

Cost-Effective Connections

These cards offers suggestions for schools with limited budgets to create impactful events for families.

These ideas can help schools meet PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.

Please customize for your school's use.

Secondary

Newsletters by the Curb

Grade level: 6-12

Cost: Printing and copy paper

Time: 30 minutes

Have staff members meet parents at drop-off or pick-up times with a school newsletter. This helps build relationships while also offering another way for schools to improve home-school communication.

Supports PTA Standard(s):

1 - Welcoming All Families into the School Community

2- Communicating Effectively

3- Supporting Student Success

Picture This

Grades: 6-12

Cost: Free

Time: runs concurrent with evening activity

Have the school's journalism or yearbook staff capture pictures of entire families or students' supporters with the student. E-mail pictures back to students. The idea is to visually show them all of the people who are cheering them on through their education to reach their goals. Consider holding this event in conjunction with college/career fair, Conferences, orientation night, etc.

Supports PTA Standard(s):

1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community;

3-Supporting Student Success

6- Collaborating with Community

Giving Back

Grade level: 6-12

Cost: Free to minimal to cover supplies

Time: 30-60 minutes

Invite families to join students and staff in thanking businesses and community organizations that support the school. Activities could include delivering Thank You cards and posters, or hanging student artwork.

Supports PTA Standard(s):

6- Collaborating with the Community

College/career fair

Grade Level: 7-12

Cost: Printing and optional snacks

Time: 90-120 minutes

Invite local colleges, vocational schools and civic and business groups to participate. Although an all-school event, target families of students who are not performing to their potential (however your school defines that e.g. grades, suspensions, etc.) Ask those academic and professional groups to bring incentives to distribute (rather than the school purchasing give-away items). Create short presentations such as how family members can talk with their student about educational/career goals; have school staff present information about improving academic performance based on the school's data related to student achievement, etc.)

Supports PTA Standard(s):

- 1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community*
- 4- Speaking Up for Every Child*
- 3-Supporting Student Success*
- 6- Collaborating with Community*

Coffee and Conversation

Grade Level: 6-12

Cost: coffee and coffee supplies

Time: 30 minutes

Invite families to school to meet with the Principal or leadership staff before school starts for an informal/casual dialogue on school happenings and how families can help support student success. Promote Site Council for those who are interested in more frequent or structured interaction.

Supports PTA Standard(s):

- 1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community*
- 2- Communicating Effectively*
- 3- Supporting Student Success*
- 4- Speaking Up for Every Child*

Morning mingle

Grade Level: 6-12

Cost: coffee and coffee supplies

Time: 30 minutes

Offer tours of the building and allow families to interact with particular teachers. If timed for the beginning of the year, this could supplement Open House as a showcase for all-staff or particular teachers.

Supports PTA Standard(s):

- 1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community*
- 2- Communicating Effectively*
- 6- Collaborating with Community*

Brunch Bunch

Grade Level: 6-12

Cost: Free as people who wish to eat would purchase their own food

Time: 45-90 minutes

Once a month on Saturdays hold an informal dialogue with families and school leadership or staff at a local coffee shop to discuss school-related matters and to build relationships in a casual setting. Consider rotating locations to make it more convenient for families to attend who live in different areas of the city.

Supports PTA Standard(s):

- 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 Community*

Let's do lunch

Movie Night

Grade Level: 6-12

Cost: Free

Time: runs concurrent with school lunch times

Organize an effort for adult family members to pick up their students for a "power lunch." Offer structured conversation topics that the families and students could complete with each other and bring back for extra credit. Topics could include: creating a homework plan; outlining post-secondary plans, goal-setting, etc.

Supports PTA Standard(s):

- 1- Welcoming All Families into the School Community*
- 3- Supporting Student Success*

Grade Level

Cost: Snacks (can be sold in concession areas that could also generate revenue for the school)

Time: 120 minutes

Invite families of freshmen and sophomores to watch an age-appropriate inspirational movie based on an educational theme with their parent/guardian's permission. Invite families to attend. School staff can facilitate a discussion afterwards. Example of movies: The Great Debaters (PG-13); Freedom Writers (PG-13), Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story (NR). Grades: 9th and 10th.

Supports PTA Standard(s):

- 1- Welcoming All Families into the School Community*
- 3- Supporting Student Success*
- 4- Speaking Up for Every Child*

Bring your parent to school day

Open Mic Night

Grade Level: 6-12

Cost: Free

Time: runs concurrent with school hours

Pre-register families who want adult family members to attend school with their student. Or have families attend in place of their children. This activity demonstrates first-hand knowledge of how the school system works and broadens parents' perspectives.

Supports PTA Standard(s):

- 1- Welcoming All Families into the School Community*
- 2- Communicating Effectively*
- 3- Supporting Student Success*
- 4- Speaking Up for Every Child*
- 6- Collaborating with Community*

Grade Level: 6-12

Cost: Free

Time: 60 minutes

Have students write poetry that coincides with a particular subject-area and invite them to perform their poems for their families. Invite music classes to perform to add more of an artsy vibe to the evening. Because poems are academic-based, the event is linked-to-learning. As students transition between "performances," staff could offer helpful hints and tips to families much like commercial breaks that link to learning.

Supports PTA Standard(s):

- 1- Welcoming All Families into the School Community*
- 2- Communicating Effectively*

School Showcase

Grade Level: 6-12

Cost: Free

Time: 60-90 minutes

Families and community partners would be invited to see special classroom projects and demonstrations. End with a talent show, musical performance or other entertainment in a culmination celebration that recognizes academic achievement and that celebrates family involvement. Could be done mid-year to avoid end-of-year activities.

Supports PTA Standard(s): 1

1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community

2- Communicating Effectively

3- Supporting Student Success;

6- Collaborating with Community

Dominos tournament

Grade Level: 6-12

Cost: Purchases of dominoes and incentives

Time: 60 –90 minutes

Hold a dominos tournament after school that could create a friendly competition between families and students. Because the game of dominos is based on math, this could be a linked-to-learning activity.

Supports PTA Standard(s):

1-Welcoming All Families into the School Community

2- Communicating Effectively

3- Supporting Student Success

