Purposes of PTA

Local, State and National

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship.
- To raise the standards of home life.
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.
- To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

The Florida Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc., a branch of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, is a nonprofit educational organization which seeks to unite the forces of home, school and community on behalf of children and youth. It is a democratic organization and believes in democratic processes and principles.

Mission

The mission of the PTA is threefold:

- to support and speak on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
- to assist parents in developing the skills they need to raise, protect and prepare their children;
- to encourage parent and public involvement in the public schools of this state.

Policies

The organization is noncommercial, nonsectarian and nonpartisan. No commercial enterprise and no candidate may be endorsed by it. The name of the Florida PTA, its regions, councils and local units or their officers in their official capacities may not be used in any connection with a commercial concern, or with any partisan interest, or for any other purpose than the regular work of the organization. These policies should not be confused with authorized parent-teacher activities in the field of legislation.

Structure

The work of the Florida PTA (incorporated under the laws of the state of Florida) is carried on through its local PTAs. Each local unit is a self-governing group, planning its programs and activities to meet the needs of children and youth in the communities in which they serve. However, the bylaws of each local association must be approved by the state chair of bylaws, as they must conform to the policies of the National and Florida PTAs.

Correct Usage of PTA

PTA and PTSA are registered service marks of the National PTA and may be used only by those in membership with the National PTA. Do not use hyphens, periods or small letters. When used as a plural noun, it should be PTAs or PTSAs.

Charters

Local PTAs may be organized and chartered in any school, in workplaces and community centers and county councils in each of the 67 counties of the state. A charter is issued by the Florida PTA upon approval of the association's bylaws and payment of dues to the state office.

If a charter has been lost or destroyed, a duplicate charter will be issued from the state office upon written request.

Should any chartered association change its name, two copies of Article I - Name of the bylaws (with the change indicated) should be sent to the state office immediately. A charter with the new name will be issued by the state office.

Procedures for the proper organization or dissolution of a PTA are in the Florida PTA bylaws, Article VI. For detailed information, please call upon your state office, county council president or your region representative.

Regions

Florida is divided into 7 regions so that a closer working relationship with councils and local PTAs may be achieved. Region representatives are elected by the Special Electing Group (Florida PTA newly elected officers) every two years. The region representative has the responsibility for guidance to both local PTAs and councils, interpreting and
extending the PTA program, organizing new PTAs and developing PTA leadership in unorganized areas in the region.

Each region will hold a meeting at the Annual Convention. Additional region meetings can be scheduled as needed at any other state meetings. Region meetings are held to build leadership, to strengthen PTA programs and to stimulate growth in membership enrollment and participation.

County Councils
A council is a group of local PTAs organized under the authority of the state PTA for the purpose of conference, leadership training and coordination of the efforts of the member PTAs.

A council is governed by approved bylaws designed to meet its specific needs. Local PTAs join the council as a unit, not as individual members, and pay dues according to the council bylaws. Councils are responsible for organizing new local PTAs within the county. Councils are guided by the same objects and basic policies as the national, state and local unit.

Strengthens Local Units
A council serves as a medium through which PTAs of an area together can attack problems beyond the scope of a single PTA working alone. Organized into a council, a group of PTAs can bring the power of united planning and effort to bear on solutions of community-wide problems affecting children and youth. A council strengthens each local unit enabling it to work more effectively in its own school and neighborhood.

Serves the Community
The council acts as a channel of communication by relating valuable information, instruction and news from the state and National PTAs in membership. It alerts the PTAs to state and national plans and helps them to translate these plans into programs and projects that serve the community.

Council meetings are used to increase the effectiveness of PTA; to give practice in procedures and techniques; to stimulate PTA, council or public action; to accomplish specific purposes; and to interpret and participate in state and national programs.

Sets Good Example
In financial as in all other affairs, a council has a dual responsibility to work efficiently toward achieving its purpose and to set a good example for its member PTAs. No PTA may be compelled to contribute to special projects or to participate in a money-raising event against its wishes. A council may not legislate for the local unit.

More information about county councils may be obtained from the Florida PTA web site.

Develops Leadership
Through conferences and instructional meetings, the council enables PTA officers and chairs to exchange ideas and plans, to benefit from each other's experiences in PTA work, to learn new techniques of leadership and to receive training for their specific responsibilities. A part of every council year-round training program (schools of information, workshops, study groups, etc.) should be conferences that council officers and committee chairs hold with their local counterparts.

For PTA members it provides opportunities to gain broader experiences in leadership through service as council delegates, officers and committee chairs, thereby helping to develop leaders for positions and tasks of greater responsibility.

Cooperative Relationships
While maintaining its independence as an organization, the Florida PTA recognizes the value of cooperation with governmental and other agencies whose programs are based on a common interest in child welfare. The Florida PTA often shares in the combined knowledge of many organizations and contributes its experience and leadership to joint projects.

Records Retention
It is suggested that a copy of the following information be attached to the records of the secretary and treasurer so that essential materials are retained notwithstanding change-over in officers.

Permanent: Charter, Bylaws, Check Register, Accounts Payable Ledger, Minutes and Agendas, Reports made to Federal/State Agencies and Audit Reports.

Seven Years: Cash Receipts, Petty Cash Records, Bank Deposits and Statements, Invoices

Three Years: General Correspondence and Budgets
Membership and Dues

Any person interested in the Purposes of the Florida PTA and willing to uphold its basic policies and subscribe to its bylaws may become a member. Membership is all-inclusive. When dues are paid to the local PTA, an individual becomes a member of both the Florida PTA and National PTA.

Local units set their own dues, from which $3.00 per member must be sent to the state office for state ($1.25) and national ($1.75) dues. Services from state and national are provided through payments of membership dues.

It is the responsibility of the treasurer to forward the state and national portion of dues to the state office. A local group failing to submit these dues is not authorized to use the registered service mark, PTA or PTSA.

Study Discussions

PTAs, PTSAs and county councils can improve the effectiveness of their associations through study-discussions, including a self-study to evaluate previous years' budgets, programs and committee work.

A study-discussion is a group of five or more members enrolled for at least two hours of study and discussion of the timely topic. Annual Convention, State Legislative Activities in Tallahassee and Leadership Conference may count. Routine board and committee meetings do NOT count.

1. Organize a committee which could include other chairs, parents, teachers, students and administrators.

2. Research school or community needs for study. Use community, school and PTA leaders as resource people.


Student Involvement

Bridge the Gap through Student Involvement - Much like a bridge makes connections, student involvement will connect every component of PTSA - parents, teachers, and students. Fostering the relationship and understanding the importance of students in the organization will strengthen your PTSA; and everyone benefits - the community, the schools, the PTSA, and the students themselves.

Services

The Florida PTA serves its membership through the following methods: state office in Orlando, annual state convention, region meetings, group or individual help by the leadership teams, workshops, legislative dispatches, state legislative activities, state and national representatives as speakers and conference leaders, and state releases to newspapers.

Literature, publications, membership cards and other materials are sent to the local associations and county councils and each local president will be added to a distribution list to receive the Florida PTA E-Newsletter. A website (www.floridapta.org) is available with current information. These and many other services are available from the state PTA headquarters.

Each year in the summer, a Kit of Materials is sent from the state office to local presidents whose names and addresses have been furnished. Each enclosure is an important "tool" for local leaders.

These services are made possible with money received from membership dues.