



PTA 101: THE BASICS

What is the PTA?

The PTA is a non-profit organization comprised of families/caregivers and members of the school staff/administration coming together to plan and participate in activities designed to enrich, entertain, celebrate and unite our school community. The Northeast PTA is also involved with the Montclair PTAC or PTA Council, a group which is composed of all the local PTAs in our school district. Together, the local PTAs and PTAC are also members of the New Jersey PTA (NJPTA).

Who runs the Northeast PTA?

For the 2021-22 school year, our board includes:

- Allison Task, President ptapres@northeastpta.org
- Lindsey Hirsch, VP Operations & Membership ptavp@northeastpta.org
- Bridget Tilner, VP Events & Community Outreach events@northeastpta.org
- Matt Tilner, Treasurer treasurer@northeastpta.org

You can also reach us at northeastpta@gmail.com

Nominations and voting for the following year's board typically happens in June. Membership in the PTA is open to all caregivers, parents, and teachers. You can become a member here: <https://northeastpschoolpta.memberhub.com/store>.

What does the PTA do?

The Northeast PTA provides funding and coordinates volunteers for programs designed to help our children learn outside of their normal curriculum. We host and run events to help families connect outside of school.

The programs we hope to run in 2021-22 include the following list. All dates are subject to change.

FAMILY EVENTS

- **First Day of School Parent Coffee (9/9/21):** Coffee, pastries and Kleenex! Reconnect with your parent friends after you drop off your child for the first day of school. Schmooze and hang out on us. Also a good time to sign up for volunteer opportunities with the PTA.
- **Welcome Back Parent Recognition Brunch (9/19/21 -- rain 9/26):** New this year, we would like to recognize the parents and families who have been through an unprecedented event. This is a free PTA-sponsored event.
- **Film on the Field (10/1/21):** A Northeast tradition: An outdoor movie on the northeast field, typically held in the fall. Families bring blankets and snacks and cozy in the dark and enjoy the movie.
- **Fall Heritage Festival (10/24/21):** Also new this year, a celebration of the fall, our community, and our global heritage. Combining a family dance with the cultural heritage dinner of years past. Mark your calendars, not to be missed
- **Welcome Activities for Kindergarteners and Incoming New Students (August/Sept):** New student ice cream social and kindergarten playdates are scheduled before the school year begins.
- **School Dance (Spring 2020):** Usually held in the spring, the whole family is invited. Just like you remember it (but with music from today).
- **MLK Day of Service (MLK Day):** The whole family is welcomed to participate in a day of service on MLK Day in January.

CHILDREN ONLY

- **After School Enrichment (ASE) (sign up 9/13, starts 9/20):** After school activities for children for an 8-week period in the fall and spring. This is a paid-for activity, scholarships are available.
- **In-School Assemblies and Travel Support for Field Trips:** The Northeast PTA currently funds all in-school assemblies, and offers funding for transportation for field trips.

THANKS YOU'S / GIFTS

- **Teacher Appreciation Activities:** Teacher welcome back coffee, teacher appreciation week, teacher luncheon, classroom gifts and more.
- **Birthday Books:** Each Northeast child can select a book from a list at Watchung books. Happy birthday from the Northeast PTA

SHOWCASES

- **The Northeast Geography Bee (Spring 2022):** Other schools have spelling bees, but at the Global School we have a geography bee. Children form teams and compete.
- **Northeast Talent Show (Spring 2022):** Held in the spring, there is room for every child, any talent, often with a special showcase from the Fifth Grade Class.

FUNDRAISERS

- **Soccerthon (Spring 2022):** In the spring, we meet at a local soccer bubble and everyone competes, World Cup style.
- **Northeast Spiritwear (Year Round):** Sweatshirts, t-shirts, they're all for sale as part of a Northeast fundraiser.
- **Northeast Gala / Count Me In (Spring 2022):** Northeast typically alternates these two events, a parent-only night out (Gala) and the simpler "make a donation". In 2021-22, we hope to run a spring gala.
- **Fifth Grade Carwash: (9/25/21, rain 10/2)** Fundraiser for fifth grade committee.
- **Fifth Grade Mum Sale (10/16/21):** Mums are for sale each fall as part of a fifth grade committee fundraiser. Pickup at Northeast.
- **Book Fair and Pancake Breakfast (Spring, 2022):** The Book Fair is a week-long event held in our library, typically in the fall, and ends with a family

Pancake Breakfast. We hope to hold this year's events in the Spring, once we can safely get inside the school again.

Other than events, what are some ways the PTA has supported the school?

In addition to funding events and activities, the PTA has also been responsible for capital improvements such as the air conditioning in the school, the 5th grade lockers, the awnings and tents outside, as well as the picnic tables and benches. Past PTA presidents even painted the 4-square court on the blacktop! The PTA also purchases supplies and admissions for students in financial need on a confidential basis.

PTA 101: MEMBERSHIP AND VOLUNTEERING

How do I sign up to volunteer?

You can become a PTA volunteer by reaching out to northeastpta@gmail.com, or by reaching out to any member of the board or Committee Chairs directly. Let us know your skills, talents and interest and we will do our best to find something that you will enjoy doing! ***Volunteering is good for your head, your heart, and your community.***

What does it mean to be a Class Parent?

A class parent is the parent leader for each classroom. You are the heart of the class, creating class events inside and out of school (Valentine's Day craft projects, playdates, etc). Class parents cultivate community inside the classroom, organizing activities with the garden committee, working to support the teachers. They organize teachers' gifts given by the classroom, and help recruit volunteers for PTA events. We try to have two class parents per class. Class parents meet monthly with PTA board members and one another to facilitate communication in the school. Due to covid, parents are not allowed inside the classroom at this point.

What are PTA committees? What does it mean to be a Committee Chair?

Committee chairs take a leadership role running various events. There is a lot to get done throughout the school year, and the committee chair takes responsibility for

leading and executing and initiative. Some PTA Chairs have been identified for the 2021-22 school year and some are still available.

Who are current Committee Chairs? How can I become one?

If you'd like to chair a committee, it's best to reach out to the current chair so that you can shadow for a year and learn the ropes. We realize that's not always possible, so sometimes you need to be brave and bold and jump in and figure it out (with the support of the PTA board, of course!)

We need volunteers for every committee and every event.

All chairs are looking for volunteers for their committees and the best way to eventually become a chair is to start by volunteering. Reach out to us at northeastpta@gmail.com and let us know which committees are of interest to you.

The following Committees Chairs are in place for for 2021-22:

- School Garden - Kara Leftwich, Nicole Warrington
- Spirit Wear - Jennipher Kennedy
- After School Enrichment - Bridget Tilner
- Fifth Grade Committee -- Sara Ferry, Allison Gehlmeyer
- MFEE Liaison - Amanda Goldman, Maura Determann
- Birthday Books - Lindsey Hirsch / Allison Task
- Programming - Ursula Zoffinger
- Welcome Back Brunch - Ursula Zoffinger / Bridget Tilner
- Kindergarten Playdates - Erin Madigan White
- Ice Cream Social - Kelley Reynolds, Diana Hernandez
- Film on the Field - Bridget Tilner
- Talent Show - Lauren Griffin
- Soccerthon - Mike & Theresa McDonnell
- Geography Bee - Sreesha Vaman
- Pancake Breakfast - Marcy Clark

Committee Chairs are needed:

- Teacher Appreciation - Open
- MLK Day of Service - Open
- School Dance - Open
- Book Fair - Sara Ferry, Michelle McCarthy emeritus leads (looking for new leads to train)
- Read Across America Week - Open
- Fall Harvest Heritage Festival - Open
- Spring Gala - Open

Northeast PTA 2021-22 Mission Statement

We support the community of Northeast families and educators. We are caregivers fostering children's learning, growth and development. In 2021-22, mindful of the pandemic and need for repair, we will intentionally foster healing of Northeast community relationships. We include caregivers, teachers and students in leadership and volunteer roles for all PTA events, activities and committees. We serve all parties, welcome all voices, and strive to improve year to year, continually learning from what is working and what is needed.

We fundraise to support programs focused on:

1. Global awareness and impact,
2. Diversity, inclusion and equity,
3. Community and individual growth, and
4. Facilities improvement.

Northeast PTA 2021-22 Goals

1. Improve trust between parents and staff.
2. Support initiatives for families and teachers to meaningfully connect.
3. Provide open opportunities for families and children to connect with their Northeast community.

Why become a member of the Northeast PTA?

When you become a member, you are choosing to play an active role in the Northeast school community. You are role modeling volunteerism for your children, building the community you want to be a part of, the one you'll be shedding tears with at high school graduation and beyond.

Your membership fee (\$15 for caregivers and parents, \$5 to faculty and staff) goes toward funding free events for parents, staff and children. This gives you the right to vote in our elections, and shows that you are invested in participating in the PTA.

How do I become a member of the Northeast PTA?

You can purchase a membership at: <https://northeastsschoolpta.memberhub.com/store>

PTA 201: ADVANCED QUESTIONS

How does the PTA work with the principal? What's the overall involvement with the school?

Historically, the PTA has collaborated with the principal to identify needs that we, as a parent-led group, can address and to provide support for events and other activities. We coordinate our calendars to ensure that we can use the field and facilities. We coordinate with the principal for in-school events and programming. During the pandemic, the PTA was instrumental in facilitating Zoom meetings with our school principal and all families.

We typically have meetings with the principal every 1-2 weeks, and are in constant contact with the principal and his/her assistant, Mrs. Pugliese, on a regular basis. Mrs. Pugliese is an anchor member of our team, as she fields all kinds of questions from parents on a daily basis, some about the school, while others are about ASE or Spiritwear. We work very closely with Mrs. Pugliese so that she can support the parents.

As Dr. Clarke will be on leave this fall, we look forward to collaborating with Mr. Chiles who will serve as our interim principal.

The PTA's goal is to build community and be welcoming. We are not responsible for nor do we get involved with curriculum or classes. We do support teachers requesting grants from MFEE for their professional development.

How does the PTA work with the teachers?

The PTA stands for "Parent Teacher Association", so teachers are invited to participate. Teachers can become members at the MemberHub store just like caregivers and parents, though teachers are offered a reduced rate (\$5). Teachers are welcomed at all events, including the Gala, Film on the Field -- you name it, they're welcomed to it! Teachers can volunteer for committees and even chair committees. They are welcomed and included.

The most direct way teachers work with the PTA is through class parents. Class parents coordinate in-class activities (when we are able to do that), and can work as closely with the teacher as the relationship allows. This is a wonderful way to build relationships and community in your child's classroom.

How did the PTA support the school during the pandemic?

In March of 2020, when all in-person schooling, events and activities came to an immediate halt -- and for more than a year afterwards -- past Northeast PTA Boards were charged with pivoting to try and foster a sense of community in a new and challenging remote environment. This was first accomplished by increased outreach and communications, like weekly emails and Facebook posts offering supportive messages, resources and remote activities to engage students, staff and families. The PTA hosted Zoom PTA meetings and Community Meetings for the entire school in collaboration with Dr. Clarke, to share important information about remote and live instruction and to facilitate conversations between parents and the administration. Beginning in Spring 2020 (to date), the PTA has taken part in meetings with administrators, our school principal, PTAC and other PTAs to understand and contribute to District plans for schooling and to share ideas and strategies for safe, innovative and entertaining ways to host events and activities, like a remote school dance complete with teacher videos and tributes in Spring 2020, and a heartwarming virtual MLK celebration video in January 2021.

Throughout 2020-21, the PTA ventured into supporting our community in new areas. In anticipation of the school physically reopening in Fall 2020, the PTA purchased water and eight tents for students to enjoy snacks and time outdoors. Those tents were put to immediate use when the school reopened in Spring 2021 and will continue to offer shade and protection to students when they return in Fall of 2021. During the 2020-21 school year, the PTA packed take-home school supplies, Halloween books, and Valentine's Happy Hearts bags that were picked up by families outdoors in front of the school. They hung a banner reminding our community that "we're better together."

When the school was able open up for in-person instruction again, the PTA hosted a few events, following strict District protocols, including a book donation and giveaway and a pizza party for each grade on the blacktop. The 2020-21 school year was an unprecedented year that brought many challenges and called on the PTA to brainstorm and problem-solve all year long in an effort to take care of our families, children and teachers to the best of their abilities.

The pandemic, as well as other disturbing events that took place in Spring 2020, necessitated new ways of thinking about who was "in need" and a renewed focus on increasing and improving equity and diversity in our school community. During the summer of 2020, members of the PTA Board became very involved with the School Action Team for Partnerships (SATp), which dedicated itself to anti-racism and equity in our school and our community. With the SATp, the PTA Board also agreed to fund and co-host multiple student assemblies, evening family presentations and professional development for staff.

How will events this year differ from those in non-pandemic times?

So for starters, no volunteers have been allowed inside the school since March 13, 2020. This is a directive from the Central Office. You may hear of other schools going inside (we have too!), but we've been respecting the directives of Central Office and erring on the side of caution. So, all activities will be outside until further notice. And parents will not be allowed inside the school. That means ASE is outside, all events and activities are outside, etc. Class parents are welcome to coordinate events with the teachers that are outside the school (planting in the garden), and last year many parents participated in regular Zoom reading invitations. We do what we can with what we've got. Staying outside the school is probably the biggest change for the coming school year.

For 2021-22, the PTA has chosen to focus on events and activities that connect our community and are welcoming to all families. We've ADDED two new outdoor events for the whole family, a brunch on September 19th and a Fall Heritage Festival on October 24th. So those two events, plus the classic Film on the Field (October 1) is how we are making this year different, and answering the need for families to reconnect and foster our community.

What does the PTA fund? How does money flow into and out of the PTA?

The PTA has fundraising events and activities throughout the year including the Gala, Spiritwear sales, Soccerthon, and After School Enrichment (ASE). There is also a 5th grade committee that dedicates efforts to fundraising for each year's "graduating" class, in order to provide field trips and end-of-year celebrations and ceremonies. The largest part of the PTA's spending is in-school events and assemblies. The PTA board chooses how to raise and spend money. Early in the school year there is an open PTA board meeting to discuss and vote on the annual budget, and all are welcome to come.

What is the Fifth Grade Committee?

The fifth grade committee is a group that fundraises specifically for fifth grade graduation events, trips and celebrations. Their events include the annual mum sale, 5th grade carwash, and they often run a concessions stand at events.

What is MFEE?

Per their web site, the Montclair Fund for Educational Excellence (MFEE) "has raised over \$13 million private dollars to empower students, teachers, and the Montclair community, with the overall goal of helping the district provide a high-quality education for all students."

They support and fund initiatives within the community and provide funding through grants to individual staff members and schools. The PTA has an MFEE liaison team that helps teachers write grants and make requests to MFEE for funding for projects

supporting educational excellence and social/emotional development, as well as staff professional development. Fundraising for the MFEE is done through donations, Teacher Toasts at the end of each school year, and other events including the annual Amazing FundRACER, which many students, staff and families take part in.

What are Teacher Toasts?

Teacher toasts are an MFEE fundraiser where the class parents or other parents in the classroom host a paid-event to celebrate the classroom teacher. These can be held at private homes or other event spaces. Typically, a group hosts the venue, while another supplies food and beverages. All class parents and caregivers are invited to attend. It's a fun night out to celebrate and thank the classroom teacher.

What is SEPAC?

Per their website: The Montclair Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) is a group of parents, professionals and concerned community members with a shared interest in and concern for special education issues.

- SEPAC groups are mandated by State statute to exist in each NJ school District.
- SEPAC strives to improve the educational process and experience for children in need of special education and related services and promotes the inclusion of children with special needs, with the necessary supports, within their schools and the community at large.

The PTA has 1-2 representatives who attend SEPAC meetings and strives to ensure that our school is sensitive to the needs of parents, families and children who have special education needs.

What is PTAC?

The PTA Council (PTAC) is a collective of all Montclair PTA presidents. Their mission is “to support school PTAs in their work advocating for the success and wellbeing of their students. The PTAC functions as a representative body of the PTAs, so that the voices

of parents and caregivers are more effective in influencing decisions made at the individual school and district level.” They meet regularly with Dr. Ponds and the administration to bubble up issues from the schools and act collectively. The Northeast PTA President meets monthly with PTAC.

What is a School Action Team for Partnerships (SATP)?

Each school in the Montclair School District is mandated to have a SATP. This group supports each school's mission and consists of families, teachers, community partners, and students who will review and inform the School Improvement Plan. Starting in Fall 2020, our focus was anti-racism and equity. We revamped the school mission statement, cohosted book donation and giveaway, created a presentation on talking about race with children, a history of hip hop cultural presentation and other activities with PTA. At Northeast, our group is broken up into committees including: Curriculum, Achievement, Family Engagement, Professional Development, and Demographics/Procedures).