

Leadership Services Commission

Sample PTA agenda

CALL TO ORDER (on time!)

The president stands, raps gavel once and calls the meeting to order.

“The meeting will please come to order”

OPENING CEREMONIES

Pledge of Allegiance (not “flag salute”)

“_____ will lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Will you please stand.”

READING/APPROVAL OF MINUTES NO MOTION NEEDED

“The secretary will read the minutes of the ___ mtg.”

The secretary stands, addresses chair and reads minutes.

“Are there any corrections?”

(Omissions and additions are also corrections.)

Or (with approval of group) the minutes may be assigned to a committee for approval or correction.

“The minutes stand approved as read,” or

“The minutes stand approved as corrected.”

FINANCIAL REPORTS

(treasurer, financial secretary, budget & finance chairmen)

NO MOTION NEEDED

“_____ will present the treasurer’s report.”

“You have heard the report of the treasurer.

Are there any questions?”

“The report will be filed for the auditor.”

AUDIT REPORT (semi-annual)

MOTION NEEDED TO ADOPT

“It has been moved and seconded that the audit report be adopted.” (Follow steps for a motion)

PRESENTATION OF BILLS

MOTION NEEDED TO PAY BILLS

“The treasurer will read the bills.”

Since approval of budget does not authorize expenditure of funds, BILLS MUST BE PRESENTED AND THEIR PAYMENT VOTED UPON.

(Bills should be itemized in minutes as to amount who is to be paid and what payment covers.)

“It has been moved and seconded that the bills be paid.” (Follow steps for a motion)

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COMMUNICATIONS

Communications are read by (corresponding) secretary and, if action is required, may be acted upon as read.

“The (corresponding) secretary will read the communications.”

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD (for association meetings)

MOTION REQUIRED BUT A SECOND IS NOT, WHEN A MOTION COMES FROM A COMMITTEE/BOARD

A summary report (not the minutes) is read for the information of the members. Recommendations are voted upon one at a time, the secretary moving the adoption of any of the recommendations.

“The secretary will present the report of the executive board.” “You have heard the recommendations.” (follow steps for a motion)

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

President calls for the “report of the committee”, not the “chairman’s report”. Person making the report moves the adoption of any recommendations.

“_____ will present the report of the _____ committee.”

***“Are there any questions regarding the report?”
“If not, the report will be filed” or “You have heard the recommendations”***
(follow steps of a motion.)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

President presents each item of unfinished business.
(The president should not ask “is there any unfinished business?”)

“The first item of unfinished business is _____”

NEW BUSINESS

A motion is necessary before discussion and vote on any new business.

“The first item of new business is _____”

PROGRAM

The president introduces the chairman to present the program.

“_____ will present the program.”

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Date of next meeting and important activities should be announced.
If there is a social time following the meeting, this should be announced.

“Are there any announcements?”
Examples: “The next meeting will be ____”
“Refreshments will be served.”

ADJOURNMENT

President raps gavel once.

NO MOTION IS NECESSARY

“The meeting is adjourned.”



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Checklist for a healthy PTA unit

Membership enrollment

- Is an initial membership campaign held toward the beginning of the school year?
- Are continuing opportunities provided for parents and staff to join?
- (Membership is year-round.)
Is membership per capita sent through channels at least monthly and by deadlines?

- Is an attendance record kept for all meetings?
- Are minutes kept for all meetings?
- Are all action items recorded, including approval of budget, all expenses and all fundraising activities?

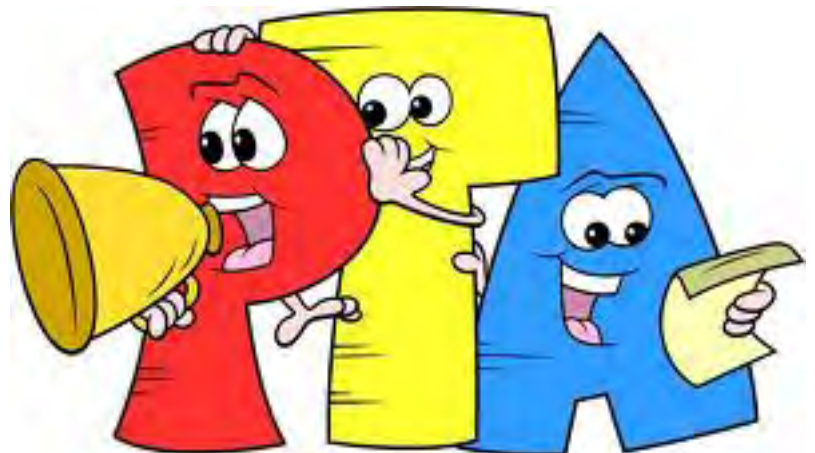
Bylaws

- Are bylaws reviewed yearly and updated (sent through channels for approval) every three years?

Financial Procedures

- Are financial procedures in accordance with recommended PTA policies and procedures?
 - Is the budget approved and actual revenues and expenditures compared at least quarterly?
 - Is the insurance premium and the workers comp form/remittance sent in by deadline?
 - Are all checks signed by two authorized officers? And are all expenditures properly authorized?
 - Are tax filings submitted in a timely manner?

 - Are written reports presented/filed monthly?
Are balances, receipts and disbursements recorded in the minutes each month?
- Is each check approved/ratified and listed?
- Are they presented at both



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Annual Reports

- Are volunteer hours being recorded?
- Are annual historian reports filed by the deadline?

Leadership

- Do members of the executive board work well together?
- Does the PTA attract and retain new leadership?
- Are new, qualified candidates nominated for office each year?
- Do leaders attend council/district PTA meetings and take advantage of training opportunities?
- Do leaders communicate effectively with members?



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Additional Situations to Avoid

- yes no School staff member as treasurer or president.
- yes no Anxious principal who wants projects funded without going through the process set up by the PTA.
- yes no Overbearing principal who wants the PTA to do what he/she wants regardless of the proper procedure.
- yes no Fundraising project that will benefit a board member financially.
- yes no PTA paying for aides or specialists one year and expecting/obligating next year's board to do the same.
- yes no A president who writes the checks because the treasurer has no experience.
- yes no Paying per caps/insurance consistently late.
- yes no Lack of or incomplete minutes, particularly in matters involving use of funds.



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Deciding to delegate

Presidents who successfully delegate achieve two important goals at once:

- 1. It frees them to focus on other, higher priority parts of their job; and**
- 2. It helps other board members develop their own leadership skills and abilities.**

Ask the following questions to help you decide whether or not to delegate something:

Do I have sufficient time to complete the task properly? If the answer is no, delegate it!

Does the task specifically require my supervision or attention? If it doesn't, assign it to someone else.

Are my personal skills and expertise required to complete the task? If not, hand it off.

If I do not fulfill the assignment personally, will my reputation or the board's be hurt?
If the answer is still no, then delegate it.

Is there a member of the board who would benefit from, and learn, new skills by handling the assignment? If the answer is yes, offer him or her the gift of learning by doing. Give him or her the opportunity to take on a new responsibility.

Six steps to effective delegation

There are six steps recognized by most management authorities to achieve effective delegation:

1. Review the tasks to be done. Determine which ones others should do.
2. Select the person best suited for the specific task.
3. Encourage, train and motivate the person to accept the assignment.
4. Explain the task fully and then turn over the job and the authority to accomplish it to that person. Check to be certain that your expectations are clearly understood. Ask questions to be certain that your expectations have been understood. Then step away and let the person complete the task.
5. Provide support, encourage independence and develop confidence. Restrain from over checking on the progress of the task.

"The best executive is the one who has sense enough to pick good men to do what needs to be done, and self-restraint enough to keep from meddling with them while they do it."

Theodore Roosevelt

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Encouraging productive team efforts

Share expectations and directions

What more do PTA leaders need beyond a Toolkit and a job description? Most need to understand the priorities of their job and how much time they are expected to spend on tasks. Some may need guidance in managing their workloads. Communicate your expectations and provide due dates. Ask to make sure they understand what is being asked of them.

Identify your “customers” and how to treat them

Make sure all your PTAs know how to reach their district counterparts and come to agreement as a district on responding in a timely manner to questions and concerns.

Sometimes PTA leaders hear the frustrations and concerns from upset councils, units and PTA members because those leaders are the face of the association. When replying, stay focused on the reasons for their feelings and how you can assist them. The goal should be to help them understand and have a positive attitude.

Understand PTA’s policies and procedures

When your team understands the reasons for policies and procedures as well as where they come from (bylaws, Toolkit) they will be able to explain them to others. Discuss the attitude your team projects. Encourage them to avoid commiserating about how restrictive or prescriptive PTA is by helping others understand that many of our "rules" are based on IRS regulations and corporate law for non-profits.

Communicate clearly and provide direction

Sharing and forwarding information is a main task for district PTAs

as they are the conduit to the councils and units and the PTA members.

If you forward emails without direction or context, some may not know what to do with them. Make sure the recipients don't need to spend time understanding or figuring out what you want.

Identifying leadership strengths

Strong leaders:

- create an atmosphere of mutual trust
- demonstrate honest, ethical behavior in all transactions
- lead by example, e.g., “do what I ask others to do”
- demonstrate courage in all transactions
- communicate a clear vision with recognizable goals for the organization and its members
- state expectations clearly and confirm understanding
- expect people to be accountable and offer support
- translate organizational goals practically and meaningfully for people at all levels
- make and communicate decisions promptly
- resolve conflict with the goal for all to succeed
- communicate with charisma and effectiveness to groups
- take responsibility for decisions without finger-pointing
- involve others in planning
- praise people for work well done
- delegate in a way that encourages others to have full ownership
- appropriately provide authority to others to make decisions
- believe in and suggest training that teaches leadership, teamwork, and skills
- implement innovation as a method to improve performance
- demonstrate no tolerance for organizational turf or “them and us” scenarios
- create forums to celebrate organization successes
- support and demonstrate efficient management of personal stress levels
- manage impending change, real and rumored, efficiently
- use time constructively and effectively
- help people by listening without pre-judging
- have excellent relationships with members regardless of position in the organization
- are accessible
- encourage people to communicate their differing opinions



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Letter of Determination proof of tax-exempt status

What is a Letter of Determination?

A Letter of Determination is proof that a PTA is a constituent organization of the California State PTA. It is a packet consisting of:

1. Letter dated 1943 from the Internal Revenue Service
2. Letter from the California Franchise Tax Board
3. Current cover letter from the California State PTA office indicating the unit is a constituent unit and is in good standing. This letter also includes the unit's EIN (Employer Identification Number).

The letter of determination should be filed with the PTA's permanent financial records.

Why is a Letter of Determination needed?

1. To open a bank account for a 501(c)(3) nonprofit
2. For some donation and grant applications
3. To proof the PTA's tax-exempt status

When is the Letter of Determination provided?

A newly organized unit receives a Letter of Determination packet upon its acceptance as a new unit by the California State PTA Board of Managers. A "tentative/pending" Letter of Determination is sent to the unit upon receipt in the California State PTA office of the new unit application packet (which should be sent to the state PTA office within two weeks of organizing). This is the Letter of Determination that a unit can use to open a bank account.

Who requests the Letter of Determination?

Usually the PTA president or treasurer requests a Letter of Determination from the California State PTA office by contacting sales@capta.org. A district PTA may also request a Letter of Determination for a unit. The state office always sends the letter directly to the PTA president.

Public disclosure laws require that the Letter of Determination be given to anyone who requests it. Such requests are directed to the president or treasurer of the PTA in question. The district PTA should not keep Letters of Determination on hand nor should the district or council provide a cover letter indicating a unit is in good standing. **Only the California State PTA can verify PTA status.**

Where does the California State PTA office send the packet?

The California State PTA office sends the packet to the PTA president. The PTA president should provide it to anyone who requests it.

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Nonprofit basics for PTA leaders

PTA board members often experience some confusion about what PTA is, and the legal roles and responsibilities of officers and board members. Veteran or newcomer, some things aren't clear – at least not at first – and there are possible repercussions from a lack of understanding.

California State PTA wants you to continue working on behalf of all children and families – and we want you to do this in a way that meets legal requirements by which all nonprofit associations must abide. It's important to understand that this is not just a "PTA thing." While the following comments are tailored to PTAs, they are universal in application to all nonprofits.

Does this apply to you?

If you are an officer or a board member of your PTA, yes it does. How do you know if you're on a board? Your unit's bylaws voted on by your membership should clearly delineate who is an officer and an executive board member. Executive board members most often include the principal, the teacher representative and all standing committee chairmen.

If you are an officer or a board member of a local PTA, council, or district PTA, the IRS, and local, state and federal governments recognize you as a leader of a 501(c)(3) educational nonprofit organization. As a leader of a nonprofit organization, you have certain duties and responsibilities delineated in corporation law.

Board members are expected to exercise care and act prudently in all their dealings concerning their PTA. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Oversight and careful scrutiny of the budget and regular financial reports.
- Following all PTA financial procedures, especially association approval of all expenditures.
- Reading the minutes and keeping accurate records.
- Asking questions when something isn't clear or seems questionable.
- Putting the interests of the PTA before personal interests, and avoiding conflicts of interest.



It's the law

According to nonprofit corporation law, there are three main duties owed by a board to the members of its organization: *obedience*, *care* and *loyalty*. (Note: these duties are *owed to the members* – boards serve the *membership*.) What does this mean? A board member is expected to obey the central purposes of the organization (the Mission and Purposes of the PTA) and to use these purposes to guide in decision making. The board also has the responsibility to ensure that the PTA functions within the law – both the laws of the land and the laws of the organization (your bylaws).

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Some red-flag examples

Your local unit may have a problem if:

- Bylaws haven't been updated for over three years;
- Bylaws say the PTA dues are \$3.00 and you have been collecting \$5.00 for as long as you can remember;
- Board members have never seen or read the Mission or Purposes of PTA;
- The treasurer doesn't provide monthly financial reports which are reviewed by the executive board;
- Board members gain financially by being members of the board; or
- Fundraising money is kept in the trunk of your car.

As an officer or board member, it is your responsibility to ensure that all PTA expenditures are approved. Your role is also to ensure your PTA follows all PTA and legal guidelines. We are all aware of the possibility of lawsuits. The California State PTA provides directors and officers liability insurance and bonding insurance as part of each PTA's annual insurance premium; however, it is critical that PTA financial guidelines be followed and that you have a good paper trail on your transactions.

Getting it right

Taking on a leadership role in PTA is a big step. There is a lot to remember, but you don't have to go at it alone. California State PTA and your council and district help provide the training and services you'll need to be a successful nonprofit. Here are some tips to help you:

1. First, allow your council or district PTA to help. Officer training, boardsmanship, bylaws, parliamentary procedure, finance and budget – let the council or district PTA provide training for your board.
2. Read your bylaws and make sure they reflect what you are actually doing. If they do not, *change the bylaws* (within certain parameters). Make sure all board members have a copy of the bylaws.
3. Make sure all officers and board members have an understanding of their responsibilities and have the training to fulfill them.
4. Pay insurance premiums on time and follow California State PTA policies and procedures to protect officers and board members against personal liability arising from alleged mismanagement or misrepresentation.

Finally, remember your PTA is a private, independent, nonprofit association. Your money does not belong to a school, a principal, or any one person in your association – it belongs to your members and its use is directed by membership.



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Qualities of an effective PTA leader

- **Listens – carefully.** Successful leaders spend much of their time listening and gathering information.
- **Makes a decision now.** Not tomorrow or next week. Using information on hand today, a successful leader makes the best possible decision.
- **Shares responsibility and blame** with his or her coworkers for mistakes and learns from them.
- **Recognizes talent** and brings it forward realizing that excellent board members will be a credit to the organization.
- **Knows how to nurture and develop** the strengths of each board member.
- **Can be counted on** to follow through: when he says he will do something, he does it, and does it well.
- **Gives constructive and tactful criticism** that supports a board member while teaching her.
- **Provides comfort and understanding** – personally and professionally – to board members who need it.
- **Is mannerly and timely** in all communications ~ verbal, written and electronic.
- **Adheres to ethical behavior** at all times.
- **Keeps the perspective** of all children and families in mind.
- **Models** for the board, the children, the staff and the community the behavior of a good PTA leader.
- **Always says thank you** and shows appreciation for the efforts of others.



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Reasons to conduct elections before the school year ends

Bylaws indicate when elections are held; but, WHY is it important to elect new officers before the current school year ends and not when the new school year starts?

If the new school year begins *without* new officers

1. Four months of transition and planning time is forever lost (because the new board can begin meeting and planning right after an April election).
2. The program and budget committees have inadequate time to develop and plan prior to the first association meeting, which leaves little time to give notice for and present plans to the membership for its required approval.
3. The PTA executive board must play catch-up. It can take months to feel organized and prepared to effectively lead the association.
4. Banking, check signatures, and bill paying can be impaired if previous officers have moved on and financial procedures have not been properly addressed at the end of one fiscal year and the beginning of another.
5. The transition of officers and chairmen after an extended break loses the momentum of sharing and passing on information and materials. If past officers or chairmen move to another campus or community, materials and procedure books often become lost.
6. Newly elected officers miss the opportunity to participate in counterpart training often provided by the district and council PTA in the spring, as well as convention and other workshops.
7. Bylaws state the president-elect is entitled to represent the PTA at the annual California State PTA convention, if the budget allows. The annual convention is always held in late April or very early May.
8. Mailings of valuable resources and materials from National and California State PTA are missed or not received in a timely manner.
9. The opportunity to promote PTA, build a relationship with the school, and publicize the PTA's role on campus is delayed and momentum is lost.
10. Administrators and school staff may be confused as to whom the PTA leaders are and how valuable the PTA/PTSA is to the school community.
11. Opportunities for valuable community building, networking, and volunteer recruitment, which normally begin when officers take office, are lost.
12. The membership campaign begins too late for the PTA to qualify for the Ready, Set ... Remit! Award and may prevent the PTA from remitting the first required dues payment on time.
13. Students lose the opportunity to participate in Reflections, PTA's fine arts program, because there is inadequate time to plan, kick off, and meet entry deadlines.

Strategies of a successful PTA leader

The holding of a leadership position does not always dictate that the leader will be involved in all activities. Instead leadership often requires the surrender of one's own wishes as well as great amounts of patience.

Consider the following suggestions:

- Always remember that whatever authority you have comes from the job and not from the person. You are the temporary holder of your position of responsibility.
- Remember that there probably isn't any single best way to do anything. The thought may jolt you a bit; progress will come only because, one day, a better way to do something than yours will be found.
- Surround yourself with people who are knowledgeable about the organization. The more everyone knows, the better your organization will function – and the less likely it is that you will make big mistakes.
- Listen. Make it easy for people to talk to you. Don't assume you know what the problem is. Ask them to tell you.
- Find out what your team members do best. Delegating authority is an extremely important aspect of leadership. Effective delegation can save time and energy, provide diversity in approaches, and promote efficient use of human resources.
- Load your team members with challenges and responsibilities. Do it as soon as possible.
- Give them ample credit for accomplishments. Let them have no doubt their work is appreciated.
- Expect that their competence will be discovered.
- Do whatever you can to support the efforts of other volunteers, wherever they may be in your organization. If you want people to help you, you must help them.
- Effective leaders must recognize that no one-leadership role will be appropriate at all times. Leadership roles must suit the situation as well as the needs and preferences of the team as well as the leader. Remember to remain flexible enough to switch roles if necessary.



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Tips for effective board meetings



It is important to value people's time and make the best use of the time available when the executive board meets. Use these tips to have effective board meetings.

- **Stick to the scheduled dates and times stated in the bylaws** and which are published in the PTA calendar for the year.
- **Always start the meeting on time.** Make every effort to respect other people's time by ending the meeting at the agreed upon time.
- **Prepare and send out the agenda before the meeting** to provide advance notice of pending actions and to remind members of items to be prepared to discuss
- **Create an attendance list for attendees to sign or initial.** Illegible writing is avoided and it helps in determining whether there is a quorum present. Think about adding a space for volunteer hours so each member can provide his/her volunteer hours on a regular basis.
- **Make your agenda a working document.** Try including start times for each item. For example: 6:30 p.m. Welcome, 6:35 p.m. Minutes of Previous Meeting, 6:40 p.m. Treasurer's Report, etc. Use the scheduled times to keep things moving along.
- **Follow parliamentary procedure** when chairing a meeting. It helps prevent people from monopolizing the discussion time and assures that control is maintained.
- **Ask committee chairmen to report briefly by presenting committee recommendations to the executive board.** Detailed planning is done ahead of time by the committee and the executive board then approves the committee recommendation or refers the issue back to the committee for further work.
- **Ensure that the secretary takes minutes at every meeting.** Ask the secretary to send a draft set of minutes out no later than one week after the meeting to assure that members have the opportunity to assess accuracy while recollections are fresh and to serve as a reminder of assigned tasks.
- **Attach a list of action items to the minutes with expected dates for completion and the person responsible to serve as a reminder to all of the expectations and responsibilities undertaken.**

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Types of PTA meetings

For each PTA, various groups are assigned specific functions and each group has particular authority to act and fulfill the assigned obligations.

PTA bylaws specify the frequency of executive board and association meetings, how special meetings may be called, and the quorum requirements.

Association:

The association is the voting body for all action taken, including adopting bylaws, adopting the program and the budget for the year, electing the nominating committee, electing officers and approving all contracts to be signed and all expenditures.

Executive board:

The PTA executive board consists of the elected and appointed officers, the principal, the teacher representative and the committee chairmen. The executive board meets monthly to handle the transaction of necessary and detailed business between meetings of the association. The executive board is responsible for accepting and studying recommendations to be presented to the association for approval. The bylaws provide details about the executive board's responsibilities.

Guests may be invited to attend an executive board meeting as well as a meeting of the membership. A courtesy seat is granted by the president to the guests present. A guest may bring information to be shared with the group. However, guests do not participate in discussion or voting and should leave after their information is relayed.

Committees:

A committee may be a standing committee with regular, ongoing responsibilities during the PTA year or it may be a committee organized for a short-term activity only. Committees meet to make recommendations to the executive board concerning the assigned activity. A guest may be invited to a committee meeting to present information.

Minutes:

The meetings of each PTA group should be preserved through the recording of minutes. Each group's meeting is different and different minutes are required. The board meeting cannot be combined with the association meeting.

