PTA Bylaws Are Essential

What do you think of when you hear the term “bylaws”? Do “restrictive,” “rules,” and “Who needs them?” come to mind? The more familiar you are with unit, council or district bylaws, the more you’ll appreciate their contribution to running an organization smoothly. The cover page includes the date your PTA was organized; National PTA and California State PTA identification numbers as assigned, the District PTA and Council PTA, if in council. The internal signature page indicates when the bylaws were last adopted. Bylaws must be updated every five years or as changes are needed, and should be reviewed annually. Contact the PTA council or district parliamentarian for assistance to update bylaws.

**Article I** presents the name of the organization as chartered. This is the legal PTA name and must appear on all legal documents such as tax filings, minutes, and any communication to state PTA, etc.

**Article II** states the purpose of the organization. The executive board should review its PTA’s goals to ensure alignment with the purposes of PTA.

**Article III** outlines the basic policies of PTA, including noncommercial, nonsectarian and nonpartisan policies. It states PTA cannot enter into memberships with other organizations – with exceptions. Study the California State PTA Toolkit to learn what the exceptions are. Articles III and X states what to do should the unit, council or district be dissolved.

**Article IV** details per capita dues, how much goes where, remittance deadlines and other membership items.

**Article V** lists required officers, nominating committee requirements, term restrictions, date of election, how to fill a vacancy in office, and notice requirements to officers and members.

**Article VI** states officers and chairs must follow duties described in the Toolkit. This article also covers how to legally remove a non-attending officer/chair or one whose conduct is injurious to the organization. “Due process” is fully outlined, is a right, and must be followed. PTA’s use of Roberts Rules of Order is discussed and term end transfer of materials to officer/chairs-elect. Finally, elected officer check signers are identified here.

**Article VII** includes everything to know about an association or general meeting: the annual (election) meeting month; required meeting quorum; who can make motions, debate and vote; approval authority over the budget, programs and expenditures; and special meetings requirements. Finally, this article states proxy voting is never allowed; and describes the electronic meeting requirements, when allowed.

**Article VIII** discusses the executive board; who is included and what the board does; how the board approves payments; financial oversight including audits, audit review committees and reviews by non-check signers; what committees it can create; and how to fill board vacancies. Members of the executive board may not serve as paid employees of or under contract to the association (conflict of interest). Here, learn how to call a special meeting, what the required quorum is, and if electronic meetings are permitted.

**Article IX** covers council PTA membership. It states to which council you belong (if in council), and who represents the PTA at council meetings. Out-of-council PTAs strike this article renumber the remaining articles; and are members of the District Board.

**Article X** details the charter procedure for all local PTAs organized under the authority of California State PTA. The requirements of constituent organizations – units in good standing – are found here as is the charter withdrawal process. Sixty days’ notice to council/district is required before a vote to disband can occur.

**Article XI** explains PTA’s relationship with National PTA and California State PTA and the bylaws may not conflict with either. Local PTAs must adhere to policy statements found in the Toolkit.

**Article XII** contains the Articles of Organization.

**Article XIII** states the start and end of the fiscal year and lists agency identification numbers as assigned to the PTA.

**Article XIV** states the parliamentary authority that is Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised. Parliamentary authority empowers PTAs in achieving proper meeting procedures and respecting every member’s opinion.

**Article XV** outlines the bylaw amendment procedure, including review by the California State PTA Parliamentarian and references sections, California State PTA*** and California Corporate Code**, which cannot be struck.

**Standing Rules** may be amended at any meeting with a 2/3 vote, or majority vote with 10 day notice, exceptions are *** items. Standing Rules include bylaws distribution, secure member list, officer list, annual (volunteer hour) report, number of and the vice presidents’ duties, association meeting months, association and executive meeting notices, association and executive council meetings, association meeting items, expenditures authorization limits, committees, chairs, procedure books, and council assessment, if any. Additional standing rules may be added.

**Note:** Incorporated PTAs must add additional information in Articles V, VIII and XII per California Corporate Code.

Bylaws are essential for your PTA. Open your copy, review them as a board, and start learning today!