



2008 National PTA Emerging Minority Leaders Conference
“Destination Leadership III – Leadership Skills For
the 21st Century”

Oakbrook Marriott
October 31 – November 2, 2008

Monet Davis, Presenter

Conference Objectives:

- ❑ The Emerging Minority Leaders Conference was created to “recognize and reinforce the importance of ethnic minority leaders in PTA’s future growth.”
- ❑ Its ultimate goal is to develop PTA’s leadership so that we can advance in fulfilling the vision of making every child’s potential a reality.
- ❑ It was created in response to the growing diversity within our public school and communities, and the need to help the local PTA units serve all children and families.
- ❑ Each State was encouraged to identify attendees from all levels within their organizations.
- ❑ There were a total of states 44 represented as well as the District of Columbia and attendees as far away as Virgin Islands and Germany.

Conference Content:

- ❑ New and returning attendees were split into two groups.
- ❑ The conference provided many opportunities for attendees to share ideas on what was working well within their local PTA units, and also time to seek guidance or suggestions on how to handle special situations and issues.
- ❑ Course topics covered included the following:
 - ❑ Common Threads of PTA Basics
 - ❑ Collaborative Leadership
 - ❑ Surviving and Thriving within PTA
 - ❑ Expanding Male Involvement Panel Discussion
 - ❑ Leadership Panel Discussion

Why I wanted to attend:

- I aspire to leadership positions within the PTA. How can I best use my talents and skills to help my local and state PTA units?
- At Longwood Elementary school, the achievement gap is widening for African-American students and Hispanic students. How can I identify other parents to engage in partnering with our PTA unit to address this issue?
- IPPC Council members comprise a very homogeneous group of parents. How can we get more minorities in this group and within the local PTA units in each school?
- How do we move beyond the excuse of “not being able to find” minorities who want to get involved in our local PTA units?
- How can we come up with creative programs and events to get more minorities involved? What are the challenges? How do we overcome them?
- What information and best practices can I learn at this conference that I can pass along to my local PTA unit and other IPPC members?

How well do you know the issues?

- True: National PTA membership has decreased from 12 million in the early 1980's to around 5 million today.
- True: The number of children represented by the National PTA during this same time period has more than doubled.
- False: PTA units with predominately Native American members are thriving within their respective states.
- True: The number of grandparents who are seen as primary care givers for our children has more than tripled since 2000.

How well do you know the issues?

- False: Twenty percent of the National PTA membership is men.
- True: There are nine states who have developed State Emerging Minority Leadership Conferences, and seven more have been identified to implement them during the upcoming year.
- False: The State of Illinois has developed an EMLC.
- True: The number of children that are being raised in households that are fatherless by race are as follows: 27% Caucasian, 40% Hispanic and 66% African-American.

Suggestions for Recruiting more minorities:

- ❑ Canvass your communities by seeking minorities for leadership in churches, synagogues, temples, bilingual parent committees and other places of worship.
- ❑ Ask minority business owners to get involved in your local PTA unit. Partner with them on creating resources for your PTA. Determine if they currently have programs that can be implemented or provided to your school PTA unit.
- ❑ Look for minorities who have the courage to stand alone. Begin a conversation with a prospective member on the values you share in common with your children. Creating relationships individually fosters an atmosphere of trust and allows them to feel your passion and commitment.
- ❑ Make meetings bilingual, not just translated.
- ❑ Be aware of events that compete for PTA meeting times. Consider meeting on Saturdays or during the evenings if you currently meet during the day.

Suggestions for Recruiting more minorities:

- Ask members who are involved if they know of others that would be willing to serve.
- Give current minority members a ST goal that they can achieve that utilizes their strengths. Ask them what they are passionate about and get them involved in that project. Show them that they have the potential to be a leader.
- Consider providing food at PTA meetings.
- Have teachers make personal linkages with the parents. Consider creating a quarterly newsletter that highlights student successes to make parents feel like they are linked to the school. Consider making it bilingual. Have each quarter focus on a different theme (academics, arts, sports, etc.) so that every child is included at least once during the year.

Suggestions for Recruiting more men:

- ❑ Allow men to plan events which will encourage other fathers and men in your community to participate.
- ❑ Men who were surveyed regarding why they were not active in their local PTA unit cited the following reasons:
 - ❑ “I was never asked”
 - ❑ “I would rather write a check than to hear discussion about what kind of wrapping paper sold best during this year’s fundraiser.” Make the issues discussed relevant to what is important.
- ❑ Begin a conversation with a prospective member on the values you share in common with your children. Creating relationships individually fosters an atmosphere of trust and allows them to feel your passion and commitment.
- ❑ Ask a father to come in and present a topic of interest to a class.

Suggestions for Recruiting more men:

- ❑ Find positive male role models in the community and invite them to your PTA meeting.
- ❑ Fathers sometimes don't get involved unless there is an issue with their child at school or there is a sports activity. Get fathers involved in more aspects of your child's experience at school as appropriate within the culture.
- ❑ Some high schools have added to their curriculum a class that teaches teenage boys who are about to become fathers what they need to know to be the best father for their child. These courses are taught by fathers from the school, surrounding places of worship or within the community.

Develop a plan of action:

- Create a survey for parents who are not PTA members. Find out why they chose not to join, and what programs or resources they believe would entice them to join. Assess and respond to the needs of your students, school, parents and community. Make the survey available in multiple languages.
- Consider having your PTA meeting one hour before an event (school play, Family Night, festival, etc). Try to capitalize on the audience that will already be at the school.
- Consider having your PTA meetings at an offsite location where a lot of families can be represented that don't normally attend (apartment complex meeting room or clubhouse).
- Capitalize on the sheer number of people that are committed to bringing about change. Reach out to your State PTA elected officials and local elected politicians.

Develop a plan of action:

- ❑ Take advantage of training offered by the State. Each State has two trained workshop facilitators to conduct training.
- ❑ Consider providing free babysitting at your PTA meetings and advertise the fact that it will be provided on your announcements.
- ❑ Look to implement programs that might interest parents such as improving test taking skills or computer skills as a part of your monthly PTA meetings.
- ❑ Determine if there are grants available for special projects or needs that are identified.
- ❑ Develop partnerships with race based community organizations such as the Quad County Urban League who have programs in place to help students.

2009 Emerging Minority Leader Conference

- ❑ The 2009 EML Conference will be held in Atlanta, GA.
- ❑ Next year's conference will incorporate three separate conferences:
 - ❑ Emerging Minority Leader Conference
 - ❑ Increasing Male Involvement
 - ❑ Increasing Student Involvement
- ❑ Please note: No one can attend the EMLC for more than two years. The Conference is designed to create more leaders, not send the same ones. I would recommend that we send someone else to next year's conference.
- ❑ I will be willing to develop an Emerging Minority Leaders Conference for the State of Illinois.

“Being a man or woman is a matter of birth but being a man or woman who makes a difference is a matter of CHOICE!”

Byron Garrett, PTA CEO