-Teacher Conferences

Modern Recruitment

Ask every family personally at least three times during the year. Research consistently shows that personal invitations are the most effective recruitment tool. Families are more likely to join when they understand how membership benefits students.

- Social media campaigns
- QR code membership links
- School newsletters
- Text messaging
- Online registration platforms



Recruitment and Retention Strategies

Share the many ways people can support your PTA



Become a Member

Join the PTA to support students, families, and your school community.



Volunteer Your Time

Help at an event, assist with a project, or volunteer when your schedule allows.



Share Your Ideas

Attend meetings, complete surveys, and offer suggestions to help shape PTA programs.



Advocate for Students

Use your voice to support policies and initiatives that benefit all children and schools.



Volunteer From Home

Support your PTA from anywhere! Help with social media, flyers, membership, translations, communications, and other behind-the-scenes projects.

Equity-Centered Membership Growth

Equity Means:

- Providing each family the support and access they need to participate.

Key Principle

- Not every family starts from the same place.

Questions to Consider

- Who is participating?
- Who is missing?
- Why might they not be involved?
- What barriers exist?



The goal is not simply increasing numbers. The goal is creating a PTA that reflects the entire school community.

Creating a Welcoming PTA Culture

First Impressions Matter- IS YOUR PTA WELCOMING?

Ask:

- Are meetings welcoming?
- Do new families feel included?
- Is information easy to understand?
- Are we family-friendly?

Welcoming Practices

- Greet attendees personally
- Introduce new members
- Explain PTA terminology
- Offer childcare when possible
- Keep meetings focused and efficient



Many families decide whether to participate within their first interaction with the PTA.

Retaining Members Year After Year



**10 practical ways
to keep PTA members and leaders
interested and engaged throughout the year**

Retaining Members Year After Year



1. Give People Meaningful Roles

Match volunteers with their interests, skills, and availability. Not everyone wants the same level of involvement.

2. Recognize and Celebrate Contributions

Thank volunteers often—through social media, newsletters, meetings, handwritten notes, or small appreciation events. People stay engaged when they feel valued.

3. Keep Communication Two-Way

Regularly ask for ideas and feedback through surveys, polls, or conversations, and let members know how their input influenced decisions.

4. Offer Learning Opportunities

Share PTA resources, leadership training, webinars, and conferences to help members grow their skills and confidence.

5. Build Relationships

Create opportunities for members to connect socially, not just work together. Strong relationships keep people coming back.

Retaining Members Year After Year



6. ✨ **Show the Impact**

Regularly share success stories, photos, student outcomes, and testimonials so members can see the difference their involvement makes.

7. 🕒 **Respect People's Time**

Hold efficient meetings, offer virtual participation when possible, and provide flexible volunteer opportunities—including tasks that can be done from home.

8. 🌱 **Invite New Ideas**

Encourage fresh perspectives and empower members to lead projects they're passionate about. People are more invested when they help shape the direction.

9. 📅 **Keep Members Involved Year-Round**

Stay connected with newsletters, social media, family events, advocacy updates, and volunteer opportunities—not just during fundraising or meetings.

10. ❤️ **Create a Welcoming Culture**

Make every member feel included, appreciated, and part of the team. When people feel they belong, they're more likely to stay engaged.

Males In PTA



Women cannot do it all!

Male involvement strengthens PTAs by bringing diverse perspectives, expanding volunteer capacity, and creating leadership that reflects the families we serve.

When fathers, grandfathers, uncles, and other male caregivers are engaged, students benefit from stronger family-school partnerships and positive role models.

Encouraging male participation helps build more inclusive PTAs, increases membership and advocacy efforts, and ensures every family feels welcomed and represented.

"Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success." — Henry Ford

Reaching Underrepresented Families

Families Often Missing From Engagement Efforts

- Working families
- Multilingual families
- Families new to the district
- Military families
- Foster and kinship caregivers
- Families of students with disabilities
- Secondary school families
- Historically marginalized communities

Outreach Strategies Go Where Families Are

- Community centers
- Sporting events
- School pickup lines
- Local cultural events



Building Community Through Engagement

Engagement Happens Before Membership

Families are more likely to join when they:

- Feel connected
- Feel heard
- Feel respected
- Have meaningful opportunities to contribute

Community-Building Ideas

- Family cultural nights
- Service projects
- Student showcases
- Parent education programs
- Community partnerships



Key Takeaway

Connection leads to participation. Participation leads to membership.



FREE for PTAs/SEPTAs in CT \$1,200 savings to run your PTA

Key Features:

- Online membership registration and dues collection
- Event and fundraising page creation
- Secure payment processing and tracking
- Built-in reporting for treasurers and audits
- Communication tools for families and members

Benefits for Local PTAs:

- Reduces administrative workload for volunteers
- Improves accuracy and transparency of financial records
- Makes joining PTA easier for families
- Supports year-round engagement and fundraising

Connecticut PTA is excited that we've teamed up with Givebacks to provide their valuable online tool to all PTA's in Connecticut...free of charge! Givebacks makes it easier to run your PTA -- engage families, raise funds, stay in good standing, and more. You'll save hours on admin tasks, so you can focus on connecting with your children and engaging your school community.

Givebacks is valued at \$1,200 per year, but they are providing it to Connecticut PTA's for free because Givebacks and Connecticut PTA want to further the PTA mission through easy-to-use technology

CT PTA Support

- Training and guidance available for setup and ongoing use.
- Helps your PTA stay compliant, organized, and efficient.
- Access tools for membership, fundraising, email communications, events, finances, and more.
- Manage nearly every aspect of your PTA—all in one convenient platform!

Resources

National PTA Membership Tools <https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/membership-resources>

Membership Mania <https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/membership-resources/membership-mania>

Recruitment Tools <https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/membership-resources/recruitment-tools>

DEIJ Tools <https://www.ctpta.org/diversity-inclusion>

Givebacks <https://www.ctpta.org/memberhub>



Thank you !!

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www.ctpta.org

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