

Guide to Georgia PTA Diversity

Activities, Exercises, and Resources

“Implementing Diversity at your School”

- This document explains why a PTA board (local, council, etc..) should add a diversity chair position to their board, explain the goals of the committee, offer a sample implementation plan, and how presidents can help establish the committee.
- This is a good document to share with PTA presidents at the end of school/early in the summer when they’re putting together their board for the following year.

“Diversity and Inclusion: What’s the Difference?”

- This is a great document from California State PTA that explains the difference between what it means to have a “diverse” PTA and an “inclusive” one.
- Good to share with a board that is reluctant to change the way things have always been done; demonstrates the importance of making changes to make new groups feel welcome and be able to participate.

“How far is it from Marietta to...”

- This is a document developed for “Sister Cities Day” during our International Week. It shows the distances from Marietta to our three international sister cities.
- Could even be useful for communities that don’t have sister cities.
 - Pick another city in the state that has sister cities. Figure out distances from that city to their sister cities. Teach about the sister city program.
 - Pick major world cities (e.g., ones in the news lately, ones with a particular connection to your town, etc..) and calculate distances to them from your town.
- This exercise has been shared this with teachers as an opportunity to teach geography, metrics, and math.

“How many countries...”

- Great document to raise student and family awareness of the interrelatedness of our culture with other world cultures.
- Data gathered from students can be used for lessons in geography, math (e.g., graphing, addition, etc.), and economics.

“In Defense of...”

- This exercise was designed for students 8th grade and up to help them develop the ability to see a situation or issue from both sides, even if they don't agree with the other side.
- Don't limit your topics to the suggestions on the worksheet. Add your own, especially if there's a particularly relevant issue in your school or community that would work.

International Celebrations Ideas and Best Practices

- Collection of ideas and best practices on how to plan, prepare for, and produce an international celebration from diversity chairs across Eastern Cobb County.
- International celebrations are great “gateway” events to entice families from other cultures to get involved at school when they might not otherwise be inclined to participate.
- At the high and middle school levels, international celebrations are great teaching opportunities for the kids who are mature enough to be responsible for much of the planning and preparation of the event.

Martin Luther King Jr. pledge and bookmark

- Great and easy-to-implement activity for Martin Luther King Jr. Day or any other peace-focused event.
- Offers the opportunity to start a parent-child dialogue about Dr. King, civil rights, discrimination, etc... because students are encouraged to discuss the pledge with their family.
- The pledge text is taken from a pledge card offered to visitors to the Martin Luther King Jr. Historic Site Visitor Center in Atlanta.
- Students at one local unit were given copies of the pledge by their teacher during morning announcements. The pledge was described and then read aloud during the announcements; students were then asked to sign their pledges together en masse as a sign of solidarity in peace and non-violence.

“Peace Chain”

- Flexible, impactful, and fun way to get students focused on peace and what it means to them.
- Easy to adapt for all grade levels.
- Inspired by a token of love and peace left at the site of the shooting of Congresswoman Gabrielle Giffords.

“My Wish for Peace”

- Open-ended prompt for teachers to ask their students to write about what they wish for peace.
- One local unit used this during their International Week’s “Peacemaker’s Day.”

Cultural Resource Group

- Cultural Resource Group is a group of parents/caregivers who volunteer their expertise to help teachers supplement their lessons with first-hand information about their particular culture, country, or faith of expertise.
- Helps identify countries and cultures represented in a school. Great way to collect data and identify potential volunteers for a cultural summit (information included later in this document)
- Helps make families of diverse backgrounds feel more welcome, validating the importance of their culture.
- **Documents include:** pre-implementation teacher letter, post- implementation teacher letter, and volunteer form
- **Implementation instructions:**
 - Meet with school administrators to introduce the program and its value to the faculty and get their approval for implementation.
 - Make class sets of the volunteer forms (one per child) and give sets to each teacher along with a copy of the teacher letter explaining the program, giving teachers instructions for the forms, and explaining what the program offers them
 - Collect forms. Volunteer form instructs teachers to collect completed forms from students and turn them in to the office to be collected by PTA. Customize form to fit your needs for easiest collection method.

- Compile data into an Excel spreadsheet, chart, etc... showing names, contact information, country/culture/faith of expertise, and any other notes shared on the form that would be relevant for teachers to know (e.g., grandmother fluent in Mandarin, father lived in another Spanish speaking country, etc..).
- Provide data to school administrators to share with teachers. Really encourage them to remind teachers to use these volunteers; otherwise it may become more difficult to recruit help in subsequent years.
- Provide post-implementation letters to teachers to remind them about the program, let them know the data is available, and let them know how and where it can be accessed.

Cultural Summit

- A cultural summit is an event designed to offer teachers and administrators the opportunity to ask open and honest questions of a panel of cultural experts representing the predominant cultures and faiths of a school community. The discussion is meant to facilitate the school's understanding of each culture so that teachers and students have an easier time working together in the classroom.
- Recommended for implementation at the local unit level. We tried offering a cultural summit to all teachers and administrators at our council level, but attendance was very low. Our most effective summit was held at a local unit in lieu of their regular faculty meeting. The teachers were already required to be at the meeting and they were grateful for the information and the opportunity to ask questions.
- Documents include: sample invitation for principals (for summits designed for more than one school), sample panelist invitation, sample faculty letter, cultural summit ground rules
- **Implementation instructions – local unit level:**
 - Meet with school administrators to introduce the program and its value to the faculty and get their approval for implementation. Feel free to ask your Council, District, or State Diversity Chair to join you for this meeting if you feel their input would be valued.
 - Identify the predominant cultures and faiths in the school community and volunteers from each with deep enough expertise to speak comfortably and authoritatively on their culture or faith. It's ideal to find volunteers with some experience in their native school system (e.g., teachers, parents with students who attended school there, etc.) These volunteers will serve as your expert panel. Community leaders may also be recruited to serve as panelists (e.g, rabbis, representatives from a nation's consulate, teachers from international schools, etc...). Volunteers may need to be screened by the school. Creating a Cultural Resources Group (see information earlier in this guide) is a great way to identify potential panelists.

- Work with administrators to find the best time to hold the event. You'll need at least one hour to allow for good discussion; two hours would be even better.
 - Customize sample invitations and teacher letters with your PTA logo, the date, time, and location of your event, and any other important information they might need, including the organizer's contact information. Send invitations to identified potential panelists and letters to teachers.
 - Customize sample questions for panelists and cultural summit ground rules to fit the needs of your summit. Sample questions are designed to "jumpstart" conversation if your audience is slow to ask questions. The questions should come from the audience once you get them started, not from the facilitator. However, be prepared with at least one question for each panelist in case no one asks one so that everyone has a chance to contribute.
 - Encourage panelists to share any relevant information they have that no one asks about. Your audience may need the information, but just not know enough to ask about it.
 - Good idea – print name tents for each panelist with his or her name and culture printed clearly for your audience to see.
 - During the summit, have someone record all the questions asked and the answers. After the event, compile all of the questions and answers into a resource guide for the school.
- **Implementation instructions – council level or for multiple schools:**
 - Meet with school administrators to introduce the program and its value to the faculty and get their approval for implementation.
 - Identify the predominant cultures and faiths in the school community and volunteers from each with deep enough expertise to speak comfortably and authoritatively on their culture or faith. It's ideal to find volunteers with some experience in their native school system (e.g., teachers, parents with students who attended school there, etc.) These volunteers will serve as your expert panel. Community leaders may also be recruited to serve as panelists (e.g, rabbis, representatives from a nation's consulate, teachers from international schools, etc...). Volunteers may need to be screened by the school.
 - Since your event will involve multiple schools, you'll need to figure out what time and location will work best to allow for the best attendance from everyone.
 - Customize sample invitations to panelists and principals with your PTA logo, the date, time, and location of your event, and any other important information they might need, including the organizer's contact information. Send invitations to identified potential panelists and principals at your target schools. You might also want to send an electronic version of the invitation to principals and ask them to forward it to their teachers to invite them.

- Customize sample questions for panelists and cultural summit ground rules to fit the needs of your summit. Sample questions are designed to “jumpstart” conversation if your audience is slow to ask questions. The questions should come from the audience once you get them started, not from the facilitator. However, be prepared with at least one question for each panelist in case no one asks one of them so that everyone has a chance to contribute.
- Encourage panelists to share any relevant information they have that no one asks about. Your audience may need the information, but just not know enough to ask about it.
- Good idea – print name tents for each panelist with his or her name and culture printed clearly for your audience to see.
- During the summit, have someone record all the questions asked and the answers. After the event, compile all of the questions and answers into a resource guide for the participating schools.

“Cobb County Schools 101”

- This program was designed as a sort of introduction to some of the nuances of our county school system for all families new to our country or our county.
- Families were invited to an evening meeting close to the beginning of the school year to learn more about many of the things no one ever teaches you about the schools and school system. Fliers advertising the meeting were posted at school and in the community, and went home with students in backpacks.
- The enclosed presentation presents our county school system in the context of a “cluster” – one of our council’s high schools and all of the schools that feed into it. It covers information about the county school system that is general to all schools (e.g., school board information, programs offered, progression of schools, etc..) as well as information specific to this high school and its feeder schools.
- Administrators, counselors, and ESOL teachers from each of the cluster schools, as well as school board members, were invited to attend as expert resources for families and their questions.
- The enclosed presentation offers a template to customize to create a similar program for other school districts.

“Diversity Outreach”

- This PowerPoint presentation was created in the summer of 2010 (updated, June 2011) for a workshop at Georgia PTA’s Convention Leadership Training (CLT); our annual state convention.
- The workshop and presentation were developed with three main objectives:
 - To provide an understanding of what diversity means to the PTA
 - To explain the importance of diversity to PTA membership
 - To present strategies for identifying and engaging families and individuals from diverse backgrounds and gaining their membership and involvement in PTA
- A useful tool to show to a PTA board that doesn’t have a diversity chair or one that has been reluctant to add a diversity chair and convince them to bring one on board.