

Meeting Module

a publication of the
Michigan Parent Teacher Student Association

Volume 3, Issue 5

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Keeping the Momentum

Congratulations! Your elections have taken place. Now is the time to start to organize your Executive Board's summer events. Set a timetable that includes at least one strategy session each during June, July, and August.

Include training opportunities such as the Michigan PTSA Summer Leadership Academy where you can attend sessions on President, Treasurer, and other officers' duties. Encourage your officers to be cross trained so that your Executive Board can function most effectively.

Include a time to establish goals for the upcoming school year, considering past goals but setting a plan for the immediate and changing needs of your members. Not all events should be fund raising in nature, and all should target the broadest spectrum of your school community. Create a proposed budget based on those new and relevant goals.

Planning for your future, such as the next three years, helps officers see the big picture in these financially concerning times.

Schedule the whole year of meetings for your General Membership and the Executive Board that suits your needs to discuss and implement the business of your PTA. Allow enough time for the Executive Board to make plans and recommendations without being rushed. Many PTAs set this meeting a week before each General Membership meeting.

Think outside of the box in scheduling your General Membership meetings:

- Consider meeting six times a year instead of monthly
- Have a theme or speaker at each meeting
- Offer the opportunity for student groups to perform or display art work
- Alternate day with evening meetings to reach more parents

Update your procedure books and touch base with all Committee Chairs to reinforce their duties and the assistance your Executive Board can offer.

Allowing opportunity for your Board get to know each other leads to a cohesive team that benefits your school community by starting strong for the first day of school and beyond.



Officer Code of Conduct

Each volunteer brings to the PTA a diverse set of experiences and expectations. It may be the case where those expectations are not aligned with other officers' expectations. Consider the suggested Code of Conduct forms included with this month's Meeting Module. One is formatted for PTA and the other is set up for PTSA.

Review the bullet points in your Executive Board meeting. Once adopted, present the form at a General Membership meeting as an amendment to your Standing Rules. Invite each Executive Board member to review, sign, and date the Code of Conduct, then have your Recording Secretary keep a copy on file with the meeting minutes.

In doing so, each Officer and Standing Committee Chair can be clear as to their responsibilities to the organization and its members. If for any reason conflict develops, a review of the Code of Conduct will be a good starting point in resolving the concern. Working together for the common benefit to your students, staff, and families will make your PTA stronger overall.

Monthly Insurance Tips

...compliments of Association Management Insurance

- ✓ Make sure that any vendors that you do business with can show you their certificate of insurance. This will ensure that they are following prudent business practices and are a reputable company to do business with.
- ✓ Make sure you know the guidelines for following your bonding policies. There are safeguards set in place with all bonding policies and not following those safeguards could result in a denied claim.

**Michigan
PTSA**

everychild.one voice.

3300 Washtenaw Avenue
Suite 220

Ann Arbor, MI 48104-4294

734-975-9500 (Phone)

734-677-2407 (Fax)

www.michiganptsa.org

INSURANCE

Ensure Your Fundraising Activities are IRS-Compliant

PTAs have always held fundraisers to pay for their own expenses, such as photocopying and newsletter production and mailing, as well as to help school children purchase essential supplies or activity-related items, like marching band uniforms. As nonprofit organizations, PTAs must ensure that their fundraising activities comply with rules the IRS sets for nontaxable income, or they may have to pay taxes on the income generated.

For most organizations, an activity is an unrelated business (and subject to unrelated business income tax) if it meets **all three** of the requirements listed below:

1. It is a trade or business, in other words, any activity carried on for the production of income from selling goods or performing services;
2. It is regularly carried on and is pursued in a manner similar to comparable commercial activities of nonexempt organizations; and
3. It is not substantially related to furthering the exempt purpose of the organization.

PTA units practice good financial management when they draft an annual budget with *specific* fundraising activities for specific purposes. PTAs that hold frequent fundraisers or engage in “perpetual” fundraising may stray from the purposes for which the IRS grants them exempt status. If income is generated “for a rainy day,” it may raise suspicions that the funds are not and may not ever be used for the exempt purposes of the organization. Tax exemption is a great benefit of being a PTA, allowing the maximum amount of funds to be used for PTA programs and services. Take care not to engage in practices that might cause your PTA to lose its exempt status.

- By Marilyn Ferdinand *Our Children* February-March 2010

Good Meeting = Productive Meeting

Let's face it, we have at one time or another sat in a meeting that went on forever and in the end nothing really got accomplished. Here are some things to take into consideration when you are challenged with the task of conducting a fruitful meeting:

Participating in a productive meeting requires four things:

- Respect each other
- Suspend our reactions and judgment
- Listen respectfully to each other
- Voice what needs to be spoken



By truly listening to the speaker, not coming to a quick judgment based on emotional considerations or outside influence, a more valuable decision may be arrived at. Keeping the “me too” chorus to a minimum will allow for more time to hear opposition views.

Our children trust us to make informed, unbiased decisions. Let's work together to hold that trust.

PTA's ability to serve children, families, schools, and communities depends on growing membership - to recruit members to demonstrate the value of involvement, to serve as enthusiastic volunteers, to help generate funds to operate, and to give PTA clout. With a vibrant membership, your PTA can be a powerful voice for children.

- National PTA

Whether through convention speakers, nationally sponsored workshops, magazine articles, brochures, booklets, videos, or online chats with experts, the National PTA has served its original purpose: to educate parents with the most recent thinking on child development and parenting. As long as there are new generations of parents, the PTA will provide this kind of information.

- The PTA Story A Century of Commitment to Children

Informing Non-Custodial Parents

Does your PTA have a way for **all** parents to receive your PTA and school information? Newsletters and reminders in the backpack don't always reach the divorced or separated parent. Have a plan to invite non-custodial parents to give your PTA their email address or request two sets of printed materials. Open House and Conferences are the perfect venues for reaching out to parents who may not regularly attend PTA meetings or events. Appoint a board member or committee volunteer to compile and assure the privacy of this information, and charge them with the responsibility to look out for opportunities to include these parents. It is important to keep all parents involved to increase the academic success for our children.

Surround yourself with only people who are going to lift you higher.

- Oprah Winfrey

One is not born into the world to do everything but to do something.

- Henry David Thoreau

It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

MPTSA's Committees that Care

Individual members, Business Partners, and School District Members all have the full attention of **Chris Greig, our MPTSA Membership Committee Chair**. Along with her committee members, Chris seeks ways to improve recordkeeping, increase all types of memberships, foster open communication, and develop a comprehensive Action Plan. Communicating with unit officers and Michigan PTSA Board members through the Membership Newsletter, Chris continues to be a valuable resource for all Michigan PTSA members. Contact Chris at Chris_Greig@msn.com.

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How Communities Can Prepare Students for a Global Society

Diverse learning environments and academic achievement are closely linked. The positive relationships that are created in diverse schools help to develop greater student awareness of the world and to foster their commitment to civic and social responsibility. Research has shown that students who learn in diverse and inclusive schools have enhanced academic development, critical-thinking abilities, and self-esteem, resulting in improved student relationships, reduced discipline concerns, and increased academic engagement.

Exposure and awareness of diversity is important in child development. Stereotypes and unconscious bias can begin as early as the age of three, when children learn to distinguish between the familiar and unfamiliar. At this age, children develop a sense of belonging, how to care for themselves and others, and what to celebrate, eat, and wear. Parents and schools have an important role in exposing students to positive experiences of difference. When they leave the school and home, students will enter professional environments that rely heavily on innovation and teamwork, and they must be able to collaborate effectively with globally diverse colleagues.

- By Nathaniel Thomas *Our Children Magazine* October/November 2009

Your children need your presence more than your presents.
- Jesse Jackson

Take 25: 25 Things to Do as a Parent

Ensuring the safety of children is a primary parenting concern. That's why PTA supports the Take 25 campaign, which encourages parents to take time to talk to their kids about staying safe.

Take 25 on May 25. Put child safety at the top of your to-do list in honor of National Missing Children's Day, hosted annually by the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children®.

Below are seven of the 25 easy ways your family can Take 25 to help kids stay safe. Also check out the resources and activities available through your community, your local PTA, and the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children®.

1. Teach your children how and when to use 911, and make sure they have a trusted adult to call if they're scared or have an emergency.
2. Check your children's online screen names to make sure they don't reveal too much about your children. At the same time, caution children not to post revealing information or inappropriate photos of themselves or their friends online. Make sure online predators don't have information they could use to manipulate your children into thinking they are trusted friends.
3. Know what other access your children may have to the Internet—at school, at the library, or at friends' homes.
4. Adapt the NetSmartz® Internet Safety Pledge for each of your children. Sign the pledges and post them next to the computer or in another prominent place as a reminder.
5. Teach your children to ask you before leaving home and to stay with a friend whenever they're playing outside or walking anywhere.
6. Visit the Internet Keep Safe Coalition's website and read about the Adventures of Faux Paws the Techno Cat. Then, print out some of the coloring sheets and discuss the message and lessons with your children while you create new artistic masterpieces.
7. Make sure your children know how to reach you at work and on your cell phone.
8. Take your children on a walking tour of the neighborhood and tell them whose homes they may visit without you.
9. Set up "what if" situations and ask your children how they would respond. "What if someone asked you to help them find a lost puppy? What would you do?"

Visit www.pta.org/1246.htm for Family Tips 10 through 25, ideas for children of all ages.

Don't handicap your children by making their lives easy.
- Robert A. Heinlein



Stop Lying to Me!

Most parents know that angry feeling they get when they realize their teen is lying to them, but the child will simply not admit it when caught. Many parents do not know how to react. Some teens believe if they protest their innocence long enough, parents will begin to doubt themselves. If you are sure your child is lying, however, it is important to deal with the situation immediately by finding out why your teen feels compelled to be dishonest, discussing your feelings about the importance of trust and honest communication, and by making clear the consequences your teenager will face if you catch him or her lying in the future.

Rather than instantly starting to lecture your child about why lying is bad (you can be sure they know lying is not a good idea), first ask them to explain why they thought lying was the best choice in this situation. You can explain to them that lying is unacceptable, but if there is a reason why your child felt compelled to lie, you want to know it so you can possibly eliminate any misunderstandings. This is not to say they might have a good reason for lying, just that they might feel they had a good reason for lying. Did your child lie about failing a test because he or she thought you would tell them they are stupid? Did your child lie about a party because even though it was an innocent party, they know you absolutely forbid parties, period? Did your child lie about a boy they are dating because they know you don't like kids from "that side of town?" If your child has a reason for lying that might be removed through discussion and open communication, you remove that "excuse" in the future.

- Find out more at <http://www.byparents-forparents.com/teensandlying.html>

Words to Live By

From elementary to high school the last day of school gives classmates a chance to put into words what their friendship has meant over the year. Signing a friend's yearbook is an opportunity to communicate like no other. It lasts forever.

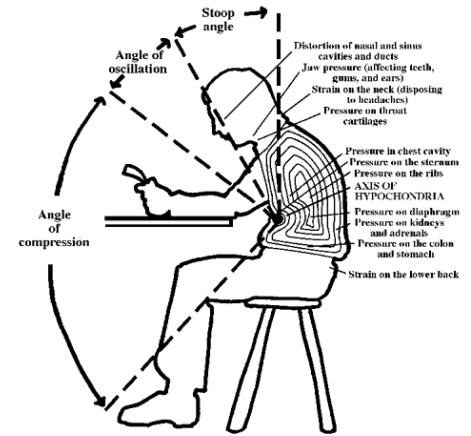
Finding a quote or motto that captures your outlook is valuable even into adulthood. Many email signatures are followed by a quotation from a famous person or that infamous "anonymous". Help your child explore the myriad of quotations available either by visiting the library or by going online. Finding a motto will help your child to focus on what is important as they go through life and measure each decision against that special phrase. Down the road it can even be the focal point of their resume.

Words to live by will help your child to dare to dream for a lifetime. As Wendy Wasserstein has said, *Don't live down to expectations. Go out there and do something remarkable.*



Month of May - Correct Posture Month...

Moms always say to sit up straight. The month of May, being Correct Posture Month, brings that memory into sharp focus. Not unlike focusing your camera and celebrating National Photo Month. Making picture perfect memories of grandparents will help celebrate Older American's Month and also Better Hearing and Speech Month. Let's celebrate Physical Fitness and Sports Medicine Month that may very well lead to Better Sleep Month. With more daylight and less darkness National Bike Month can motivate you to enjoy the outdoors. Asthma and Allergy Awareness Month may bring us



The Posture Theory Diagram ©

Image courtesy of <http://users.sa.chariot.net.au/~posture/>

indoors where we can write a card to a serviceman or woman to celebrate National Militarily Appreciation Month. Combining National Egg Month and National Salad Month may help you plan your next lunch menu. For dinner consider recipes for National Hamburger Month and open wide.

However you and your children choose to spend your special moments together during May, know that family fun and making memories is never limited to part of the year. Talk, ride, walk, breathe, write, and do whatever promotes family togetherness. It's not difficult, but it kind of makes you wonder why National Breathe Easy Month is only celebrated in May.

What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

5 Ways to Be Involved in Your Child's Education

- Help organize and/or participate in a community "clean up" or "beautification" project.
- Be a role model, be active in community service yourself or together with your child.
- Work with teachers and school administrators to develop a parent involvement policy.
- Find out information on community resources and organizations and use them.
- Advocate for flexible work schedules and leave time to attend school functions.