

DOS AND DON'TS OF PARTNERING WITH TEACHERS

Do:

- **Plan together.** Working to achieve common goals is a powerful tool to build relationships. What are teachers trying to achieve? How can PTA help get parents and community involved?
- **Invite teachers to join and become involved.** Ask teachers to attend meetings and provide input. Identify ways for teachers to become involved even if they cannot attend a meeting. Create a campaign specifically messaging PTA's value to teachers and ask teachers to support your PTA's work by joining PTA.
- **Identify volunteer opportunities.** Work with teachers to identify classroom and activity-related volunteer opportunities, and then find volunteers to assist.
- **Show respect.** Let teachers know that your PTA values them. A good working relationship between home and school is essential to student success.
- **Seek input.** Suggestion boxes, surveys, one-on-one meetings, program assessments, etc.—ask for teachers' input on PTA's impact and on the success of PTA programs and encourage teachers to offer suggestions for improvement.
- **Build a team.** Informal social gatherings, game/fun nights, family sporting events and outings—how can your PTA build relationships outside the classroom among PTA Board members, parents, and staff?
- **Show appreciation.** Thank teachers for their support of PTA and the work they do for children. Plan meaningful Teacher Appreciation Week activities, and regular recognition of teacher's efforts.
- **Demonstrate cooperation.** A strong PTA-teacher relationship is a partnership. How can PTA help teachers? What can staff and PTA leaders accomplish together? Approach all interaction with teachers in a spirit of cooperation.

Don't:

- **Criticize teachers for missing PTA meetings.** While teachers' meeting attendance is a good goal for a PTA, it is important to remember that many teachers have their own family activities and PTA events to attend. Also, some teachers have had bad experiences with certain parents. PTA support does not have to include meeting attendance.
- **Bribe or blackmail.** Teacher recognition or support of grade or classroom activities should not be tied to teacher membership.
- **Become an ATM.** Demonstrate that advocacy is better than fundraising to secure needed resources. Talk to teachers about their needs and brainstorm ways to make those needs known in the community.
- **Show up unexpectedly.** School is a teacher's workplace. Schedule a meeting or provide notice. Be respectful of teacher's time. Do not interrupt class time.
- **Assume knowledge.** Schools are vibrant workplaces and teachers must keep track of more than just PTA activities. Keep teachers informed about PTA events and schedules. Ensure teachers know about upcoming fundraising or classroom activities. And brief teachers on PTA priorities and successes. Help teachers understand the value PTA brings to their place of work.