

# Defining the Difference

**T**he term “PTA” is commonly used to describe any parent group, and many parents, teachers, and administrators are unaware of the distinct differences between PTA and other parent organizations.

## All parent groups are not the same

- ❖ PTA is a not-for-profit organization and the nation’s original and premier parent involvement group in schools.
- ❖ PTA has more than 23,000 local units and more than 5 million members.
- ❖ PTA units are supported by a national and state structure that provides valuable information, resources, and training.
- ❖ PTA believes parents are *more* than fundraisers.
- ❖ PTA works with parents to advocate for proper funding, leadership, and instruction for all schools and school districts.
- ❖ Chartered PTA units are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.
- ❖ Local PTAs are eligible for discounted insurance for events that are not covered by their schools.
- ❖ PTA provides a free data collection/volunteer management system.

## PTA membership is open to everyone

- ❖ PTA is inclusive of all people who care about children and schools.
- ❖ PTA builds bridges between homes, schools, and communities to help children succeed academically and personally.

## Local PTAs make their own decisions

- ❖ Local units select the priorities, programs, and activities that address the needs of their schools.
- ❖ There are no mandated programs from the national or state organization, though relevant programs, helpful resources, and a network of support are provided.

## Relevant programs

PTA national programs are free, user-friendly, and created with leading experts on topics of importance to PTA members. These programs include

- ❖ **National Standards for Family-School Partnerships**—Research-based standards outlining what families, schools, and communities can do together to support student success.
- ❖ **Phoebe Apperson Hearst–National PTA Excellence in Education Partnership Award**—An award that recognizes local PTAs for exemplary collaboration with families, schools, and communities.
- ❖ **Reflections Program**—An annual program that allows youth to express themselves through the arts.

❖ **Three for Me**—An involvement program that encourages parents to dedicate three hours per year to their children’s schools.

The PTA national office also provides resources, workshops, and materials to support

- ❖ Back-to-School
- ❖ Start the Art
- ❖ PTA Teacher Appreciation Week
- ❖ PTA Take Your Family to School Week
- ❖ Healthy Lifestyles
- ❖ Student achievement
- ❖ Child safety

## **Fundraising**

*PTA Fundraising Essentials*, published annually, is filled with ideas and resources to help PTAs organize fundraising activities to support their initiatives.

## **Dues and benefits**

PTA members pay minimal dues to support local, state, and national efforts to improve the education of all children. In return, members receive valuable resources, information, and training.

### **Benefits of affiliation for your local PTA include**

- ❖ *PTA Quick-Reference Guides* on leading a PTA, membership, finances, and programs
- ❖ Reproducible brochures, marketing templates, public service advertisements, and PowerPoint presentations
- ❖ *Our Children* magazine
- ❖ *PTA Fundraising Essentials*
- ❖ A Back-to-School kit with resources and materials to use throughout the year
- ❖ *PTA Local Leader News*, a biweekly electronic newsletter

❖ Tools to help implement local and national PTA programs

- ❖ The PTA Unit Achievement Award recognition program
- ❖ The annual PTA National Convention
- ❖ Programs and resources from national sponsors of PTA

### **Benefits of membership for individual members include**

- ❖ Online resources, including select articles from *Our Children* magazine
- ❖ Electronic newsletters that keep members informed on current education, family, and legislative issues
- ❖ Special discounts and offers from national and local member benefits providers
- ❖ Online leadership training through e-learning courses
- ❖ Discounted rates for the PTA National Convention
- ❖ The Member-to-Member Network, connecting PTA members to members of Congress
- ❖ Additional benefits from the state PTA

## **A united national voice for children**

Not all decisions affecting a child’s school happen at the local level, and the Mission of PTA is to address the educational and social needs of all children. For more than a century, PTA has been a driving force in national education policies and programs. Today, PTA continues to champion the importance of parent/family involvement, safe and nurturing environments, and proper funding, curriculum, and leadership in our public schools.

*For a Spanish-language version of this document, go to [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org).*