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# **SAMPLE Roadmap to Excellence**





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## HOW TO USE YOUR ROADMAP

The *Roadmap to Excellence* is a planning and consensus-building tool to support you as you take the next steps to build and lead your School of Excellence team, strengthen family-school partnerships and make a substantial, positive impact on your school community in the focus area you have selected.

**Just like your school, this Roadmap is unique.** It has been created using the answers provided in your Family-School Partnership Scan. The suggestions that follow have been customized specifically to help **your PTA** reach the goal of becoming a National PTA School of Excellence.

On the following pages, you will find:

- **PTA's Role in Strengthening Family-School Partnerships** and **About the National PTA School of Excellence Program.** These introductory sections will refresh your memory about the importance of family-school partnerships and help you to develop a deeper understanding of the School of Excellence program and its goals. Throughout the year, the information in these sections and in your *Getting Started Guide* can be used to brief new partners and team members, parent and school leaders, and your general PTA membership.
- **Steps to a Stronger Family-School Partnership.** This section includes your customized recommendations improving your family-school partnership. **This is the core of the School of Excellence program.** To foster your success, we have provided *concrete steps that will move your PTA to the next level* in each of these areas. Simply take these steps, and you will be on your way!
- **A Family-School Partnership Focused on a Shared Objective.** This section provides a brief overview shared objective your school selected to be its focus for the year. While the primary goal of the School of Excellence program is to enhance family-school partnerships, the program objective provides your PTA and school with a real-world focus for your efforts, in the form of a common problem to address. This section also lists **specific resources offered by National PTA and its partners** to support you as you identify and implement effective solutions.
- **Take Action Toward Excellence.** The final section of this *Roadmap* points to general tips and tools available at [pta.org/excellencetools](https://pta.org/excellencetools) to help you successfully build and lead your team, develop an action plan and promote your progress. Finally, it describes how to complete the final National PTA School of Excellence application at the end of the school year.

This document is just the beginning. You will continue to hear from the National PTA School of Excellence team throughout the year with information, resources and support. Additional planning and implementation tools can be found on the School of Excellence area of the National PTA website: [pta.org/excellencetools](https://pta.org/excellencetools). And as always, help is only a phone call or email away: Email [Excellence@pta.org](mailto:Excellence@pta.org) or call 800-307-4PTA.



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## PTA'S ROLE IN STRENGTHENING FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

Nurturing family-school partnerships is the core of the National PTA School of Excellence program. Research shows that family engagement supports student success. PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships were developed with national experts and reflect the research about how parents, schools and communities can work together to support student achievement. They include the following:

- **Standard 1—Welcoming All Families Into the School Community.** Families are active participants in the life of the school and feel welcomed, valued and connected to each other, to school staff and to what students are learning and doing in class.
- **Standard 2—Communicating Effectively.** Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.
- **Standard 3—Supporting Student Success.** Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and they have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.
- **Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child.** Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.
- **Standard 5—Sharing Power.** Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence and create policies, practices and programs.
- **Standard 6—Collaborating With Community.** Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services and civic participation.

For more information about PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, access your [Getting Started Guide](#) or visit the National PTA website: [www.pta.org/familyengagement](http://www.pta.org/familyengagement)

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## ABOUT THE NATIONAL PTA SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE PROGRAM

National PTA's School of Excellence program supports and celebrates partnerships between PTA and schools to enrich the educational experience and overall well-being for all students. Whether you are looking to step up your PTA's involvement in school improvements or to celebrate your already-effective PTA-school partnership, the School of Excellence program offers turn-key tools to help you to make a substantial, positive impact on school and student success, and to earn recognition for your PTA and school.

### What Is a National PTA School of Excellence?

At a National PTA School of Excellence, families feel welcomed and empowered to support student success, and PTA is a key partner for continuous school improvement.

### Program Goals

National PTA's goal for the School of Excellence program is **to enrich the educational experience and overall well-being of students by forming family-school partnerships that leverage community resources to strengthen family engagement and contribute to continuous school improvement.**

By participating in this program and applying the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships to a specific problem identified by your school community, your PTA will realize the following benefits:

- Help make your school a **more welcoming place for families.**
- Empower families to **be part of school decision-making.**
- Demonstrate to school leaders that **PTA is a key partner** for continuous school improvements.
- Receive **recognition in your community, at the state level and nationwide** for engaging families in a way that makes a substantial, positive impact on your school and student success.

### Final Steps on the Path to Excellence

Now that you've completed the family-school partnership scan, you will take action using this *Roadmap to Excellence* as your guide. Work with your School of Excellence team to improve the family-school partnerships at your school and make progress toward your selected goal. Then prepare to submit the final application:

- Resend the family survey and school principal questionnaire.
- Collect survey results and analyze your progress.
- Write a summary of your efforts to improve family-school partnerships and work toward your selected goal. Include any results.
- **Complete the School of Excellence Application** at [PTA.org/Excellencetools](http://PTA.org/Excellencetools) or by phone (800) 307-4PTA **by June 1, 2014.**



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The final application mirrors the family-school partnership scan. It contains the same questions from the school principal and family survey. The score from this section will determine whether you become a School of Excellence.

To qualify for the Phoebe Apperson Hearst Award, which includes a \$2,000 grant, we will ask you to summarize the efforts of your family-school partnerships and progress made toward your selected goal. This is the summary we suggested in the third bullet on the previous page.

During the summer, National PTA volunteers will review all applications. **By August 1, you will be notified whether you have been selected to be a National PTA School of Excellence.**

PTA's achieving School of Excellence status will receive tools and assistance to help you **celebrate your success** and announce this honor to your local community. Schools that do not qualify for the National PTA School of Excellence designation will receive a National PTA Certificate of Merit and a new *Roadmap to Excellence* to help them continue to pursue excellence during the following school year.

## How National PTA Supports You

Support from National PTA does not end with the information in the *Roadmap to Excellence*. Throughout the year, as you implement strategies to enhance your family-school partnership, you can expect National PTA to provide the following:

- **Programs and Grants.** National PTA leverages its extensive network of partners to offer a number of sponsored programs and grant opportunities throughout the year. Turn-key program tools and grants can be used to enhance your PTA's efforts to increase family engagement, ensure students' health and safety or support arts in education. Examples include the following:
  - Take Your Family to School Week
  - Healthy Lifestyles: Energy Balance 101
  - Family Reading Experience
  - Urban Family Engagement Network

Learn more about grant programs at [pta.org/programs](https://pta.org/programs). New grant opportunities will be announced at [pta.org/awards](https://pta.org/awards).

A National PTA School of Excellence designation will be given to PTAs that **meet a certain threshold or make significant progress** in strengthening their family-school partnership.



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- **Training:** In the fall, National PTA will offer a webinar series on the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. These webinars will be promoted and archived on [PTA.org/excellencetools](https://pta.org/excellencetools), so you can find just the information you need to support your goals, when you need it. Additional training opportunities are promoted at [PTA.org/training](https://pta.org/training).
- **Resources:** Throughout the year, the School of Excellence team at National PTA will continue to send timely emails with information and reminders about the School of Excellence program, tips regarding the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships, promising practices to inspire you, and links to resources that support your goals for school improvement.
- **[PTA.org/excellencetools](https://pta.org/excellencetools):** On this page developed just for PTAs on the path to excellence, you will find tools and templates including resources to help you plan (e.g., sample action plan, budget planning worksheet), implement (resource request letter, program announcement, event registration sheet), and wrap up (evaluation tools, thank you letters) strategies to achieve your goals.
- **Technical Assistance:** At any time, you can email [Excellence@pta.org](mailto:Excellence@pta.org) or call 800-307-4PTA for answers to your questions about the program. We will connect you with a State or National volunteer leaders who can brainstorm, problem solve and celebrate with you.

## How Your State PTA Supports You

Your State PTA is here to support your Local PTA as you work toward enhancing your family-school partnership and making a substantial, positive impact on your school through the National PTA School of Excellence program.

Your State PTA may support Local PTAs through:

- Programs and grants
- Training, technical assistance and mentoring
- Web and print resources

The best way to stay informed about your State PTA's programs, training events, and resources is to make sure you are on their mail and email distribution lists. If you would like more information about your state's latest programs, training events, and resources visit: <http://www.pta.org/members/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2677>

## STEPS TO A STRONGER FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

The primary objective of the National PTA School of Excellence program is to help PTAs and schools strengthen family-school partnerships to benefit all students' academic success and general well-being. Your progress toward this objective is what will be assessed through the final National PTA School of Excellence Application, submitted at the end of the school year.

National PTA offers the following customized recommendations to help your school move its family-school partnership to the next level. Each recommendation is based on your answers to the Family-School Partnership Scan.

Your next step is to review these recommendations with your school leaders and School of Excellence team and determine what you can work on first. Try to make progress by focusing on two to three recommendations per National Standard for Family-School Partnerships. Your focused attention to making substantial progress in a few areas per National Standard will help you to achieve the National PTA School.

If you have questions about these recommendations, email [excellence@pta.org](mailto:excellence@pta.org) or call us at 800-307-4PTA. Your success is ours. We want to help.

Welcoming All Families	National PTA's Recommendations
<p>1. Our school has friendly signs inside and outside to welcome families and visitors in the multiple languages they speak.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start—but there is room for improvement!</b> Families feel more welcome when they see friendly signs in multiple languages throughout the building. Use school demographic data to determine the three languages most commonly spoken by families in your school community. Work with the school and your membership committee to update signs throughout the building in these languages. Start with the signs families see first upon entering the building, such as welcome signs on the front door and front office entrances.</p>
<p>2. Our school and PTA translate communications into the school's major languages.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Never." This is an opportunity for improvement!</b> You want families from diverse backgrounds engaged in all school activities. In order to achieve this, it is important to keep all families informed about issues and events occurring at the school. If your school is not translating this information into families' native languages, you may be missing a great opportunity for effective communication between school and home. Take the first step: Work with your parent liaison, school secretary or parent advisory committee to review current communication practices at your school. You may need to advocate for a more deliberate communication plan to reach all school families.</p>

<p>3. Families feel encouraged to volunteer.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Frequently." Great job!</b> Take it to the next level: Using the volunteer or membership forms that families complete each year, work with your membership, volunteer or hospitality committee to make personal phone calls to diverse parents to solicit their ideas about volunteering. Help connect parents to specific opportunities that interest them. This personal touch will help broaden your volunteer base and engage even more families in serving their school community.</p>
<p>4. Families feel our school's policies and programs reflect, respect, and value the diversity in our school community.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Always." Excellent—keep it up!</b></p>
<p>5. Families feel they are treated fairly regardless of age, gender, race, or cultural background.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start---but there is room for improvement!</b> Two-way communication occurs when teachers and families dialogue together, and it is a shared responsibility. The traditional parent-teacher conference is one strategy for building effective two-way communication. Provide families with information about what to do to make parent-teacher conferences more effective. They should be prepared to discuss specific concerns or provide new information about their child. Discussion should avoid blame by taking a solution-focused approach. National PTA offers additional tips for what to do before, during and after a parent-teacher conference: <a href="http://www.pta.org/programs/content.cfm?ItemNumber=1710">http://www.pta.org/programs/content.cfm?ItemNumber=1710</a></p>
<p>6. Families feel our school is inviting and is a place where families feel they belong.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Frequently." Great job!</b> Take it to the next level: Families and school staff should collaborate continuously to support students' learning at home and at school. Teachers and parents can discuss students' individual learning styles, family cultural experiences, strengths, and academic and personal needs regularly and develop personalized goals to support academic success. Consider implementing one of the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• At many schools, parents, students and teachers work together to establish personal education plans (PEPs) to support students' education or career goals.</li> <li>• At Title I schools, every family signs a home-school compact. These compacts should be discussed at parent-teacher conferences and can be individualized if a student is not meeting standards.</li> <li>• This video from Great Schools describes a four-step process for helping children set and reach goals: <a href="http://www.greatschools.org/parenting/motivation-confidence/4213-help-your-child-make-and-reach-goals-video.gs">http://www.greatschools.org/parenting/motivation-confidence/4213-help-your-child-make-and-reach-goals-video.gs</a></li> </ul>



Communicating Effectively	National PTA's Recommendations
<p>1. Our school and PTA communicate with families in multiple ways (e.g., email, phone, web site).</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start—but there is room for improvement!</b>            Communicating effectively is a building block for strong family-school partnerships. Your school and PTA can and should communicate with families via multiple channels. Families want information quickly, so technology is increasingly important. Develop a pool of volunteers who will focus on effective ways to communicate with families through technology. Share with them these tips from National PTA about using social media effectively:  <a href="http://www.pta.org/files/NPTA_Social_Media_Tipsheets_%28%29.pdf">http://www.pta.org/files/NPTA_Social_Media_Tipsheets_%28%29.pdf</a></p>
<p>2. Our school provides interpreters for all meetings and events, when needed.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Unknown." It is important to know! Here's why:</b> Can you imagine attending a meeting or event and not knowing what is being said? Families who do not speak English well struggle with this every day, and they may not be attending PTA activities as a result. Take the first step: Make it a priority to have interpreters available for families at all meetings and events. Review your volunteer pool for parents who might be qualified to serve as interpreters. You also may request interpreting services and equipment from your school district.</p>
<p>3. Our school provides continuous staff development regarding effective communication techniques and the importance of regular, two-way communication between the school and family.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Always." Excellent—keep it up!</b></p>
<p>4. Our school translates communications into the school's major languages.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start—but there is room for improvement.</b>            Translating some of your communications into the school's major languages is a step in the right direction. Set a goal to increase this practice at your school. For example, if you currently only translate event flyers, begin to translate your newsletters too. You can ask for translation help from your school's ESL teacher or from school district personnel. You also might work with parent volunteers within your PTA. You will find many parents willing to contribute their skills for this purpose.</p>



<p>5. Families feel they have two-way conversations with school staff about student strengths, areas for improvement, learning styles, progress, and other concerns about the child.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Always." Excellent—keep it up!</b></p>
<p>6. Families feel schools provide information about student progress, including report cards that help them understand how they can support their children's learning.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start—but there is room for improvement!</b>          Communicating about student progress and how parents can support learning from home is an important continuous improvement goal for any school. Work with your principal to host parent meetings for each grade level or subject, to present academic goals for the year and solicit family members' feedback. This is a great opportunity for the school to explain expectations and how parents can support learning. This curriculum event could take place right before a PTA meeting to engage more parents. Your school district's curriculum guides describing goals for each subject and grade level are great tools to support this strategy. National PTA also offers Parents' Guides for Student Success: <a href="http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2910">http://pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2910</a></p>
<p><b>Supporting Student Success</b></p>	<p><b>National PTA's Recommendations</b></p>
<p>1. Our school involves parents in planning for transitions to elementary school, middle school, high school or post-secondary education or careers.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Unknown." It is important to know! Here's why:</b> Empowering families to support their own and other children's success in school is powerful. It is important for parents to be prepared to monitor their children's progress and guide them as they advance through elementary, middle and high school graduation; postsecondary education; and into a career. Take the first step: Identify the transition planning services that your school currently offers. Explore ways for the PTA to partner with the school to support families as they transition through the PK-20 education spectrum. PTAs also can help ease families' natural anxiety during school transitions. Consider holding joint meetings with PTAs of neighboring schools, so families can meet some of the other parents in their children's future schools.</p>
<p>2. Our school provides a range of options and choices for a wide</p>	<p><b>You said, "Frequently." Great job!</b> Take it to the next level: Families are active participants in their children's learning at home and at school. Host an event with your school to raise families' awareness about the value of after-school or</p>

<p>array of extracurricular activities that reflect student interests, goals, and learning.</p>	<p>extracurricular programs. Invite teachers who sponsor extracurricular activities to show families the many opportunities that currently exist at your school. Your PTA also can work with parents to advocate for the school to provide additional extracurricular options.</p>
<p>3. Our school uses adequate technology to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century learners.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Unknown." It is important to know! Here's why:</b> Technology is used daily in our schools, from smartboards in classrooms to calculators for math instruction and digital card catalog systems in school libraries. Knowing more about the technology used in your school can help your PTA better support learning. <b>Take the first step:</b> Develop a simple questionnaire to identify the ways that your school currently uses technology to engage students and involve parents. Review the survey results with your school principal to determine how your PTA can support technology needs at your school.</p>
<p>4. Our school shares student achievement data with families in ways that solicit their ideas about how to improve achievement.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Frequently." Great job!</b> Take it to the next level: In this era of accountability, schools are placing a high priority on student achievement, and parents and teachers are encouraged to work together to support learning. Invite family members to Data Nights, where families and teachers participate in workshops cosponsored by your PTA and school to learn how standardized test results can be used to improve student learning. Data Nights can be held in a town hall format or in roundtable discussions based on grade levels or subject areas. Schools can solicit ideas from parents to improve achievement and provide parents with strategies for working with their children at home in specific content areas. National PTA's Family Reading Experience, Powered by Kindle, is one program that teaches families how to work with their children in the area of literacy: <a href="http://www.pta.org/members/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3586event">http://www.pta.org/members/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3586event</a></p>
<p>5. Our school includes students in parent-teacher conferences as active participants in discussions of expectations and work quality.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Always." Excellent—keep it up!</b></p>
<p>6. Families feel they understand the academic standards their child is expected to meet and how the curriculum is linked to those standards.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start—but there is room for improvement!</b> Work with teachers to help them find opportunities throughout the year to explain to parents what students are learning and what good work looks like according to the academic standards by age, grade level and subject. Encourage parents to attend parent-teacher conferences, ask questions about academic standards and ask to see their child's work samples as well as samples of work that meets specific standards. Consider offering an interactive training or webinar for parents. For</p>



	<p>example, this video shows a parent asking probing questions about her child's work in relation to expectations and standards:  <a href="http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uf2YvwKqbaA">http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uf2YvwKqbaA</a></p> <p>National PTA offers state-specific resources about the Common Core State Standards:  <a href="http://www.pta.org/advocacy/content2.cfm?ItemNumber=3008&amp;navItemNumber=557">http://www.pta.org/advocacy/content2.cfm?ItemNumber=3008&amp;navItemNumber=557</a></p> <p>If your state has not yet adopted the Common Core State Standards, work with your department of education to disseminate information about state standards and how parents can help their children meet them.</p>
<h2>Speaking Up for Every Child</h2>	<h2>National PTA's Recommendations</h2>
<p>1. Our school informs families of the process and/or procedures to raise concerns and resolve problems (e.g. workshops, web-based materials, school handbook).</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start—but there is room for improvement!</b>          Speaking up for every child is how parents advocate for change at the grassroots level. Parents and families need to know the process they can use to raise questions or concerns and resolve problems with the school. Work with your school administration to develop a clear, written process for raising issues and working with the school advisory council, school improvement team or school leadership team to address them. Consider offering training to parents that explains the chain of command and the process for sharing their concerns.</p>
<p>2. Our PTA fuels parent participation on school district, state, and national committees that focus on education issues.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start—but there is room for improvement!</b>          Empowering families to speak up for every child is PTA's mission. Parent empowerment helps ensure that all students have access to learning opportunities that will support their success. Your PTA can claim a seat at the table with decision makers by asking to participate in a school board meeting or local hearing about a specific need or interest of your school or community.</p> <p>Use these training materials from National PTA to help prepare for your meeting:  <a href="http://www.pta.org/files/Advocacy%20Training/Meeting%20with%20Decision%20Makers/Meetings%20with%20Decision%20Makers%20Training%20Script.pdf">http://www.pta.org/files/Advocacy%20Training/Meeting%20with%20Decision%20Makers/Meetings%20with%20Decision%20Makers%20Training%20Script.pdf</a></p>
<p>3. Families feel our school treats their concerns with respect and demonstrates a genuine interest in developing solutions.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Unknown." It is important to know! Here's why:</b> PTA should be the champion for families within the school community. Your PTA can help by providing families with information about how to resolve problems at school. Take the first step: Work with your school to develop a chart showing whom to contact when specific problems arise. Make this chart available on the PTA and/or school website and in print for parents to reference whenever they have concerns.</p>





<p>2. Our school establishes policies that recognize and respect families' cultural, ethnic, religious and socioeconomic diversity.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start—but there is room for improvement!</b> Your PTA can work with the school to address barriers to family engagement and student success that are related to diversity of race, income, culture and religion. Use data from your family survey to identify concerns. Then, work with your school leadership team or advisory council to problem solve and address any current policies that do not recognize and respect the diverse student population at your school. Advocate for representation by diverse members at council and advisory meetings where decisions will be made that affect students.</p>
<p>3. Families feel they are collaborative partners that share in the decision making for areas such as policy, curricula, budget, school reform, safety and personnel.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Always." Excellent—keep it up!</b></p>
<p>4. Families feel they have input in the development of our school improvement plan.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start—but there is room for improvement!</b> PTA can play an important role in collecting and disseminating information about effective advocacy for student success. Consider including a section in your monthly newsletter or on the PTA website called, "Did You Know?" This section could be used to provide information to parents about the school improvement plan and how they can give feedback on the plan. Report parent input to your advisory council or committee to enhance family-school collaboration and help meet the needs of all students.</p>
<p>5. Families feel our school engages and solicits feedback from families before making important decisions (e.g., curricula, school policies, dress code, and education programs).</p>	<p><b>You said, "Frequently." Great job!</b> Take it to the next level: Your PTA is an important partner in the education process, bringing parents and teachers together to work toward improving educational outcomes for all children. Because families already feel like collaborative partners at your school, consider going one step further to inform them about district-level policy changes. Consider hosting an annual event where school board members are invited to come and brief families on state and district-level policies.</p>
<p><b>Collaborating with Community</b></p>	<p><b>National PTA's Recommendations</b></p>
<p>1. Our PTA distributes information on community resources</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start—but there is room for improvement!</b> Collaborating with the community is a great opportunity for parents and school leaders to work closely with local organizations and businesses to strengthen the</p>

<p>that serve the cultural, recreational, academic, health, social, and other needs of families within the community.</p>	<p>school; expand the resources available to students, school staff and families; and build a family-friendly community. You can work with your school social worker, counselor or family engagement coordinator to develop a survey to assess the needs of your school community. Based on the survey results, create a school bulletin board and/or resource table for parents with brochures about local health services, service learning opportunities and other resources that families need most.</p>
<p>2. Our school distributes information on community resources that serve the cultural, recreational, academic, health, social, and other needs of families within the community.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Frequently." Great job!</b> Take it to the next level: Work with school staff to create a comfortable, inviting family resource center or room. Staff and parent volunteers can inform families about services, make referrals to programs and plan activities or trainings.</p>
<p>3. Our PTA has partnerships with local businesses, community organizations, and service groups to advance student learning, or assist the school or families.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Frequently." Great job!</b> Your school has established some partnerships within your community to advance student learning. <b>Take it to the next level:</b> Work with your partners to assess school needs. Brainstorm with them how they can help develop programs to support student success and/or find creative ways to provide additional funding for programs or trainings at your school.</p>
<p>4. Our PTA involves community members in school volunteer programs.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Sometimes." Good start--but there is room for improvement!</b> PTA welcomes volunteers in many different capacities throughout the school. Take every opportunity to invite community members and partners to volunteer. One way to engage volunteers is to invite them to participate in National PTA's Three for Me program, by finding three opportunities to volunteer at your school during the year. Make sure you log all volunteer hours for your records. Find more information about Three for Me on the National PTA website: <a href="http://www.pta.org/programs/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3274">http://www.pta.org/programs/content.cfm?ItemNumber=3274</a></p>
<p>5. Our school collaborates with community services and adult learning opportunities.</p>	<p><b>You said, "Always." Excellent—keep it up!</b></p>



6. Families feel the school is a central part of their community.

**You said, "Frequently." Great job!** Schools are central to their communities when they provide families with access to comprehensive services or the information they need to identify and access those services, including primary care, mental health counseling, parent education classes or adult learning opportunities. Take it to the next level: Work with your school and district to offer adult education, recreation or GED programs after hours at the school, perhaps in partnership with a local recreation center or college. For inspiration, read the following success story of a PTA that made their school the hub of their community:  
<http://www.pta.org/programs/content.cfm?ItemNumber=1873>

SAMPLE ROADMAP



## FOCUSING YOUR FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP ON A SHARED OBJECTIVE

In addition to assessing the current state of family-school partnerships through the scan, your school community selected a shared objective for the 2013–14 school year in one of three areas:

- Improving family engagement in education
- Ensuring students' health and safety
- Supporting arts in education

The objective you chose will provide a focus for your PTA's efforts to engage families and build a stronger family-school partnership. While stronger partnerships will support your progress toward this shared objective, **the School of Excellence program's primary aim is to increase the strength of the family-school partnership itself.** In other words, your final School of Excellence application will be assessed on the basis of how your family-school partnership has improved during the year, rather than how much progress you have made toward your chosen programmatic objective.

The following section provides some brief background information about the objective you selected and information about resources offered by National PTA and our partners to support you as you work toward making a substantial, positive impact on your school in this area.

**Focus area: Improving family engagement in education**

**Objective: To increase family engagement supporting student success (literacy, math, science).**

The benefits of family-school-community partnerships are many: higher teacher morale, more family engagement and greater student success are only a few. Students with engaged families generally earn higher grades, score better on tests, adapt well to school and graduate at a higher rate. Parents serve an important role in learning once school is over, too.

Student academic achievement starts at home, and PTAs play an important role in helping families understand how to encourage learning and support a child's physical, mental and emotional development. PTA and our partners offer several resources to encourage and assist families in becoming more engaged in their children's education.

**National PTA offers the following resources to support you:**

- **National PTA Standards for Family School Partnerships Implementation Guide.** Information and resources to empower PTA leaders, parents, educators, community members, and students to work together for the educational success of all children and youth.  
[http://www.pta.org/files/National\\_Standards\\_Implementation\\_Guide\\_2009.pdf](http://www.pta.org/files/National_Standards_Implementation_Guide_2009.pdf)

- **Discover the Power of Partnerships.** Guide to building successful family-school-community partnerships. [http://www.pta.org/files/BSP\\_Booklet.pdf](http://www.pta.org/files/BSP_Booklet.pdf)
- **PTA Family Reading Experience, Powered by Kindle.** A set of free activities that engage the entire family. The activities focus on improving the reading skills of children between kindergarten and fifth grade. <http://www.pta.org/familyreading>
- **Parents' Guide to Student Success.** Grade-specific guides that help parents better understand how to support their child's progress in math and reading, and ways to build relationships with their children's teachers. <http://www.pta.org/parents/content.cfm?ItemNumber=2583&navItemNumber=3363>

**Our partners** offer the following resources to support you:

- **Worksheets and Activities** (GreatSchools). Reading and activity worksheets for families to use with children from preschool through middle school, from GreatSchools, a national nonprofit that works to improve education by engaging parents. <http://www.greatschools.org/worksheets-activities.topic?content=4313>
- **Math Meets Mischief: A Guide for Parents** (Bedtime Math). An overview of Bedtime Math, a nonprofit organization that creates playful, kid-appealing math problems on everything from ninjas to flamingos. Parents can access each day's problem on [www.bedtimemath.org](http://www.bedtimemath.org), Facebook, through the Bedtime Math app (available free from the App Store), or by signing up for a free daily email. <http://bedtimemath.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/2013-parent-guide.pdf>
- **First Book National Book Bank.** A clearinghouse of brand-new books donated directly by publishers. Schools and PTAs may request the titles and quantities they would like to receive; the books are free and are shipped for an average of \$.45 per book. <http://www.firstbook.org/first-book-story/innovation-in-publishing/national-book-bank>
- **Virtual Book Drives** (First Book). An online fundraising tool to help schools and other groups raise money for book purchases on the First Book Marketplace. Your school or PTA selects titles, customizes a fundraising site, and receives approximately four new books for every \$10 raised. <http://www.firstbook.org/get-involved/virtual-book-drives>



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# Roadmap to Excellence

## TAKE ACTION TOWARD EXCELLENCE

With your team members, use the recommendations in this *Roadmap* to develop an action plan for the year that is informed by the Family-School Partnership Scan and what you have discovered about the needs and desires of students, family members, school leaders and the community. National PTA has created several resources to help your team develop effective program plans. You can find the following at [PTA.org/excellencetools](http://PTA.org/excellencetools):

- Effective Leadership Tips
- Program Planning Guide and Checklist
- Template Action Plan
- Tips for Promoting Your Progress
- Sample Budget
- And more!

## Complete the National PTA School of Excellence Application by June 1, 2014

Your final step during this school year will be to conduct a second Family-School Partnership Scan to evaluate your progress. As you did this fall, you will collect information from school leaders and survey families to assess the progress you have made toward the six National Standards.

Using the scan results, you will then complete the Final National PTA School of Excellence Application online at [www.pta.org/excellencetools](http://www.pta.org/excellencetools) or by phone at 800-307-4PTA (4782). As mentioned above, this application mirrors the original Family-School Partnership Scan, with the addition of a brief narrative describing how your school and PTA have strengthened family-school partnerships and achieved progress toward your selected program goal.

A team of National PTA volunteers will review applications and narratives. The review process will take into account the fact that PTAs and schools are starting at different levels of existing family engagement and have varying resources. This approach helps to even the playing field and ensure that *all* PTAs have the opportunity to participate and achieve excellence.

Schools that do not qualify for the National PTA School of Excellence designation this year will receive a National PTA Certificate of Merit and a new *Roadmap to Excellence* to help them continue to pursue excellence during the following school year. They will build on the momentum they started, and National PTA will provide even more support to help them overcome barriers along the way.

Schools that *do* meet a certain threshold or make marked improvements in strengthening their family-school partnership will be notified of their School of Excellence designation by August 1, 2014. They will receive a banner to hang prominently at their school, along with other tools to support local recognition and acknowledgment at the state and national levels.

**We look forward to supporting you and celebrating with you!**

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