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Introduction: Measuring Success

PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships offer a framework for how families, schools, and communities should work together to support student success. To facilitate the implementation in local schools of programs, practices, and policies that are guided by the Standards, PTA has developed an assessment guide, otherwise known as a *rubric*.

The National Standards Assessment Guide provides specific goals for each Standard, as well as indicators for measuring whether those goals are being met. There are also examples for each indicator to show what good practice looks like at different levels of development:
❖ Level 1: **Emerging**—Limited level of development and implementation
❖ Level 2: **Progressing**—Functioning level of development and implementation
❖ Level 3: **Excelling**—Highly functioning level of development and implementation

Each level of practice should build on the last; good practices at the emerging and progressing levels are expected to continue at the next level.

Who Should Be Using the Assessment Guide

Anyone who has a stake in improving schools and making sure children succeed should find this assessment guide to be a useful tool: PTA leaders, other parent leaders, school administrators, school board members, policy makers at all levels, teacher-training institutions, education advocates, community organizations, and more.

This guide focuses on implementation at the local school level, because, ultimately, change must happen within each school building and each school community. That's where the learning happens. Nevertheless, many of the actions recommended will require district policies, resources, professional development, and support if they are to be achieved and sustained.

Share this assessment guide with your school action team, principal, school board members, community partners, and others as you build family-school partnerships for student success.

10 Ways to Use the Assessment Guide

The National Standards Assessment Guide can be used in a number of ways to help develop and improve programs, practices, and policies that affect family and community engagement in schools.

Here are 10 ideas on how to use the guide:
- ❖ To assess current family involvement practices at the school
- ❖ To develop ideas for involvement practices and activities
- ❖ To inform the development of a school improvement plan
- ❖ To monitor progress in reaching school improvement goals
- ❖ To design professional development for staff
- ❖ To discuss the Standards at PTA and faculty meetings
- ❖ To conduct a school walk-through looking for evidence of implementation for each Standard
- ❖ To create a survey for parents and staff
- ❖ To guide the development of school-based parent involvement policies and compacts
- ❖ To design research and evaluation studies and instruments

An excerpt from the guide for Standard 1

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

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.

Goal 1: Creating a Welcoming Climate: When families walk into the building, do they feel the school is inviting and is a place where they "belong"?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 **Excelling** Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 **Progressing** Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 **Emerging** Limited level of development and implementation	
Developing personal relationships	Family volunteers from different neighborhoods and backgrounds are trained to serve as mentors to help other families become more engaged in the school. *For example, mentors call new families to invite them to attend PTA/parent group programs, offering to pick them up or meet them at the entrance of the school.*	PTA/parent group members volunteer to work in the school office to provide information and support to families and students. *For example, a help desk is established and staffed by family volunteers and school employees.*	Families are greeted promptly in their home language by friendly front-office staff who give them correct information and help them connect with appropriate faculty members. *For example, a staff member or family volunteer, using the family's home language, gives a new immigrant family information about the school and a tour of the building.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Creating a family-friendly atmosphere	The school is a welcoming place where families can drop in and connect with school staff and other families. *For example, the PTA/parent group and school staff together create a family resource center, staffed with parent volunteers or school staff fluent in various languages and filled with information in various languages about the school and community.*	The school building is easy for visitors to navigate, and the community knows what is going on at the school. *For example, signs clearly direct visitors to important places within the school such as the library and guidance office, and an outside marquee keeps the community informed of upcoming events.*	The school campus is clean and welcoming to parents. *For example, entrances are clearly marked and a sign inside the front door welcomes families in the main languages of the community.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet
Providing opportunities for volunteering	The school volunteer program reaches out to parents of all neighborhoods and backgrounds, identifies their unique experiences and skills, and offers varied volunteer opportunities for both at home and school. *For example, PTA/parent group leaders make personal phone calls to diverse parents to solicit their ideas on volunteering and to help connect them to opportunities.*	The PTA/parent group works with the school to organize a formal volunteer program. *For example, the PTA/parent group helps develop a range of volunteer options, sends volunteer invitation forms to all families in their home language, and coordinates the responses.*	PTA/parent group members and other parents are welcome to volunteer their services in the school or individual classrooms. *For example, a small group of parents are used by the school when volunteers are needed.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Standard 1, Page 2 of 4

Goal 2: Building a Respectful, Inclusive School Community: Do the school's policies and programs reflect, respect, and value the diversity of the families in the community?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Respecting all families	The school and families from all neighborhoods and backgrounds assume collective responsibility to identify and break down barriers to family engagement related to race, ethnicity, class, family structure, religion, and physical and mental ability. *For example, families from different neighborhoods and cultures create family histories that combine to tell the story of the entire school community.*	School and PTA/parent group leaders work with parents and community members from different neighborhoods and backgrounds to gain their insights on how to make the school more respectful and supportive. *For example, families and school leaders discuss how the school will accommodate students who might be absent from school because of holy days.*	Families and school staff affirm student cultures and history in school resources, classroom lessons, and activities. *For example, PTA/parent group members from different neighborhoods and backgrounds work with school staff to ensure that media center and classroom materials reflect the diversity of the community.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet
Removing economic obstacles to participation	Family and student activities and events are free. The school and PTA/parent group collaborate to cover the costs through the school budget, PTA/parent group fundraising, and contributions from community businesses and organizations. *For example, fees to participate in after-school programs are waived for low-income families.*	School leaders, the PTA/parent group, and community members work together to offer extracurricular activities at no cost. *For example, the PTA/parent group sponsors a dialogue with a children's author and each family receives a free copy of the author's book.*	For family activities, the PTA/parent group makes a commitment to keep the events free or low-cost. *For example, the school book fair offers a section of new or gently used books donated by other parents to be made available at no cost.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Ensuring accessible programming	PTA/parent group leaders and school officials jointly create schoolwide procedures and policies to ensure that all parents and students have access to school-sponsored programs and events, including academic services. *For example, services such as interpreters during meetings or classroom instruction, transportation, and child care are consistently provided for both school-based events and school events held in community locations.*	PTA/parent group leaders and school officials work together to plan family programs to be held at the school and in community locations such as libraries, community centers, faith-based centers, homes in different neighborhoods, and work sites. *For example, the PTA/parent group organizes a family program about applying effective study skills at an apartment building near the school.*	Family activities are held at various times and days of the week to respect parents' work schedules. *For example, a family dinner and science exploration program is held on a Sunday evening instead of a weekday.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

"Families" and "parents" are used interchangeably to refer to adults who are responsible for a student. "Families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods" and "diverse families" include families from all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, family structures, and economic levels, as well as those with physical or mental challenges.

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National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

Standard 2—Communicating Effectively

Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

Goal 1: Sharing Information Between School and Families: Does the school keep all families informed about important issues and events and make it easy for families to communicate with teachers?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 **Excelling** Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 **Progressing** Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 **Emerging** Limited level of development and implementation	
Using multiple communication paths	Families, the community, and school staff communicate in numerous interactive ways, both formally and informally. *For example, school and PTA/parent group leaders take part in community forums in different neighborhoods and appear on radio or local TV call-in programs and use social networking online to engage families.*	School staff collaborate with the PTA/parent group to develop connections with families through multiple two-way communication tools, including personal calls, e-mails, and notes. *For example, parents who are not fluent in English are given up-to-date information through bilingual staff or parent volunteers who are available at times convenient for these families.*	The PTA/parent group and school keep families informed of upcoming events in a variety of ways, including regular print and electronic notices, in the languages spoken in the community. *For example, the school uses newsletters, fliers, e-mail, automated phone calls, and text messages in the home languages of families as needed.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Surveying families to identify issues and concerns	Parent survey results are reflected in the School Improvement Plan. *For example, programs, policies, and practices are developed collaboratively by teachers, administrators, families, and community members to meet the needs of parents as identified in the survey.*	The parent survey is translated into multiple languages and communicated in various ways, including in person, online, in print, and by phone, and made available to all parents. Results are posted on the school and/or PTA website and discussed. *For example, the PTA/parent group plans morning coffees and evening "happy hours" to discuss survey results with parents and solicit additional feedback.*	PTA/parent group leaders and representatives from the school staff (e.g., principal, teacher) complete a parent involvement survey. The results guide the development of parent involvement programs. *For example, the executive committee of the PTA/parent group and the principal meet over the summer to discuss the survey results and plan strategies to address barriers.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet
Having access to the principal	The principal personally welcomes families into the building and meets regularly with parents in small groups or one-on-one as needed, in school and in different neighborhoods. *For example, the principal and PTA/parent group develop an agenda for small-group dialogues to be held in different neighborhoods on issues such as school security or homework expectations.*	The principal is accessible for scheduled meetings with groups of parents or individually at different times of the day. *For example, the principal hosts monthly coffee hours that are open to all parents to discuss a variety of topics. Meeting times vary from month to month to accommodate parent schedules.*	The principal shares information about schoolwide issues at PTA/parent group meetings, with opportunities for individual follow-up discussion by appointment. *For example, the PTA/parent group invites the principal to a monthly meeting to discuss schoolwide test results and plans to address gaps in learning.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Standard 2—Communicating Effectively, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Providing information on current issues	A team of administrators, teachers, families, and community representatives strategically look at developing issues that affect families to determine whether there is a need for a schoolwide response. *For example, the principal meets monthly with a parent-school-community team to address school-wide issues and determine appropriate responses.*	All school families are kept informed of developing concerns in the school community. *For example, print and electronic newsletters are generated on a regular basis. When serious concerns arise, families are immediately informed through e-mail, and letters are sent home.*	The principal keeps the PTA/parent group president informed of current school issues and concerns. *For example, the principal meets monthly with the PTA/parent group president to review issues that may affect families and student learning. The issues discussed are determined solely by the principal.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Standard 2—Communicating Effectively, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Facilitating connections among families	The PTA/parent group takes steps to help parents get to know those beyond their own neighborhood and culture. *For example, the PTA/parent group plans small group events that begin with icebreaker activities, parents can also connect electronically through school listservs, blogs, and social networking Web pages.*	The PTA/parent group and school jointly develop programs to help parents connect with each other. *For example, the PTA/parent group collaborates with school staff to jointly plan an orientation program at the beginning of the year and distributes a calendar and a schoolwide directory with staff and parent listings.*	The PTA/parent group provides opportunities for parents to get to know each other. *For example, PTA/parent group newsletters provide contact information for parents who want to join a committee. Parents of students in each grade level can plan informal get-togethers to socialize with each other (e.g., a Parents of 4th-Graders Breakfast Club).*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

"Families" and "parents" are used interchangeably to refer to adults who are responsible for a student. "Families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods" and "diverse families" include families from all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, family structures, and economic levels, as well as those with physical or mental challenges.

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

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 have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

Goal 1: Sharing Information About Student Progress: Do families know and understand how well their children are succeeding in school and how well the entire school is progressing?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 **Excelling** Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 **Progressing** Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 **Emerging** Limited level of development and implementation	
Ensuring parent-teacher communication about student progress	Teachers and parents discuss students' individual learning styles, family cultural experiences, strengths, and academic and personal needs, then develop learning goals to support academic success at school and at home. *For example, the school has adopted a Personal Education Plan for parents, students, and teachers to establish education/career goals.*	Teachers and guidance counselors regularly contact parents with positive news as well as concerns about their children. Parents have an easy way to communicate with teachers on a regular basis. *For example, each classroom has a website where class assignments and other schoolwide events are posted. Parents can ask general questions or schedule meetings with teachers as needed.*	Parents can contact teachers through e-mail, notes, or phone messages and receive a timely response. Teachers make contact with all families at the start of the year to establish positive relationships. *For example, teachers in high school send home a welcome note to all families inviting their comments and providing an e-mail address or phone number.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Linking student work to academic standards	Teachers and parents have regular discussions about how each school program or activity links to student learning through academic standards. *For example, the teacher and families discuss the music curriculum goals before a student concert; parents of football players are offered opportunities to learn how the playbook relates to math and logic standards.*	Teachers explain to parents throughout the year what students are learning and what good work looks like under the academic standards for the student's age and grade level. *For example, teachers maintain portfolios of students' work for parents to review upon request.*	Student work is displayed throughout the school in a way that shows how it met academic standards. *For example, teachers display students' writing assignments to demonstrate how students used skills such as clear and concise language, proper spelling, and staying on the topic.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet
Using standardized test results to increase achievement	Parents are included on school or school district academic standards committees and discuss how to raise expectations and achievement for every student. *For example, a cochair of the standards committee is a position established and reserved for parents only.*	Families have opportunities to learn how to interpret testing data. *For example, family members and teachers are invited to participate in workshops, sponsored by the PTA/parent group and the school, to learn how the school uses standardized test results to improve student achievement.*	Parents are informed about standardized tests. *For example, the principal explains at an informational meeting when and which standardized tests are given at which grade levels, and why the tests are being given.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Standard 3—Supporting Student Success, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Sharing school progress	The principal collaborates with PTA/parent group leaders to present regular progress updates on reaching academic goals and develops strategies to support improvement. *For example, the PTA/parent group works with school staff to match mentors with struggling students.*	The principal collaborates with PTA/parent group leaders to facilitate discussion between school staff and families on needed academic improvements. *For example, family-school dialogues focus on increasing the diversity of students in the gifted program or the number of girls taking advanced math and science classes.*	The principal presents the school's academic goals at the beginning of the school year and reports on progress made the previous year. *For example, the principal or other school administrators host parent meetings for each grade or subject to present academic goals for the year and to solicit feedback.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Standard 3—Supporting Student Success, continued

Goal 2: Supporting Learning by Engaging Families: Are families active participants in their children's learning at home and at school?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Engaging families in classroom learning	The PTA/parent group helps organize a database of parent and family skills, expertise, and backgrounds, through which teachers can find resources. *For example, a parent who is an artist is brought in to work with students to create a school mural.*	Families and teachers engage in innovative ways to collaborate on classroom learning. *For example, teachers invite community groups and families to their classes to share information about their cultures and demonstrate how foods from their cultures are prepared, helping students learn history and culture, as well as math and chemistry skills.*	Families and teachers work together to provide resources for upcoming units of study. *For example, grandparents discuss life under segregation during a lesson on civil rights.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet
Developing family ability to strengthen learning at home	Teachers and the PTA/parent group plan regular family learning events at workplaces and community locations. *For example, workshops on a variety of topics that help parents support learning are held during lunchtime at a local manufacturing plant or at a child-care site in the late afternoon.*	The school and PTA/parent group work together to provide families tools to support student learning at home. *For example, a series of workshops teach parents strategies for supporting reading development for different grade levels.*	The school and PTA/parent group offer programs on parenting skills that will help promote learning. *For example, an expert is invited to give a presentation to help parents deal with the tough issues of raising teenagers.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Standard 3—Supporting Student Success, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Promoting after-school learning	The school partners with community organizations (including faith-based) to provide after-school programs for children and families. *For example, the local Boys and Girls Club works with parents, students, and school staff to create a program that meets the recreational and academic needs of students. The program is available five days a week and is free of charge.*	The PTA/parent group and the school invite families to learn more about the value of after-school activities. *For example, the PTA/parent group hosts an Afterschool Alliance Lights On Afterschool event to raise awareness about the importance of after-school programs.*	The school informs parents of after-school opportunities. *For example, fliers about school-based as well as community-based programs are sent home with the student. E-mail, Web announcements, and phone calls in families' home languages are also utilized.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

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National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

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.

Goal 1: Understanding How the School System Works: Do parents know how the local school and district operate and how to raise questions or concerns about school and district programs, policies, and activities? Do they understand their rights and responsibilities under federal and state law as well as local ordinances and policies?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 **Excelling** Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 **Progressing** Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 **Emerging** Limited level of development and implementation	
Understanding how the school and district operate	The school district offers workshops for family members about school and district programs, policies, and resources, and the skills to access them. The workshops are offered in various languages and locations in the community. *For example, workshops are offered on parent and student rights under Title 1.*	The PTA/parent group and school collaborate to inform the school community about how the school and school district operate and the role of parent involvement in the school. *For example, the PTA/parent group and school staff cohost a fall orientation where families can learn about programs for academic and social growth, tour the school, and meet the entire school staff. Interpreters are available.*	The principal provides all parents with information on the school's mission, goals, and organizational structure. *For example, the school handbook is available in print and on the school website. It is also available in various languages as needed.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Standard 4, Page 1 of 6

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Understanding rights and responsibilities under federal and state laws	A network of PTA/parent group members helps other families exercise their rights under state and federal education laws. *For example, the PTA/parent group engages its members to use state and federal mandates to develop a Parent Bill of Rights.*	The PTA/parent group invites district staff to talk about parent rights and responsibilities under state and federal laws. *For example, parent advocates help families understand their options if their school does not make adequate yearly progress under NCLB.**	The PTA/parent group distributes written materials about parent involvement mandates in state and federal programs, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* and Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA):** *For example, information about each of these mandates is posted on the school's website with links to other programs related to these mandates.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet
Learning about resources	Guidance counselors, parent advocates, and teachers work with families to take advantage of resources and programs that support student success. They target families who may not know how to access these resources. *For example, they work with families whose children are underrepresented in advanced classes to encourage their sons and daughters to take higher-level courses.*	Meetings at school and in the community help families better understand students' options for extra academic support or enrichment. *For example, the PTA/parent group and school cosponsor informational sessions on after-school and summer learning programs.*	The PTA/parent group helps develop and distribute information about available programs and resources, such as magnet programs in math, science, and Advanced Placement classes. *For example, the school and parent group create a school handbook with academic resources that is available in all languages spoken in the community.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

* The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 reauthorized a number of federal programs aimed at improving the performance of U.S. schools by increasing the standards of accountability for states, school districts, and schools. NCLB is the current name for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) passed in 1965.

** The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004 is a federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services.

Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Resolving problems and conflicts	School staff and the PTA/parent group jointly plan strategies to help parents, teachers, and students identify and resolve problems and conflicts at school. *For example, conflict resolution classes are offered to help parents, students, and teachers learn effective ways to resolve conflicts at home and at school.*	The school has a clear, written procedure for resolving concerns or problems. *For example, a committee of school staff and PTA/parent group leaders is established to ensure that concerns have been addressed, and that further action is taken if needed.*	The PTA/parent group provides information to all parents on how to resolve problems at school. *For example, a* Guide to Identifying and Resolving Problems at School *is developed and made available on the school website and in print, in appropriate languages.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Goal 2: Empowering Families to Support Their Own and Other Children's Success in School: Are parents prepared to monitor students' progress and guide them toward their goals through high school graduation, postsecondary education, and a career?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Developing families' capacity to be effective advocates	The PTA/parent group works with the principal to establish school polices that support parents as advocates. *For example, the school handbook includes a number of resources (e.g., information on parent rights under federal and state education mandates, local district policies, requirements for promotion and/or graduation, and numbers to call for additional support) that help prepare parents to be advocates for their and other children.*	The PTA/parent group offers parents opportunities to learn advocacy strategies and techniques. *For example, workshops and other information sessions are offered to help parents learn how to ask the right questions about their child's progress in school.*	The PTA/parent group collects and disseminates useful information on how to be an effective advocate for student success. *For example, the PTA/parent group provides monthly tips (on the school website and in print) on how to be an advocate for student success.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet
Planning for the future	The school has created partnerships with colleges and universities and local businesses to expand opportunities for career exploration and preparation. *For example, advanced students have opportunities to take courses at the local college or university. Businesses offer internships for students during the school year and summer.*	The PTA/parent group and school staff help prepare parents and students to make informed decisions that connect career interests with academic programs. *For example, information sessions are offered to help parents and students identify career interests and goals. They then can focus on the skills and education needed to be successful in that career.*	With support from the PTA/parent group, the school offers opportunities for students to explore careers. *For example, local employers are invited to speak at a school career expo, and asked to offer field trips to work sites.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Smoothing transitions	A transition program developed by PTA/parent group leaders and school staff helps parents feel connected and remain involved as their children progress through school. *For example, informational sessions explain how expectations, standards, and approaches to teaching change from elementary to middle and high school.*	School staff and PTA/parent group leaders reach out to new students and their families before the next school year starts, offering an orientation to the school, opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities, and to meet other students and parents. *For example, the PTA/parent group assigns "buddies" to new students and connects families to parent mentors.*	Spring orientation programs cosponsored by the school and PTA/parent group help prepare students for the next grade level or school. *For example, an elementary school organizes visits to the middle school for parents and students, who are given an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the new environment and to ask questions.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Engaging in civic advocacy for student achievement	The PTA/parent group partners with other education advocates to mobilize school and community support around issues that affect student learning. *For example, "parent café conversations" are held on the need for smaller class sizes, after-school programs, or funding for a middle school science lab, resulting in families advocating for these improvements before the school board.*	PTA/parent group leaders offer discussions on policy issues and organize families to testify at local public hearings on school needs. *For example, the PTA/parent group invites school board members to give an informal budget briefing and holds a voter registration drive.*	PTA/parent group leaders help families learn about political issues affecting education. *For example, the PTA/parent group sponsors local candidate forums during election campaigns.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

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National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

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.

Goal 1: Strengthening the Family's Voice in Shared Decision Making: Are all families full partners in making decisions that affect their children at school and in the community?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 **Excelling** Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 **Progressing** Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 **Emerging** Limited level of development and implementation	
Having a voice in all decisions that affect children	The school has established policy to ensure that parents have an equal voice in all major decisions that affect children, such as principal selection and budget allocation. *For example, 50% of the School Improvement Team is made up of parents. The PTA/parent group leader holds a permanent seat and makes recommendations for additional parent members.*	The PTA/parent group and school host dialogues with families and school personnel about issues and policies to gain their ideas and insights. *For example, proposed changes in the grading system are discussed at the school and in neighborhood settings during the day and evening, with interpreters as needed.*	The school informs families about issues or proposed changes, and gives them an opportunity to respond. *For example, the school informs families in advance about changes in the school schedule or building renovations, and offers contact information in case families have questions.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Standard 5, Page 1 of 4

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Addressing equity issues	PTA/parent group leaders work with the school improvement team to adopt effective strategies to engage families in reducing achievement gaps between groups of students. *For example, families, faculty, and community members join in open dialogue with the school improvement team about root causes of the achievement gap, and identify strategies to close that gap.*	PTA/parent group leaders work with school staff to address barriers to family involvement and student success that are related to diversity in race, income, and culture. *For example, van pools are established for families whose students are bused from distant neighborhoods so they can take part in math and science nights.*	The PTA/parent group identifies barriers to working with school staff on issues such as low attendance that affect student achievement. *For example, parents and faculty work on shared strategies and jointly determine best practices in raising student attendance.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet
Developing parent leadership	PTA/parent group leaders are trained in facilitation skills such as brainstorming, role-plays, and small-group activities that encourage everyone to speak. *For example, PTA/parent group leaders use these skills to facilitate regular schoolwide meetings to discuss ideas for improving school climate and student achievement.*	PTA/parent group leaders recruit interested families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods to volunteer (both in and out of school—according to their schedules), sit on a committee, and run for office. *For example, leaders survey families to find out their interests and skills, and follow up with opportunities where they might be able to help.*	PTA/parent group leaders reach out to parents with diverse backgrounds and invite them to become involved in the PTA/parent group. *For example, leaders greet families as they bring their children to school events, and get their ideas for family learning activities.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Standard 5—Sharing Power, continued

Goal 2: Building Families' Social and Political Connections: Do families have a strong, broad-based organization that offers regular opportunities to develop relationships and raise concerns with school leaders, public officials, and business and community leaders?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Connecting families to local officials	The principal and parent leaders personally invite public officials to meetings to discuss ideas, issues, and problems in the community. *For example, as a result of ongoing concerns for student safety raised by parents, representatives from the police department, the department of public works, and the school board are invited to an open meeting at the school to address the problem and propose solutions.*	The school and PTA/parent group host regular meetings with local officials, such as school board members, local police, and other community leaders, so that families can learn about resources in the community. *For example, the PTA/parent group plans a community resource fair that includes representatives from the public and private sectors to provide information about their programs.*	The school and PTA/parent group provide written materials in multiple languages on local government and community services. *For example, the PTA/parent group supplies voter registration forms in the school's front office.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Developing an effective parent involvement organization that represents all families	The PTA/parent group leaders build the organization's effectiveness by recruiting and maintaining a leadership team that reflects the school and community and by aligning all programs and practices with PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships. *For example, the PTA leadership team holds focus groups and community discussions throughout the school community to identify issues and invite participation on planning committees based on the National Standards.*	The PTA/parent group leaders reach out to families who are not involved at the school to identify interests, concerns, and priorities. *For example, parent leaders and school staff have a "back-to-school" walk and meet with families at local beauty shops, laundromats, parks, places of worship, and other community gathering spots for open conversations.*	PTA/parent group leaders receive leadership training. *For example, all parents interested in leadership roles in the school are invited to participate in leadership training, and those holding such positions are required to participate.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

"Families" and "parents" are used interchangeably to refer to adults who are responsible for a student. "Families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods" and "diverse families" include families from all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, family structures, and economic levels, as well as those with physical or mental challenges.

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

Throughout this implementation guide, the levels of practice build on each other, assuming that good practices at the emerging and progressing levels will continue at the next level.

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.

Goal 1: Connecting the School with Community Resources: Do parent and school leaders work closely with community organizations, businesses, and institutions of higher education to strengthen the school, make resources available to students, school staff, and families, and build a family-friendly community?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 **Excelling** Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 **Progressing** Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 **Emerging** Limited level of development and implementation	
Linking to community resources	School staff and the PTA/parent group create a comfortable, inviting family resource center. Staff and parent volunteers inform families about services, make referrals to programs, and plan activities. *For example, the family resource center at the school is available to the community to provide services on site such as a used clothing exchange, dental clinic, and summer program expo.*	School staff work with the PTA/parent group to determine and describe community resources for students and families. *For example, with support from the PTA/parent group and faculty, middle and high school students map all the community resources and create an online and print guide (in appropriate languages) for distribution to families and throughout the community while they earn credits for service-learning.*	School staff and the PTA/parent group collect information for families about community resources. *For example, the school office has a bulletin board and resource table with brochures about local colleges, health services, sports teams, and service-learning opportunities.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

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Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Organizing support from community partners	Community and business representatives work with school and parent leaders to assess needs and develop programs to support student success and find creative ways to provide funding and staff. *For example, the local Rotary Club collaborates with the school and parents to create a Student Leadership Academy.*	School staff and parents reach out to community organizations and businesses about offering donations and sponsoring scholarship programs. *For example, the PTA/parent group appeals to local businesses to sponsor a family science program.*	The PTA/parent group invites community leaders to make presentations on programs available to children and families outside of school. *For example, the PTA/parent group plans an After-school or Summer Camp Resource Fair.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet
Turning the school into a hub of community life	School facilities such as the computer lab, library/media center, classrooms, and gym are open year-round for broad community use. *For example, PTA/parent group members work with community members to run micro-enterprises such as party planning, Web design, and computer programming.*	Adult education, recreation, and GED programs are offered after hours at the school. *For example, based on a survey, classes are offered in creative writing, Web design, English as a Second Language, storytelling, cooking, computer repair, plumbing, hair braiding, and playing the drums.*	A variety of community groups use school facilities for events and activities during the school year. *For example, the PTA/parent group approaches Scout groups and 4-H clubs about organizing chapters that can meet at the school.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: **Excelling**	Level 2: **Progressing**	Level 1: **Emerging**	
Partnering with community groups to strengthen families and support student success	Teachers and families work with grassroots groups to develop solutions to local problems. *For example, community groups donate supplies and labor to work with families and students on fixing up a deteriorating park, renovating a home for a needy family, or planting a community garden.*	The PTA/parent group works with school staff to sponsor student businesses to bring student skills to the community. *For example, high school students start up a local café and bookstore, offer graphic design and printing, or do carpentry and light home repair.*	School staff and the PTA/parent group partner with local community event organizers to sponsor resource fairs. *For example, holding a health expo at a Cinco de Mayo celebration or a job fair on a soccer field.*	☐ Level 3 ☐ Level 2 ☐ Level 1 ☐ Not here yet

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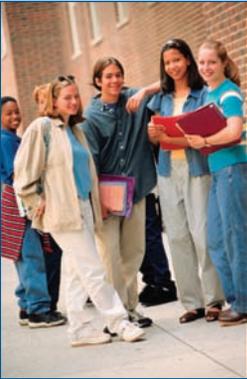
About PTA

PTA comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.

Discover
The Power of Partnerships

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(800) 307-4PTA (4782)
info@pta.org ✳ www.pta.org