

Basic Parliamentary Procedure: Did You Know?

- **Following basic parliamentary procedure** at PTA meetings ensures order, promptness and fair and impartial treatment for all.
- **The parliamentary authority for PTA** is Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.
- **Bylaws provide** the basic framework for the PTA purposes and the governing structure.
- **Bylaws may never** be suspended.
- **Bylaws should be reviewed** annually to determine if any changes are needed. Follow the California State PTA procedures to amend bylaws.
- **Standing rules provide detail** regarding procedures for the PTA.
- A standing rule may be amended at any association meeting by a majority vote. (A two-thirds vote is required if no previous notice has been given.)
- **Each board member should have a copy** of the bylaws. At the beginning of a new term of office, the bylaws should be reviewed by the entire board.
- **Every board member needs to know** and understand the bylaws – “the rules of the game.”
- **A copy of the bylaws must be provided** to any member upon request.
- **The executive board should be trained** in parliamentary procedure in order to model it for the membership.
- **The parliamentarian advises the president** who rules on points of order and procedural questions.
- **A motion chart** may be laminated and placed between the president and the parliamentarian for easy reference at meetings.
- **Many district PTAs keep a supply** of standard Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSAs and Council Bylaws available for purchase.
- **Units should provide** the council and district PTA with a copy of their bylaws.
- **A PTA position may be filled by only one person.**
- **One position equals one vote.**
- **Minutes should contain** records of all actions taken by the group, including the exact wording of every motion, the maker of the motion and the actions taken on that motion.
- **The secretary or chair should request** that the motion be in writing if the motion is long or involved.

- **Only one action may be considered at a time.**
- **Any action** (spending money, adopting programs, etc.) to be taken requires a motion.
- **When several PTA members wish to speak to the same issue** during a meeting, the parliamentarian may assist the president by noting the names of those wishing to speak and the order in which they should be called.
- **Only members of the group that is meeting have the right to attend** unless the group grants permission for guests to attend. However, the right to vote cannot be granted to a guest.
- **PTA bylaws define each separate meeting group** – committee, executive board and association – and assign separate responsibilities and authority to each group.
- **A special meeting may be called** to consider one or more items of business requiring urgent action before the next regular meeting.
- **Voice vote is the regular method of voting on motions requiring a majority vote.** If the chair believes the vote will be close, he may call for the vote by a show of hands.
- **A rising vote is the regular method of voting on motions requiring a two-thirds vote.** It is also used to verify an inconclusive voice vote.
- **The chair may order** a “rising count” or “count of the house” to verify an inconclusive voice vote.
- **A two-thirds vote is required to change any action** previously adopted by the group, such as bylaws or the budget.
- **A standing rule may be adopted to limit the length of time** for any motion and to limit the number of speakers on each side of the issue and the time to be allotted for each speaker.
- **Voting by proxy is prohibited.**
- **The president protects the impartiality of the chair** by exercising the right to vote (or by abstaining) only when the vote will affect the outcome, i.e., to break a tie vote, or when the vote is by ballot.
- **Members must be given written notice** of all association meetings, along with an agenda that includes all action items to be considered, at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.
- **Only members are legally qualified** to make motions, discuss and vote.



EIGHT STEPS TO A MOTION

1. Obtain the floor.

The member rises or raises his hand and waits to be recognized before speaking further.

2. Recognition by the chair.

The chair grants the member the right to speak by a nod or by announcing the member's name.

3. Make the motion.

The member speaks clearly, stating the motion concisely, saying, "I move ..." (Never say, "I so move," or "I motion that ...") Motions are always in the affirmative. The chair has the right to request that the motion be in writing, unless the rules indicate otherwise.

4. The motion is seconded.

A second indicates that more than one person wishes to consider the subject. Another member says, "I second the motion," or simply, "Second!" If there is no second, the chair says, "Motion fails for lack of a second." Motions coming from a committee do not need a second.

5. Chair restates the motion.

Only the chair can formally place a motion before the assembly. The chair repeats the exact motion, "It has been moved and seconded that..." The motion is now pending. Once stated by the chair, it cannot be changed or withdrawn without consent of the members.

6. Debate or discussion.

Immediately after stating the question the chair asks, "Is there discussion?" The maker of the motion has the right to speak first. Discussion must remain relevant to the pending question. The chair should endeavor to alternate pro and con speakers. The maker of the motion may vote against the motion, but may not speak against it.

7. Putting the question – the vote.

When discussion appears to be concluded, the chair asks, "Are you ready for the question?" If the discussion has been long, or amendments made, the motion should be restated as it presently stands. The chair says, "The question is on the adoption of the motion that ..." The chair then calls for the vote by saying, "All those in favor of the motion say 'Aye'" and pausing for response. "All those opposed say 'No'." Always call for the negative vote, no matter how unanimous the affirmative vote may appear.

8. Chair announces result.

No motion is complete until the chair has announced the result of the vote. The chair says, "The 'ayes' have it and the motion is adopted," or, "The 'nos' have it and the motion is defeated." In a counted vote, the chair should first announce the count, then the result of the vote. The chair then states the effect of the vote.

HOW MOTIONS MAY BE AMENDED

MAIN MOTION: I move that we have a parenting program at the park.

This **main motion** may be amended by making a motion:

To strike a particular word or phrase: I move to amend the motion by striking the words, “at the park.”

OR

To insert a particular word or phrase: I move to amend the motion by inserting “in October” after the word “program.”

OR

To strike and insert a particular word or phrase: I move to amend the motion by striking “at the park” and inserting “in November on the school grounds.”

OR

To substitute the entire motion: I move to substitute the following: “That we have an ice cream social.”

In addition:

A motion may be made to amend the amendment following the same procedure:

to strike;
to insert;
to strike and insert; or
to substitute.

For example, if the amendment is to insert in the substitute motion:

I move to amend the amendment by inserting “in October in the park.”

NOTE: A vote must be taken on the motion to amend the amendment before any other amendments may be proposed. The main motion must be voted upon after all amendments have been addressed.