

TERMINOLOGY USED IN BYLAWS

Bylaws: The basic rules by which an organization governs itself. The bylaws of an organization are always superior to and supersede the standing rules and parliamentary authority. One always looks first in PTA bylaws for a ruling on any question; then the standing rules, if they exist; then in Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised. Any changes in bylaws require previous notice to the membership and a 2/3 affirmative vote by the membership.

Bylaw Revision: A complete set of bylaws are submitted as a substitute for the existing bylaws. This requires previous notice to the membership and a 2/3 affirmative vote by the membership.

Bylaw Amendment: The striking out of one or more consecutive words, inserting one or more consecutive words, striking out and inserting in the same place a word or combination of words, or adding a word or consecutive words. Amending requires previous notice to the membership and a two-thirds vote of the membership.

Bylaws Review: Every PTA should review and check over their existing bylaws each year to be assured they meet the particular needs of the association. They should be as brief and concise as possible and neither more restrictive nor more detailed than necessary.

Standing Rules: Relate to the details of administration of the association, rather than to parliamentary procedure. They may change from executive board to executive board or meeting to meeting. They are usually adopted as a need for them arises. They require a majority affirmative vote for adoption, without previous notice having been given to the membership. They are separate from the unit/council bylaws.

Noncommercial: As seen in Article III, the name PTA or the names of its officers shall not be used in conjunction with the commercial activities of other organizations, including but not limited to the promotion of their goods and services. This policy should be applied with judgment, discretion and common sense, recognizing that it is not meant to prohibit all contact or cooperation with such groups.

Nonsectarian: PTAs should be hospitable to all--those with a belief as well as those without a belief--while not supporting one religion over another and according each faith equal respect and consideration. We emphasize the importance of a spiritual faith in the Objects of the PTA. PTA has the right to offer inspirational messages to open or close its meeting; but such messages should be inspirational rather than sectarian.

Nonpartisan: These bylaw provisions address the prohibitions and limitations regarding political and legislative activity. One of the Objects of the PTA is "to secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth." The PTA may propose, support or oppose legislation needed to achieve the Objects of the PTA provided that those efforts do not exceed the limitations placed upon such organizations under the federal tax laws. The PTA may never support or oppose political parties or candidates. Failure to comply with these restrictions could result in a PTA losing its federal tax-exempt status.

Parliamentary Authority: Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is the parliamentary authority adopted by the National PTA. Its adoption by local units is required. See definition of bylaws for use.

Co-President: According to parliamentary procedure, it is customary that only one person shall be elected to serve in any one office. The state PTA may grant exceptions when bylaws provide and circumstances require it. However, if an exception is requested and granted, only one person shall be designated as the official contact person for State and National PTA; and only one set of materials will be sent to the person

so named. If you choose to have co-presidents, be aware that only one of those individuals may vote, not both. If the membership feels the need for additional offices, it should establish additional positions of vice-president. A vice-president serves in place of the president when called upon, holds a recognized office and has the privilege of voting.

Constituent Organizations: The state, region, council and local unit of PTAs that together with National PTA Board of Directors constitute the National PTA.

Annual Meeting: A specific meeting, usually the election meeting or the meeting to adopt the budget, which should be provided for in the bylaws.

Special Committee: A committee selected to perform a specified function, and at the completion of this task it automatically ceases to exist.

Standing Committee: A permanent committee that performs a continuing function, and remains in existence for the life of the association that established the committee.

Executive Board: A group composed of the officers of the association and other persons, usually the chairmen of standing committees, the principal of the school or a representative appointed by him/her. An executive board has the power to act for the association when necessary between its regular meetings. These duties should be stated in the association's bylaws.

Executive Committee: A smaller group, subordinate to the executive board, and usually limited to the elected and appointed officers. Composition and duties need to be specified in the association's bylaws.

Quorum: Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised state: "The minimum number of members who must be present at the meeting of a deliberative assembly for business to be legally transacted is the quorum of the assembly. The requirement of a quorum is a protection against totally unrepresentative action in the name of the body by an unduly small number of persons." It is suggested that the quorum be set to reflect the number of people who could reasonably be expected at any business meeting. Use a number, not a percentage.

Fiscal Year: Twelve (12) months of financial operations. Wisconsin PTA's fiscal year begins on July 1 and ends on June 30.

Ex-officio: By virtue or because of office. When provided in the bylaws, certain offices automatically confer membership on certain committees. Persons who are committee members because of an office they hold are therefore called "ex-officio" members. It is advisable to place in the bylaws "the president shall be an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating committee." Such a rule enables the president to attend committee meetings when he/she desires. He/she can offer motions, speak to motions, and vote. However, the president is not counted in determining a quorum. The vice-president may not take his/her place as an ex-officio member.

Councils: When a city, county, or area has three (3) or more local PTAs, those may be organized into city, county or area councils for the purpose of conferences, leadership training, and coordination of the efforts of local PTA units.

Regions: The state shall be divided by the State Board of Directors into geographical regions. A region consists of one or more counties. Each region has an advisor to help facilitate the affairs of the WI PTA.