
PTIA CHAT AND NIBBLE Build Academy (School 91) Buffalo, New York

The goal of our PTIA Chat and Nibble program was to welcome parents to the first Parent Teacher Involvement Association (PTIA) event of the Build Academy school year. We wanted to introduce parents to parent leaders and to administrators and teachers in a relaxed atmosphere. We hoped to get our parents involved in their child's school as early as possible in the school year. We felt that if we could get parents involved in their children's education, their children would do better in school.

Until this practice, we had very limited attendance at our PTIA meetings and events. We needed a way to entice parents to join our PTIA and attend other activities. The parent leaders decided to cook a barbecue dinner and invite families to come. At the dinner, a brief program of introductions and PTIA yearly events would be discussed.

Many members of our Action Team for Partnerships participated in the organizing and implementation of the dinner. Parents cooked, students greeted, teachers and administration got acquainted with parents and other family members. Our biggest challenge was getting families to attend. During the first week of school, students brought home fliers publicizing the dinner. Teachers reminded the students about the upcoming event. We made sure parents knew that the whole family could attend. We felt that if the

whole family could come to have dinner, then more parents would be apt to attend.

Parents made salads and donated chips. One of our business partners, Wonder Bread, donated the hamburger and hot dog buns. The meat, drinks, and condiments were purchased from the PTIA treasury. The entire evening cost about \$200.

Everyone benefited from this event. First, our students and parents got a chance to see their school family in a relaxed atmosphere where they would feel comfortable. Second, parents participated in a school activity that would, hopefully, set a precedent for future activities. As the year progressed, we did witness better attendance at our meetings and events, especially at our parent conferences. We also had an increase in membership to the PTIA. Some of the parents became very involved. One is a PTIA officer! The PTIA Chat and Nibble was an excellent way to encourage parents to enjoy a PTIA event in a very non-threatening manner.

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