

Parent Roles on School Committees



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It's that time of year! Schools are desperately reaching out to parents to provide extended services that may include:

- Volunteering in your child's classroom or lunchtime supervision support
- Fundraising for the school or a student group
- Driving for field trips or sports activities
- Acting as a leader for the Parent-Teacher-Student Association
- Serving on a school or district advisory team for curriculum adoption, school plan development, special education services, English language learner services, Title I services, gifted or talented services, or local education bond oversight
- Providing added after school or weekend services

Support Your Children's Schools

Parents should seriously consider how they can best support each of their child's school activities when considering their added job and family support needs. Many families struggle with accepting too many responsibilities at one school and not having any more time for the demands from another school. It is better to talk with each child to determine how they want their parents to support them. For example, could another family member offer more help? As grandparents, we provide carpool and homework help for the younger grandkids. Older grandkids may invite us to attend special sporting events as they prefer to carpool with their friends to most events.

Classroom parent volunteer help may include:

- Organizing and helping at special events
- Creating curricular units for a classroom teacher
- Listening to students read in small classroom groups
- Reading to children and managing an art or social studies activity that supports a story
- Helping students with their small group math assignments
- Sitting near challenged students to give encouragement and help them focus on assignments

School leadership activities that may incorporate parents' special talents may include:

- Writing public relations stories for the school
- Organizing and leading fundraising activities

- Organizing and leading school events
- Organizing parent carpools for field trips or sporting activities
- Recruiting parents to serve on school leadership and advisory groups
- Helping with the after school childcare services

Consider Leadership Opportunities with Various Countries

When a parent has immigrated from another country or attended a different type of school, they can offer teachers a wider variety of culturally rich activities. Many parents are reluctant to become involved in their children's classroom activities because they may have had limited experiences in the American school systems. Some parents from different countries help classroom teachers by sharing their cultural practices through cooking, art projects, storytelling, social studies projects, and plays. A few parents lead cultural history days. Several parents volunteer in classrooms during the Thanksgiving holiday season by talking about their holiday cultural practices. Others may lead students with various acts of kindness. They may host a fundraising event for cultural communities in need or adopt a school from another country with letter writing activities.

Grow Your Volunteer Leadership Talents

As parents become active in their children's schools,

many will gain leadership skills that can benefit their jobs. Others may explore new skills as they learn how to fundraise for a project or write a public relations story. Some may manage the social media platform for the school. The talents gained from these experiences may lead a parent to run for their local school board, substitute teach, work as a lunch time supervisor, or return to school to become a teacher. My own parent volunteer activities led me back to college many years ago to become a teacher and an educational leader. Please share your own leadership journey as a parent volunteer in the comments section under this blog.