



## Parent Association Guidelines Revised 9-14-23

### 1) Introduction

The High Tech High (“**HTH**”) schools are fortunate to have many dedicated volunteers performing important duties that support the schools. HTH parent volunteers make a significant positive impact on their schools, by such activities as planning annual fundraisers, coordinating teacher appreciation lunches, assisting with exhibitions, and being strong advocates for the community. The work of volunteers seeking to fundraise and provide other support for the HTH schools is coordinated through the various HTH parent associations (“**Parent Associations**” or “**PA**”). Parent Associations must be established in accordance with the following guidelines, regardless of the name used by the parent group, and perform their work under the umbrella of the High Tech High Foundation (the “**Foundation**” or “**HTH Foundation**”), a 501(c)(3) non-profit.

The following guidelines (“**PA Guidelines**”) are designed to protect the Foundation’s 501(c)(3) tax status and provide a framework to help Parent Associations navigate the best ways to organize so they can effectively support their school’s needs. The PA Guidelines are designed to apply to the activities of all HTH Parent Associations.

### 2) Foundation Overview

The HTH Foundation raises funds for innovative programs and facilities to enhance the educational experience and opportunities for students and staff. We aim to promote community involvement and partnerships among corporations, businesses, families, individuals, and community groups to ensure that all High Tech High students have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The HTH Foundation is governed by a Board of Directors, which operates appropriate committees to provide services and support to the HTH schools and the PAs. Those committees may include various fundraising functions, website, financial oversight, PA support, and others. More information about the Foundation can be found at the Foundation website: [hightechhighfoundation.org](http://hightechhighfoundation.org).

Because the Parent Associations do not have a legal status separate from the Foundation, the Foundation provides a variety of services to the PAs, including tax filings, audit services, mandatory filings such as fictitious business name certificates, and more.

Parent Associations exist for the purpose of conducting community building and fundraising activities to support their specific school and in some cases, specific school activities.

Parent Associations are a great opportunity for all parents to become involved in activities that support the schools. HTH schools are proudly tuition-free public schools, and in all fundraising activities, it is important that we reassure families that any gift of money or time is strictly voluntary and never a condition for a student's full participation in school activities.

### **3) Organizational Requirements for Parent Associations**

The PAs are part of the Foundation, and they share one tax ID number: 33-0866869. Donations to the Foundation (and to the PAs) are tax deductible. Each school's PA raises money for school-specific enhancements, while the Foundation is the umbrella for the PAs and additionally fundraises for larger needs and for causes that benefit all 16 schools equitably.

Parent Associations are comprised of parent/guardian volunteers, and do not have a legal status separate from the Foundation. Instead, Parent Associations are recorded as "fictitious business names", also known as a "DBA" which stands for "doing business as."

- a) One Parent Association Per School: The Foundation will recognize one Parent Association per school. New Parent Associations must apply with the Foundation Board for recognition as a HTH Parent Association. A group wishing to be recognized by the Foundation should be prepared to submit:
  - i) The name of the Parent Association;
  - ii) An explanation of the cause the group intends to address;
  - iii) Evidence of support from the School Director;

- iv) Any bylaws, rules, or procedures under which it intends to operate; and
- v) The names, addresses, email address, and phone numbers for the proposed group's leadership.

Please note that a PA must get permission from the Foundation Board to change its name, given the legal changes that a name change requires. The Foundation retains the right to revoke the recognition of any Parent Association if the Foundation determines that it is in the best interest of the HTH organizations to do so.

- b) Relationship to Foundation: As a recognized component of the Foundation, Parent Associations fall under the Foundation's nonprofit, tax-exempt status for purposes of fundraising efforts.
- c) Tax Identification Number: The Tax Identification Number of the Foundation is to be used in relation to Parent Association fundraising activities, provided that the Parent Association:
  - i) Adheres to the PA Guidelines and other established Foundation policies as they may be established from time to time;
  - ii) Observes all guidelines provided by the Foundation Board; and,
  - iii) Uses Donation Acknowledgement Forms as established and published by the Foundation.

#### 4) PA Leadership Roles

To ensure proper accountability, each Parent Association is required to have leaders elected by popular vote of the constituent parents/guardians/PA members of the school being served by that Parent Association ("**PA Leaders**"). PA Leaders shall be elected annually (see Section 7.b.). Leadership of Parent Associations shall consist of at least the following roles:

- a) President (or equivalent title): The PA President is responsible for organizing and leading PA meetings, leading annual planning, and ensuring that leaders are in place for each event and activity of the PA. The President shall appoint chairs of committees as needed and shall act as an ex-officio member of all committees.
- b) Treasurer: The PA Treasurer shall be responsible for maintaining the financial records of the group and reporting to the Foundation Treasurer. The Treasurer shall oversee all PA funds and shall ensure that all PA expenses are paid and any income is correctly allocated. The Treasurer shall maintain an accurate account of all income and

disbursements, with the understanding that the financial records are subject to review as part of the annual audit of the school's financial records. The Treasurer shall submit reports of income and expenses to the Foundation Treasurer on the template form (see Resources page on Foundation website) each January and July, and maintain information privacy as required. The Treasurer shall also assure that any donations or cash, goods, or services will be acknowledged lawfully with provided Donation Acknowledgement Forms and all details about the donor recorded.

- c) Secretary/Parliamentarian: The PA Secretary shall record and publish the minutes of all Parent Association meetings, maintain the Parent Association's correspondence and files, and publish notices of all Parents Association General meetings. Publication of a notice in the Parent Association Newsletter, or an email to all families, shall constitute notice of any Parent Association meetings. The Secretary will also act as Parliamentarian, and maintain knowledge of these PA Guidelines and any Bylaws maintained by the PA. The Secretary is also to assist the PA President with periodic updates of such Bylaws to maintain compliance with the PA Guidelines and any ongoing practices of the PA.
- d) Communications Chair: A PA Communications Chair oversees all PA communications to parents and the school community. The Communications Chair will work with other volunteers, the school Student Information Systems Administrator, and the Foundation Board in preparation and distribution of e-newsletters, email blasts, and is responsible for maintaining the PA calendar, website, and social media sites.

It is important to explain here that PA Leaders are not executive officers of the Foundation, or any other HTH corporation, nor do they have the powers of HTH executive officers. Moreover, PA Leaders do not have the authority to represent themselves as HTH or HTH Foundation officers, nor do they have the authority to negotiate or enter into any contract on behalf of the HTH organizations. The PA Leaders' titles are largely ceremonial and are devised and recognized only to facilitate effective operations of each of the Parent Associations. For the purpose of these PA Guidelines, the term "PA Leader" shall refer to a Parent Association volunteer whereas the term "Executive Officer," shall refer to any of the Foundation Officers officially appointed by the Foundation Board of Directors.

At the discretion of each Parent Association, additional volunteers may be designated with other titles to describe their operative roles within the

group. Please note, however, that as with the other PA Leader roles, the titles afforded to these additional roles shall be functional and ceremonial only as individuals serving in these capacities shall not have the powers of the Foundation's Executive Officers.

## 5) PA Bylaws

Some Parent Associations have adopted bylaws to further define how their group will operate ("**PA Bylaws**"). In this context, PA Bylaws are purely functional in nature and do not establish the Parent Association as a separate legal entity. Moreover, PA Bylaws are subordinate to the Foundation's Bylaws, Foundation Board-adopted policies, and the PA Guidelines. Any bylaws adopted by a PA must conform with, and not conflict with, these PA Guidelines. To the extent PA Bylaws conflict with any of the Foundation's policies or PA Guidelines, the Foundation's policies and the PA Guidelines will govern.

## 6) PA Financial Record Keeping Responsibilities

The following guidelines pertain to the financial record-keeping responsibilities of each Parent Association operating through the Foundation. Any question concerning these responsibilities may be raised with the Foundation Treasurer. Please see the current forms and detailed procedures at the Resources page of the Foundation website:  
[hightechhighfoundation.org/resources](http://hightechhighfoundation.org/resources)

- a) Source Documents: All receipts, invoices, check registers, and bank statements must be maintained as a part of the record of each Parent Association's operations. All source documents are subject to request by the Foundation Treasurer at any time for the purpose of audit or other corporate compliance purposes.
- b) Change of PA President or PA Treasurer: Upon change of the PA President or PA Treasurer, all records must be either passed directly to the new PA Leader or turned over to the HTH Business Office. Under no circumstance should records remain in the custody of any volunteer who is no longer actively involved with the Parent Association.
- c) Cash Handling: Deposits should be prepared by the PA Treasurer. Where cash has been collected, two volunteers should be involved in counting and verifying the cash received. Both volunteers involved in counting and verifying should collect the cash receipts and note the following in the records: the amount collected; the date(s) of collection

and deposit; the fundraising event pertaining to the cash amounts; the purpose for which those funds have been earmarked (if applicable).

- d) Checking Account: Any checking account opened by a Parent Association must be coordinated through the Foundation Treasurer; the signers on the account are to be the PA President and PA Treasurer, and may include the Foundation Treasurer as a signer. (Please see the directions for bank accounts and changing signers as PA Leaders change, on the Foundation website Resource Page). In January, May, and June, each PA is to provide copies of PA bank account statements to the Foundation Treasurer, either directly by the bank or by the PA Treasurer. All checks must either be signed by both the PA President AND Treasurer, OR by any one of such signers, so long as a check authorization form has been approved by a second signer and is maintained in the PA Treasurer's records;
- e) Record Retention: All accounting records of the Parent Association should be turned over to the HTH Business Office within 12 months after the close of each fiscal year. Some groups prefer to turn over the records shortly after the end of the fiscal year, while others prefer to keep the prior year's records within their control. Either approach is fine so long as the records are turned over to the Business Office by the end of the following fiscal year.
- f) Reporting: PA Treasurers will complete and submit accounting reports to the Foundation Treasurer every January and every July, following the end of the fiscal year (July 1- June 30).
- g) Privacy: Personal information (such as parent addresses, contact information, donations given, and similar) collected by the PA must be treated with extreme caution and should be retained no longer than is absolutely necessary. Under no circumstance should the personal information be used for any purpose other than that for which it was offered. Moreover, under no circumstance should the personal information be offered to any outside organization or person for any purpose. All files containing personal information must be password protected. Credit card information should only be received in an encrypted form. Access to any database containing personal information must be limited and each volunteer with access to the personal information is to be reminded of these confidentiality obligations.
- h) Contracts: Contracts required for the operation of a Parent Association must be presented for review under the current Contract Guidelines

found on the HTH Foundation website under Resources. Please note that only the Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, Treasurer, and Secretary of the Foundation are empowered to sign contracts at several of the levels set under those Contract Guidelines.

## 7) PA Operations and Management

Parent Associations should observe the following guidelines in the management of their operations.

- a) Membership: Membership in Parent Associations must be open to all parents/guardians who have current students; such parents/guardians are automatically considered members of their child's school PA. PAs are also open to families who have HTH school graduates, teachers, and administrators of that school. All PAs must be nonpartisan and nonsectarian in their membership and purpose. There shall be no mandatory membership fee collected.
- b) Elections: Each PA will hold annual elections for the PA Leader positions of President, Treasurer, Secretary, Communications Chair, and any other elected PA Leaders of the PA under its Bylaws, in **May** of each school year.
  - i) In April, the Nominating Committee (current PA Officers or such other representative group of PA members denoted in the PA Bylaws or appointed by that year's PA Leaders) shall solicit and accept nominations from members (including self-nomination), obtaining approval from the school Director and consent from each nominee to serve if elected.
  - ii) The Nominating Committee shall seek to nominate a candidate for each office and report the nominees to members and school staff by the April PA meeting if possible, and no later than 15 days prior to the election.
  - iii) Election notices should be posted to the PA webpage at least ten days prior to the event, and communicated to PA members.
  - iv) Elections can occur by appropriate paper balloting in-person on school grounds, through a secure online ballot, or during a PA meeting.
  - v) If the election occurs during a meeting, it shall be by voice except when there is more than one candidate for a particular office, in which case the in-person vote shall be by secret ballot.
  - vi) The candidate receiving a majority of the votes for the office shall be elected. If there are more than two candidates and no candidate receives a majority on the first ballot, there shall be a runoff between the top two candidates.

- c) Meetings: Parent Association meetings should be conducted openly with advance notice posted on the PA webpage and communicated in messaging to school families. PAs are encouraged to hold meetings at flexible times and venues to allow the widest possible participation.
- d) Volunteers: Parents who have direct interaction with students, must follow the HTH Volunteer Guidelines (which can be found on the HTH Foundation website under Resources, in the PA Toolkit).
- e) HTH Websites:
  - i) A PA Page has been established for each PA on the Foundation website, for communications and fundraising outreach. Each PA is responsible for updating their PA page on the Foundation website at least annually in August; send updates to [hthf@hightechhighfoundation.org](mailto:hthf@hightechhighfoundation.org).
  - ii) Each PA may also establish its own website, if desired, within any guidelines set by the Foundation.
  - iii) Under no circumstance shall a specific for-profit company logo, name, or likeness be advertised on school-affiliated websites, or be provided an exclusive page on a PA website. A PA may, however, thank its sponsors in a listing on its website and include company logos.
  - iv) Anytime a password or sign-on is established for any reason, the web link, password, sign-on, and user name information shall be submitted to the Foundation; see the Resource page of the Foundation website for details.
- f) PA support: The Foundation has established a PA Representative(s) for each campus to guide and support PA Leaders. Please contact them anytime with your questions. Their contacts are listed on the Foundation website Resource page.
- g) Media engagement: All requests for media engagement or press releases should be forwarded to the PA Representative or Foundation Board.
- h) Use of HTH Facilities: PAs shall coordinate use of conference rooms or other school facilities for their meetings and events with the Site Manager of individual schools and establish regular meeting time/dates by the start of each school year.
- i) Fundraising Activities and Drafting Annual Plans: In May/June, it is a best practice for the newly elected PA Leaders to meet with their



school Director and begin creating an annual plan for the coming school year ("**Annual Plan**"). Potential elements for the Annual Plan include:

- i) Incorporate appropriate fundraising strategies and community building needs as identified by the School Director;
- ii) Reflect a description of planned PA activities aligning with Director-identified needs and the school calendar;
- iii) Include a calendar of events, planned appeals, and scheduled mass communications;
- iv) Include the PA officer roster with names and contact information for each officer. This strategy will assist in the effective coordination of philanthropic endeavors throughout the HTH community;
- v) Align with applicable regulations for the types of fundraising activities contemplated. Certain fundraising activities, such as raffles, auctions, Scrip/eScrip, and gift card sales, are specifically regulated by law. If a Parent Association intends to include any of these activities in its Annual Plan, the PA Leaders should consult with their PA Representative to ensure that proscribed regulations are observed; and,
- vi) Account for the general benchmark that at least 90% of net proceeds from any volunteer fundraising effort be directly allocated to the school or program for which funds are being raised.

PA leaders having questions about how to establish an Annual Plan may consult their PA Representatives and watch for tools on the website Resource page.

j) Standards of Practice for Parent Associations:

- i) **Conflicts of Interest Standards:** Parent Associations should take steps to avoid conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest, and the appearance of impropriety, may arise in any number of situations. When in doubt, please ask the PA President and/or the Foundation's CEO or PA Representative. In furtherance of this policy, please note the following:

- (1) **Endorsements of Products or Businesses:** Many families at HTH schools own businesses and see value in marketing their products or services to our community. Other parents and families see value in marketing the companies where they are employed. Careful consideration should be given before working with businesses and organizations where there are personal ties. The Foundation's CEO should be consulted if this issue is presented in any regard.

- (2) Fundraisers for Individuals: Personal fundraisers directed to support an individual are to be avoided. Fundraisers held at schools should benefit either the entire school or a group of students (e.g., a teaching team or class of students).
- (3) Avoid Third Party Product Sales: Avoid selling products for other organizations (e.g., wrapping paper, cookie-dough) for a percent "profit" as these types of fundraisers tend to promote the vendor of the items sold to a much greater degree than a charitable cause, and provide low margins of the funds raised back to the school.
- ii) Student Fees: In 2012, AB 1575 was signed into law reaffirming that students may not be charged impermissible fees to participate in any activity that is educational in character. HTH has adopted a Student Fees policy that should be observed by the Parent Associations in the context of their work. Please see the Student Parent Handbook for the HTH Student Fees Policy. Questions regarding what is acceptable should be directed to the Foundation CEO.
- iii) Wellness Standards: Each school that participates in the National School Lunch Program is required by federal law to establish a local school wellness policy. Please see the HTH Wellness Policy and related information on the HTH website: <https://www.hightechhigh.org/about/lunch/#wellness>. Local wellness policies are an important tool for parents and schools in promoting student wellness, preventing and reducing childhood obesity, and providing assurance that school meal nutrition guidelines meet the minimum federal school meal standards. School-based organizations, including the Parent Associations, are encouraged to use healthy food items or non-food items for fundraising. HTH encourages volunteers to consider nutritional quality when selecting snacks for parties and limiting items that do not meet nutritional standards (see sample listing on Wellness section of HTH website). Fundraising events involving food must be done outside of regular school hours.
- iv) Affiliations, Engagements and Endorsements: Fundraising activities should steer clear of engaging companies or organizations which may be considered inappropriate in a public school setting (e.g., alcohol or tobacco companies, religious or political lobbying groups). If there are questions as to whether an organization is

appropriate to engage in HTH community activities, please contact your PA Representative or the Foundation CEO.

- v) Financial Plans for Fundraisers: Volunteers are oftentimes surprised at the amount of cash outlay that it might take to launch and implement a fundraising activity. The Foundation encourages PAs to budget and plan their fundraising activities in order to avoid having the fundraiser consume the proceeds.
- 8) **Revisions and Additional Guidelines:** The Foundation reserves the right to amend and augment the foregoing guidelines at any time.

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