

# Planning Inclusive PTA Events

## video1539100796

**video1539100796:** [00:00:00] Welcome everybody. And thank you for joining us this evening to learn about planning truly inclusive PTA events. I'm Nanette Nolan. I'm the chair of the Torrance Council of PTAs diversity, equity and inclusion committee and with me tonight are our incredible committees so joined tonight by Jan Harata, who is our council president. She's awesome. And also by the entire force of the amazing DEI committee and PTA leaders who I love and adore Brea, Jordana, Sunny, and Michelle. So thank you guys so much for joining. This group Training will be or is being recorded and all materials, including the recording will be shared and posted on our website at Torrance Council of PTAs dot o r g forward slash inclusion.

I also want to note that while none of us are certified experts, we are using guidelines that come to us from national PTA and also kind of applying our own PTA experience. So, Miss Jan, I'll kick it over to [00:01:00] you. So, as stated in the PTA mission, our aim is to engage and empower all families and communities to advocate for all children.

When we fail to be intentionally inclusive, we miss connecting with key groups and diminish our ability to effectively serve all students. Increasing diversity, equity and accessibility should be a priority. Yeah, well stated well said so, before we dive into the presentation, we just want to be clear about what the hopes are for tonight.

We hope you guys will get out of it. So, note, this is really just a starting point. We hope that in the coming months and years, we continue to deepen these conversations and then it's more. As your work evolves, hopefully our work also continues to evolve, and I'm looking forward to those. But today you want to understand kind of from a high level, the importance of [00:02:00] the principles for PTAs we'll talk about the tools and the processes for inclusive event planning tools that we've developed.

Worked on really hard last year and into this year. And again, things we've kind of borrowed from the national PTA and then see what an inclusive event could look like in action. So we'll, we'll use a couple of different points or metrics to kind of have tell that story and kind of play through a scenario

also feel free to throw comments and questions and chat. My colleagues on the call here will also be answering and then we'll have different points in the presentation, which will stop and be able to take your questions as well. So let's have a quick discussion about kind of principles and how they apply to our PTA work and organizations and by extension, how that ends up serving the communities that we work within.

So, the National PTA is a really excellent framework and resources that can help guide our work here. As you can see from [00:03:00] this one chart and I apologize, it's a, it's a wee bit blurry, but I promise the one that's in our toolkit is gorgeous and crisp. We could look at any metric of PTA. In this case, this is membership, which, you know, we're a membership and advocacy organization.

~~So this is,~~ Totally makes sense. But each one of our PTAs is starting from a starting point. Right? So I'm going to suspect most of us are probably this kind of beginning column where we aren't really aware of the dominant groups or don't see ourselves necessarily as a dominant group as a PTA and what that means.

And we're not necessarily aware of the other communities and the different Differences and with the differences in our community. So, like, you know, case in point you know, I've sat on many boards where the folks in the room were largely homeowners and married. Well, we know that we have people who rent, we have people who live with other people who have different kind of learning live, like, lived experiences and configurations.

And single [00:04:00] parents and, and single guardians. So having some of those people on our border, knowing that they, you know, knowing how they can access or don't access our materials and content and PTA would be really invaluable and being able to better serve them, right? So as you move to understanding now, who are the people in your neighborhood, in your school community, and maybe why they don't participate or why they can't participate, right?

You're starting to now move into kind of emerging where you're now starting to focus on the diversity, kind of the differences between everybody. And now you are starting to better understand. And as you can kind of tell, like, moving on to intermediate in advance, it's that those conversations become a robust and they end up evolving into real partnerships.

You have an opportunity to. Work with people in a more meaningful way and build something with them rather than building something for them. So that's

what I would love to see us kind of do more of a core principle of DEI is that it cannot be standalone work. So maybe you might have a DEI chair [00:05:00] or vice president or committee, but the truth is everything that you do should really have a DEI lens.

Because at the end of the day, who we're working with, who we're serving, we want to serve our people and people are varied. And so you know, much like the. Kind of short discussion here about membership across PTA. This should really be embedded in the programs, in your advocacy, in your governance, or your leadership.

And again, we have this, this particular chart, as well as the programs, governance, and advocacy charts in our toolkit. So you can definitely get a better sense for that. Sorry. I'm still having like funny. I'm gonna blame it on myself. I said I wasn't gonna tell you guys that I had messed up, but just kidding.

Next we'll talk briefly about some of the tools we'll be using. Today we'll talk about the toolkit, the Torrance Council of PTA's DEI toolkit, that is the accessibility and inclusion worksheet, and the new event and [00:06:00] activity plan that we just rolled out this year. We'll talk about the other two in just a moment, but I did want to ~~share some~~ something about the toolkit here,

Last year, we developed and launched this toolkit. It includes details on how to start a committee and provide some information that you probably have never seen before, because it's got a funny title, but even a job description that goes into some great depth about what this with the committee and or chair position could look like.

What are some of the activities? What are measurements of success? It's, it's actually a really great description. I'm surprised. I mean, I guess I'm not again, the, the description is outreach, which is a good title, but not when you're, I don't know, it's, it's just a funny one. Anyhow, I digress but it includes some details on how to start that committee with that job would actually entail include some resources and more.

And we hope that the units will really, you know, be able to find this helpful and accessible. What we realized in [00:07:00] doing this, putting this together was that the national PTA stuff is great. I think it has a great concepts on the basic overall reasons why D I are important, but it doesn't really get into the how it talks at great length about the why.

On this committee, we talked a lot about this too, is wanting to roll out tools, tools that you guys can use to more seamlessly think with the DEI mindset. So we hope that honestly, that this resource is helpful. We want to continue to build and expand upon it. So as you guys have ideas or needs, questions, or things that you're doing at your campuses, we'd love to know about those things and and continue to build out tools that are going to be.

useful for your peers, especially those that don't necessarily have time to build it from scratch themselves. Which I mean, who really does have time for that, right?

So let's start by imagining we're planning one of those classic PTA events, like a family literacy night. Many of us have probably done something like [00:08:00] these or science night or something like that on our campuses, probably at the elementary level.

And it's the, ~~the full~~ The full Monty, right? We've got the auditorium. We've got presentations happening. There's some reading stations. There's a P. T. A. Book Fair. There's some food for sale. There's activities and we're super amped. ~~So while engaging for some, this kind of event might actually present barriers for other families.~~

So one bit of one thing I'd love to hear from you guys. The audience is kind of what are some potential barriers you witnessed or envisioned at previous school events. So again, this. On paper, it looks like a great idea, ~~but~~, but inherently, we know that there are people who can't access or won't access the event.

If you guys could type in the chat, you know, things that would be barriers. And we haven't gone into great detail about this event. I'm just trying to get you to think about the events, the PTA events in your mind, the ones that we're maybe accustomed to seeing.

Oh yeah, evening workers is a good one. Time of day is a really big deal. I mean, I think we assume that we're 9 to 5ers, but we know that that's not really true. Other ones that I [00:09:00] know can be challenges are, you know, non English speakers. Thank you, Marina. That's absolutely true. We also know that a lot of things that we produce in PTA are because many of us are.

English speakers don't necessarily participate. You know, don't necessarily speak other languages and may not always have that as an thing in our mind. We're like, well, surely the school would tell us if we needed to translate special ed students. I think that's a great a really great one is Maria appreciate that.

Because we do know that You know, there are students who, for whatever reason, do not or cannot participate in our events, and we haven't really teased that out. Carlos mentioned that having reading nights in auditoriums with too much noise, overstimulation, sensory sensitivities, ~~that's,~~ that's excellent.

I know a lot of amazing PTA leaders who care a lot about our students, but that's never been a thing that's come up. So yeah, all of those things. I've even recently, I think that one PTA board was hearing them have a really robust discussion about, like financial, [00:10:00] hurdles.

Sometimes families feel kind of embarrassed to come to events with their families or their children and be unable to afford the things that we're putting out there. ~~So, I mean, I think there are a ton more barriers.~~ And again, ~~this,~~ this work is really kind of, it's about trying to understand. And then make decisions based on that understanding.

So I appreciate you guys playing along. I know that people are like, it's too late at night and I'm trying to get my dinner and I do not want to chat with you. I get you. I feel you. I hear you. So you guys have identified some really great points. Things like language financial constraints, accessibility needs and.

Just sometimes making people feel overall welcomed and represented. So, you know, how can you gain an understanding of your school community? What are their barriers to participating in your events? So you guys have kind of spoke through a few, but we know that there are likely more.

So where do we start? There you go. Finally. So We have this wonderful Accessibility and Inclusion Toolkit, and I'm going to kick it over to Michelle, and I'll try to manage the buttons. [00:11:00] Hello, everyone. I'm really excited about this tool that we put together, and this is going to help you in what we just talked about.

The assessment captures racial, ethnic breakdowns, languages spoken, socioeconomic status, And details on any special accommodations. A, a special accommodation needs like mobility, sensory, food allergies, and more. So it gives you a checklist to help you, to help you plan. You'd work closely with the principal to gather this data and then present this information to the board, making it available as a reference tool in their procedure book.

This is now your entire team's resource. And should be a key source of information for all of your events, programs, and [00:12:00] fundraisers. What's

nice about this tool is that you only need to do this once a year, ~~but can be,~~ but can use this information all year long. It really is the gift that keeps on giving.

~~So we,~~ we love this this tool here. And we think it's pretty straightforward. Of course, if you're working on it and you, you know, See that there might be something else that needs to be added. Always let us know. But we think that we covered a really good portion of things to think about. So this is to help you, like, I would suggest doing this at the beginning of the year sit down with your principal and go through this and then get it to all of your people, all of your chairs, your board, everything.

And this can be part of your procedure book in your Google drives and. And a blank 1 and then the 1 that you fill out for each year. It's a very good tool. Yeah, I [00:13:00] agree. Thank you, Michelle. And we realize that this is going to cover every single instance again. So many of our schools are very.

They have different communities or populations of students and so your school site administrator, meaning your principal and your school team, including your pair educators are going to be key and helping you really understand the specific needs. That's really just like a starting template, but we want you guys to make this your own.

This is your community. So you should be the experts on the on the people there in, so again, thank you, Michelle. And I really love that as a resource, too. I think back, you know, when I first started in PTA, I was telling my colleagues just before you guys got on, I wish I had known or had any of these tools.

I would have done things a lot differently. I think a lot, a lot of our PTA leaders would have if you knew that there are people who couldn't access the things that we were producing, we would feel very differently about. The work that we're doing. We work so hard. We put so much love and attention into it.

I think if we could just change the lens a little bit and change the effort, we could really get there. [00:14:00] Can I just jump in? We had a question of if this is mass distributed questionnaire, and I just wanted to let everybody know and Jordana put it in the, in the chat as well. ~~It's,~~ it's in the toolkit and all of this information is on our website and we have a tab specifically for Diversity, actually, and inclusion.

You also find these things under the forms tab. We have it in several different places, but our website is very, very robust with pretty much anything and everything that you can think of to run a PTA. Yeah, and we did as I, and I want

to really say that we, I think, I mean, we rolled out the toolkit at the end of last year and, you know, have been trying to instill in our units that this is a tool that they can use, but I don't know that most of them are using or know about it.

So I think there's still some, there's definitely some opportunity for us to get more, to get that more out and in front of our units. And [00:15:00] then the 12th, we just newly revised. So we haven't, it hasn't been out there long in the universe. Also another question that I saw was, if the principals have this information and each school does have a report, and they have all of the demographics and I was able to, ~~you're,~~ you're able to find them online as well on the TUSD website, but the principal should have.

Lots of this information. Yeah. And I mean, I don't know that necessarily we know how many people in our community are Buddhist, ~~for instance~~ our principals are incredible and they know a lot.

About their families, stuff that's not even on paper. So I think this is really a great it's also a great conversation starter. Not everything can be quantified in numbers. Sometimes there's going to be some anecdotal evidence and there's just going to be a lot of learning. And I think the more that you start to dig in and show interest in kind of learning about your community, it kind of opens the door for even more learning.

You start becoming a really [00:16:00] great you know, community slash PTA detective and kind of really sussing out needs and, and having those conversations. But I love it. You guys keep the questions and stuff coming. So the next tool we'll kind of talk about before we dive into, like, the going back to our literacy night is the new event plan that we just released.

The event plan itself isn't something we've, we developed our own. California state PT has a template that they have put out and we at torrens council had used that modified that ages ago to kind of fit the torrens council slash T. U. S. D. like needs, you know, in terms of insurance and things like that.

And my colleagues can jump in and keep me honest if I'm lying about that, but I felt pretty confident. I know a thing or 2, so, but I will explain the event plan kind of at large or as overall and then get into some of the little pieces of things that we've tweaked, which we hope will make make a difference.[00:17:00]

So, a quick note about event plans using event plans. This isn't something every unit is using, but we do highly encourage we use it. Pretty with a lot of regularity in Torrance council. You would give this theoretically to every board

member, every committee person, every chairperson who is hosting something for your PTA and.

Committees don't make decisions by themselves. They, they work small working groups and then they take it back to their board of directors or their executive board, I should say, for approval. So, you know, chair people, committee folks cannot go spend and do without the authorization of their board which usually involves involvement from the principal as well.

So there's like kind of. Kind of layers and approval processes. And what we love about this is that it kind of serves a few purposes when you're putting together an event, an activity, a fundraiser, you know, you can see here on this 1st page. Part of the screen, it's all of, like, the basic information, the who, what, when, [00:18:00] where, you know, how, and while that's not the super impressive, important part, I think what I love about this particular tool is that as you go into it more, it's like a two page sheet.

You have this wonderful checklist that helps you think through all the things that we often forget. So if you have a chairperson who has never really been a part of your PTA and they're starting to host something and they don't know all the things they should be asking, what's cool about this is that they have kind of a logistical checklist that they're able to kind of go through and ensure that they got the PTA approval and that they checked the calendar and they, you know, they know that this is approved by the insurance.

And if you're doing a raffle that you guys have done your, ~~you know~~ you know, have your certificate through the California State PTA, like you've checked that box. The things that we've changed about it, is that we were adjusted, I should say, as we've added sections related to translation and interpretation, dietary restrictions special accommodations you know, Carlos had mentioned earlier, ~~noise~~, noise, sensitivities or mobility concerns, [00:19:00] closed captioning, there's a whole host of things.

And this is just again, like a, a, a small down payment on that. Because there's so much more we probably could do, ~~but~~ But wanting to start somewhere and getting you guys to think through building those into your plans in a way that felt kind of more like seamless, you know, you're already checking the box that you have a microphone and you have a flag and somebody to do the flag salute checking to make sure that there's, you know, you guys have planned for these other things.



Can make it feel like it's part of a, it's a really holistic look, or at least we hope it gets you closer to that. We even put in a checkbox reminding the organizer to check religious and cultural holidays. You know, very often we're hosting things ~~unintentionally and sometimes~~. Yeah, unintentionally and not meaning to be, you know, it's tough to get dates on the calendar.

So sometimes things land where they land. But, ~~if you knew~~, if you knew it was landing on a date that was really important, you know you might scooch it the next week over a day over things like that. So again, just trying to give some thought into [00:20:00] how, many of our units are kind of using this tool already.

And we really wanted to kind of, amplify it. You know, augment it, make it more useful. So if we go back to, like, our example, let's say, you know, after meeting with your principal, you learn that 12 percent of your families speak Spanish as a primary language at home. That's not uncommon. We have a lot of, I don't know if Terry or any of my colleagues remembers how many languages are spoken in TUSD alone, but I know just some of our school campuses, there's dozens of languages spoken.

My understanding is it's 80. Yeah, it's, it's a lot, right? I remember when I heard the number, I was like, that's not a real number. ~~Although we can't translate 80 different things, that's probably not within our, our wheelhouse.~~

Every school community has probably a couple of languages that are spoken by some number of your families as their native tongue. And so. Having that discussion, let's, you know, in our theoretical amazing you know, elementary school here, [00:21:00] 12 percent of our families speak language speak Spanish primarily at home.

So then kind of, you know, get you thinking like, well, what do we do with that? So in addition to probably providing translated emails and social media posts and promoting the event in Spanish as well as in English, You may also want to think about what happens on site, right? Do, are there signs that are clear for everybody in both languages, dual languages?

You know, if we're putting together banners or other kind of materials, ~~is it, is it,~~ is everything that they see gonna mirror our English language experience? And that's something I think we don't maybe ask nearly enough. And so I think there's really kind of a wonderful opportunity in some languages.

You can even use like, I tools to kind of at least get the initial writing down and then work with your school to see if their interpretation, you know, translation services or things that they're using that you could piggyback on. Or you know, you could pay a little bit of money and actually have it translated, or have a native Spanish speaker read what you had [00:22:00] translated and tell you if this makes zero sense.

We do that a lot in 33rd District. We actually have a translation team of three folks now who handle all of our interpretation. A lot of times we run it through AI, and then I'll send it to them, and then they'll say like, No, honey, this, this word. Nobody uses that. That's, that's the, that's a Spanish grammar teacher, you know?

So it's, you can do, there's a lot of stuff you could do that's low cost, no cost, you know, and stuff that's a bit more professional. And even things like your PTA meetings. I can tell you, I've sat in meetings before where I was, I do not speak Spanish, unfortunately. But sitting there listening to a presentation, no joke, I put together I ran through a high translation and worked with a counterpart to deliver it in Spanish, and I couldn't understand, I didn't even know what slide we were on.

It was the worst experience I'd ever had, and I thought, this is the experience we force families to sit through all the time. Could we improve that? And the answer is absolutely. [00:23:00] And even thinking through kind of interpretation, you know, could we have, and I apologize, there is definitely a, yep, there's a typo.

Nobody gets any bonuses. I caught it. But if we had a, you know, interpreter through our school district or through an outside service, what would that look like? Could we have a help desk and have a volunteer in our community who's willing to volunteer? You know, a couple of hours to be you know, the Spanish language help desk person.

There's a lot of really cool opportunities that we probably never considered because we didn't know that there was a, there was a need or didn't acknowledge how big that need might have been. So let's jump into the kind of the next scenario. Let's pretend we have a, and this isn't an unusual scenario either.

25 percent of our families qualify for free or reduced lunch. We know that there's a lot of, you know, there are some Title I schools in Torrance and, and, We know that families struggle and it doesn't matter what neighborhood you

live in. I mean, they, you know, it doesn't matter if you're in Torrance or Compton.

There's families that struggle regardless. [00:24:00] So, you know, consider families, that might need additional support. You know, for your reduced lunch doesn't necessarily mean that, that you couldn't access our events, but, but in speaking with your school, you know, your principal, they might be able to tell you that there's like 25 families at the school that really have severe needs or 10 families at the school that really have, you know, some severe financial challenges.

And so, you know, as a PTA, you could even think creatively I put PTA bucks here, but I'll explain it in just a moment. You know, I thought, well, We already know that sometimes we get, as PTAs, maybe we solicit donations, and, you know, there's always more food than we know what to do with, even at the end of the night.

I've yet to have been to a PTA event where there weren't just a ton of leftovers. So you know that you probably have a little bit of wiggle room in food, in terms of like food or drink, or a little bit of wiggle room in terms of like activities. But you know that, let's say this event, this event, Literacy event is largely free, you know, come on to [00:25:00] campus, enjoy the readers and da da da.

But let's say you had food for sale or snacks or goodies for sale. You're doing it as a fundraiser or to offset some of the cost. And you also maybe have your book fair running. And you also know that that, you know, books can be quite expensive. You know, I know a lot of book fairs do offer inexpensive books.

So that's, you know, neither here nor there. But as a group, you might say, well, 10 families, you know, if we, if we gave each of them PTA, like this little voucher, PTA bucks, and we gave that to the school because they would deal with those families directly. We don't know who they are. We don't need to know who they are.

~~You could distribute like a number, a small number within your school community as student incentives.~~ And before you know it, the families who are coming, who have, you know, a voucher worth 10 PTA bucks or whatever, could get a couple of pieces of pizza and a couple of drinks and feel like they participated in, in an event.

That otherwise maybe they might have held back on and no, no, that's not like the most amazing example, but I'm just saying, as an, as a, for instance, like, I

think I thought of that, that winner in about 5 minutes, but I, you guys are way smarter and have [00:26:00] amazing boards who I think would be interested in thinking through.

How do you make some of these? How do you close some of those gaps and make it easier for families to participate? In the fullest sense you could also ensure that it's a truly a free event, solicit donations for snacks and beverages. And everybody, you know, who comes gets a free snack, your beverage, if they want, you know, they just eat dinner at home or whatever, or again, a combination of maybe free options, but being clear what things are free you know, upfront, maybe on your promotion and then talking about, you know, there will be food for sale.

You know, come on a full stomach or come empty, you know, we'll, we'll handle it either way. So there's options. I think just was what I'm trying to say is you can start seeing how very quickly you have an opportunity and now you have a solution. I love it. And let's say your data shows that you have students with intellectual or cognitive disabilities.

We know that we, we do on many of our campuses have, you know, students that have you know, [00:27:00] IEPs or in special ed programs. And again, this is going to look different for all of you, elementary, middle school, high school and different school sites have different you know, different student populations.

So, this isn't going to be a universal and it's not going to be an easy 1 to, to figure out right away. You're going to work with your, your school because they're the ones who have the knowledge and the partnership, but really thinking through, you guardians that have students with disabilities.

Should also feel like our events are welcoming and accessible highlight on accessible, meaning that they can access it. So consider how participation might differ for us for a student with an intellectual disability. Let's say, maybe you know, versus a physical disability, a student that is blind might.

Obviously have very different needs and experiences than a student with maybe down syndrome. So there's, it's not going to ever be a one size fits all, which means that there's a lot of discussion to be had. [00:28:00] So, tailoring events that are accessible and engaging for persons with disabilities, including the families, because they're welcomed on our campus.

Right? And we, we know that again, families come all shapes, sizes and colors. Means that we want to provide accommodations like white spaces or sensory friendly activities. And I'm not expecting any of you guys to be occupational therapist or para ads. This is where you lean in hard on your school.

But what would be even better is if you met with and found parents who have children with disabilities to be on your board, or to be a part of your committee, or to be an advisory group to be able to share some of the things that you want to do and asking them directly. What that would mean for their family.

How might that look? How might that change? And I think that's when it starts becoming really real. When you see numbers on a paper, it isn't as meaningful seeing, seeing families who are participating in ways they've never been able to participate, participate. So I really want to encourage you guys to kind of lean in here because this is a, this is a huge opportunity.

There [00:29:00] are so many students cannot and do not participate in our events. And with some tweaks, we really could make, make a difference. So I'm going to get off of my soapbox. I'm going to kick it over to Jan. Take a breath and take it away. As usual, Nan has done an awesome job presenting all of that. So we appreciate all the work you've done for that.

Inclusion is about more than just accessibility. It's about creating a sense of belonging for everyone in our community. School community. Let's commit to these principles and all our PTA events and activities. The goal isn't perfection, but we want to reduce the barriers and make events more welcoming each time through small, thoughtful tweaks.

So, to illustrate further, we're going to break into small groups to discuss [00:30:00] an actual upcoming event at your school and how you might make it more inclusive. Please keep your part of the discussion brief. So everyone can share and have a great discussion. Yeah, give me 1 2nd, I'm going to create our little breakout rooms.

I'm popping my colleagues in the room and then I'm just going to toss you guys to the wind.

So, I want to thank everybody again for being here. We will reconvene after you guys come out of your your breakout rooms. So long and happy trails.

Hello. So good to see everyone. So I hope everyone had really productive, helpful discussions. I sometimes think like, you know, when you're by yourself

and you think, I think I've got a really great idea or I know there's a need, but it's like you have nobody to kind of just, Bounce it around with I know we have board members, but we're busy and sometimes we're very, you know, everyone's working virtually.

So I just love I was kind of jealous that you guys were [00:31:00] in that in the breakout rooms and I was not because I'm sure there was some really good discussions. Sorry, apologies. Okay, attack dog gone. So. Now that you guys are kind of back, I would love to see anyone from, you know, maybe some of my colleagues in the, in the committee would be willing to either pick somebody from the group who would be willing to share, or maybe you share out some of the one or two kind of ideas or thoughts that, you know, bubble to the surface for you guys.

And don't all jump up at once. Well, I'd like to ask Marina to share a bit. Our the group I was in was me, Sumi, and Terry. So being that we're from council we, you know, we really picked Marina's brain and it was very helpful. To hear what she had to say, so I'd like her to share it.

Okay, so we primarily discussed communications [00:32:00] that PTA has to share with the school population. So making sure that those communications are accessible to all families be it. That we consider posting or announcing events or whatever is coming up in different locations on campus that parents can access without actually having to physically enter the campus.

Because we know for security reasons, we pick our kids up at either a front gate or a back gate. And then, of course, making sure that those communications are in written in. different languages, depending on that school population and that they're shared across multiple platforms, actual physical tangible ones, like I described, front, back of school, in the office, but also [00:33:00] through, you know, Facebook, Instagram our weekly newsletter.

~~So really it was a discussion on accessibility.~~ No, I love that. Language is so huge. As said, I mean, I, I think maybe all of us know what it's like to, you know, at some point not be able to understand, you know, what is being said. I've even thought like I had such a hard time with accent. So I could be talking to another individual who was speaking English and like my ears weren't attuned to it.

You know, ~~it's, I think it's,~~ it's interesting how, Language is so important for being heard and understood. I mean, obviously it's a practical need, but I think when you walk into a room and you see something that is in your native tongue,

that one act tells you you're, you're welcomed here. Like we see you, we see you.

And I love that. There are some really great tools. Again, I can't say enough for you have used with ChatGPT, I've used Claude Canva, which is a, it's a free tool that a lot of us in PTA use already. But they [00:34:00] have, they've been playing in the AI space and you can use, use that tool to do translation.

Sometimes when I pull text into like chat GPT, I'll ask it to write in a, in Spanish that is commonly spoken in Southern California specifically. I don't, it's not perfect, but it gets really close. And what I love about it is when I hand it to somebody who can Read and write or spell and understand well.

What's very cool is that it usually it's very few minor things that need changes, which gives me a lot of confidence. Cause I know that, you know, what we probably learned in high school is not what is spoken on the, you know, in the everyday regular, settings. So I love that. Thank you so much for sharing.

Would any of my other colleagues like to chip in and also if you guys are hearing like, if there are tools, you know, use love, whether it's a website, an email system, a tool and AI, like, whatever, please do feel free to share that because this is really meant to be you know, a collaborative effort in which [00:35:00] we're all learning and growing together.

If I can just add, I translate some of the documents that I use at work into Spanish and, I, I just use regular old Google Translate and I feel like it's improved so much over the years that I may have to just like, Rearrange one word here and there, but it largely, at least for Spanish, it does translate pretty well.

Yeah, it is spooky good on Spanish. I know enough to get in trouble, but not enough to actually be useful. So I don't know where that leaves me, but I agree. I would say it's dicier when it comes to other languages. You know, I'm thinking of like you know, Japanese or character, you know, or Chinese symbols, that stuff you definitely would not want to mess around with.

Because if, you know, let, let's say you have somebody we know may know lots of Spanish speaking individuals, but I don't know, I know several Japanese Americans, but I don't know any [00:36:00] that, that write and read in Japanese. So being able to get somebody who can read it and read it well and know what you're saying, you know, you give maybe the English version and

the translated version, they'd be able to kind of give you the, the skinny, but again, your school.

Site your principal would be a great place to start because I do know and thanks to sunny for shedding shedding light on this is that if your school has a is a 15 percent is the threshold for a specific language that I think the school district has to or the school site has to have those translated for those families and while PTA doesn't have that same requirement, it is really a good rule of thumb.

And so we might be able to piggyback on whatever the school is doing. To kind of make sure that our, our, we're in alignment and somebody can tell me if I was wrong. I'm fine with that. I'm always wrong. So would any of my other colleagues like to chip in with maybe a discussion they had in the room?

And thank you again, Marina. I appreciate you. I'm willing. It's Michelle.  
[00:37:00] Yes. So I it was just me and Megan Chandler. And we had a very productive discussion. Ours kind of went into the direction of coming event bike rodeo. And I know this is one that Torrance Council has also kind of discussed and also in our DEI committee.

The accessibility of, of doing a bike rodeo for some of our families because of socioeconomic, of physical disabilities and the things like that. And she did give me a resource that I'm going to look into. It's called kids in motion, and you know, there are possibilities of, of.

Because the bikes, the specialty bikes are very expensive. So a lot of families  
[00:38:00] cannot afford them. But if we could talk to somebody like a kids in motion or another organization that might be able to provide those bikes for us at either the school site or at the Torrance Council. Bike rodeo, you know, then that's that's another option.

This is also something that we could talk to the fire department about as well, because we collaborate with them. And maybe they have resources as well. So that was very exciting. And then she also talked about dances. And having maybe a sensory corner or a quiet room so that there is the ability for those kiddos that have, the sensory overload that there's a place for them to go.

And then also she, she said that she liked the PTA Bucks idea. Or, you know, making the dances free and and having [00:39:00] all of your parents like put out an all call for donations. I know at West we've done that for teacher appreciation. I know that's not a kid's thing, but and that way you know, let everybody know what you need and people.



People love to donate, ~~and then,~~ then you're able to keep your events, free. And, so those are the, the things that we talked about. But, I love that. I should have had like a PTA bingo card. Like you would have checked a few. I mean, we've talked about communication. Love it. I love the idea of a partnership.

There's so many communities and small, ~~well,~~ community organizations and small nonprofits that do really niche things that I don't think most of us know about. So, I mean, I love that. I appreciate you know, your guys sharing and just the thoughtfulness about that. I, you know, and again, I, I can't stress enough.

I'm not an expert. I have two neurotypical children. I hadn't [00:40:00] actually had a lot of exposure myself until working on a resolution with two individuals who I, ~~think highly of and~~ the work that they do. And then even my daughter and working with students who were on the spectrum in her capacity, kind of as her entry level into that space.

And I was, I was amazed at how little I knew and how little I understood. And that's the, the kind of the learning we've been seeing in our committee too is just realizing there's a lot we don't know. And it's okay to say that we don't know it, but again, seek out the, the experts, especially the families who have these children and can really inform some of these decisions.

They know exactly what this looks like when they take their kid out to a restaurant or when they're, you know, with their family and in different setting, they would be able to kind of anticipate some of the things that, that maybe we couldn't. So I, I can't stress enough how important partnerships are going to be in this effort.

And that, yeah, that was another thing that we discussed is, is. Because we haven't experienced it, then, you [00:41:00] know, We don't we don't know. And, so connecting with with those folks and trying to better understand and, of course, getting them on your board or, you know, Megan, is there anything that I missed that you wanted to add?

No I think Michelle did great. Thank you, Michelle. I am that family. I do have a kid with special needs that goes to Torrance Unified School District and I do serve on the board on that school and I'm actually the incoming president for next year. Congratulations. Thank you. So I, you know, I asked Michelle to speak cause it's very personal to me, ~~all this, so I can start to go off a little bit,~~ ~~but yes, we also talked a~~ very important to me, like, Getting those families more involved in campus things, because there is a huge disconnect and I told her,

like, our fun run, my son's class was 1 of the ones that out of all the classrooms, the top 5 to raise the most money for the 1st time ever.[00:42:00]

And it was just more of a personal touch because I am that parent and I do walk the same steps that they walk and I, they're, they're just willing to listen to me. So, I did tell Michelle, I love the idea of an advisory board, a chair position so this can just be an ongoing thing and it wasn't just that one time board member, so the kids to come in will also have That voice in that family will also have somebody that they feel like they can relate to.

I love that. Thank you so much for sharing it again. It's it's all of us together. I mean, we all know what it feels like to love somebody, especially if, you know, we've been entrusted with raising a little human being until an amazing, you know, human being, we give them the world. And so, you know, it makes sense that so many people are, are it.

Hungry for community and want to see their Children have the fullest experience that they possibly can. So I love that. I mean, that's that's what we're trying to to aim for, any other colleagues have anything they [00:43:00] wanted to kind of share that that that would be really helpful for the rest of our audience.

I can piggyback on what Michelle's group talked about. I was in a, a breakout with Maria Crawford and Jackie and Carlos Solorio. And the bike rodeo was a big subject that. We talked about for most of the time I'd love for the Solarios to speak on it.

If that's okay. And but before that, I wanted to say 1 of the other points that they made was how out of all the kind of family nights they do at their campus. The movie night seems like the 1 that could be the most inclusive because it's an outdoor space. It's, you know, they just described it. So beautifully.

So, I will let them take that over if they're still on our meeting. Yes, we're still here. So, in terms of the the bike rodeo, one of our concerns is, is that, and we're comparing it to when Clark, our son, who's on the [00:44:00] spectrum, was at launch, which was that a lot of these kids in his class and in the class he was in before have mobility issues.

And or an O. T. and things like that. And sometimes they're not able to at this point, pedal yet, or even use a scooter yet. And we were thinking, you know, at launch, it was all wheels. Welcome. It wasn't just you had to be on a bike and it had to be a without training wheels or any of those things that was there.

They can be in a wagon. They could be so they can just be part of. The experience, and so , we were saying that we never had Clark in the bike rodeo because he, he's currently, you know, T for like, low Tony, it's very low tone and muscle tone to be able to do some of these things. And so to, to not be able to do that, that.

It's it's sad, and we'd want to be included and so that's what we were talking about in that regard. And then, in terms of the. The movie night we were saying it's one of the [00:45:00] most inclusive nights for a number of reasons one being that it's fairly free So some we're a tier one school. So a lot of the kids who come or parents families who come it's You know grandmas and grandpas were there.

They were all there watching a movie. We watched coco in october last year last year they were able to come and bring their own food. We also had food available So for people who did want to buy something and it was there we could fundraise on that But also That was one of the only nights I remember seeing a lot of people in our village.

That's what I call our special education group, our village, being there because for our kids, they stem sometimes they have a hard time sitting in one place. And it was nice to be in a place where we didn't have to worry if we were bothering somebody else or, you know, disrupting their experience, but also our kids are having a good time.

So it was all encompassing and inclusive, one of the most inclusive events. That we've had [00:46:00] and since clark has been in school and it was a great sense of community Not just for the special needs community or special education community rather but for everyone to come together And really be in the moment and enjoy The time just watching a movie.

Yeah And again, it was technically a you know a free event. Yeah, with the option To you know have that fundraising opportunity But it really was a great turnout. Yeah, and we hope to have more of those not just Once a year. Yeah, those are our 2 things. No, those are honestly, those are beautiful. I mean, I, I will tell you, I don't think anyone on torrents council thinks we've had this on lockdown.

And I think anybody who thinks they do still doesn't fully have it because I think there's always room. There's more and more room for everybody at the table. You've given us a lot of really helpful feedback on the bike rodeo that I know as a council, we can take back

there's different discussions and what we started with, you know, we, we heard a need, we [00:47:00] try to address the need, but we know that there are more needs and there's a lot more learning to be had. So I appreciate that. I love the thoughtfulness and the experience you guys had with the outdoor space. There are opportunities, I think, you know, we talked to last night at the special task force.

I won't jump into that too much, but that there's so much low hanging fruit. There are things we can do right here right now that would. That would move the needle really on trying to make more of our events welcoming and truly where everyone really could participate. So thank you guys for that.

Anybody else want to share? I think Bri were you did you lose the, the digital grappling with Jordana? I did I lost no pushing me. ~~Well, 1st, I just want to say Jill or Alma if you would prefer to speak instead of me, please interrupt me.~~ I know. I think I spoke too much during our breakout room.

Honestly. So, I'm sorry you 2 for taking up the space. But we talked about some of our family events. You know, previously, I think a lot of have had, [00:48:00] like, the father daughter dance and mother son dance or event things like that. And we talked about kind of shifting those away from being. You know, gender based, like, dividing up the students by gender and also parents, like.

Being more inclusive of different family structures and things like that. But 1 of the concerns that was brought up was that I think, you know, a lot of the reason, or at least part of the reason that those events happen that way is you know, to divide up. Into smaller groups, because we, a lot of us are working on small campuses and cafeterias can only hold so many students before it turns into a wild, you know, chaos of children.

So I had shared that at Fern, we started doing our events broken up by upper grades and lower grades. So TK through 2nd grade is 1 event and then 3rd through 5th [00:49:00] grade is another event and it's when we started it last year. So, we're on our 2nd year, we've done our lower grade event and we have our upper grade event coming up.

And so far it's been very well received. So there there's been a little bit of maybe a nostalgia from like, small groups of the, the loss of the 1 particular event. But overall, ~~the~~. The response has been very positive and it's allowed us to kind of tailor the, the activities by age level, like age group too.

So we're, we're appealing more to to the students where they're at the younger younger ones versus the older ones. So. I love that. I love that. Oh, that's so smart. I mean, right now we, we need a sense of community more than we've ever, I think, you know, so I appreciate all the ways that you guys are proposing bringing communities together.

Love it. I know we had a couple of others where did anyone else want to jump in with [00:50:00] some feedback or insights that you thought might be Helpful for the group, and I know just a quick time check. I know we did plan on you know, calling this calling this at 9 because we've all got bedtimes. So we'll move through the last couple of slides.

I had Kaylee and Rebecca and we were coming from big schools and a little school title one school not title one school so we're a lot of differences right but there were some things in common and one of the things we noted was, if you're getting.

You've gotten one area of diversity covered. Maybe you're neglecting another area, you know, like you're doing really good because you have some volunteers that can help you with feedback and ideas on this area, but then you're kind of lacking this area. So, I don't know. I think my takeaway was do your best.

You know, don't beat yourself up if you don't get it right the first try like this is all kind of new and kind of being aware and trying is your is your first [00:51:00] success. And also about specific events, we did talk about dances and be I'm totally with you on shifting away from the gender base we did that successfully last year.

Lower grades, upper grades, and it kind of keeps down the chaos, but one of the big things is that we still make it very clear that it's like you come with your adult, whoever that may be, but you come with an adult, you don't just come with like a group of friends and, and students and, you know, And go crazy because it's not like a parents night out event.

It is like a family event. So if you keep that consistent with your messaging, then, you know, you could have a little bit more involvement with the families and not just, a really fun, but kind of crazy event with just students. What else did we talk about? Just take, take the little wins build on them.

Talk to the teachers get talked to volunteers. Talk to the [00:52:00] parents who are complaining about something. Hey, you have some great ideas. ~~I may agree with you.~~ Why don't you bring this back to the group and maybe we can work

together on like planning the next event to address that complaint or address that challenge that We didn't like super succeed on.

So that's also really good to just get more people involved. So you don't have to think of it all. It's not possible to think of all the issues that could come about, right, with all these events and all these logistics. So yeah, just get your, your community more involved and really know your community.

And, then these, Events that we're trying to put out will be super inclusive and accommodating. You know, I think was just providing, you know, bikes in general and helmets, because, you know, That was a big thing about bike road. You have to ride with a helmet, but not everyone has one. So if they [00:53:00] want to be involved, you know, maybe have a few that they can borrow that, you know, are different sizes and things like that.

So it fits well, and so that they can be involved in the bike road event, even if they don't have, like, a bike or the proper equipment. That was one thing I noted too. ~~In the past,~~ I do want to say in the past, we used to have a connection that did give helmets.

Reach out to Torrance PD too, because we always have an officer come and kind of like MC our event and do a little like showing off all the different obstacles for the bike rodeo.

And I didn't know this, but they get all sorts of safety equipment for free that they want to give out to the community. But they just don't know who to just like randomly give it out to. So see what they have and what resources they can share. Or if they even have like personnel who would want to volunteer and help you at these types of events.

This is really good stuff. ~~I~~ I want you guys to know too, this isn't meant to just be like here in this [00:54:00] small group of you know, 13, 16 of us or whatever, you know, we, the hope is that we'll share, we will be able to pull this through into some things, investigate other things and be able to share this out.

But I can't stress enough how important it is to really consider adding a DEI committee or chair or advisory group to your PTA. Somebody who, somebody is not a single individual people from your community who are interested in this work and are have a vested interest in trying to see that stuff pulled through your PTA

~~Sunny, it is you next, my friend.~~ We're coming around home stretch, friends. Before I go to the last, last slide, one thing about translation. And getting people, more people to meetings.

I had a crash course in this, but my school had that requirement of 15 percent were Japanese speaking. And so school communications had to go out in both languages. Literally like the text will be English and then Japanese right under. PTA doesn't have that requirement, but that is our community, right?

And so I made [00:55:00] it a point to say, we will have. You know, parent ambassadors or language ambassadors at our meetings, our PT meetings, and these are just folks who volunteered their time, thankfully, to sit in the back and just kind of translate what's going on at the front to any folks who need it. And they can sit at the back and talk concurrently and it won't like really interfere with the goings on but it'll actually just help those few families that need it.

That little help and that wasn't an official thing but we've called it our language ambassador program. And if you identify those communities that need those translation services and just simply ask your board or ask your volunteers. Hey, would you mind helping us, you know, just don't have to translate verbatim word for word but you know just a little bit or help with questions, you know, for these families that we've identified or that that need that help or that would be more comfortable.

Coming to a meeting if they knew that was available. And we do have, it's funny, but apparently a big [00:56:00] thing in the Japanese community is a, is the line app. It's a like a chatting app messaging app that you use on your phone. And so we have a line group and we have, I think, over 200 folks in the line group.

And so we have a board member who takes all like a really, really pertinent information. That PTA puts out, and even the school puts out and kind of translates it for that group, and addresses questions that the group has for us. So that's a great little, like, part of the ambassador program we have, so.

Mind blown. Thank you so much, because I think, I don't even know if I touched on it or glossed over it, but Sunny, I love that. Different groups have different needs, right? I've heard WhatsApp is really big in the Spanish speaking community line, and there's other ones that Korean, Korean families use.

And so, how do you put your feelers out? Like, is that what's going on behind the scenes? Like, has this been going on and we just didn't know? Probably.

How can we, get into those networks and get them [00:57:00] involved, answer the questions, make them feel included and heard. And that is, you know, another way to make your, pTA more inclusive. ~~All right, super crash course because I didn't know that that,~~ you know, translation requirement was affecting our school. And I think we're the only school that has that big of a percentage. And Korean is not far behind either. So like a Japanese 15 percent Korean 12%.

So they're really huge parts of our school in our community. So I love that. Thank you so much for sharing and and I, I don't know how anybody ever thought of such smart ideas, but I appreciate you guys. And I hope that you guys steal some of this, this good stuff here. Does any we're going to yeah, I'll just say, so I just really want to talk about how.

Getting feedback I've talked about in my breakout room getting like a little post event feedback a little rundown with your board members and your volunteers is a really good idea. You can, like, codify it in a survey or a [00:58:00] form. We even passed out paper forms during the event to get the parents and families and the kids saying what, you know, what were their favorite parts, what was kind of like, Not favorite parts.

And what do you want to see in the future? You know, things like that. But for our, our, the survey to our board, it was more specific. Like, what did you think about the pacing of our meetings? Like, what was working? What was not working? Did you, did you spend too long in your shift? Did you wish there was more volunteers?

trainings prior to the event? Things like that. And so very specific questions. Even share your good stories, like share your stories because you could have had someone over in this sector of the event and you've never saw them all night, but they were experiencing great things too. And so, definitely like get together at some point afterwards and talk about what worked, what didn't.

And if you can kind of. Put that down, whether in a spreadsheet or just in [00:59:00] your event plan or committee report or something about what to do next time, or here's a resources that worked out really great. Here's the numbers we called. We used to do binders you know, had all our flyers and contact information, everything in binders.

That was pre COVID. During COVID, they all went Lost like so and so had it so so it's not coming back to school so so left town. I don't know. And so I saw that as a great opportunity to go digital, and we put everything on our Google Drive, how that looks for you kind of depends on how techie. You know, you



are how many techie people you have on your board, but we were able to have a Google workspace.

So we have a shared drive and we have email addresses that end in our website domain name. So we'll have like yearbook at Hickory PTA dot net. [01:00:00] We have like, hello, at HickoryPT. org, like the general one, we have treasurer at HickoryPT. org, so we have our emails, we have our separate drives in Google Docs we can work with, but then we have the shared drive that we put into specific folders so that everyone can access them.

If you want to take a peek at the budget or remind yourself of the budget, it's in the finance folder. If you want to see the meeting agenda or the documents that we had at this meeting is in the meeting folder. So things like that. I think are really great idea. You know, try to not let like the slide says, don't let your hard work in planning your feedback after afterwards.

Great ideas. Don't let them go to waste. Like you want to pass it on. You're not gonna be in this position forever. I hope not. Right. So you wanna be able to pass that knowledge on and, and talk about the good things, talk about the challenges.

The through line there is just, you know, make sure that your [01:01:00] work can be, you've done all the hard work, make it easy for someone to take that and, you know, Take it and evolve it even further, you know, because if, you know, to Sunny's point, we lose so much knowledge when, when those, if you, you would be more likely to do something, if you had a flyer, you had to update a letter, you had to update a game plan that you had to make tweaks to, it's that much harder for people to think inclusively.

When they're just trying to build it from scratch. So make sure that you're giving the future generations of PTA the best chance to really serve your community. And then last word before we get on to Jan's goodbye. Oh, I'm sorry. Editable or making a spreadsheet that works, are really, really valuable tools.

So if you've got that techie person who knows how to do that, or that design person who knows how to work Canva or whatever. And can teach you some tips that will that you can use and like everything. That's great. And they can collaborate on the document. That's that's the [01:02:00] biggest plus bonus for me for Google Docs is that you can both be typing into it.

You can share ideas. You can copy and paste and like change the title and make it your own or make it new for this year or whatever. So, and one of those

things is a form. Have you guys done Google Forms? I think Google Forms are awesome. If you want to send out that survey real quick, you send out a few questions on a Google Form, and the answers populate into a spreadsheet, so you have it all in one place.

I think they're awesome. And one of the ways we've used it with our DEI committee is this Spotlight on DEI, survey. Which you can check out with that QR code. It looks like and then also be on our DEI website and also in our newsletter, which I don't know if we mentioned yet, but this is really a way for you guys to share those events and programs.

It could be an ongoing thing. It could be say, something as simple as, you know, we've made sure there's more resources in the library [01:03:00] that are inclusive or we've done a dance that had these accommodations and just, Whatever you thought worked well, whatever you didn't think work well, all that is valuable information to share with, you know, other PTAs and other units.

And so we would love to spotlight some of these things each month in like a newsletter that we send out to, to the greater group so that we can share your work. I love it. Thank you so much, Sunny. All the great ideas for your partnership, of course, and just for. Bringing us to the very end, where I will leave it off with our incredible Jen.

Well, first I just want to thank Nan, Michelle, Bri, Jordana, and Sunny. This amazing committee is just doing great things. Having you all here tonight to join us and talk about it means that you're interested and [01:04:00] you are invested in this. So let's hope we get more people involved and get this at all of our units.

Feel free to email any of us. You can just go to our website. All of our contact information is there

and we absolutely are learning, . ~~Constantly learning. We don't have sacred cows, so,~~ Anything we can do to improve, improve our programs, improve our messages, improve our training, improve the resources, like, please, we really do want that. We really do want to make this, . The absolute best experience for every single person that encounters our PTAs.

And again, I want to thank everyone for just being here.