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November 16, 2017

The San Diego Unified Council of PTAs and
San Diego Unified School District
present:



National Parent/Family Involvement Day Planning Guide

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CELEBRATE



National Parent/Family Involvement Day Thursday, November 16, 2017



- What:** Schools host a new event on (or move an existing event to) ***National Parent/Family Involvement Day, Thursday, November 16, 2017***, to honor the powerful contributions that parents and caregivers make to support the success of students.
- Where:** All SDUSD pre-k to grade 12 schools
- Who:** School staff, parents, caregivers, community members, business partners, and volunteers
- Why:** To reinforce awareness of the invaluable role that parents/caregivers and community play in supporting student learning and public education, and honor their contributions to student success.

TIMELINE

Oct. 2017	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Resource Packet to help generate event ideas is provided on multiple websites including www.sdcouncilpta.org and www.sdusdfamilies.org• Meet with the Principal and PTA members to discuss possible ideas.• Plan to solidify your event by the end of October.
By Nov. 3, 2017	Plan event and mobilize volunteers.
Week of Nov. 6, 2017	Finalize event preparations.
Nov. 13 - 17, 2017	Schools celebrate National Parent/Family Involvement Day.
Dec. 2, 2017	Schools and PTAs submit photos and brief description of their National Parent/Family Involvement Day event to be published in a PTA summary document.

Background:

This is the sixth year the San Diego Unified School District and the San Diego Council of PTAs are partnering to implement ***National Parent/Family Involvement Day*** at district schools.

Over forty years of research indicates that when parents are strategically involved in children's learning at school and at home, student achievement significantly improves and schools are more effective.

The district and Council of PTAs jointly agree that parent engagement focused on supporting the learning process, both at school and at home, is critical to increasing overall student achievement.

In addition to recognizing the critical role parents and caregivers play as invaluable partners in student success, secondary goals of this event include:

- To identify and recruit parent and community volunteers whose efforts will help schools increase parent engagement
- To building strong partnerships with parent and community linked to student learning
- To lay the foundation for strategic family engagement at schools
- To strengthen and sustain the partnership between schools and PTA

Vision 4 of the district's Vision 2020 plan focuses on the importance of parent involvement and the need for community partnerships and volunteers to augment the work of our teachers. National Parent Involvement Day allows us to highlight how important these individuals are to the education of our children and say "thank you" for their contributions.

Project Appleseed, a Missouri-based nonprofit, first launched **National Parent Involvement Day**, 20 years ago. Since then, districts across the nation have designated the third Thursday in November to celebrate parent involvement and hold events of various types to mark the occasion.¹

START HERE SITES MAY CHOOSE TO:

- 1) **Move an existing event to November 16.** Consider adding a fun twist or a unifying theme including students and parents in the planning phase.
 - *Example: Move your regularly scheduled November Family Friday or Principal's Coffee to Thursday, November 16 and focus on recognizing or celebrating parents/community members as invaluable allies in student success.*
- 2) **Design a brand new event.** Several sample summaries of successful school wide parent events (hosted by real schools across the country) are listed below.³ (Additional details available at www.sdcouncilpta.org)
- 3) **Utilize this event to recruit new members** to the school's PTA or to create interest in establishing a new PTA.⁴ www.sdcouncilpta.org
- 4) **Review the following pages** for new ideas to try this year.

IDEAS FOR SCHOOLS TO CONSIDER

Past school ideas range from “Come to School with Your Student Day,” which University City High School has hosted for the past several years; coffee/breakfast with parents; a week-long open house style celebration in which parents are invited on campus all week; or something as simple as the PTSA handing out chocolate kisses to parents as a way to say “thanks.”

- **Host a Breakfast or Coffee & Pastries** event to announce a new PTA or to boost membership in your PTA. The PTA is a key organization to connect parents, especially new parents to your school with other parents and community members.
 - Set up tables to welcome families and community members to your school. Make available membership forms to enroll new PTA members.
 - Make special nametags for members that say, “*Ask me about the PTA*” or “*Join the PTA Today.*”
 - Provide “Welcome Bags” with school information, PTA brochures, and goodies gathered from local businesses or organizations. Include a bookmark with the dates of PTA meetings and special PTA sponsored school events.
 - Have a chart with a list of volunteer opportunities so parents can sign up to help. Man the table with a volunteer to encourage sign-ups!
- **Come to School with Your Student Day:** This event is similar to one that many secondary schools organize every year where parents and caregivers “shadow” their student at school, spend time in the classrooms observing actual instruction time and join their child for lunch in the cafeteria.
- **Celebrate Dads’ Involvement:** Fathers want to be involved, but they aren't necessarily going to respond to traditional parent group roles. Use this day to engage more fathers in their children’s education and make sure to welcome any male role models who are involved with a child, such as uncles, older brothers, grandfathers, coaches, and stepfathers.”
- **Shine-a-Light Night:** Create an event to showcase all the extracurricular programs at your school (and in your community) such as clubs, athletics and honor groups that enrich classroom learning and provide students new ways to develop their interests and talents. Shine a light on all the opportunities for students and families to get involved. Examples include sport team demos, cheer groups, band, chorus, clubs, robotics, dance, drama, afterschool programs, and community partnership services and resources.
- **Brown-Bag Lunches:** Administrators invite parents and community members to chat and build partnerships while bringing their own brown-bag lunch, and to help keep everyone informed about the school and student learning. Topic ideas: Making families feel welcome by conducting a fun teambuilding activity.

- **Theme-based Student Essays:** Students may participate by writing an essay, poem, or thank you letter sharing how their parent(s) or caregiver(s) have supported them in school, learning, and/or life. These can be shared/showcased with families in a variety of ways on the day of the event.
- **Launch the Me2 Program:** The Me2 Program asks every parent to donate two hours to the school during the school year. Parents receive a checklist of possible volunteer activities, including “Attend an awards assembly,” “Join your student for lunch at school on their birthday,” and many others. Include audience attendance in your definition of “volunteers” who contribute their time to support student activities at school. Throughout the year, teachers and administrators highlight the Me2 program at all school functions that parents attend.

A large thermometer-type display at the school tracks the volunteers’ progress toward the goal of hours. On a monthly basis, parents are provided various volunteer opportunities to inspire their parents’ involvement.

- **Family Fitness Night a Popular School-Wide Event:** Reaching students with the message about the importance of fitness isn't enough. Go for the gold with events designed to bring in students and their families too. Involve the Physical Education teachers to plan physical activities in the gym like karate, kick-boxing, aerobics, dance, yoga, Pilates, hip hop, Zumba, and body sculpting. In the main hallways provide information tables work with a local community clinic to bring their bus and provide free health screenings for families. Especially popular with students are the opportunities to try physical activities.
- **Sports Math Night:** Elementary students and parents work through a series of math stations, playing dice and money games, working problems on calculators, stamping, graphing and going on a math scavenger hunt—all designed to support core skills in adding, subtracting, estimating, finding patterns and employing logic.
- **Family Math Night:** This middle school event invites parents and students to visit various interactive stations to work and play together (sometimes competing) to solve mathematics-based problems aligned to state math standards. Students help the teachers to set up each rotation with games or activities, such as: practicing math facts using Pringles cans, playing bingo, arranging tangrams and many others.
- **Game Night:** Ask families to bring their favorite board games to play together. You might also call local stores to donate games for this event. Provide a light dinner or dessert night. Some easy and fun ideas are any type of card games (Uno, Go Fish, War, etc.), Pictionary, Charades, Dominoes, Connect 4, etc.

BUILDING SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIPS—THE PTA WAY



From Awareness . . .

1. When families, schools and communities work together student achievement improves.
2. Teacher moral rises.
3. Communication among parents, teachers and administrators increases.
4. Family, school and community connections multiply.

It doesn't matter who you are or where you're from. Family involvement at home and in schools promotes student success. And there's ***more than 40 years of research*** to back that up!

Inform your school community of the power of their involvement in children's development. Then, educate the community on ways to maximize their involvement by linking it to student learning outcomes.



To Action . . .

Parent engagement doesn't just happen by chance; it must be encouraged, and cultivated. Policies and programs that focus on what families, schools and communities can do together to support student success are crucial.

Use the ***PTA's National Standards for Family School Partnerships*** to increase family engagement:

1. Welcoming all families into the school community
2. Communicating effectively
3. Supporting student success
4. Speaking up for every child
5. Sharing power
6. Collaborating with the community



To Celebration . . .

Family involvement promotes student success. You can never say it enough . . . and when you see it happening at your school, ***CELEBRATE!*** Let your community know that it's not just studies about other schools that show the link between involvement and achievement – *it's the experience at your school as well.* Advertise your accomplishments in the community, the district newsletter, school newsletter, and in the SDUCPTA and 9th District PTA newsletters.

The Need for Strategic Parent Involvement

- It is difficult to overemphasize the importance and influence of parents. Their lack of input, when it exists is an unmistakable and nearly insurmountable void. As Blazer (2005) points out, research show that “**meaningful family involvement**”. (linked to student learning) is a powerful predictor of high student achievement. Students attain more educational success when schools and families work together to motivate, socialize, and educate students (Caplan, 2000). Students whose families are involved in their education typically receive higher grades and test scores, complete more homework, have better attendance, and exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviors.
- **Children of involved families also graduate at higher rates** and are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education programs (Riggins~Newby, 2004; Norton, 2003; Caplan, 2000; Binkley et al., 1998; Funkhouse and Gonzalez, 1997. Henderson (1987) found that the academic benefits gained from family involvement with elementary school students continued through the middle and senior high school levels. Furthermore, studies have observed these positive outcomes regardless of students’ ethnic or racial background or socioeconomic status, noting that students at risk of failure have the most to gain when schools involve families (Caplan, 2000; Funkhouse and Gonzalez, 1997; Henderson, 1987).
- **School reform** trends come and go, but families and community residents have a long-term interest in ensuring that local schools provide their young people with excellent opportunities. They bring to school improvement efforts a deep knowledge of local context and history, innovative solutions, and rich webs of relationships (Annenberg Institute for School Reform McAlister 2012 (<http://annenberginstitute.org>))
- **Fathers' Involvement in Their Children's Schools** is an October 1997 report from the National Center for Education Statistics. According to the report, children whose fathers participate in classroom activities and school meetings and events receive higher grades, enjoy school more, and are more likely to participate in extracurricular activities than children whose fathers don't participate -- regardless of the level of maternal participation.

In spite of the benefits of father participation, according to the NCES report, fathers often are not involved in children's education:

- Nearly 70 percent of nonresident fathers and 50 percent of fathers in two-parent families are not involved in school-related activities.
- School climate had a significant impact on the degree of father involvement, particularly in grades 6 through 12.
- The advantages of paternal involvement were most significant in 6th to 12th grades.

¹ National Parent Involvement Day was established 19 years ago by Project Appleseed, www.projectappleseed.org

² These ideas for building community are taken from the *National Network of Partnership Schools* annual *Promising Partnership Practices Collection for 2011, 2010, and 2012* at <http://nnps.jhucos.com/>

³ PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships www.pta.org/programs

DESCRIPTION OF YOUR NATIONAL PARENT INVOLVEMENT DAY EVENT

Schools and PTAs: Please submit photos and a brief description of your National Parent Day event which will be published in a summary document and shared with schools and PTAs.

Name of event:

Description of event:

Time:

Participants: (parents, grandparents, Armed Forces volunteers, police, firemen, etc.)

Partners for this event:

Contact Information:

Name:

Title: (PTA member or staff)

Email:

1. Please scan and attach any pictures.
2. Submit to:
 - Linda Zintz, VP Programs, SDUCPTA, lzintz@gmail.com
3. Deadline: Friday, December 2, 2017.