

Needs Assessment

The strength of a PTA depends on the support of the people it exists to serve. A needs assessment is a tool to help your PTA in setting goals which meet the needs of that group. It does take a little time and a lot of patience, but it is also the most important first step necessary to help PTA boards become effective leaders.

Groups To Survey—Parents, Teachers, Students, Administrators, Community

FOUR WAYS TO CONDUCT A NEEDS ASSESSMENT

1

Interview

Person-to-person — Person-to-group — Telephone

Advantages: Immediate response

Disadvantages: Difficult to administer and tabulate
Takes a lot of time

2

Questionnaire (most frequently used)

Fill out at a school activity — Send home with child — Door-to-door

Advantages: Easy to administer and tabulate

Disadvantages: If they are sent home, you can expect only about 10% return.
You still need to reach the members of the community who did not attend the school activity.

3

Online Survey

Use online survey tools such as Constant Contact or Survey Monkey

Advantages: Easiest to administer and tabulate

Disadvantages: People usually need incentives to motivate them to take a survey. Offer to enter them in a prize drawing. For best results, make questions short and simple with boxes to click instead of text boxes that require typing in answers. This also leaves out parents that don't have access to the internet or those for which you don't have an email address.

4

Speaking Out

Best used in small groups — Divide larger groups into smaller groups

Advantages: Immediate response

Disadvantages: More personable—people have a “buy-in”
Difficult to tabulate “group”
Not all groups will be represented.

After you have tabulated the results of your needs assessment:

- Meet with your Board and review results.
- Set your goals and priorities together (include principal).
- Identify 3–4 programs or areas of concern to address during the year.
- Publish the results for your members and other groups surveyed.

The people your PTA serves will support and participate with you when they have a part in the development of your goals.

YOU'RE ON YOUR WAY—HAVE A GREAT PTA YEAR!

Sample Needs Assessment

A Survey of Concerns About the Rearing and Education of Children and Youth In Our Area

Your PTA would like your help in deciding what it should do this coming year. We want to plan activities, including meetings, that will make a difference to improve our school, our community, and our homes in the interest of our children and our youth.

Please indicate by checking the three (3) most important areas of concern in each section that you think your PTA could work on next year. Please complete this survey by (date) _____.

Behavior of Children and Youth

- Respect for authority
- Discipline in behavior
- Behavior toward others
- Self-esteem
- Tardiness
- Unnecessary absence
- Clean language
- School violence
- Bullying
- Other (for online survey include a text box)

Education

- What is being taught
- Instructional methods
- Buildings
- Administration
- Qualification of teachers
- Home/school partnership
- Reading/literacy
- Class size
- Energy
- Legislation
- Other

Home-School Relations

- Parent/teacher conferences
- Support of learning at home
- Parents visiting school
- Trust between parents and school
- Report cards

Legislative

- Lack of adequate funding for education
- Too much time cut for professional development for teachers
- Help for parents to be able to help children with new Utah Core Standards
- My Representative doesn't represent me very well in how he/she votes
- I need a better understanding of how the legislative process works and how I can get involved

Other Health

- Nutrition
- Healthful environment
- Dental care
- Alcohol, tobacco, drug abuse
- Immunization
- School lunch
- AIDS
- Teen Suicide
- Other

Safety

- Safe crossings
- Bicycle safety
- Safety hazards
- Fire
- Emergency preparedness
- Safe schools
- Pornography
- TV
- Juvenile justice
- Shoplifting
- Vandalism
- Child abuse
- Violence toward others
- Other

Family Life

- Parent education
- Family education
- Books/toys
- Human relations
- Open communication
- Pre-school
- Special needs
- Internet safety
- Other

Community

- Recreation
- Libraries
- Playgrounds
- Cultural arts
- Existing programs
- Patriotism
- Citizenship
- Other