

Baltimore County Council



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MEMBERSHIP WORKSHOP

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PTA MISSION: *“to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children”*

PTA’S BASIC FUNCTION: *to support, advocate for, and connect parents/caregivers and teachers/staff to ensure the PTA mission is fulfilled*

Be part of the solution ~ improve your school and community

A STRONG PTA IS ...

- **welcoming and inclusive**
- **visible** (at school events, on school’s website, in school office, in community, on social media)
- **active** (do good, then tell everyone about it, highlighting impact and value)

Membership Info & Resources: <https://bcptacouncil.org/resources/membership/>

National PTA’s “PTA for Your Child” Membership Campaign Toolkit
https://bcptacouncil.org/resources/membership/pta-membership_toolkit-for_your_child/

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WHAT IS PTA AND WHY DOES YOUR SCHOOL NEED ONE?

- **3 levels:** members, volunteers, leaders; all invited, welcome to join/serve as their time allows
- parent/caregiver-led (usually), parent/caregiver voice, **advocacy and community-building first, fundraising second**
 - part of something bigger (AC for BCPS, hybrid school board, infrastructure advocacy, cellphone campaign)
- school + PTA achieve more together!
 - National PTA grants
 - staff appreciation
 - trusted core group of active parents, school volunteers
- opportunity to:
 - be connected with your child's school
 - help your child and other children
 - network with parents/caregivers and teachers/staff
 - access great resources for parents and students
 - speak up and suggest change, witness improvements thru advocacy, events, fundraising
 - be good role model for your child, showing importance you place on them and their education
- event ticket discounts for PTA members, National PTA discounts



WHY CAN MEMBERSHIP BE SO DIFFICULT?

- how stay strong in time of decreased volunteering, decreased need for in-person interactions, increased economic stress, increased distractions?
- how carry out strong campaign with small board, possibly no Membership Committee Chair?
- differences at elementary, middle, high school levels

PTA BARRIERS (based on National PTA survey results)

- ***No Explicit Ask to Join***
- ***Don't Understand Value of PTA***
 - leaders/members have difficulty explaining role of PTA in supporting education and curriculum needs, advocating for children, building school community
 - some see PTA as social club/clique
- ***Confusion About What PTA Membership Means***
 - many see as time-consuming with volunteering and attending meetings
- ***Not Welcoming All Families***
 - many don't believe PTA is inclusive, welcoming, representative of community

YET people are interested once they understand the role of PTA!

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BEST WAYS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR PTA

- offer opportunities to be, stay involved, meet volunteers where they are in terms of talents, time, and interests
- attract new members, retain existing ones – welcome new families
- have your PTA reflect community it represents
- reach out to teachers, staff, students (if PTSA), community
- principal's support is **CRUCIAL!**
- if potential volunteers reach out, contact them right away to find out their interests and invite them to participate
- power of personal “ask,” saying “thank you” and “we appreciate you,” recognizing people's contributions
- be engaging to engage others; power of positivity; be responsive, listen, seek feedback; what are people's needs and interests?

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BEST WAYS TO STRENGTHEN YOUR PTA (continued)

- increase activities, not meetings
- well-run, respectful, productive, positive meetings in which people want to participate
- link event/meeting to student-based event that parents want to attend, include **FOOD**
- approved childcare at event (check insurance/BCPS guidelines)
- hybrid meetings if possible
- meetings in different places or at different times – ASK to find out best times for parents/caregivers to meet



MEMBERSHIP AND DUES DETAILS

- members can be enrolled all year long ~ 2024-25 PTA Membership valid until 9/30/25
- FSPTA doesn't distribute membership cards; print cards via Givebacks or using template on FSPTA website: [PTA Card Template](#)
- FSPTA no longer issues invoices; units track membership numbers and pay dues monthly
- remit dues to FSPTA and NPTA on monthly basis (first payment due 10/31) using Givebacks or form on FSPTA's website: [Free State PTA Membership Form](#)
- members pay dues to local unit at amount set by that unit
 - each member's dues includes FSPTA portion (\$2/member/year) and NPTA portion (\$2.25/member/year); thus, each unit remits dues in amount of \$4.25/member
 - dues high enough to cover FSPTA/NPTA portion, not too high to discourage membership
- submit dues for at least 10 members by 3/31 to remain "in good standing" with FSPTA
- business membership (thank sponsors, don't endorse them)
- direct donations in addition to membership BUT you can't skip the membership part!



MEMBERSHIP AND DUES DETAILS (continued)

- Membership drives at Back-to-School Night, other major school events
 - “Event Package”: PTA tablecloth, signs, sign-up sheet, membership form or Givebacks info, 1-pager about your unit
- **Givebacks** can increase membership by 34%! – members discounts, cash back for unit
 - easy-to-understand [sample membership form](#) in school office and on PTA website (not everyone is computer-savvy or has internet access or has credit card)
- **Givebacks Training** (schedule or watch recorded workshops):
<https://info.givebacks.com/workshops>
 - **Collecting Membership Dues & Staying in Compliance:** 30-minute session on entering cash/check members, setting up memberships in your store, paying your membership dues to your state PTA, and the basics of uploading your compliance documents
 - **Managing Contacts, Newsletters & Messages:** Learn the difference between contacts and members, how to add contacts, contact management tips, and more

MEMBERSHIP VIDEOS: <https://info.givebacks.com/videos>



COMMUNICATIONS

- keep members informed/motivated thru ongoing communications, reach out in different ways
- **Newsletter, Flyers** (be clear and concise; say it with less, but say it enough)
- **Website** - make sure it's linked to school's website!
- **Social Media, Facebook** (info-sharing page better, more open, take pics at events!)
- **Event/Volunteer Apps** (Sign-up Genius, text/alert programs)
- **Mid-year reminder** to families/staff encouraging them to join
- **List programs, events, wins** – remind everyone of how much PTA does to improve school
- **PTA Branding and Web Guidelines** (PTA tagline: *everychild.onevoice*)
 - create PTA logo for your unit to remain compliant and unify your look
 - <http://www.pta.org/about/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3097>

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DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

- **all** feel welcome, appreciated, respected, valued for their distinctive skills, experiences, and perspectives
- **all** have opportunity to fully participate in goals of PTA and are critical to PTA's success
- **all** community voices (including men) included; does your PTA mirror your school's demographics?
- events that appeal to different people and create inclusive environment
- liaisons to bridge linguistic and cultural differences; materials in different languages, translators at meetings, translator network