

San Diego Unified Council



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SAVE THE DATE!
ALL DISTRICT SCHOOLS

The San Diego Unified School District and
the San Diego Unified Council of PTAs invite you to

Celebrate National Parent Involvement Day

Thursday, November 15, 2012

18th annual celebration held on the third Thursday in November

National Parent Involvement Day provides a yearly opportunity for schools to welcome, honor, and highlight the powerful contributions parents and caregivers provide at school and home to support student success.

Keep in mind:

1. Save the date on the school master calendar
2. Plan a special event for this day with your PTA or parent group representatives
3. Promote the event to your school community



More information will be available on the following websites by September 2012:

www.sdcouncilpta.org

www.sandi.net/parentoutreach



Questions?
Email bfernandez@sandi.net





- What:** Schools host a new event on (or move an existing event to) ***National Parent Involvement Day, Thursday, November 15, 2012***, to honor the powerful contributions that parents and caregivers make to support the success of students.
- Where:** All SDUSD pre-k to grade 12 schools
- Who:** School staff, parents, caregivers, community members, business partners, and volunteers
- Why:** To reinforce awareness of the invaluable role that parents and caregivers play in supporting student learning and public education, and honor their contributions to student success.
- Timeline:**

Sept.	Toolkit information and guidelines to help generate event ideas are provided for school sites on multiple websites including www.sandi.net/parentoutreach and www.sdcouncilpta.org . Meet with your PTA members to discuss possible ideas.
Oct. 5	School sites should have their event idea solidified.
Oct. 15 – Nov. 9	Plan event and mobilize volunteers.
Week of Nov. 12	Finalize event preparations.
Nov. 15, 2012	Schools celebrate National Parent Involvement Day.
Dec. 2012	Schools and PTAs submit photos and brief description of their National Parent Day event to be published in a PTA and District summary document.

Background:

The San Diego Unified School District and the San Diego Council of PTAs are partnering to implement the first ***National Parent Involvement Day*** at district schools.

Over thirty years of research indicates that when parents are strategically involved in children's learning at school and at home, student achievement significantly improves and schools are more effective.

The district and Council of PTAs both agree that parent engagement focused on supporting the learning process, both at school and at home, is critical to increasing overall student achievement. Parent Engagement serves as one of the pillars of our district's ***Community-based Reform Model***.

In addition to recognizing the role parents play as invaluable allies in student success, secondary goals of this event include:

- *Identifying parent and community volunteers whose efforts will help schools increase parent engagement*
- *Building strong partnerships with parent and community linked to student learning*
- *Laying the foundation for strategic family engagement*
- *Strengthening the partnership between schools and PTA*

A Missouri-based non-profit, **Project Appleseed**, first launched **National Parent Involvement Day**, 18 years ago. Since then, districts across the nation have designated the third Thursday in November to celebrate parent involvement and hold events of various types to mark the occasion.¹

Ideas for Schools to Consider:

A few sample ideas for elementary and secondary schools are listed below, but a wide variety of additional ideas for each category with more detailed descriptions² will be available in September at www.sandi/parentoutreach and www.sdcouncilpta.org.

Sites may choose to:

- 1) Move an existing event **to November 15th**. Consider adding a fun twist or a unifying theme including students and parents in the planning phase.
 - *Modification Idea: Move your regularly scheduled November Family Friday or Principal's Coffee to Thurs., November 15th and focus on recognizing or celebrating parents as invaluable allies in student success.*
- 2) Design a brand new event. Several sample summaries of successful school wide parent events (hosted by real schools across the country) are listed below.³ (Additional details available at www.sandi/parentoutreach and www.sdcouncilpta.org).
- 3) Utilize this event to recruit new members to the school's PTA or create interest for building a new PTA.⁴ www.sdcouncilpta.org

Family Events to Build School Climate³

- **Come to School With Your Student Day:** similar to one that Serra High School organizes every November where parents and caregivers "shadow" their student at school, spend time in the classrooms observing actual instruction time and join their child for lunch in the cafeteria.
- **Shine-A-Light Night:** Create an event to showcase all of the extracurricular programs at your school (and in your community) such as clubs, athletics and honor groups that enrich classroom learning and provide students new ways to develop their interests and talents. Shine a light on all of the positive opportunities for students and families to get involved. Examples include sport team demos, cheer groups, band, chorus, chess club, safety patrol, robotics, dance, afterschool programs, drama, & community/ business partnerships' services and resources.

Family Events to Build School Climate (continued)

- **International Game Night:** Based on the Olympics, this event is designed to celebrate the school's diversity and improve students' and families' sense of belonging by playing traditional and cultural games representative of the school's population.

Family Events with a Literacy Focus

- **Student Contest:** students may participate by writing an essay, poem, thank you letter, or composing a song, creating an art project or video sharing how their parent(s) or caregiver(s) have supported them in school, learning, and/or life. These can be shared/showcased with families in a variety of ways.
- **Reading Restaurant:** Serving up children's books brings parents and students together for an engaging "literacy" meal. Presented with a menu upon entering, each participant enjoys 3 distinct "courses". Teachers, dress as chefs, read aloud various book selections followed by everyone sharing a related food that is featured in the story.

Family Events with a Math Focus

- **Sports Math Night:** Students and parents work through a series of math stations, playing dice and money games, working problems on calculators, stamping, graphing and going on a math scavenger hunt—all designed to support core skills in adding, subtracting, estimating, finding patterns and employing logic. Sports-themed food, decorations, and prizes are included.
- **Family Fun Math Night:** This middle school event invites parents and students to visit various interactive stations to work and play together (sometimes competing) to solve mathematics-based problems aligned to state math standards. Students help the teachers to set up each rotation with games or activities, such as: practicing math facts using Pringles cans, playing bingo, arranging tangrams and many others.

Family Events with a Science or Technology Focus

- **Science Sci-Fari Adventure:** The theme of this night focuses on leading parents and students through a maze of stations in the school gym to make discoveries and find answers to various science questions designed especially for the event. Families receive booklets containing fun science-related activities to complete at home.
- **Science and Technology Night:** To introduce parents to science and technology learning standards, usually taught only in the classroom, this event provides experiential learning opportunities for families to explore together. With activities such as Sink or Float, Solid/Liquid/Gas Bingo this event provides intrigue and discovery for both students and their families. Teachers may demonstrate classroom wiki's they have created and share helpful websites and online resources parents can utilize to support student learning.

¹ National Parent Involvement Day was established 18 years ago by Project Appleseed, <http://projectappleseed.org/abc.html>

² These ideas for building community are taken from *the National Network of Partnership Schools annual Promising Partnership Practices Collection for 2011 and 2010*. www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/ppp/2011/index.htm

³ For all food related questions please refer to Administrative Procedure 5153

⁴ PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships www.pta.org/1216.htm



Research You Need to Know About

The Need for Strategic Parent Involvement

- It is difficult to overemphasize the importance and influence of parents. Their lack of input, when it exists is an unmistakable and nearly insurmountable void. As Blazer (2005) points out, research show that “meaningful family involvement” (linked to student learning) is a powerful predictor of high student achievement. Students attain more educational success when schools and families work together to motivate, socialize, and educate students (Caplan, 2000). Students whose families are involved in their education typically receive higher grades and test scores, complete more homework, have better attendance, and exhibit more positive attitudes and behaviors.
- Children of involved families also graduate at higher rates and are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education programs (Riggins-Newby, 2004; Norton, 2003; Caplan, 2000; Binkley et al., 1998; Funkhouse and Gonzalez, 1997. Henderson (1987) found that the academic benefits gained from family involvement with elementary school students continued through the middle and senior high school levels. Furthermore, studies have observed these positive outcomes regardless of students’ ethnic or racial background or socioeconomic status, noting that students at risk of failure have the most to gain when schools involve families (CA-plan, 2000; Funkhouse and Gonzalez, 1997; Henderson, 1987).
- School reform trends come and go, but families and community residents have a long-term interest in ensuring that local schools provide their young people with excellent opportunities. They bring to school improvement efforts a deep knowledge of local context and history, innovative solutions, and rich webs of relationships (Annenberg Institute for School Reform McAlister 2012 (<http://annenberginstitute.org>))

Building Successful Partnerships—The PTA Way ⁵



From Awareness . . .

1. When families, schools and communities work together student achievement improves.
2. Teacher moral rises.
3. Communication among parents, teachers and administrators increases.
4. Family, school and community connections multiply.

It doesn’t matter who you are or where you’re from. Family involvement at home and in schools promotes student success. And there’s **more than 30 years of research** to back that up!

Inform your school community of the power of their involvement in children’s development. Then, educate the community on ways to maximize their involvement by linking it to student learning outcomes.



To Action . . .

Involvement doesn’t just happen; it must be encouraged, cultivated. Policies and programs that focus on what families, schools and communities can do together to support student success are crucial.

Use the **National Standards for Family School Partnerships⁵** to develop, evaluate and improve involvement practices at your school.



To Celebration . . .

Family involvement promotes student success. You can never say it enough . . . and when you see it happening at your school, *celebrate!* Let your community know that it’s not just studies about other schools that show the link between involvement and achievement – *it’s the experience at your school as well.* Advertise your accomplishments in the community and aim for the PTA’s national *Phoebe Apperson Hearst Outstanding Family-School Partnership Award.*