The PTA Secretary

*Tools and Tips for Success*

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About this workshop

What makes a good secretary? A sharp pencil? Good attendance at meetings? Learn why this job is key to the functioning of your PTA

This workshop will provide PTA secretaries with the tools and knowledge they need to support the local PTA. The secretary does more than take meeting minutes and send meeting reminders. They are the record keeper for the organization. They also help prepare for PTA meetings and follow-up afterwards.
PTA Mission

To make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.
Topics

• The role of the secretary
• Preparing for meetings
• Activities during the meeting
• Minutes
• Motions
• After the meeting
• Maintaining the records
• A few notes about bylaws and standing rules
The secretary role

Some PTAs have a recording secretary and a corresponding secretary (check your bylaws!)
Most local PTAs have one secretary.

Recording secretary
Meeting responsibilities (including minutes)
Records retention

Corresponding secretary
Internal and external communications
(Note: Some PTAs have communications committees)
Preparing for the meeting

Prepare the agenda - work with the president and board
Send the announcement
  Date, time, location, agenda (why should someone attend?)
Call for reports (officers, committees)
  Reports will be part of the official record
Make sure meeting roles are clear
  Attendance
  Quorum counter
  Time keeper
  Peace keeper
Make sure guests and speakers are informed and prepared
Sample agenda

Call to Order
Approve the agenda
Approve the minutes
Officer Reports (Financial report may be part of this or separate)
Committee Reports (Standing Committees, Special Committees)
Principal’s Report
Unfinished business (List the specific items)
New business (List the specific items)
Announcements
Program/speaker (if part of the schedule; may need to move depending on
  If there is a program or speaker
This item may be moved on the schedule, depending on the guest
Adjournment
During the meeting

Make sure someone is responsible for greeting guests
Ensure a quorum is present
Note changes to the agenda (if any)
Present previous minutes for approval (typically send to members in advance)
Take minutes (use the agenda as a guide)
Record motions and amendments; record votes (someone else may help count)
Be attentive to parliamentary procedures
Meeting minutes

Minutes are legal documents
  The official and historical record of actions for the organization
Minutes should be brief and factual
  State what is done, not what is said
Accuracy is important
  Spelling of names
  Exact wording of motions
Meeting minutes

Include start and end time
Indicate that a quorum is present (after verifying)
Use the agenda as a guide

Officer, financial, and committee reports-
  Indicate the report was presented.
  You may state the topic, not details.
  Refer to the written report (which will be part of the meeting records)

Programs and presentations
  Indicate the speaker and topic
  Refer to meeting materials and handouts
  If necessary for the record, include a few bullet points about the topics covered

Author includes name, position, signature
Recording motions

What is a motion?

A formal proposal by a member (or committee) that the PTA take a certain action or position.

Someone needs to oversee parliamentary procedures when motions are presented, debated, amended, voted on.

Motions are usually part of new business.
Recording motions

Accuracy is essential when recording motions

Consider using motion forms

To record-

Who presents the motion

The exact wording of the motion “It is moved that…..”

Do not record the preliminary comments to the motion

Whether the motion is seconded

Amendments to the main motion

Outcome of vote on amendments and final motion

Do not record the debate of the motion
Not included in the minutes

Opinions and personal comments (example- “Member made an excellent point about....”)

Judgmental phrases and shaming

Overly descriptive language

Detailed reports

Transcript of the meeting

Name of the individual who seconds a motion
After the meeting

Finalize the draft minutes
Collect materials distributed at the meeting

Best practice - share the draft minutes with the officers or board of directors
  - Catch errors early
  - Remind individuals of any action items

Share the draft minutes with the members before the next meeting
  - Attendees should be prepared to amend, if needed, and approve

File the approved minutes
Maintaining the PTA records

Records related to your PTA (paper or electronic)
  Bylaws
  Standing rules (if your PTA has standing rules)
  Meeting agendas and minutes
  Membership list
  Board of directors contact information
  Calendar
  Budget; financial reports; audits
  Position descriptions
  Committee workplans
  Materials from workshops and conventions

Correspondences to and from the PTA
Bylaws

Bylaws govern your PTA association— they establish how the PTA functions; provide transparency and accountability to the membership.

Include information about the following (not an exhaustive list):
- purpose, basic policies, relationship with state and national PTAs
- nominating committee process and elections
- specific officer duties
- executive committee- composition and duties
- board of directors- composition and duties
- information about general membership meetings, including quorum
- bylaws amendment process

All members must have access.

Board members should be familiar with the bylaws. (DON’T wait for an emergency!)
Standing rules (not all PTAs have standing rules)

Supplement and interpret bylaws
Cannot conflict with bylaws
Approved by membership, with no approval by state PTA
Developed and updated, as needed ("We need a rule for that....")

May provide details about-
- Officer duties (beyond what is in bylaws)
- Committee responsibilities
- Format for committee plans of work
- Practices at meetings (roles and responsibilities)

All members must have access.
Summary

The PTA secretary is a rewarding and powerful position. The key organizational information is at your fingertips! You help ensure meetings are organized and productive. Your work supports all of the PTA’s advocacy efforts. You enable the success of the PTA mission…

“To make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.”
Resources

Materials from Free State PTA workshop “How Robert’s Rules of Order can help you run an effective meeting whether in person or virtual” held on August 12, 2021.

National PTA eLearning courses
https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/elearning
✔ Local PTA Secretary Roles and Responsibilities
✔ Using Parliamentary Procedures for Effective Meetings
✔ Taking and Approving Meeting Minutes
Thank you for attending.
Thank you for supporting our students.
Have a wonderful school year.