

FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION

PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children and youth. The task of connecting parents, guardians, families, educators, schools and community leaders to each other is both crucial and attainable. Affirming the significance of family engagement has been a priority of National PTA since its founding in 1897.

Family engagement is a shared and collaborative effort to advance programs, practices and policies that empower families in every facet of the education and development of children and youth from birth to adulthood. Family engagement takes many forms, including but not limited to parents' role as first educators and primary influences in the lives of their children, as decision-makers about the education of children and youth, health, and well-being, and as advocates for the success of children and youth.

Decades of research show that family engagement matters for student success. Students whose families are engaged are more likely to attend school, avoid discipline problems, achieve at higher levels and graduate high school. Research also suggests family engagement is equally as important as school leadership or a rigorous curriculum to predict school improvement.

Transformative Family Engagement

Transformative family engagement reimagines traditional family engagement with a focus on practices and policies that are more inclusive, individualized, integrated, and impactful. PTA is committed to transformative family engagement that is:

- *Inclusive* - embraces and values diverse perspectives;
- *Individualized* - meets the unique needs of every family and child;
- *Integrated* - connects and aligns with the educational system; and
- *Impactful* - empowers families to support their child's success.

Although there is consensus that family engagement matters, families and educators often struggle to figure out how to engage with one another in ways that reach all families and positively impact student success. In response, PTA developed the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships to empower us all to work together for the success of all children and youth.

PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships set the bar for how schools and parent organizations should work together to support student success. Since their initial creation over

20 years ago, the standards have contributed to greater awareness and capacity for improving family-school partnerships nationwide and internationally. They have been used by PTAs, schools, districts, state education agencies, and the U.S. Department of Education for accountability and support for strong family engagement and are one of the few recognizable and concrete guideposts for family engagement across the education system.

National PTA identifies six key standards that can help schools, PTAs and school districts improve their family-school partnerships so that all students can thrive:

1) Standard 1 - Welcome All Families

The school treats families as valued partners in their child's education and facilitates a sense of belonging in the school community.

2) Standard 2 - Communicate Effectively

The school supports staff to engage in proactive, timely and two-way communication so that all families can easily understand and contribute to their child's educational experience.

3) Standard 3 - Support Student Success

The school builds the capacity of families and educators to continuously collaborate to support students' academic, social and emotional learning.

4) Standard 4 - Speak Up for Every Child

The school affirms family and student expertise and advocacy so that all students are treated fairly and have access to relationships and opportunities that will support their success.

5) Standard 5 - Share Power

The school partners with families in decisions that affect children, youth, and families and together—and as a team—inform, influence and create policies, practices and programs.

6) Standard 6 - Collaborate with Community

The school collaborates with community organizations and members to connect students, families and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services and civic participation.

These standards highlight the importance of collaboration between schools, education leaders, families and community members to create a supportive educational ecosystem, ultimately leading to improved academic outcomes and student well-being. Embracing these standards strengthens the partnership between families and schools and contributes to a more vibrant and engaged educational community.

*Position Statement: **FAMILY ENGAGEMENT IN EDUCATION***

Adopted: 2024

National PTA and its constituent associations are committed to bringing these standards and transformative family engagement to policy and practice at the local, state, and national levels. This includes strengthening family engagement in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) and throughout policy impacting children and youth, families, and the education system. Family engagement is central to PTA's mission to unlock the potential of every child. Our rich history is marked by a steadfast commitment to family engagement, underscoring our pivotal role in bringing together parents, guardians, families, educators, schools, and community leaders. Together, we build welcoming, supportive, inclusive, and safe schools that foster meaningful partnerships and trust between families and educators and prepare all students to reach their full potential.

Adopted: by the 1991 Board of Directors

Reviewed: by the 1993 and 1996 Convention Resolutions Committee

Revised: by the 1999 Board of Directors

Amended: by the 2021 Board of Directors

Amended: by the 2024 Board of Directors