



Building and maintaining a sustainable arts program requires a committed team. You can't do it all yourself. Parents are often looking for positive ways to be involved in their school communities. Enlisting them in your effort to improve arts education can dramatically increase what you are able to accomplish at your child's school. Plus, parent engagement is closely linked to student success and overall school quality. Below are key pointers on how to build parent support for arts education at your child's school.



1 JOIN YOUR SCHOOL'S PTA OR PARENT ASSOCIATION

Collaboration among parents and school leadership creates greater advocacy power. Joining your school's PA/PTA is a great way to get engaged and begin to enlist support for your efforts. For example, you could:

- ✓ Ask your PTA to help fund school residencies, field trips, and other arts activities.
- ✓ Suggest the association meet with the principal to discuss arts education and partner to host fundraisers.
- ✓ Get an arts education line inserted into the group's budget.

▶ **Are there other existing groups at your child's school that might support your efforts? There may be parent groups associated with specific activities like band, theater, or dance that are willing to help if you ask.**

Collaboration among parents and school leadership creates greater advocacy power.

2 FORM A SPECIAL ARTS COMMITTEE OR PARENT NETWORK

A formal arts committee or an informal parent network focused on arts education can make a huge difference. Find out if any such group already exists—if not, consider starting one. Schedule regular meetings and look for opportunities to work together with school leadership towards building a strong arts program at your school:



- ✓ Survey school parents to see if they have arts expertise or a connection to the arts. You never know who might be an artist, metalworker, poet, musician, or dancer.
- ✓ Encourage attendance at student performances and exhibitions, and recruit other parents to join the effort.
- ✓ Reach out to local arts and cultural organizations that might help with teacher training, artist residencies, workshops, discounted tickets, or field trips.
- ✓ Invite your school leaders to participate and help inform the work of the committee.

3 HOST A STUDENT PERFORMANCE OR FAMILY ARTS NIGHT

Student performances and art exhibitions typically attract broad parent attendance. Don't miss opportunities to work with school administrators to deepen parent engagement at these events — those who show up are the most likely to become further involved:



- ✓ Set aside time at the event to talk about the value of the arts to student learning and career development.
- ✓ Pass around a sign-up sheet and invite attendees to join your arts committee or attend the next arts event.
- ✓ Build parent enthusiasm by hosting events that engage parents in arts activities with their children.
- ▶ **Are there any existing arts activities already on the school calendar? Could you use these to talk about your arts education plan and to sign up parent supporters?**

4 PUBLICIZE EVENTS PROUDLY AND TARGET A WIDE AUDIENCE

Don't overlook any avenue for publicizing arts events within, and beyond, the school community. Engaged audiences and parents are more likely to want to do more. Here are some tips to raise the profile of your events:

- ✓ Provide information—in multiple languages—on meetings, workshops, and other activities in the school newsletter, email announcements, on social media, and on posters and flyers posted at school or sent home.
- ✓ Schedule events for times when parents are already at school (for example, PTA meetings) or provide school-day, after-school, and weekend event options. Attendance will zoom!
- ✓ Provide refreshments, childcare, and translation services to enable all parents to participate.
- ✓ Ask the PTA to sponsor the program and use its network to get the word out.
- ✓ Get buy-in from the principal and school leadership and invite them to participate.
- ▶ **Who at your school could help you identify and recruit parents who are fluent in the languages spoken by students at home? Does your school have a translation service that can be used?**

5 GET STUDENTS EXCITED AND INVOLVED

Generating student enthusiasm for the arts is essential to the success of arts programming. Student involvement is powerful proof of the benefits that arts instruction provides. Plus, a high level of student engagement will resonate with families and school leadership, creating important support for the arts. In collaboration with the school:

- ✓ Involve students in getting the word out about arts activities and events. Provide time and materials for them to design flyers, create invitations, or help sell concessions.
- ✓ Capitalize on students' energy by having them create, as well as participate in, fundraising activities.
- ✓ Encourage students to advocate for the arts at PTA and school board meetings or with principals and elected officials.

