



Shawnee Mission Area Council Parent-Teacher Association Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities

The purpose of these Activity Tip Sheets is to help your PTA promote Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in your school community. These activity tip-sheets provide guidance to help your PTA plan activities. We encourage you to plan activities that reflect the many cultures, experiences, and interests of all families in your school.

Activity Planning Worksheets are included for the following PTA events and activities:

- Cultural Night
- International Foods Restaurant Night
- DEI Newsletter
- DEI Book Club
- Pen Pals
- Clothing Exchange Volunteering
- Heritage & Group Awareness Months
- DEI Round Table Discussion
- Family Volunteer Opportunity
- Cultural Connections: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Affinity Group

Visit the **SMAC-PTA DEI Website** for updates to this document!
<https://www.smac-pta.org/dei>

National PTA Resources – PTA.org/DEI

National PTA has a wealth of resources for every PTA. Check out the [National PTA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion page](#) for resources focused on learning about diversity, equity, and inclusion, discussing them in our community, and taking action to more effectively serve ALL children in families, with a focus on historically marginalized or underrepresented populations. A few highlights that can be found on this page:

[National PTA DEI Resource Guide – English](#)

[National PTA DEI Resource Guide - Spanish](#)

[Multicultural Reference Guide](#)

Notes from the Backpack: [Podcasts focused on DEI](#)

[Responding to Pushback Against DEI Efforts](#)

[PTA Center for Family Engagement](#)

[10 Minutes to PTA the Transformative Way](#) - 10 min videos focused on helping parent leaders make their family engagement efforts more transformative

As your PTA unit works toward engaging families, it is important that activities and communications are thoughtfully planned to represent cultures accurately, respectfully, and positively. As your unit plans activities and initiatives, encourage families from different backgrounds and cultures in your school community to become involved and share their voices and perspectives. Remember that while there may be commonalities among individuals from a similar culture, we should always aim to highlight that every individual is unique and valued, and that we share many characteristics and qualities across cultures, backgrounds, and abilities. While we may have different experiences and backgrounds, we all want to feel accepted and welcomed in our school and PTA community.

A special thank you to Corinth Elementary PTA for sharing their events and planning tools. As your school develops and plans successful DEI activities, please feel free to share your experiences and lessons learned with your larger PTA community by reaching out to the SMAC PTA Diversity, Equity, and Outreach Coordinator at smacdei@smac-pta.org.

SMAC-PTA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities

Cultural Night

What is it?	This is a fun family event where families can share and learn about other family cultures that make up the school community. This event includes entertainment, ethnic food, cultural activities, giveaways, and so much more. Families may host a table where they can highlight and share elements of their culture. Consider pairing up with another school to increase the number of potential volunteers and funding available.
When and where?	An evening at school (typically a weeknight evening, and its best if there is no school the next day.)
Planning Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● PLANNING SPREADSHEET template can be customized to your event: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Planning outline that includes tasks throughout the planning process ○ Sample expense sheet ○ Sample map and scavenger hunt ○ Sample debrief form ● Plan and organize food options. ● Plan and organize tables or stations in which families or groups of families highlight elements of their culture. Examples of items at each station or table might include pictures, posters, items/artifacts representative of their culture, such as clothing or dishware, food samples, artwork, musical instruments, crafts, books, or other objects that illustrate the culture’s language, a map or globe showing size and location of the country, or flags. Share holidays and traditions, highlight the language, or any other ways to highlight unique aspects of a culture or country of origin. ● Plan and organize entertainment, such as musicians or dancers.
What costs or requirements could arise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food vendors, if not potluck ● Entertainment ● Materials for crafts or activities ● Giveaways or handouts ● Printed marketing and communication materials (signage, cultural info boards at family tables) ● Name tags ● See expense tab on planning spreadsheet
Volunteer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning committee <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Entertainment ○ Food vendors ○ Family tables ○ Tracking expenses ○ Marketing and communications ○ Activities ○ Point person for volunteers on event day ○ Signage and map for event day ○ School Mascots appearance (principals organized) ○ District communication and press coverage (principals) ○ District kitchen staff/supplies (principals) ● Volunteers the night of the event to set up stations, direct station hosts to their tables, organize entertainers or food vendors

Cultural Night (continued)

Additional ideas or variations

- Start small, with a cultural pot-luck dinner. Over time, add entertainment, stations, etc.
- Encourage families from different cultures to help organize the event and contribute their ideas.
- Make sure to include representation of the families in your community,
- Represent cultures accurately and respectfully and encourage families from different backgrounds and cultures in your school community to become involved. While there may be commonalities among individuals from a similar culture, highlight that every individual is unique and we share many characteristics and qualities across cultures – while we may have different experiences, we all want to feel accepted and welcomed in our community.
- Invite teachers and administrators, community members, or local businesses to participate.
- Provide students with a “Passport” or “Scavenger Hunt” to get a stick or stamp at each station. This helps ensure participation and engagement.
- Encourage families to share traditional recipes, and post them on your PTA website or social media.
- Consider partnering with another school to share resources, meet new families, and build relationships

SMAC-PTA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities
International Foods Restaurant Night

What is it?	This could be a fun family event where adults and children can experience foods from different cultures around the world, or an adult-focused activity with a presentation or guest speaker, a book discussion, or PTA meeting.
When and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At a local restaurant highlighting a particular cuisine, culture, or group within our community. ● This event could be a weeknight dinner or a happy hour event. ● Schedule to align with monthly heritage recognition events (see Heritage & Group Awareness Month activity tip sheet).
Planning Notes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the location - a restaurant, ice cream or dessert spot, bar. ● Approach the venue to check on space for a group. For a smaller space, or an event involving children, consider a “drop in” event rather than a specific start and end time. ● For a presentation or discussion, plan an event agenda and recruit an activity leader or facilitator. ● Consider if the venue might agree to a fund-raiser, in which they donate a percentage of sales to the PTA
What costs or requirements could arise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Food/beverage costs for families ● Name tags for attendees
Volunteer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify and make arrangements with the location. ● Publicize the event. ● The night of the event, volunteers may welcome attendees and run any planned events.
Additional ideas or variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start small, with a drop-in event. Over time, add a discussion or presentation. ● Consider <i>Golden Scoop Ice Cream</i> in Overland Park, which is staffed by individuals who have different learning abilities. ● Make sure to include representation of the families in your community. Find out if local restaurants are owned or managed by families from your school. ● Represent cultures accurately and respectfully and encourage families from different backgrounds and cultures in your school community to become involved. While there may be commonalities among individuals from a similar culture, highlight that every individual is unique and we share many characteristics and qualities across cultures – while we may have different experiences, we all want to feel accepted and welcomed in our community. ● Invite teachers and administrators, community members, or local businesses to participate.

SMAC-PTA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Newsletter

What is it?	Newsletter content focused on diversity, equity, and inclusion can communicate goals and values related to valuing diversity, equity, and inclusion in the school community. Content may be included in the PTA newsletter and/or the school newsletter.
When and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Weekly, monthly, or quarterly
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Content can vary, but might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dinner table topics centered around DEI ○ Family ethnic background stories from your school ○ Ethnic Restaurants ○ Upcoming local cultural events ○ Movies or books centered around DEI ○ Inspiration DEI Quotes ● Content may be compiled months in advance and shared out on a weekly or monthly timeline. ● Introduce the newsletter early in the year, so that families understand its intention and purpose. ● Create a shared folder for compiling content. ● Create a calendar that can be used again next year (e.g., family stories in October, book recommendations in November). ● Plan for a small committee to review and proofread content before disseminating newsletter content. ● Coordinate with the school principal to include content in the school newsletter.
What costs or requirements could arise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Little to no cost
Volunteer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruit different volunteers on a rotation to generate and review content. ● Inquire if teachers have book recommendations, or other content that might be appropriate for such a newsletter.
Additional ideas or variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Don't try to create all new content for each newsletter. Share National PTA resources around DEI <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National PTA DEI Resource Guide – English ○ National PTA DEI Resource Guide - Spanish ○ PTA Podcasts focused on DEI

SMAC-PTA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Book Club

What is it?	A book club for parents that selects and discusses literature centered around themes of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Members engage in thoughtful conversations, reflecting on the experiences and perspectives of marginalized communities, and exploring ways to promote understanding, empathy, and positive change in society. The book club serves as a platform for personal growth, learning, and fostering a more inclusive and socially conscious
When and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● You can choose how often the book club meets - the club may meet multiple times throughout the reading of a book, or just once when attendees have completed the book. Meet at school, a home, or a public library (reserve space with Johnson County Libraries using their online room reservation service). ● A zoom call might be an easy way for readers to check in and participate. ● Schedule meetings so that participants have more than ample time to read the book.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Determine the goals and focus of the book club, and how you will decide on a book. Consult teachers for recommendations and consider a diverse array of books that highlight different cultures, nationalities, or other affinity groups. ● Identify books that tell stories that are accurate, respectful of identities beyond your own, and depict people in a positive light. Choose books that are written by individuals from the group of people that the book is about. ● Create a list of books that you add to over time. Consider partnering with local bookstores to identify new books and support local booksellers. ● Consider a committee to select books and select books that highlight the diversity of children and families in your community. ● Sometimes you may find supplemental materials that could be used to facilitate discussion, such as through Scholastic. ● Decide who will moderate the book club meeting, or meetings. Develop some st ● Schedule a space where the club can meet. ● Publicize the book club, with information about the book and the nature of the discussion. ● Develop discussion points for each book (i.e., study questions, discussion prompts).
What costs or requirements could arise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Book purchases ● Provide snacks/drinks or invite participants to bring their favorite snacks or drinks. ● Name tags for attendees
Volunteer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Book club facilitator who can facilitate a positive discussion, field questions, and promote thoughtful and respectful discussion.
Additional ideas or variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider supplemental activities, such as a guest speaker to deepen the learning experience. ● Consider different ways of participating, such as through in-person meeting, or an online (i.e., Zoom) discussion. Post discussion questions to the newsletter to promote reflection for those who read the book but cannot attend the book club meeting. ● Document attendance, participation, and satisfaction, and use this information in selecting the next book. ● See National PTAs website for more information on Diversity in Literature ● Consider a child-focused book club. This might follow a book fair, where the book club is publicized. ● For middle and high schools, encourage students and/or clubs to participate in the planning.

SMAC-PTA Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities
Pen Pals

What is it?	PTA units partner with another school within the district or outside the district and then pairs students with a Pen Pal. Students then communicate with each other throughout the year via hand written letters. Letters can be focused on themes aimed at learning about family, culture, or community. When coordinated with principals and teachers, letters may be written during school hours.
When and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan for letters to be traded across several months or throughout the school year.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Partnership is crucial for this project to be successful. It will be important to coordinate and have agreement with other PTA units about this project and its scope and timeline and the writing prompts, as well as ensure that each PTA unit agrees to participate fully and has the capacity to see the project through. ● Reach out and obtain agreement from school staff to incorporate this activity into your PTA activities. ● Identify and coordinate with the PTA unit in another district, or with local PTA units within the district to ensure equivalent numbers of children can participate. ● Plan far enough ahead so that teachers can plan letter writing time into their day. ● Create and share writing prompts. Develop these in collaboration with your partner PTA and include teachers in the planning of these writing prompts to ensure they are appropriate to the development and writing abilities of the students. ● Distribute printed copies of the writing prompts so that students can write their letter on each page, or simply share writing prompts via email with each teacher. ● Plan to communicate with school staff the purpose and scope of this project ● Create a timeline for teachers to see when students should work on their letters, when they should be completed, and when they might receive letters from the partner school.
What costs or requirements could arise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Check to see how PTAs can help support this activity through providing paper for each student.
Volunteer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create and agree upon writing prompts, and distribute writing prompts to teachers. ● Drop off paper if schools require that PTA provides the paper. Print copies of the writing prompts to be distributed to each student, and then pick them up. ● Trade boxes of letters, sort, and distribute to students.
Additional ideas or variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan an event for students that involves the Pen Pal partner school, such as

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities

Clothing Exchange Volunteering

What is it?	<p>The Shawnee Mission Area Council PTA manages the Clothing Exchange The Clothing Exchange offers gently used clothing and shoes to those within the SMSD boundaries. All items are clean. Donations are made possible by SMSD residents. All residents are welcome! Shop, volunteer, donate, or organize a donation drive.. The Clothing Exchange is staffed by volunteer parents and caregivers in the district. Volunteers are needed to sort donations, hang clothing, organize, and help parents/caregivers as they visit the Clothing Exchange.</p> <p>For more information: https://youtu.be/c0sgkw1xaKg</p>
When and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with the Clothing Exchange staff to identify their needs. Volunteering can be scheduled as a PTA Unit throughout the year, or on a one-time basis.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate with the Clothing Exchange staff to identify a date, or dates, when parents/caregivers of students can volunteer in the clothing exchange. Tasks include sorting donations, hanging donations, and assisting shoppers. Publicize the event via newsletter and social media. Be sure to explain what the Clothing Exchange is, and that it is open as a resource to all families within the SMSD.
What costs or requirements could arise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This is an event for adults with middle schoolers (accompanied by an adult) and high schoolers. If your unit participates in the Socks and Underwear donation event, there will be costs to parents/caregivers to donate socks and underwear.
Volunteer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Clothing Exchange suggests that each PTA unit send 4-6 volunteers when scheduled to staff the Clothing Exchange. Individual volunteers may participate throughout the year.
Additional ideas or variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To learn about volunteer and donation opportunities https://www.smac-pta.org/clothing-exchange Monthly donation drive suggestions: https://www.smac-pta.org/files/ugd/ba1111_e61fdb95f73044c8a45c0dcb6e328e5c.pdf Information on the Clothing Exchange: https://youtu.be/c0sgkw1xaKg

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities Heritage & Group Awareness Months

What is it?	<p>Designated months during which specific cultures, groups, or communities are celebrated and recognized for their historical and cultural contributions to society. These months can feature assemblies, activities, and educational initiatives aimed at promoting awareness, appreciation, and understanding of diverse heritages and their significance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sept 15-Oct 15: Latinx Heritage Month ● October: Indigenous Peoples Day ● November: Native American Heritage Month ● February: Black History Month ● March: National Disability Awareness Month ● April: Arab American Heritage Month ● May: Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month ● July: Disability Pride Month
When and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a monthly calendar of designated months with activities or acknowledgments relating to each month. The activities associated with each month will vary.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Plan how each month is recognized. This recognition could simply be an acknowledgement in a newsletter or on social media, or it could align with a specific PTA DEI event. ● The recognition event could be coordinated with school staff during the school day or take place as a PTA event outside of the school day. ● Publicize via newsletter and social media.
What costs or requirements could arise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cost will vary based on the event. ● This requires planning throughout the year, so that you recognize a variety of “month” recognitions.
Volunteer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creating and managing the calendar, and prompting PTA Leadership about upcoming months
Additional ideas or variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate with school staff about coordinating monthly recognition events with in-school events. ● For middle and high schools, clubs or affinity groups may lead the planning.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities

DEI Round Table Discussion

What is it?	A forum where individuals come together to engage in open and constructive conversations about topics related to diversity, equity, and inclusion. The goal of these discussions is to promote understanding, address challenges, and develop strategies to foster a more inclusive and diverse environment. Think of this event as a “book club” without having to read the book – this is an informal discussion where attendees can explore topics, share experiences, engage in discussion, and learn from others.
When and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schedule a one-time event, or consider multiple sessions over the course of the year to explore a variety of topics related to DEI ● Reserve a space at school, such as the gym, library, multi-purpose room where groups of no more than about 8-10 adults can gather around a table, or tables, for a discussion.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invite parents/caregivers to attend via newsletter, email, or social media. ● Reserve a space at school, such as the gym, library, multi-purpose room where groups of no more than about 8-10 adults can gather around a table, or tables, for a discussion. ● In welcoming attendees, encourage open and honest, and mutually respectful conversations. Acknowledge that we all come to this discussion with differing perspectives, backgrounds, and experiences, and all points of view are valued. ● Create a list of questions to start the conversation – brainstorm as a group and get feedback from others as you plan your discussion questions. Questions might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Share a time when you first observed or experienced discrimination? Share a time when you felt empowered or belonged? ○ What do the terms <i>diversity, equity, and inclusion</i> mean to you, and why are they important? ○ What has influenced your thinking about DEI and motivated you to get involved and be an advocate? ○ What can do as a group to make a positive impact on equity, inclusion, and belonging within our school?
What costs or requirements could arise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No cost to reserve space at school. ● Bring snacks/drinks or invite attendees to bring their favorite drink or snack. ● Name tags for attendees
Volunteer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create discussion questions and get feedback on them to ensure they will prompt respectful and productive conversations. ● Room reservations, set-up, clean-up
Additional ideas or variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invite a guest speaker to do a brief presentation. ● If your event involves multiple small group discussions. ask tables to take notes and share their discussion with the larger group at the end of the event. ● Follow up with a survey to assess participants’ satisfaction with the event, and use the results of this survey to inform how you structure future events.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities Family Volunteer Opportunity	
What is it?	Family volunteering activity that allows families to come together and contribute their time and efforts to support a cause or organization in Kansas City. By participating in these opportunities, family members can bond, instill values of compassion and empathy in children, and make a positive impact on the lives of others in need.
When and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Schedule in coordination with the volunteer organization.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate with local agencies or organizations to plan a group volunteer event. The following organizations have opportunity for family volunteering, but are just a starting point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Harvesters (volunteers must be 8 years or older) ○ NourishKC (must be 14 years, children 10-13 must be accompanied by a caring adult) ○ Children’s Mercy (high school and older) ○ Phoenix Family ○ Jewish Family Services ○ Catholic Charities ○ Metro Lutheran Ministry ○ United Way ○ Special Olympics Kansas ● Publicize the event via newsletter and social media.
What costs or requirements could arise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No cost ● Many organizations have minimum age requirements and ask that you sign up or apply in advance, especially for a group event
Volunteer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Coordinate with a community organization to schedule the event, and ensure volunteers meet minimum age requirements. ● Share information about the event and manage sign-ups. ● Send reminders leading up to the event to ensure that those who signed up attend and know the event time and location
Additional ideas or variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider developing a partnership with an organization to provide volunteers on a regular basis. This allows more families to attend and provides a consistent source of volunteers for that event. ● Partner with another school to draw from a larger pool of potential volunteers. ● For middle and high schools, encourage students to participate in the planning.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Activities Cultural Connections: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Affinity Group	
What is it?	A supportive space where students and families who identify as Black or Brown can come together, build friendships, and discuss shared experiences, challenges, and cultural identities. The aim is to foster a sense of belonging, empowerment, and solidarity.
When and where?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consider weekends, evenings – vary the days and times to meet the needs of families with different schedules.
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Find a location for the gathering - park, school gym. ● Publicize the event via newsletter and social media. ● Plan activities for students (play, sports, games)
What costs or requirements could arise?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● No to low cost ● Provide light refreshments or encourage families to bring their favorite snack or drink. ● Name tags for attendees
Volunteer needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scheduling the event ● Facilitating and welcoming ● Publicizing
Additional ideas or variations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While this event can be aimed at families who identify as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color, encourage all families to attend. ● For middle and high schools, encourage students to participate in the planning.