

PTA BASICS

2020 – 2021

Section 2

PROCEDURE BOOK

If each district and local unit officer and chairs would compile a procedure book, the work of our associations would be more efficient.

What Is A Procedure Book?

A procedure book, one of the most important basic tools in PTA work, is often the least used! Since the majority of the new recruits have little or no experience in the job, they need a procedure book. It will help them to identify the task and to chart a course of action. A procedure book tells of the background of the association, contributions of others, successes and failures. It is an up-to-date record that gives a foundation on which to build. If you have not received one from your predecessor, now is the time to start one.

A loose-leaf binder makes a serviceable and convenient procedure book to which pages and dividers can easily be added. If some of your materials won't fit in a binder, an expandable folder may be useful. It is suggested that each book be used for more than one year and be updated by the current user. Remember that a procedure book is the property of the association and not of the person who is using it.

Plan of Work

A plan of work is a summary of goals, plans and resources needed by an officer or committee. The plan usually includes goals or purpose, steps to accomplish goals, responsibilities, estimated revenue to be generated and estimated expenses, resources needed, staff involvement, sponsor and partner participation and evaluation plans. Two examples of plans of work are included at the end of this section.

Events, projects and programs

- Louisiana PTA, school district and your unit calendars in order to plan your activities.
- List on separate pages each event, project and program including dates, responsibilities, expenses and an evaluation form.

Resource Materials

- Information received from the National, Louisiana and district PTAs
- Notes from workshops, conferences and conventions attended
- Copy of unit bylaws, current budget
- All correspondence pertaining to your office or chairmanship

Reports

- Reports given at any meeting or sent to the district or state PTAs
- Forms submitted for awards at the district, state or national level
- Evaluations and recommendations for the future

EMAIL PROTOCOL

Electronic Mail, referred to as email, has become the new way to communicate. It is used to send and receive personal and business mail; shop; and for research, reference, and other information. Therefore, it has become necessary to establish policies for PTA members conducting business via email.

Electronic mail messages are NOT private communications – unlike letters you receive at home. Courts have determined that organizational email users do not have the right to privacy where email messages are concerned. Email as a means of communication is subject to the same professional standards one would use in writing a letter or speaking as a PTA representative.

As a representative of the PTA, it is important to design and respond to email in a professional manner.

- Don't write anything in an email message that you wouldn't want to see printed in a memo to all board members or on the front page of the newspaper. Email messages can be easily forwarded to people you did not intend to see the message. Be careful what you say.
- Email is not to be used for discussing details of sensitive issues that relate to an individual's removal from office, hearings or investigative meetings. To protect confidentiality, correspondence regarding these matters must be sent in writing and signed by the author.
- Use the proper chain of command when copying PTA members. Your emails should be directly related to your PTA position and responsibilities. You should copy the president and/or vice president when appropriate and obtain the approval of the president if the email is considered important or being sent to a large number of members.
- Using email under a PTA heading to send jokes, stories, gossip, solicit PTA members for personal gain or anything not related to PTA business is inappropriate and prohibited.
- Proofread your work. Many times the tone or phrasing of email can be misinterpreted and used to your disadvantage. Re-check for spelling and grammatical errors.
- Respond to email as soon as possible but not later than 3-5 days.
- Learning email etiquette will demonstrate your professionalism when advocating for the children of your unit and our state.
 - ◆ Always include names, proper openings, closings and "PTA" in the subject heading.
 - ◆ When possible, use the tagline *everychild.onevoice*.[®]
 - ◆ Keep messages short when possible.
 - ◆ If the email message is lengthy, make appropriate breaks so it is easy to read. Run-on emails with no clear separation are difficult to read.
 - ◆ If sending an attachment with the email, always include a message in the body of the email.

- ◆ If sending to a large number of people protect the email address list by sending the email to yourself and blind copy everyone else. This way the recipients don't see everyone else's email address and don't have to scroll through a list of names.
- ◆ If using blind copying, a notation regarding who is receiving the email should be in the body. (This email is being sent to the executive committee and the board of directors or to the membership, etc.)
- ◆ Check your email messages daily or as often as possible to stay current and avoid your mailbox from exceeding its capacity.
- ◆ Because email is considered informal, don't overuse for official correspondence, to deliver bad news or to send repeated messages for the purpose of criticizing or complaining. These matters should be handled in person, by phone or in writing.
- ◆ If you send a wrong message to the wrong person, immediately phone and ask him or her to delete it or simply apologize.
- ◆ Notify the appropriate state, district and local unit members when you change your email address.
- ◆ Be considerate of the person sending you an email. If they send you an email and it has not been copied to anyone else, your response should be sent to that person only. If they send you an email and have copied others, it's permissible to respond and copy the same names. It's suggested you get the sender's permission to forward an email intended for your eyes only.
- ◆ Do not send PTA messages that are:
 - 1) Flaming – a term used for messages that are highly emotional, angry, contain profanity or are insulting.
 - 2) Shouting – a term used for messages that contain all CAPITAL LETTERS. (To most people this is offensive.)
 - 3) Spamming – indiscriminately sending email. If you do this too often, you suffer the risk of having your emails deleted before they are read.
 - 4) Contain symbols - Most people don't use them because they create a familiarity or give the impression of a casual email.
- ◆ Use the "C's" – Check to make sure your email is courteous; concise; clear; communicates the message; has a cooperating tone and has been checked. Once you send an email, it cannot be undone.

PARLIAMENTARY LAW

Parliamentary law (parliamentary procedure) originated with the British Parliament. These fundamental rules for conducting meetings have been modified through the years. They are designed to maintain order, ensure justice and equality, expedite business and enable an organization to accomplish the objectives for which it was formed. These rules are based on logic, good sense and fair play. It is democracy in action. Every member should understand at least the fundamentals or correct procedures. Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised is the parliamentary authority adopted by all levels of PTA.

Parliamentary law requires us to accept the will of the majority and respect the opinion of the minority. The president (the chair), as the elected leader, is to carry out the will of the assembly – not to bend the will of the assembly to his own. Remember, authority is vested in the office, not in the person. **Although it is not necessary to know every rule, a basic knowledge and a copy of your bylaws will serve you well.**

Basic guidelines

- All members are equal.
- An established number of voting members must be present to conduct business (quorum).
- Only one main motion may be before the assembly at a time and only one member may have the floor at any one time.
- A 2/3rds vote is necessary when a motion limits or interferes with the privileges of a member or of the assembly bylaws, cutting off debate, closing nominations, rescinding action without notice, etc.
- General consent is a silent method of voting; by silence the membership agrees to go along with the decision of the majority.

Quorum

The quorum is the minimum number of members who must be present to conduct business at a meeting. The number of members constituting a quorum is indicated in your unit bylaws.

Motions

A motion formally proposes that the organization take a certain action or express certain views. A motion introduces business in a meeting. A main motion brings a subject before the organization for its consideration and action.

There are three types of secondary motions.

- A subsidiary motion is used to help dispose of a main motion.
- Privileged motions are those requiring immediate attention. They do not relate to the pending question, are not debatable and are of such importance as to require that they take precedence over all other questions.
- An incidental motion is one that will allow for temporary interruption of the immediate business to attend to something incidental or relating to the business of the organization.

Before making a motion, a member should know what result is desired. The following is a brief list of results you might wish to accomplish and the motion necessary to reach that goal.

(If one wants this result, then make this motion.)

- Introduce new business – main motion
- Kill the motion – postpone indefinitely
- Change the motion – amend
- Study the motion – commit or refer
- Defer action – postpone to a certain time
- Change rules of debate – extend/limit debate
- Stop debate – previous question
- Return to the order of business – call for orders of the day
- Take care of an emergency matter – question of privilege
- Provide for a break – recess
- Close the meeting – adjourn
- Continue present meeting another day – fix time to adjourn
- Reverse the decision of the chair – appeal
- Enforce the rules – point of order
- Avoid the consideration of a motion – object to consideration
- Take up a question not in order – suspend the rules
- Verify the vote of the assembly – division of the assembly

Eight Essential Steps of a Main Motion

To obtain action of the assembly on a main motion, take the following eight steps:

- 1) **Obtaining the floor** – member rises, addresses the chair by proper title.
- 2) **Assigning the floor** – the chair recognizes the member.
- 3) **Member states his motion** – or question by saying, I move . . .
- 4) **Seconding the motion** – another member must second the motion letting the chair know that more than one person has an interest in the subject of the motion.
- 5) **Stating the motion** – chair restates the motion thereby formally placing the motion before the assembly.
- 6) **Discussion (or debate)** – must be addressed to the chair and continues until no one wishes to speak or until someone moves to close debate. To close debate, a member says, I move the previous question. The motion requires a second, is not debatable and requires a 2/3rds vote. If the motion to close debate is adopted, the chair immediately takes the vote on the motion pending.
- 7) **Putting the question (or taking the vote)** -- The chair restates the motion, states the method of voting and calls for both affirmative and negative votes.
- 8) **Announcing the vote** – the chair announces the result of the vote and states the action the assembly will take.

Amendments to Motions

After the chair has stated the motion and before a vote is taken, it may be desirable to change – or amend -- the motion in some way. There are two types of amendments.

- A **PRIMARY** amends the main motion.
- A **SECONDARY** amendment amends the primary amendment.

Points to remember

- Motions must be expressed in a clear, concise statement containing only one main idea.
- The correct language is – I move that or I move to.
- The maker of the motion should be allowed, if he wishes, to begin discussion.
- A motion that does not come from a committee must be seconded.
- On rare occasions, the presiding officer may enter a discussion. He must relinquish the chair for the duration of the discussion and the vote. The president returns to the chair only after the vote has been announced.
- If the president and vice president are absent, the secretary calls the meeting to order.
- The president may vote on a pending question when her vote would change the outcome – to break a tie. The president may also vote when voting is by ballot.

Rules of Conduct

- No one has the right to do anything that prevents others from seeing or hearing the presiding officer or speaker.
- No one has the right to converse, move about or stand, except to address the presiding officer.
- If several members rise at the same time to claim the floor, the chair recognizes one and the others should be seated immediately.
- When two members address the chair simultaneously, the chair recognizes one and then calls upon the other as soon as possible.