FACILITATOR

2023-2024 RESOURCE GUIDE

Texas PTA

Table of Contents

Easy access to all of the live links in the Resource Guide are available at a scan of the QR code.

Scan me

About PTA

VISION Every child’s potential is a reality.

MISSION To make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

PURPOSES

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, places of worship, and throughout the community.
- To raise the standards of home life.
- To advocate for laws that further the education, physical and mental health, welfare, and safety of children and youth.
- To promote the collaboration and engagement of families and educators in the education of children and youth.
- To engage the public in united efforts to secure the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being of all children and youth.
- To advocate for fiscal responsibility regarding public tax dollars in public education funding.

VALUES

- **Collaboration**: We will partner with a wide array of individuals and organizations to broaden and enhance our ability to serve and advocate for all children and families.
- **Commitment**: We are dedicated to children’s educational success, health, and well-being through strong family and community engagement, while remaining accountable to the principles upon which our association was founded.
- **Diversity**: We acknowledge the potential of everyone, without regard, including but not limited to: age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, legal status, marital status, mental ability, national origin, organizational position, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual orientation, and work experience.
- **Respect**: We value the individual contributions of members, employees, volunteers, and partners as we work collaboratively to achieve our association’s goals.
- **Accountability**: All members, employees, volunteers, and partners have a shared responsibility to align their efforts toward achieving our association’s strategic initiatives.

PTA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

- Standard 1: **Welcome All Families** The school treats families as valued partners in their child’s education and facilitates a sense of belonging in the school community.
- Standard 2: **Communicate Effectively** The school supports staff to engage in proactive, timely, and two-way communication so that all families can easily understand and contribute to their child’s educational experience.
- Standard 3: **Support Student Success** The school builds the capacity of families and educators to continuously collaborate to support students’ academic, social, and emotional learning.
- Standard 4: **Speak Up for Every Child** The school affirms family and student expertise and advocacy so that all students are treated fairly and have access to relationships and opportunities that will support their success.
- Standard 5: **Share Power** The school partners with families in decisions that affect children and families and together—as a team—inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.
- Standard 6: **Collaborate with Community** The school collaborates with community organizations and members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

Leadership Competencies

Skills and Abilities Demonstrated by Effective Leaders

Successful leaders are effective leaders. Think of some of the most effective PTA leaders you have worked with. They fill their PTA role well, but their leadership capacity goes beyond that. They have skills and abilities that allow them to step into various roles. They see the value people have to offer and seek their involvement. They provide a clear purpose that others want to follow. They lead with integrity and strive to improve continually.

Texas PTA has identified a set of competencies that effective leaders demonstrate. Current and potential leaders can use these skills and abilities to improve their leadership. Local or Council PTA nominating committees can use them to recruit, nominate, and elect effective leaders. The competencies also drive our Full Circle Leadership Development program.

This list is by no means exhaustive. Rather, it is representative of the qualities PTA leaders demonstrate in the work they do to make every child's potential a reality.

Competencies	Descriptions
Integral to All Categories	
Communications	Listens actively and conveys information clearly, concisely, and accurately in both writing and speech
Adaptive	
Creativity	Sees and thinks of new ideas, alternatives, and ways to do things
Continuous Learning	Pursues the development of skills and knowledge
Forward-Thinking	
Critical Thinking	Obtains all relevant information, identifies problems and causes, evaluates information, and determines criteria that indicate solutions
Motivation	Demonstrates and promotes interest and enthusiasm
Vision	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the future and how to get there
Interpersonal	
Collaboration	Works as a team to achieve a common purpose, putting service before self
Initiative	Steps up unprompted and goes above and beyond with excellence
Relationship Building	Develops trust and mutual respect, and values diversity
Intrapersonal	
Empathy	Expresses verbal and nonverbal recognition of feelings, needs, and concern for others
Integrity	Does the right thing when no one is watching
Self-Awareness	Assesses their own strengths and weaknesses
Technical	
Delegation	Shares responsibilities, including guidance and follow up
Time & Resource Management	Effectively prioritizes and manages the resources to accomplish the goals of the group or project

Texas PTA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy

This Policy has been developed by the Texas PTA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Task Force, adopted by the Texas PTA Board of Directors ("Board"), and is intended to be consistent with the National PTA's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Policy. This policy is also designed to further the commitment of Texas PTA to diversity, equity, and inclusion: To continually be a voice for all children by reflecting diversity and inclusivity in our membership, leadership, program content, advocacy, training, partnerships, and communications.

We acknowledge the potential of everyone without regard, including but not limited to: age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, legal status, marital status, mental ability, national origin, organizational position, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual orientation, and work experience.

Effective Date: This policy was amended as of May 23, 2023, shall be reviewed by the Board every two years, and shall remain in effect until amended or replaced in its entirety as a result of action by the Board.

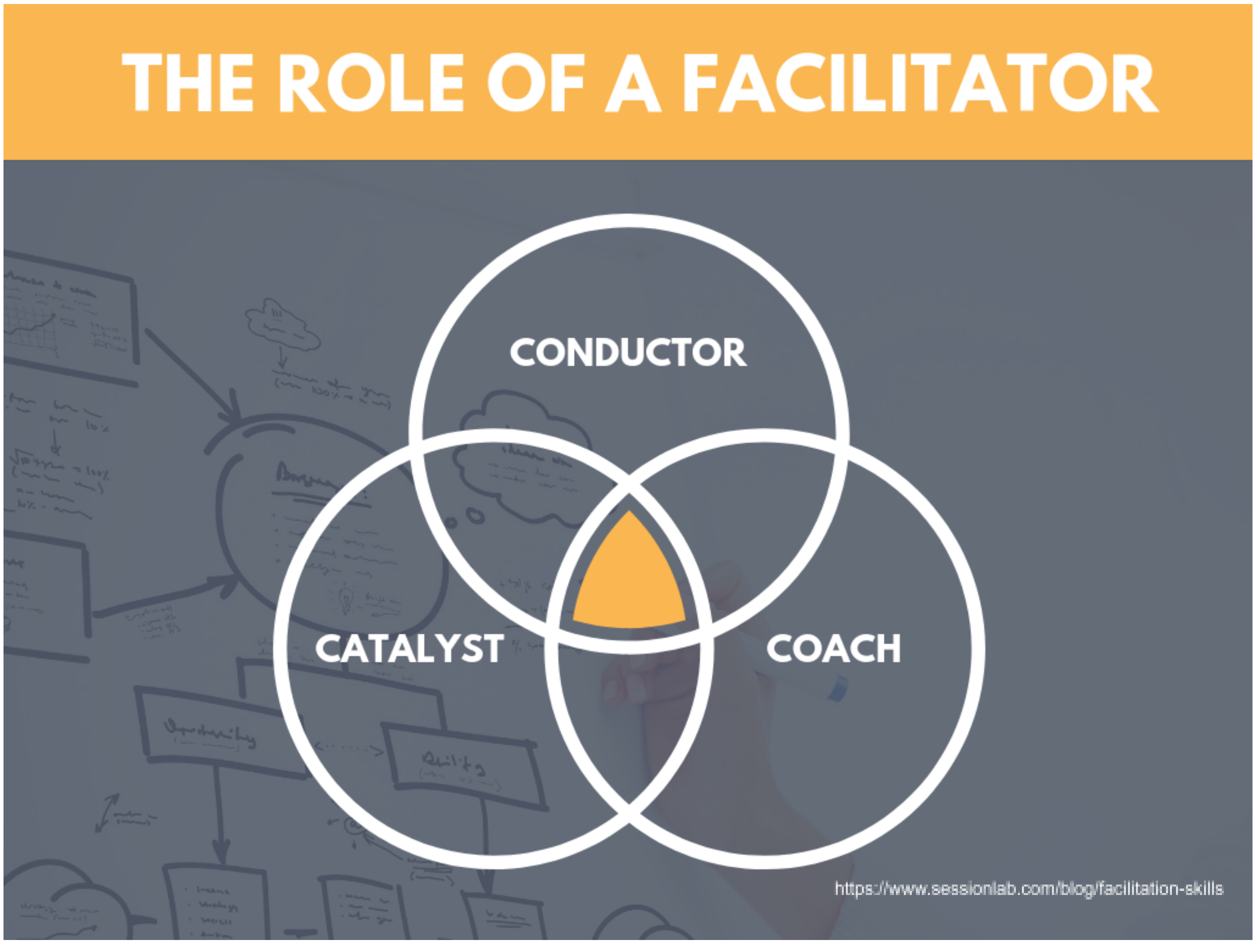
Scope: This policy shall guide Texas PTA, its Board, all constituent divisions (Local PTAs and other divisions, including Council PTAs), and their respective members.

Definitions: For the purpose of this policy:
- *Diversity* is the representation of and respect for people from different backgrounds and identities—including but not limited to race, ethnicity, culture, religion, socioeconomic status, age, geographic area, sexual orientation, gender identification, language, approaches to learning, diagnoses, or exceptionalities impacting learning or access to learning, and physical appearance. It also involves bringing different ideas, perspectives, lived experiences, talents, values, and worldviews to represent the wide variety of children, caregivers, educators, and communities within the PTA family.
- *Equity* provides fairness and access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes so that all communities are provided with what they need to be engaged and successful. This moves beyond an "equal across the board" approach to include the following:
    - a) Recognize and address bias and privilege.
    - b) Understanding and attending to specific individual and community needs, providing additional resources to those with greater needs.
- *Inclusion* is actions, behaviors, and social norms that strive to ensure all people feel safe, welcomed, and accepted. This means putting diversity into action with skill and intentionality, striving to ensure everyone feels respected, supported, and valued—and can fully participate with an equal voice and a right to be heard. This includes actively seeking out voices that have been traditionally underrepresented and/or marginalized.

Policy: Texas PTA, its Board, and its constituent divisions (Local PTAs and other divisions, including Council PTAs) shall:
- Promote and encourage awareness, inclusion, and engagement of all diverse populations represented in the community.
- Openly assess beliefs and practices to ensure inclusiveness and equity and to guard against discrimination.
- Strive to ensure that the membership, leadership, programs, partnerships, and published materials reflect the diversity of their communities.
- Facilitate communication with families in their communities in languages they understand to the extent possible.
- Identify and address barriers that hinder inclusivity.
- Foster programs and practices that eliminate bias, prejudice, and misunderstanding.
- Advocate for funding, laws, and regulations that support programs, policies, and services that meet the health, safety, and educational needs of all student populations in Texas public schools.
- Provide resources and training that develop a more diverse and inclusive group of members, leaders, and community.

Texas PTA first adopted a Cultural Diversity and Inclusion policy on July 26, 2012.

The Role of a Facilitator



A facilitator serves as:

- A catalyst for discussion: A facilitator enables the transformation of input (ideas, opinions) to desired outcome (refined ideas, decisions, strategies, etc.) without being an active part of the conversation themselves.
- A conductor of an orchestra: A facilitator synchronizes all the musicians (group participants), optimally guiding the use of their instruments toward the desired result. As the ‘conductor’ guides the participants, a system is naturally created wherein the facilitator helps everyone comply with the agreed-upon rules and norms. In this way, their efforts enable each person in the ‘orchestra” to create something greater than themselves.
- A coach: A facilitator helps the group form a constructive way of working together, identify its needs and wishes, and reach the outcome they would jointly like to achieve.

The Power of Mission and Purpose

Wise Words on Leadership

The art of leadership is getting others to do what you want done because they want to do it.
-Dwight D. Eisenhower

Every organization is perfectly aligned to achieve the results it gets.
-Dr. Stephen R. Covey

Only 360-degree leaders influence people at every level of the organization.
-John Maxwell

A Clear and Compelling Purpose

- Creates a common mindset
  - Unifies the board, campus, and community
  - Every child. One voice.
- Shapes the way we look at things
  - Forms our frame of reference
  - Guides decision-making
- Motivates us to:
  - Come to the PTA table
  - Go into schools
  - Work tirelessly
- Leads to alignment
  - We look at things through the same lens…, but with our individual perspectives.
  - We are motivated to achieve the mission…, rather than individual agendas.
- Leads to higher engagement and achievement
  - People will give their best and highest efforts because they want to.
    - There is no commYOUnity without you
    - back the future
  - We give our best efforts.
  - We don't just show up. We make a positive difference.

True leaders always practice the three R's: *Respect* for self, *Respect* for others, *Responsibility* for all their actions.

Use the Mission Strategically

- Use the mission often and with intention
  - When communicating
  - In decision making
  - In conflict resolution
  - To form a united team
- Don't assume everyone knows it. Make sure they do!
- Begin every meeting and event by focusing on it.

Connect to the Mission

- People want to contribute and know their contributions matter.
  Working to accomplish the PTA mission impacts the lives of the children and families in their own community.
- People want to be connected to something bigger than they are.
  Our members are part of their local PTA, Texas PTA, and National PTA.

Our Mission is Worthy

- Every child. One voice.
- Our mission realized makes the world a better place for everyone.
- *"Everyone's happier when everyone's happy." - Eleanor Roosevelt*

Build Rapport

You've heard it before: PTA is about relationships. When we connect with our fellow PTA leaders, they feel comfortable sharing ideas and concerns.

Build rapport with your group by showing genuine interest in them. Some leaders like to "work the room" before an event begins, chatting briefly with participants. Others prefer to have general conversations with the crowd. Be sure to share a bit about yourself as well.

Be curious, listen, and keep it light. Use humor if you are comfortable doing so, but never at another person's expense.

We all have PTA in common, so that is a good place to start the conversation. Feel free to bring in other topics as well.

Most importantly, be yourself and show that you care! Building rapport will help you to build long-term relationships that will benefit everyone.

The most powerful *leadership* tool you have is your own personal example.
-John Wooden

There are many opportunities to build rapport - in the planning phase and throughout the workshop.

- Learn about your attendees before the workshop.
  - Understand each person's knowledge base and experience, particularly related to the workshop topics and objectives. What is their current role? What roles have they held in the past?
  - Determine the group dynamics. Who are the decision-makers? Who in the group influences others? Who works well together, and who doesn't?
  - Make sure you know the proper pronunciation of each attendee's name.
- Use pre-workshop activities to connect.
  - When sending out pre-workshop communications to attendees (pre-assessment questionnaire, agenda), be sure to introduce yourself in a light and friendly way. Provide an overview of the workshop and that it will be a fun, positive experience. Use language that is personable and open.
- Be deliberate in your interactions with *all* attendees.
  - Address people by name throughout the session. Consider using name tags or paper desk placards if it is a large or unfamiliar group.
  - Ensure you are interacting with all attendees as equally as possible. Be careful not to focus disproportionately on the most extroverted people, those you know personally, or those in higher leadership roles.
  - Be aware of quieter or disengaged attendees, and encourage their involvement by asking questions or having them help with a task. While it's important to encourage engagement, make sure you do not make someone uncomfortable; do not force it.
- Stay engaged.
  - Do not check your devices or have side conversations while attendees are working on tasks. This sends the message to attendees that you are checked out or don't care.
  - Be an active listener throughout the session. Acknowledge attendees' ideas and contributions. Ask questions.
  - Be aware of and respond to the energy amongst the group. If you feel the energy dropping, move up an activity or give attendees a break, even if unscheduled.
- Say thank you.
  - Thank attendees for sharing their time and ideas, staying on task, and working together towards a common goal for the organization. Acknowledging people's contributions will make them more likely to feel valued and participate in future workshops.

Draw Boundaries

The facilitator must establish and maintain boundaries throughout the meeting or workshop. They are the impartial person in the room and must always remember their role. The minute they become part of the group, their credibility as a facilitator is lost.

It's also important for the facilitator to establish boundaries for the participants and how they will work together. Drawing boundaries is important so people can work shoulder to shoulder without disagreements, attendees stay on task, and objectives are met.

Great leaders don't *tell* you what to do. They *show* you how it's done.

- **Determine norms for the facilitator** - lead by example
  - Use Robert's Rules of Order
  - Determine how questions will be asked/answered (raised hands, written out, etc.)
  - Have respect for others and their ideas; practice listening skills, with no judgment of ideas
  - Ensure you remain neutral
  - Respect time - identify how you will adjust if things go off track
  - Identify how results will be kept or recorded
  - Identify how to incorporate breaks - specific times or take as needed
- **Agree on Group Norms** - The group leader can provide a list of group norms and let the group members customize it, or let the group create the list. The group needs input and agreement so they will have ownership of the expectations. Keep the list short and clear so the expectations are easy to remember and fulfill. Some examples may include:
  - Honor the time agreements by starting and ending on time.
  - Stay on topic and task.
  - One conversation at a time (no side conversations).
  - Share ideas and thoughts freely, honestly, and kindly.
  - Listen respectfully and with an open mind.
  - Be present. Put away phones and other devices.
  - Contribute to meeting goals.
  - Think before speaking, always attacking the problem, not the person.
  - Pursue consensus.
  - Record outcomes and share.
- **Manage the audience and power people**
  - Remind them of the agenda and agreed-upon ground rules.
  - Watch your words and body language - stay in facilitator mode, NOT decision maker; don't be defensive.
  - Give the power people a role to play.
  - Let the group decide if it is time to move on.
  - Be honest about being pulled off your agenda or being intimidated.
  - Accept or legitimize their point.
  - Use humor.
  - Take a break.
  - Address an attendee's negative behavior with them in relation to the group, never individually; it is about the group being able to move on, not the facilitator.
  - It is not personal.
  - Acknowledge differences in values.
- **Keys to effective discussion**
  - The Four Rs: Recognize, Request, Repeat, Review.
  - Prevent idea-busting by acknowledging and validating all ideas and perspectives.
  - Avoid the trap of editing people's words. Paraphrase, but don't wordsmith someone's comments.

Evaluating Meetings

You've just finished facilitating a meeting or training session. "Wow!" Whether that sentiment is positive or negative involves more than the planning that went into preparing for the meeting and more than the meeting itself. It also involves analyzing what happened so you can continue to do a better job as a facilitator by understanding what worked well and preventing repetitive mistakes.

There are specific ways to reflect upon and analyze meetings. Terms often used for this process are "after action review" and "meeting evaluation." Both involve reviewing what was intended – what was planned – and what happened. The facilitator can do both individually, or they may involve specific team members or participants. Every meeting is a process, and evaluation completes the process. As you develop facilitation skills, you may find it useful to self-critique before you include other team members and participants. This can be beneficial in helping develop baseline skills that will help you lead more effectively.

The following examples can be used to analyze a meeting or training session. Each improves future outcomes by:

- focusing on why things happened;
- comparing intended results with what was accomplished;
- encouraging participation; and
- emphasizing trust and the value of feedback.

Thematic Evaluation
Discussion questions typically center around the following themes.

- What was supposed to happen? What happened? Why was there a difference?
- What worked? What didn't work? Why?
- What would you do differently next time?

When you include team members or participants, remember to ask open-ended questions so they don't think there are right or wrong answers.

- What would you have preferred to happen?
- What would you do differently next time?
- How could the situation have been prevented?
- In your opinion, what is the ideal procedure?

Analytical Evaluation
To be effective when self-critiquing or working with team members and participants, you can use the basic themes listed above or delve deeper by analyzing meeting results, meeting process, participation/tone, and next steps.

Meeting Results

- What was the purpose of the meeting?
- Was the purpose met, and to what extent? (fully, somewhat, or not at all)
- Were planned decisions made as required and expected?
- If decisions were not made as expected, why not?
- Based on the meeting results, was the meeting necessary and worthwhile?
- Was the meeting successful?

> **True leaders don't create *followers*, they create more *leaders*.**

Meeting Process

- Did the meeting start and end on time?
- Was the meeting held at the right time and place?
- Was the format suitable (in-person meeting, phone conference, video conference)?
- Were there technical or logistical problems?
- Did all or most invitees attend?
- If attendance was not as expected, what was the cause?
- Were the presentation materials adequately prepared and distributed before the meeting?

- Did the quality or quantity of presentation materials enhance or diminish overall meeting success?
- Was sufficient time allowed for the meeting?
- Was the meeting too long or too short?

Participation and Tone
- Were all agenda items covered?
- Were you satisfied with the quality and quantity of meeting participation?
- Were participation roles and responsibilities communicated and clarified before the start of the meeting?
- Was the discussion adequately controlled and managed?
- Were certain participants allowed to dominate the discussion to the detriment of others?
- Did the meeting have a positive or negative tone?
- If the meeting tone was negative, how could that have been avoided?
- Did the meeting tone negatively or positively impact overall meeting success?

Next Steps
- What next steps and action items were identified and assigned at this meeting?
- Were these steps and assignments appropriate considering the original purpose of the meeting?
- Did participants leave the meeting clearly understanding the next steps?
- What procedures ensure assignments and next steps are correctly executed and completed?

Evaluation plays a vital role in the process of continuous improvement. It helps us analyze what is going well and what needs improvements to continue growing and developing our facilitation skills. Sometimes Thematic Evaluation works well, and sometimes Analytic Evaluation works well. If neither seems exactly right, consider combining elements from each to get the information you and your team need to be as effective as possible. For example, if using Thematic Evaluation has worked well but people are coming to meetings unprepared, you might want to include questions from Next Steps in the Analytic Evaluation model. Meetings and training sessions are conducted to achieve results. Evaluating often and effectively helps ensure that these results are achieved.

Facilitate a Workshop

Preparation is key no matter your next task, project, or decision. John Wooden reminds us, "Failing to prepare is preparing to fail."

For facilitation, you need to be personally prepared, as your participants are looking to you to guide them through a group activity. The experience that you and your participants have will be determined by how well you prepare.

> **Leadership is *unlocking* people's potential to become better.**
> **-Bill Bradley**

Below are areas of preparation and a related checklist of items you should consider to conduct successful and meaningful facilitation.

Agenda Prep

Create an agenda/outline for your workshop that will engage all attendees:

- Provide a clear set of measurable goals, topics to be discussed, and the kinds of decisions that need to be made, if any.
- Identify the make-up of your audience and their group dynamic ahead of time, if possible. This will help identify activities that best match their interests and knowledge while keeping them engaged.
- Include a balance of activities: group activities and individual reflection.
- Include time for work sessions, breaks, and energizers.
- Create a timeline for each item on your agenda to ensure you stay on task.

Logistics Prep

- Plan, in detail, how you will carry out the activities.
- Have a list of questions, discussion starters, and follow-up questions.
- Have topic-related ***short*** stories/examples ready to initiate/continue the discussion. Personal stories are usually well-received.
- Decide on the venue, seating, refreshments, and incentives. Consider the mood you want (calm vs. energetic) and set the room accordingly.
- Ensure you have all the materials you need.
- Identify whether anyone has particular needs and determine how you will meet those needs.
- Request necessary equipment or seating arrangements ahead of time. Be prepared for technology failures. Know who to contact to fix your technology issues.
- Plan for the unexpected, such as how you would facilitate your workshop without a computer or microphone.

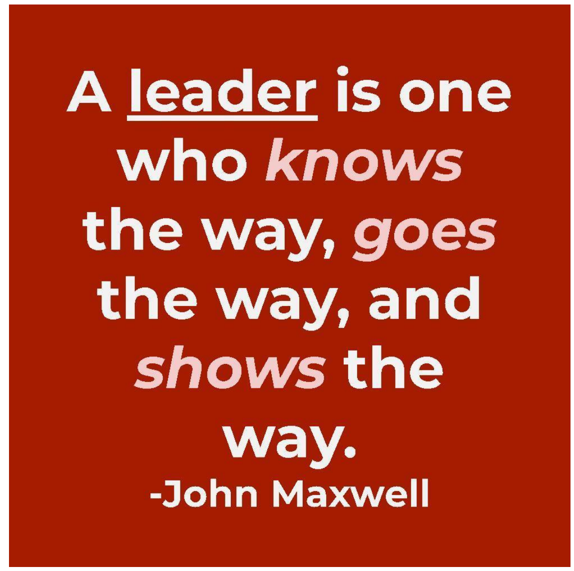
Speaker Prep

- Have a solid opening and closing
  - Opening – welcome, introductions, objectives, housekeeping (restroom locations, flow of session available amenities), and ground rules (encourage everyone to participate, ask questions, limit side conversations, disagree politely)
  - Closing – thank you, what to expect going forward (share minutes/notes, next class recommendation, assignments, decision-making/recommendations)
- Dress professionally. Wear comfortable shoes. If you feel good, you look good, and you will also feel more confident.
- Bring a printed copy of your agenda/session notes.
- Have a way to track your time (timer or volunteer) so you cover all agenda items within your allocated time.
- Practice ending a minute earlier than the allotted time to give you an extra safety margin.
- Be familiar with your visuals and any exercises.

- Be flexible. Be prepared to step in with energizers when the energy in the room drops. This may require managing the discussion differently (walking around parking spaces or splitting the group into smaller groups with a discussion assignment). Group size is important when considering an energizer. Sometimes passing out candy or small tokens to those participating will keep the attendees alert and engaged.
- Have strategies ready to redirect the discussion if needed (an attendee dominates the discussion, becomes disruptive, or veers off-topic).
- PRACTICE! PRACTICE! PRACTICE! Practice with family/friends or record it to review later. Evaluate areas that need work and then improve them before the workshop.

Day/Evening of Workshop

- Arrive early and test out all necessary equipment (clicker, microphone, computer, access to the internet, sound through computer). Know who to contact to fix any technology issues.
- Have water and mints available for yourself and manage any personal needs 10-15 minutes before the start of your session.
- Turn your cell phone to silent/do not disturb. If you use your phone as a timer, ensure you can still hear the alert if it's on silent mode.
- Greet attendees as they arrive by introducing yourself and thanking them for coming. Make sure they have all the materials.
- If attendees do not know each other, provide name tags or cards.
- Stick to your agenda.
- Ensure attendees clearly understand the workshop goals and how you define success for the session ("This workshop will be successful if…"). Share how the outcome plays a role in the bigger picture of your team/organization and the long-term vision moving forward.
- Assign a note-taker to write down ideas, feedback, questions, follow-ups, and decisions made.
- Keep the discussion constructive, positive, and on-topic. Guide but do not participate in the discussion. Attendees should not feel there is a "right" or "wrong" answer or be influenced by the opinion of the facilitator.
- It's okay to be nervous. Take a deep breath, exhale, and go for it!
- At the end of the workshop, ask attendees what they have learned and their biggest takeaways. They may have valuable insight to add to the learning!
- Provide attendees with an evaluation questionnaire for feedback. (Was the workshop enjoyable? Do they feel the goals were met? Was it a good use of their time? What did they learn that will help them do their jobs more effectively?) This will help inform and improve workshops in the future.



Post Workshop

- A few days after the workshop, follow up with attendees on outstanding action items and implications (changes in processes, new ideas to be implemented).
- Perform a self-assessment to determine whether goals were met, activities were effective/engaging, attendees felt heard and empowered, and needed decisions were made.

You may also find using a Facilitator Preparation worksheet helpful in preparing for your workshop. A sample worksheet is provided on the next page.

Sample Facilitator Preparation Worksheet

Facilitator Preparation Worksheet	
Facilitator Name:	
Topic:	
Date of Session:	
Approximate number of attendees:	
About the attendees:	What is the knowledge level of the attendees on the workshop topic? What are the group dynamics that could impact the workshop's success?
Objectives:	What do you want attendees to take away from this session? What does the organization need to learn/understand? Why?
Application:	Examples of how attendees will use this material in their PTA work. Examples of how the PTA will use this information to achieve its goals.
Handouts/Takeaway Tools:	
Icebreakers/Activities:	
Facilitator Preparation:	● Review the Facilitator's Guide, slides, handouts ● Think about personal experiences that relate to the session ● Review the participant list ● Make enough copies of handouts/tools for each participant
Room Preparation:	● Ensure the room is configured to maximize participation and discussion ● Anticipate and manage potential distractions, such as noise, room temperature, and sufficient seating.
During the Session:	● Set (or review) session "norms" ● Share objectives for the session ● If time permits, include an opening icebreaker ● Encourage discussion ● Refer to the Facilitator's Guide to manage disruptive participants ● If time permits, include an interactive activity ● Keep track of time (consider assigning a timekeeper) ● Assign a note taker ● At the conclusion of the session, review the objectives and whether they were met ● Provide an opportunity for post-session feedback

Activities

Great icebreakers/activities can strengthen bonds, stimulate brainstorming, and create a more open atmosphere. Activities don't have to be used just to start a session, end a session, or take a brain break. They can enhance the content within the meeting and expand on concepts in a fun way. Online resources for these types of engagements are plentiful. Unless otherwise noted, each activity described below is from Session Lab (https://www.sessionlab.com/blog/icebreaker-games).

If your actions inspire others to dream *more*, learn *more*, do *more* and become *more*, you are a leader.
-John Quincy Adams

GET TO KNOW EACH OTHER

Just One Lie

This method is an adaptation of the well-known icebreaker 'Two Truths And A Lie' to create an activity that can be run throughout a day of meetings or workshops. Participants mingle and ask questions from each other while noting the answers on post-its. However, everyone includes one lie. You then have a board of interesting facts about all participants but among them, one lie. Throughout the workshop, you can return to the board for participants to introduce each other and identify the lie. This is an engaging technique from the get-to-know-you games category of icebreaker, and it's often useful to have an ongoing get-to-know exercise during a longer session.

Group Map

Does your session include people who come from many different places? For active meetings, Group Map is a fun icebreaker! A great way to get to know each other is to have participants place themselves on an imaginary map in the room representing the country according to where they grew up. Ask them to share one internal value they got from that place and why it is important. Encourage people to share a short story if they want. Sharing customs and values from your childhood can create more understanding and help form stronger bonds – a hallmark of a good icebreaker.

Jenga Questions

Jenga is the starting point of many fun gatherings. It's a super easy icebreaker activity to explain and pick up; anyone can join anytime. You can spice up a regular tower-toppling contest by writing intriguing questions on the blocks. When you draw each block, read the question out loud and answer before placing the piece on the top of the tower. This can ignite exciting conversations about everyday topics, such as favorite downtime activities, to more in-depth stuff, such as career and self-development goals. *getting-to-know-you* games with an edge or a unique approach can make for fun icebreakers that set a team off on the right foot.

Find Your Pair

Prepare word pairs, like salt and pepper, milk and honey, and sail and wind, on separate pieces of paper. Tape one to each person's back. People then ask closed questions (with a yes or no answer) to determine their phrase. Once they find out, they have to find their pair. By continuing to ask questions (open or closed), they have to learn three new things about each other.

KICK OFF A MEETING

LEGO Metaphors

Each participant gets a set of a few LEGO bricks (identical sets to everyone – a few items, around five to ten bricks per person will suffice). Everyone builds something that relates to the topic of the meeting. Afterward, everyone gets 30 seconds to explain what their building means (for example, 'My Home,' 'Interesting Experiment', 'The coolest computer ever') and how it relates to the meeting topic. (Optional: The figures/buildings and the metaphors may be used later to help discussions around the table.)

Purpose Mingle

You can use this simple icebreaker at the beginning of each meeting. Have people walk around and share with others what they will contribute to that particular session. It's a great way to enhance engagement, help people set goals, and hold themselves accountable. It also makes others aware of everyone's intent.

TEAM BUILDING

Team Jigsaw Puzzle

Separate people into same-sized teams. Give each team a very different jigsaw puzzle (with equal difficulty and number of pieces). Each group has the same amount of time to complete the puzzle.

The secret twist is to switch up a few pieces with the other groups beforehand! Fun icebreakers can help keep a team on their toes and encourage creative thinking – try icebreakers for meetings that include an edge of competitiveness and fun to liven things up.

The goal is to finish before the others – so they must figure out collectively how to convince other teams to give up the pieces they need. This can be through barter, merging or changing teams, donating minutes, etc.

This is a longer game that is worth doing since it encourages teamwork on several levels – internally and externally.

Back-to-Back Drawing

The game requires two people to sit facing away from each other, where one team member is given a picture of an object or word. Without specifying directly what it is, the other person must describe the image without using words that give away the image. This is a great game to develop verbal communication, and remember that icebreaker games for work do not need to reinvent the wheel to be effective.

The Marshmallow Challenge

In eighteen minutes, teams must build the tallest free-standing structure out of 20 sticks of spaghetti, one yard of tape, one string, and one marshmallow. The marshmallow needs to be on top. It emphasizes group communication, leadership dynamics, collaboration, innovation, and problem-solving strategy.

Egg Drop

This fun activity could be used as an icebreaker both for people who have just met and for already existing teams. Breaking people into groups, each group needs a fresh egg, some straws, masking tape, and other items to create a package to protect the egg. Using the raw materials provided, the team's goal is to build a structure that will support a free-falling egg dropped from a predetermined height (for example, seven feet) without the egg breaking. Get-to-know-you games with an element of danger are always fun icebreakers for meetings. This method shows and fosters team communication, collaboration, and strategic thinking.

JUST FOR FUN!

What is My Name?

Stick the name of a well-known celebrity or public figure on people’s backs. Have players mingle and ask each other questions to discover who they are. This light game initiates easy conversations without forced or awkward small talk. Make sure the figures are generally well-recognizable. This icebreaker game is easy to set up and get going and is fun for all involved.

Rock Paper Scissors Tournament

This is a warm-up to energize a group. It is based on the traditional Rock Paper Scissors game but with a twist—the people who lose become fans and cheer for the players still in the game. The final is cheered on by a large crowd, and the excitement is through the roof! If there are more people, you can have multiple tournaments.

No Smiling Allowed

This seemingly contradictory icebreaker results in lots of smiles. Instruct everyone to keep a straight face and not smile under ANY circumstance in the first five minutes of the meeting. People turn into children with this instruction and immediately start looking at others, seeing how they cope. The anticipation makes everyone giggly, so after a while, they cannot suppress their laughter anymore.

VIRTUAL EXERCISES

Leadership Pizza

This leadership development activity offers a self-assessment framework for people to identify what skills, attributes, and attitudes they find essential for effective leadership, assess their development, and initiate goal setting. https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/leadership-pizza

Trust Battery
This self-assessment activity allows you and your team members to reflect on the 'trust battery' they individually have towards each person on the team and encourages focus on actions that can charge the depleted trust batteries. https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/trust-battery

PowerPoint Karaoke
PowerPoint Karaoke is an improv game where volunteers present slide decks they've never seen before in front of a live audience. https://www.sessionlab.com/methods/powerpoint-karaoke

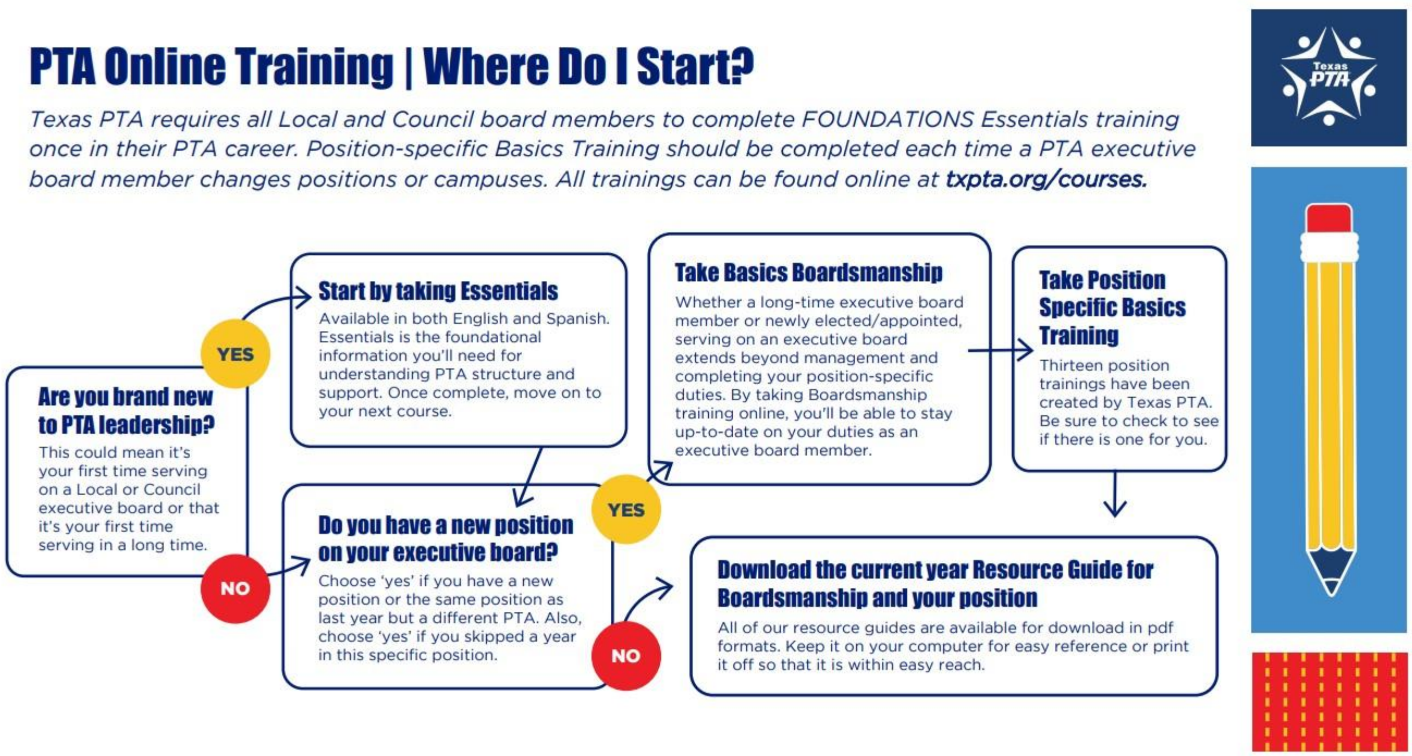
Training & Learning Resources

Texas PTA believes that volunteer at-home accessibility to FOUNDATIONS Training is important. As such, all required training is located at txpta.org/courses. Our volunteer leaders across the state can access quality educational resources to support success within their roles and build strong PTAs.

FOUNDATIONS Required Training

- **Essentials** is a high-level orientation to PTA, taken online via the Texas PTA website at txpta.org/pta-training. It contains the mainstay information that every PTA Leader should know. Executive board members should take this training at least once in their PTA career. Leaders are encouraged to take Essentials (formerly titled Foundations Leader Orientation (FLO) and Leadership Orientation Training (LOT)) again whenever the training is updated.
- **Basics** courses contain detailed information to support PTA Leaders in their executive board position. Every executive board member must attend a Basics course for their position at least once every two years. These training sessions are available on-demand at www.txpta.org/courses. Basics content includes an online training video, a companion Resource Guide, and other supporting resources.
    a. PTA Leaders can access the Resource Guides via the Texas PTA website. Visit txpta.org/local-pta-leaders to download free PDFs.

Reminder: Both Essentials and Basics courses are mandatory for executive board members. The path to ensure that all required training has been completed is explained in the following graphic.



FOUNDATIONS: Spotlights

Spotlight courses offer short, in-depth reviews of important topics and recurring PTA functions, such as Bylaws and Standing Rules, Financial Reconciliations, Conducting a Meeting, and Nominations and Elections. Spotlights are free and optional but offer vital insights on specific and timely topics.

Newsletters and Alerts

Texas PTA provides content-specific newsletters based on your PTA position. Registering as an executive board member with Texas PTA each year helps ensure you receive important updates and position-specific newsletters! Visit txpta.org/officer-intake to access the form.

All executive board members are encouraged to closely follow Texas PTA legislative advocacy efforts by subscribing to Under the Dome, our advocacy newsletter, at txpta.org/newsroom. You can sign up for advocacy Action Alerts at txpta.org/take-action.

Leadership Development Resources
Texas PTA training goes beyond the FOUNDATIONS by offering Leadership Development resources. The topics covered result from polling PTA leaders across the state.

All PTA leaders are encouraged to visit txpta.org/leadership to discover Extra Credit courses to continue their leadership development and to investigate the Full Circle Leadership program.

Texas PTA Staff and Board of Directors Support

BOARD OF DIRECTORS | *txpta.org/bod*
The Texas PTA Board of Directors are your volunteer representatives at the state level. From the president to the directors at large, Texas PTA Board members can help answer your questions and address your needs. You can reach them at the address above.

COMMUNICATIONS | *communications@txpta.org*
The Communications team manages and produces all Texas PTA communications, including *The Voice* (our quarterly newsletter), specialized newsletters (advocacy, healthy lifestyles, arts in education, environmental awareness, membership, and field service), social media outlets, and the Texas PTA website. They also serve as Texas PTA's contact for all media inquiries.

FINANCE | *finance@txpta.org*
Texas PTA understands the responsibility of managing your member dollars. The Finance team is charged with monitoring Texas PTA resources according to the annual budget, as adopted by the Board of Directors.

Members of the Finance team are also available to support PTA leaders in their compliance with state and federal financial requirements, such as filing the annual 990 with the IRS and sales tax filings with the State Comptroller.

LEADER ENGAGEMENT | *leaderengagement@txpta.org*
The Leader Engagement team gives direct support to PTA leaders and members. They assist with standards of continuing affiliation, bylaws and standing rules, organizing PTAs, and general questions on leading and managing a PTA.

MEMBER RELATIONS | *memberrelations@txpta.org*
The Member Relations team is responsible for developing recruiting resources that may be adapted for all levels of PTA – early childhood, elementary, and secondary. Staff assists with member recruitment strategies, processes membership rosters and dues, and coordinates membership awards and the distribution of membership cards to Local PTAs.

PROGRAMS | *programs@txpta.org*
The Programs team is focused on connecting PTA members and leaders with the information they need to be successful and develop programs. The Programs team is your contact for student and staff programs, such as Reflections, Texas PTA's scholarship, and educators awards, as well as Texas PTA's turnkey campus program library- Connect. Whether your PTA is registering for LAUNCH or requesting a Connect Program, the Programs team is available to assist you.

Notes

Texas PTA

txstatepta

texas_pta

THIS ITEM IS FOR PTA USE ONLY