

Whittier Elementary PTA Equity Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

Communications & Events Guidance

What if one of the “whys” for every Whittier event or communication was to create a greater sense of belonging? How might this purpose challenge us to evolve the way we plan and implement PTA-sponsored communications and events? This document is designed to guide PTA members in creating more inclusive and equitable communications and events. Use the following prompts to reflect on your planning process and identify additional actions you can take.

Accessibility & sensory considerations	How can we make the event accessible for individuals of all abilities? How can we ensure that groups are included without being isolated or separated? How can we make the event more welcoming for neurodiverse individuals with sensory sensitivities? Consider the following: • Designate a sensory friendly space at large scale events (i.e. reduced noise, dimmed lights, and small group size) • Reduce group sizes or have specific sensory times at events • Offer remote or asynchronous participation for adults and families (e.g., remote bidding and pickup for Spring Fling) • Consult with the Whittier SPED Team for guidance on potential adjustments
Cultural & family structure	How can we ensure the event feels inviting to and representative of families with varying cultural and family structure backgrounds? Have all types of families been considered in the language and imagery of the event? (e.g., single parent homes, multi-generational families, LGBTQ+ families, BIPOC families) Consider the following: • Represent the diversity of the Whittier community in materials • Use welcoming, neutral terms in all communications (e.g., “families and caregivers” instead of “moms and dads”). • Incorporate more cultural traditions into school events (i.e. additional games at fall festival or cultural storytelling at book fair) • Ensure the event is planned with cultural sensitivity, avoiding stereotypes or misrepresentation (e.g., set boundaries on costumes).
Language	How can we ensure that families who primarily speak a language other than English feel supported and included at school events? Consider the following: • Translate materials, provide multilingual signage or use imagery on signage • Avoid idioms, jargon, or figures of speech that may not translate well. Use simple, direct language. • Provide an activity in additional languages or based on different cultures at every event (e.g., Loteria at literacy night)
School norms	How can we create a sense of belonging for families who have never been part of an

	urban public school setting? How can we provide clear, welcoming explanations about the school's culture, processes, and what to expect at the event? Consider the following: • Create a question station when families can ask questions while at an event • Pair families with a mentor family that can guide them and answer questions • Have event greeters and signage that explains what occurs at the event • Provide name tags/cards to build connections • Provide detailed event explanations for those who want to volunteer or attend • Create a plan for caregivers to spectate at events to better understand the event and purpose (i.e. Move-a-thon)
Socioeconomic Diversity	How can we acknowledge that not all families have the same socioeconomic status? How could we ensure that all families are able to participate equally? Consider the following: • Offer food vouchers, sliding scale options, or financial support for activities that have associated cost • Provide a way for families to donate to provide funds for families in need • Ensure some items are at accessible price points for all families (e.g., annual fundraising ask, spring fling)
Logistical	How can we address logistical barriers (timing, transportation, childcare) that families might experience in attending or participating in the event? Consider the following: • Publish a calendar for school events at the beginning of the year. • Create a way for adults to participate in an event remotely or asynchronously (e.g., viewing a recording of the massive monkeys assembly) • Offer free childcare onsite or at a nearby location (e.g., Whittier Kids—who has days budgeted in to provide free childcare—, Seattle Gymnastics) during adult focused events • Offer events at varying times to accommodate different work schedules and family situations