

Overview

PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children. Our mission requires that diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) be central to our work and used in our day-to-day decisions and actions.

This tool is designed to help local PTAs chart a path forward on their DEI journey. It is an accompanying tool to [National PTA's Commitment to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#), which defines what these terms mean and why they matter for our mission.

Using the DEI rubrics below, your PTA can assess where you are—and where you are headed—on your DEI journey:

- **At the *Beginning stage***, PTAs are “color-blind” or “identity-blind,” either by design or default, and do not lift up issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in any regular or routine way. PTAs may take the position that paying attention to diversity or demographic disparities shifts attention away from shared goals or concerns.
- **At the *Emerging stage***, PTAs are focused on building membership and leadership comprised of individuals from different backgrounds and experiences. A primary goal is diversity and representation to better reflect the increasingly diverse constituencies that the PTA represents and seeks to serve.

- **At the *Intermediate stage***, PTAs are focused on culture and creating an environment in which everyone is comfortable sharing and contributing their experiences. The primary goal is inclusion and internal change in behaviors, policies and practices.
- **At the *Advanced stage***, PTAs are focused on systems to improve equity. The primary goal is integration of an equity lens into all aspects of the association's work. This involves making internal and external changes and regularly evaluating processes, programs and operations to understand if they truly achieve the association's mission and desire for fairness.

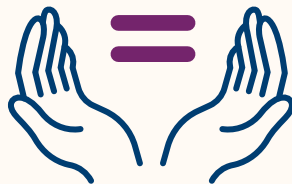
Diversity, equity and inclusion cannot be the stand-alone work of one committee or even a small group of individuals. It is the work of every PTA member who decides to serve the families and children in their community. As such, this tool helps connect the dots between DEI and every PTA's efforts around:

- **Membership**
- **Programs**
- **Advocacy**
- **Governance and Leadership**

At the end of each section of this DEI rubric, we also provide reflection questions that PTA leaders can use in their planning, training, and family engagement efforts.



Diversity



Equity



Inclusion

	<i>Beginning:</i> Color/Identity-Blind	<i>Emerging:</i> Focused on Diversity	<i>Intermediate:</i> Focused on Inclusion	<i>Advanced:</i> Focused on Equity
MEMBERSHIP	<p>Are not aware that dominant groups (e.g., White, English-only speaking, middle class, straight, Christian, etc.) have power in the PTA</p> <p>Membership is not representative of the communities served</p> <p>Have not determined which demographic group(s) are missing from membership and the barriers keeping them from being engaged</p> <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assumptions that everyone who wants to be a member of PTA knows about PTA already PTA communications and activities focused on volunteering and/or fundraising 	<p>Are aware that dominant groups (e.g., White, English-only speaking, middle class, straight, Christian, etc.) exist in the PTA's culture, but expect people to adhere to dominant organizational norms</p> <p>Membership is not yet representative of the communities served, although some progress has been made</p> <p>Have identified which demographic groups are missing and have a plan to address the barriers that prevent them from being engaged</p> <p>Have adjusted outreach tactics to reach and invite more diverse members into PTA</p> <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to promote PTA membership, generally Specific goals to increase diversity Adjusted meeting times and/or locations Translated materials Partnerships with organizations and leaders that engage underrepresented groups 	<p>Expect members of dominant groups (e.g., White, English-only speaking, middle class, straight, Christian, etc.) to acknowledge and work to reduce barriers to the success of underrepresented groups in the PTA</p> <p>Membership demographics reflect the diversity of the communities served (in race/ethnicity, languages, income, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.)</p> <p>Have adjusted internal norms and behaviors to create an inclusive environment where diverse voices are respected</p> <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Efforts to promote PTA membership based on community input PTA communications and activities focused on a range of ways members can engage Specific goals to improve inclusion Member trainings and dialogue on diversity, equity, and inclusion Has data to inform progress on DEI (e.g., surveys, membership demographics, program participation rates, etc.) 	<p>Intermediate plus:</p> <p>Lead internal processes practices, and culture to eliminate bias and disparate treatment, without placing undue responsibility on members from underrepresented groups to explain or defend themselves or their communities</p> <p>Efforts to focus on DEI in membership is ongoing and evolving based on changing demographics and communities served</p> <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specific goals to promote equity Revised bylaws and/or policies to maximize new membership in underrepresented groups Membership sponsorships to remove financial barriers for members from under-resourced groups Formal feedback from members and potential members that is published for members to see

Reflection Questions

- > What stage is your PTA when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion in membership?
- > What is one thing you want to focus on to improve diversity, equity and/or inclusion in your membership efforts?

	<i>Beginning:</i> Color/Identity-Blind	<i>Emerging:</i> Focused on Diversity	<i>Intermediate:</i> Focused on Inclusion	<i>Advanced:</i> Focused on Equity
PROGRAMS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Propose “universal” programs that are presumed to work for all people Program participation is not reflective of the community’s demographics Programming has little to no change from year to year <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> No input from families about what programming they want and/or need Programs and outreach have mostly stayed the same over time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand that a thriving PTA will require new programmatic approaches Members design new programs or change existing programs for diverse community needs and interests Program participation has become more reflective of the community’s demographics, though there is still room for growth <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events to help and/or celebrate underrepresented families and students (e.g., international night, Black history month talk, etc.) Intentional efforts to invite underrepresented groups to participate (e.g., 1-1 texts, translated invitations, etc.) Input from school administrators and PTA leaders on relevant programs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adjust programs to keep pace with changing needs of the communities served Members design new programs or change existing programs for diverse community needs and interests with input from members of these communities Program participation is reflective of the community’s demographics <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programming covers topics and areas of interest for the community Programming is interactive and includes takeaways for participants Surveys on participation demographics and high priority topics for programs or events Intentional efforts to adjust programming based on input 	<p>Intermediate plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members from underrepresented groups take the lead in designing, implementing and improving programs for diverse community needs and interests Program models and approaches reduce disparities and achieve equitable outcomes <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Events co-planned with trusted community partners Program Committee is diverse and well-connected to community Surveys on participation demographics, high priority topics and impact (e.g., usefulness, new knowledge/skills, etc.) of programs or events

Reflection Questions

- > What stage is your PTA when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion in programs?

- > What is one thing you want to focus on to improve diversity, equity and/or inclusion in your programmatic efforts?

	<i>Beginning: Color/Identity-Blind</i>	<i>Emerging: Focused on Diversity</i>	<i>Intermediate: Focused on Inclusion</i>	<i>Advanced: Focused on Equity</i>
ADVOCACY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear that lifting and prioritizing issues of inequities will create conflict • Do not have members from underrepresented populations at the table to discuss policy and advocacy <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PTA not focused on advocacy, or only minimally focused on issues that benefit “all” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe that diverse representation is important, and push past their discomfort to discuss issues of difference and diversity in policy and advocacy issues • Understand disparities in children’s educational success, health and well-being exist and work to increase member knowledge about these disparities • Acquire one-time feedback from underrepresented families and communities to inform policy and advocacy plans • Have intermittently developed relationships with community members from identities/backgrounds currently or traditionally underrepresented; engage these partners in transactional initiatives <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food pantries or other services • Statistics on the state of community problems or demographics shared with members • Presence of policy and advocacy plans that address underrepresented groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create and sustain behaviors and practices (e.g., shared norms, vision, values) to foster an inclusive environment that encourages and values differing viewpoints in decision making about policy and advocacy priorities • Have solid understanding of demographic disparities that exist in children’s educational success, health and well-being and their root causes • Have consistent relationships with community members from identities/backgrounds currently or traditionally; engage these partners as trusted advisors <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training for members on issues around inequitable systems and policies (i.e., food insecurity, discipline practices, etc.) • Policy forums and roundtables focused on DEI-centered policy issues • DEI-centered policy issues clearly elevated and communicated to stakeholders 	<p>Intermediate plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act upon opportunities to speak about diversity, difference, dominant culture and systemic biases inside and outside the PTA • Expect and support members to work with underrepresented communities to co-design advocacy and policy approaches to problems • Progress of DEI-centered advocacy initiatives are tracked and shared with members to hold PTA accountable for their efforts <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Testimony or mobilization to change free/reduced meal models to increase access • Transparent processes to vet, write and vote on DEI-centered policy and advocacy issues • Legislative committee is diverse and well-connected to the community • Top priorities in advocacy plans determined by those in underrepresented communities

Reflection Questions

- > What stage is your PTA when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion in advocacy?
- > What is one thing you want to focus on to improve diversity, equity and/or inclusion in your advocacy efforts?

	<i>Beginning:</i> Color/Identity-Blind	<i>Emerging:</i> Focused on Diversity	<i>Intermediate:</i> Focused on Inclusion	<i>Advanced:</i> Focused on Equity
GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have not determined which demographic group(s) are not represented in PTA governance and leadership, or have determined that these groups require too much effort and/or change to recruit into leadership <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rotation of the same PTA leaders year after year Nominating Committee typically asks people they know to run for office Complaints that elections are unfair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have started to collect or analyze data by demographic group (e.g., race/ethnicity, gender, primary language spoken, etc.) around governance and leadership, but it is not yet representative of the schools and communities served Have invited a few individuals to help assess and guide DEI work within the PTA Leadership has made a conscious decision to increase knowledge around DEI by seeking and requiring training <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Diversity & Outreach Committee Diversity & Outreach workplan includes a few initiatives focused on diversity Diversity training provided to governance once or twice a year Training and tools focused on underrepresented group statistics, outreach and intercultural communication, and unconscious bias 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have a significant number of people of color and/or other traditionally underrepresented groups in governance and leadership positions Shift the PTA's norms and practices so that diverse lived experiences are welcomed and can meaningfully contribute Provide training and coaching/mentoring to members to improve their skills to work across difference and inspire better thinking and solutions <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominating Committee has criteria for cultural competence Mentorship programs for new leadership from underrepresented communities Intentional efforts to encourage diverse PTA leaders to run for leadership even if "against the slate" Ongoing DEI training throughout the year Training and tools focused on constructive conflict, active listening, inclusive leadership, and interrupting bias Baseline data to assess Diversity and Outreach workplan 	<p>Intermediate plus:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Those filling leadership position reflect the diversity of the communities served (in race/ethnicity, languages spoken, ability, income, religion, gender identity, sexual orientation, etc.) Leadership engages all members in organization DEI work; through ongoing training, ensures that all understand their role in creating an equitable culture Assess and remove the structural barriers that keep underrepresented groups from seeking or attaining leadership in PTA <p><i>Things to look for:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nominating Committee is intentional in reflecting communities served in governance and leadership Removal of slating and/or delegate processes for elections Revised election procedures to maximize participation (i.e., mail-in or electronic voting, etc.) Vendors and partners selected with a DEI lens

Reflection Questions

- > What stage is your PTA when it comes to diversity, equity and inclusion in governance and leadership?
- > What is one thing you want to focus on to improve diversity, equity and/or inclusion in your governance and leadership efforts?

How to Get Started

At this point, you may not know where your PTA is in your diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) work, or the precise path your PTA will take on its journey towards equity. Know that uncertainty in the DEI journey is expected. Here are a few actionable steps you can take to advance DEI in your PTA:

1. Name DEI as a strategic priority for your PTA.

Define and communicate how diversity, inclusion and equity helps PTA achieve its mission. The more you connect the reasons—the why—for doing this work to your mission, vision, values and strategies, the more critically important it will feel to everyone in your PTA and community. Look at the nature of local issues and consider how those will be impacted by making DEI a strategic pillar for your efforts.

2. Establish a shared vocabulary. Use National PTA's [definitions](#) to start a conversation in your PTA. Where are there points of agreement? Divergence? What training and support may be helpful to your volunteers to understand a larger context for these definitions?

3. Identify diversity, inclusion and equity champions at the leadership level. Your local volunteers are critical to your PTA's DEI journey. These can be either formally elected or appointed leaders or those

who lead through influence in your PTA. DEI champions encourage other PTA members to engage in the work by speaking to and modeling its importance, through effective storytelling and building strong relationships.

4. Open an authentic and ongoing dialogue about DEI work.

There are many ways to engage in effective conversations on diversity, equity and inclusion. Host a brown-bag lunch about DEI efforts with community stakeholders from your local schools and recruit an external facilitator with experience holding these conversations to ensure the discussion is managed objectively and effectively. Connect with [Jan Harp Domene Diversity and Inclusion Award](#) winners and use their stories to start a conversation about DEI within your PTA. Brainstorm new ideas and discuss how the approaches of other PTAs might apply to your efforts.

5. Break down your data. Start looking at your numbers.

The only way to get a clear picture of inequities and outcome gaps and successes is to review your membership activities, programs and policies, and collect, examine and report relevant data. Hold yourself and your PTA's membership and leadership accountable for DEI.





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Sources:

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3. Promise54. "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Staff Experience Participant Report for National PTA Volunteers" (unpublished), May 2019.