

Chapter Six : Networking



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The activities of the Parent-Teacher Associations are not limited to those between parents and their children, but also include liaison work with the school, the teachers and various groups and organizations in the community. The establishment of a sound liaison network assists the development of the Parent-Teacher Associations. A sound liaison network should be based on a commonly shared belief among the parents, the school, the teachers and related parties for achieving the healthy growth and development of the students.

6.1 Home-School Networking

(a) Networking among the Executive Committee Members:

- Designating a contact person for the network to strengthen the impact of the affairs of the Association and the relationship among the executive committee members;
- Inviting the former chairman and committee members or chairmen and committee members from past years to be the advisors whose experience is valuable to the promotion of the affairs of the Association; and
- Holding regular activities among committee members such as monthly tea gatherings and interest classes to forge the sharing of experiences and strengthen the relationship among the committee members.

(b) Networking between the Executive Committee Members and the Members:

- Establishing liaison networks at each class level of the school for strengthening the connection between the committee members and the parents whom would be encouraged to express their needs, opinions and feelings directly to the committee members of the class level concerned;
- Increasing the channels of communication through publishing newsletters, installing message collection boxes within the school creating online message boards, etc.;
- Inviting the parents, if necessary, and with the prior consent of the school, to fill out questionnaires to collect their opinions;

- Establishing a Parent-Teacher Association Activity Centre in the school to create more opportunities for contacts between the committee members and the parent members; and
- Forming a voluntary parent service team so as to establish a harmonious cooperative relationship between the committee members and the parent members.

(c) Networking between Parent-Teacher Association and School:

- Participating actively in the activities held by the school and making attempts/efforts to take up the role of the co-organizer;
- Inviting teachers to attend the activities of the Parent-Teacher Association such as tea gatherings and interest classes; and
- Keeping regular contacts and exchanging opinions with teachers, principal, the school management committee, the students association, the alumni association, etc.

6.2 District-Based Networking

(a) Importance of district-based networking:

- Effective and beneficial home-school co-operation activities can be promoted among home, school and the community through establishing a sound cooperative relationship with other Parent-Teacher Associations, the Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations and government departments within the district and making good use of community resources.

(b) The role and function of the Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations:

- The Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations are local organizations set up voluntarily by the Parent-Teacher Associations in each district. Each Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations draws up its own constitution.
- Although the constitution of each Federation of Parent-Teacher Associations may differ from one another, their objectives can be summarized as follows:
 - To facilitate district-based liaison and exchange of views among the Parent-Teacher Associations;
 - To assist the set-up of Parent-Teacher Associations in the same district;
 - To promote parent education to improve the quality of parents;

- To promote home-school co-operation to facilitate the development of Parent-Teacher Associations;
- To integrate the forces of parents to promote educational and community development;
- To promote exchanges and broaden horizons; and
- To offer opinions to relevant authorities on issues related to education and home-school co-operation.
- Members of the Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations include:
 - Parent-Teacher Associations in the same district and
 - Member schools include registered kindergartens, kindergartens cum child care centres, primary schools, secondary schools and special schools.
- Please refer to **Appendix (10)** for avenues of contact with the 18 Federations of Parent-Teacher Associations.

6.3 Proper Use of Community Resources

- If the Parent-Teacher Associations find their schools lack facilities or resource for preparing or organizing activities, they may discuss with the community service units or community centres in the same district for borrowing the facilities and resources concerned.
- There are government departments or community services organizations setting up different types of resources centres with respect to different themes or topics. Each centre keeps a suitable amount of information including books, periodicals, VCDs, CD ROMs, cassette tapes, slide shows, videotapes and display boards for the reference by the members of public.
- Some large department stores, commercial organizations or tertiary institutions donate their surplus materials every year. Parent-Teacher Associations may pay attention to their announcements for applications.