

PTA Websites

Purpose / Layout

1. The purpose of a PTA web site is to post information relevant to PTA members. Comments from users indicate that they like to see the following on the Home Page: PTA Meeting Schedule (time, place,) Calendar of Events, Names and Emails of Officers, and Important Due Dates (councils and districts.) Do not put addresses and phone numbers of officers on the web site.
2. Sidebars to include: Membership Information, Newsletters, Fundraisers, Training Dates, Forms for Remittance and Reimbursement, Historian Information, a Non-English speaking section, and links to the IRS, the California State PTA, the council and district PTAs, local Education Foundations and other child-centered associations such as Music for Minors.
3. School districts often make space available on their web site for school web sites, and often these sites have PTA sections. They can be very varied in style and content. PTAs can also have a stand-alone web site such as *fremontcouncilpta.org* and *peraltadistrictpta.org*.
4. Surf the net for examples of web sites of other PTAs in California. (Google "California PTA") Some are good, some not so good. Select those qualities you like for your own web site.
5. Software for creating and updating web sites is constantly improving. Our web master Jenny Mitchell – jenstechs@mac.com - will update you on programs.

Content

1. Membership drive information should include the due date, dues amount, the payee (your PTA) and the name of the Membership chairman. A "rah-rah please join" paragraph doesn't hurt, either! Often schools will make space available in the office for membership envelopes collected by teachers. A form posted on the web site should be downloadable in a .pdf file.
2. Please remember that PTA is a membership organization and privileged documents such as budgets, minutes and treasurer's reports should not appear on a web site accessible by the general public. This information is for members only.
3. Newsletters can be posted on a web site in .pdf. Again, they should not contain privileged financial information or meeting minutes.
4. Close-up pictures of children should not be used without the permission of the parents. Wide-angle group shots of activities are acceptable without permission.
5. The fundraising page can contain a document for Volunteer Sign-up. The savvy web site guru can make this happen on-line, but most of us will put the form on the site and have volunteers download it and send it in to the fundraising chairperson. Be sure to indicate the purposes and goals of your fundraisers.
6. Links to the state PTA can contain legislation and convention information. You don't have to duplicate what is done on a council, district, or state level. Our links are *pta.org*, *capta.org*, and *peraltadistrictpta.org*.
7. Councils and Districts: give precise information when advertising the link to the IRS. Starting this year, **everyone** will have to file some sort of form with the IRS, either a 990, a 990-EZ or a 990-PF (an "e-postcard" for organizations grossing less than \$25,000 a year.) Please get this information out to units.

Recommendations

1. The Home page should be welcoming and informative. Put as much as you can immediately before the reader, without scrolling. Remember that not all monitors are the same size. Make paragraphs short but informative. Use the PTA logo and follow PTA guidelines.
2. Choose colors pleasing to the eye – somewhere between drab and glaring! Be consistent in design from one page to the next. Use readable – not fancy – fonts.
3. Update as necessary. People will not go to your site if information is out of date. All materials should be cleared with the PTA president who must authorize all communication that goes out in the name of the PTA. The principal is responsible for the accuracy of school information.
4. The budget for Peralta District PTA is \$50 a year for domain name registration and web site hosting. Initial start-up costs may range from zero (a dedicated volunteer!) to perhaps \$100 to a non-PTA member and even more for a professional web site creator. You may be able to find a web site professional who can give you a reasonable yearly contract for updating. These costs should be in the budget.
5. With a couple of exceptions, your web site should be fairly static. You don't want to be updating all the time. It is expensive to pay for a non-volunteer and time-consuming for a volunteer. Many of your sections will not change from year to year. The home page will change each fall with the selection of: officers and email addresses, due dates of per caps and insurance, insurance/workers comp amount, meeting dates, and program dates. Newsletter link should be on the home page also. Test all links – do not assume they work.
6. Fundraisers and programs should have two updates. The first will be the primary posting on the web page with anticipated dates and activities. The second and last update should be after the event is completed and include results and than-you messages to volunteers. Do not put the amount of money collected through a fundraiser on your web site, as this is privileged information that the general public does not need to have.
7. Encourage chairmen to write their own text, but if they are not natural writers, you may have to do it yourself. Don't expect everyone else to be as enthusiastic about a web site as you are! Promote your web site in the school or PTA newsletter.
8. If you are really gung-ho about updating often, by all means do so. Remember that various groups – yahoo groups, for example – are much more a real-time communication than is a web site.
9. Create a web site that can be passed on to the next volunteer along with software to update it. Do not make something so complicated that only you can do it.

Good luck!

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