

Bylaws Play an Essential Role in Your PTA

People tend to think of several things when they hear the term “bylaws.” These include “restrictive,” “rules,” and, “Who needs them?” to name a few. But the more familiar you are with unit, council or district bylaws, the more you’ll appreciate their ability to assist in running an organization smoothly. First, look at the bylaws and find the *issue date*. This is easily found on the cover of the bylaws. The most current unit bylaws are cover-dated “June 2011.” If the bylaws do not have this date, it is time to review and revise.

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

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

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 *Toolkit* to learn what the exceptions are. Article III also details what to do should the unit, council or district be dissolved.

Article IV details *membership*: per capita dues and how much goes where, remittance deadlines and other pertinent membership information. This is especially important as membership campaigns begin.

Article V lists *required officers, nominating committee requirements, term restrictions and dates of elections*. This invaluable information is right at hand.

Article VI gives *details of officers and duties as stated in the bylaws*. This covers president, vice presidents, secretary, treasurer, etc. Delve into the information contained in the bylaws.

Article VII could be retitled *Everything You Always Wanted To Know About Association Meetings but Didn’t Know Where To Look*. Literally everything to know about an association or general meeting is contained here: day of the week and months of meetings; which meeting is the election meeting; the budgets, programs and projects which must be approved by the membership; the requirements for calling a special meeting – and there are a few; the quorum required for the meetings; who can make motions, debate and vote; and how often to meet. Finally, this article discusses proxy voting, which is never allowed.

Article VIII is full of information about the *executive board*: who is included on the board, what the board does, how the board authorizes payments, 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). If a special meeting of the executive board is needed, you will find how to do this in Article VIII. Finally, you will find how to legally remove from office a non-attending executive board member or one whose conduct is deemed to be injurious to the organization. “Due process” is fully outlined and must be followed in such cases.

Article IX covers *committees*. Some of the vital knowledge to be gleaned from this section includes how to form committees, how long the committees serve, how to make and file committee reports, and due process for committee chairmen.

Article X covers *council PTA membership*. It states the council to which you belong (if in council), the amount of council per capita dues, and who will represent the PTA at meetings of the council.

Article XI details the *charter procedure* for all local PTAs organized under the authority of the California State PTA, conformity to rules and regulations, and the relationship to National PTA. *The requirements of a “unit in good standing”* are found in this article.

Article XII explains PTA’s *relationship with National PTA and California State PTA* and that the bylaws must not conflict with either National PTA or California State PTA.

Article XIII contains the *Articles of Organization*.

Article XIV states the start and end of the *fiscal year and the identification numbers* for both California State PTA and National PTA. These numbers are essential for filing taxes and other purposes.

Article XV 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 XVI outlines the amendment procedure for bylaws. The *California State PTA Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units* play an essential role in the PTA organization. Open your copy and start learning!