



Free State PTA 2025 – 2026

Boardsmanship Guide

How to be a Responsible Board Member



Boardsmanship Guide

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Welcome to the Free State PTA family. Thank you for taking the time to use this resource guide as a tool to provide you with some insight into what it means to be a board member for a nonprofit such as the PTA. This guide is suited for all constituent PTA units of Free State PTA in Maryland.

This guide gives PTA board members an overview of their legal responsibilities. Additionally, it will provide guidance on how board members are expected to interact with one another, the knowledge they should have, and manners they should consider when addressing conflict. This guide is a supplement to federal and state laws as well as to your approved constituent PT(S)A bylaws, policies and procedures, standing rules, or other governing documents. A board member is also considered a director.

History of the PTA

The National Parent Teacher Association (National PTA) was founded in 1897 as the National Congress of Mothers by Alice McLellan Birney and Phoebe Apperson Hearst. On Feb. 17, 1897, over 2,000 people—mostly mothers, but also fathers, teachers, laborers and legislators—attended the first convocation of the National Congress of Mothers in Washington, D.C. Twenty years later, 37 chartered state congresses existed. In 1970, the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (National PTA) and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers (NCCPT)—founded by Selena Sloan Butler in Atlanta, Ga.—merged to serve all children.

As the largest volunteer child advocacy organization in the nation, the PTA is a membership-based organization and serves as the conscience of the country for children and youth issues. Through advocacy, as well as family and community education, the National PTA has established programs and called for legislation that improves our children's lives, such as:

- | | |
|--|--|
|  Creation of Kindergarten classes |  Hot and healthy lunch programs |
|  Child labor laws |  Juvenile justice system |
|  Public health service |  Mandatory immunization |
|  Arts in Education |  School Safety |

To read more history of the National PTA please read [here](#) or [alternatively, view History - About PTA | National PTA](#). Membership in PTA shall be open, without discrimination, to anyone who believes in and supports the mission, purposes, and principles of National PTA and pays dues as required.

Mission of the PTA

The mission of PTA is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

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Because PTA is a membership-based organization joining a PTA at the local school or community level inherently provides membership to the state and national levels. There are several benefits to joining the PTA. National PTA dues are \$3.25 and state dues to Free State PTA are \$2.00.

Values of PTA

The values of the PTA underscore the ethics of PTA leaders and volunteers working together.

Collaboration - We will work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to broaden and enhance our ability to serve and advocate for all children and families."

Commitment - We are dedicated to children's educational success, health, and well-being through strong family and community engagement, while remaining accountable to the principles upon which our association was founded."

Diversity - We acknowledge the potential of everyone without regard, including but not limited to: age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, legal status, marital status, mental ability, national origin, organizational position, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual, orientation, and work experience."

Respect - We value the individual contributions of members, employees, volunteers, and partners as we work collaboratively to achieve our association's goals."

Accountability - All members, employees, volunteers, and partners have a shared responsibility to align their efforts toward the achievement of our association's strategic initiatives."

Purpose of PTA

In terms of objectives, the PTA has the following six purposes.

- A. To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community, and place of worship, and throughout the community;
- B. To raise the standards of home life;
- C. To advocate for laws that further the education, physical and mental health, welfare, and safety of children and youth;
- D. To promote the collaboration and engagement of families and educators in the education of children and youth;
- E. To engage the public in united efforts to secure the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being of all children and youth; and,
- F. To advocate for fiscal responsibility regarding public tax dollars in public education funding.

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Principles of PTA

The basic principles of PTA are:

- A. The association shall be noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan.
- B. The association shall work to engage and empower children, families, and educators within schools and communities to provide quality education for all children and youth, and shall seek to participate in the decision-making process by influencing school policy and advocating for children's issues, recognizing that the legal responsibility to make decisions has been delegated by the people to boards of education, state education authorities, and local education authorities.
- C. The association shall work to promote the health and welfare of children and youth, and shall seek to promote collaboration among families, schools, and the community at large.
- D. Commitment to inclusiveness and equity, knowledge of PTA, and professional expertise shall be guiding principles for service in this association.

Basic Policies of PTA

The following are basic policies of PTA.

Despite other provisions in the Free State PTA and National PTA bylaws, the association may only engage in activities allowed for such associations as defined under the Internal Revenue Code:

1. PTAs are exempt from federal income tax under Section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code; and as a charitable organization,
2. Contributions to PT(S)As are tax deductible under Section 170 (c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Upon the dissolution of this association, after paying or adequately providing for the debts and obligations of the association, the remaining assets shall be distributed to Free State PTA whose purposes are in accordance with those of National PTA.

The association or members in their official capacities shall not, directly or indirectly, participate or intervene (in any way, including the publishing or distribution of statements) in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office; or devote more than an insubstantial part of its activities to attempting to influence legislation by propaganda or otherwise.

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Nonprofits in Maryland

All PTAs under Free State PTA are governed by nonprofit federal and state law in addition to their bylaws, Robert’s Rules of Order (latest edition), standing rules and policies and procedures. More specifically, the Maryland Corporations and Associations is the core state reference regarding Maryland nonprofits. According to the Maryland Code, Corporations and Associations § 2-412 (read as section 2-412), every Maryland corporation is required to have the following officers:

1. A president
2. A secretary (*recording*); and
3. A treasurer

A Maryland Corporation may appoint additional officers as allowed by its bylaws. The secretary is a critical position on the PTA executive committee and one of only three positions that are required by law as a nonprofit organization in Maryland.

According to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) a nonprofit is an organization organized and operated exclusively for religious, charitable, scientific, testing for public safety, literary, educational, or other specified purposes. PTAs/PTSAs are tax-exempt organizations which have two main benefits.

1. The nonprofit organization is not liable to pay any federal income tax.
2. Donors to the organization may deduct their charitable contributions from their own taxes.

Overall, PTAs are an independent 501(c)3 nonprofit advocacy associations. The board of directors and committees decide how PTA programs like scholarships are managed. PTAs maintain their own governance documents and other written processes that are in place to grant funding for school projects, for example.

PTAs in Maryland

As the largest child advocacy association in the nation as well as in the state, PTA has existed in Maryland since 1915, and Free State PTA was chartered as the official state PTA congress serving as a branch of National PTA in Maryland since 2021. The PTA supports all students and advocates for public schools, including public charter schools.

The term PTA is interchangeable with PTSA (Parent, Teacher, and Student Association). The latter is typically found within middle and high schools and often denotes that there may be a student board member as delineated in their bylaws.

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Maryland has over 660 PTAs with a membership of over 65,000 members. According to National PTA, Free State PTA is a Tier 1 state PTA congress which puts the state level PTA on par with significantly geographically larger states such as New York, Texas, California and Florida, Pennsylvania, and Utah, etc.

There are seven council PTAs located in the following areas in Maryland: the counties of Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Harford, Howard, Frederick, Montgomery and Baltimore City. Council PTAs serve as an extension of Free State PTA and help give the state PTA congress capacity to administer training, establish new local PTA units, conduct field service, and facilitate advocacy initiatives as well as programs at the county level. To establish a council PTA, there must be three existing local PTA units in good standing.

Additionally, Free State PTA has divided PTAs into regions listed below.

Western	Eastern Shore	Southern	Central
Garrett Co,	Cecil Co.^	Charles Co.	Anne Arundel Co.
Allegany Co.	Kent Co.^	Calvert Co.	Baltimore City
Washington Co.	Queen Anne’s Co.^	St. Mary’s Co.	Baltimore Co.
Frederick Co.	Caroline Co.+	Prince George’s Co.	Harford Co.
Carroll Co.	Dorchester Co.+		Howard Co.
	Talbot Co.+		Montgomery Co.
	Somerset Co.~		
	Worcester Co.~		
	Wicomico Co~		

- As defined by the Maryland Office of Tourism**
- ^Subcategory - Upper Shore
- +Subcategory – Mid Shore
- ~Subcategory – Lower Shore
- Bolded Jurisdictions indicate existence of a Council PTA**



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What is Boardmanship

Boardmanship refers to the skills, knowledge, and conduct expected of individuals serving on a board, particularly in the context of governance and decision-making. It encompasses understanding the board's role, responsibilities, and ethical conduct, as well as effective communication, teamwork, and adherence to rules and procedures.

If this is your first time serving on a board, this guide will provide you with the fundamental basics on what is required as well as expected of you. Also, you will learn about leading practices, PTA compliance standards, and strategies on being a responsible board member as you may serve in two capacities: as an officer individually and a board member collectively. Those duties may be delineated in the bylaws, policies and procedures, or standing rules, other governance documents.

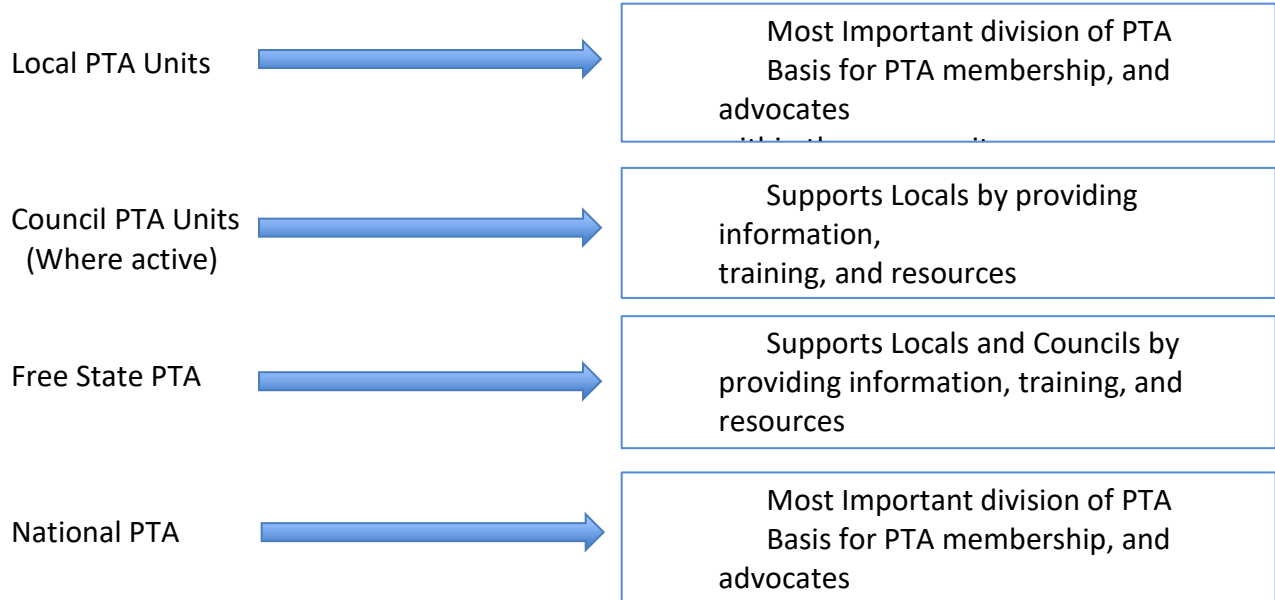


A bright idea would be to allocate in the budget funds for all board members to attend the conventions of Free State PTA and National PTA.

PTA 101 Basics

Structure of PTAs

As a member of the board of directors it is fundamental to understand the structure of the PTA.



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Constant Reminders to Members

- Your PTA is an independent nonprofit association.
- Your members get to make the decisions, approve bylaws, elect officers, and approve budgets and plans.
- Your PTA may partner with and focus efforts on a school.
- Your principal is not in charge of the PTA. It is a partnership.
- Your PTA should coordinate with the principal and always follow school policies.

The PTA is a self-governing business that maintains a 501(c)(3) nonprofit status.

Requirements of PTAs

Local unit PTAs are nonprofits, known to the IRS as 501(c)(3) organizations.

They must not violate certain restrictions that apply to their 501(C)(3) classification.

The appropriate IRS form 990 must be filed every year.

PTA must be organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational, or scientific purposes.

Funds cannot be sued for private benefit

A PTA cannot engage in any political activity. The IRS considers political activity as working for or against a candidate for public office at any level.

PTAs are encouraged to advocate on behalf of the needs of their PTAs as nonprofits and

Contributions from donors may be deductible on federal and state income taxes

PTAs are advocacy organizations. The mission and goal is to advocate. A PTA only fundraises to support the mission of PTA. PTAs that excessively raise funds to support programs or efforts beyond the mission of PTA run the risk of facing IRS penalties or being taxed.

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Remember the 3-to-1 guideline: For every fundraising activity, there should be at least three non-fundraising programmatic or advocacy projects aimed at helping children, their families, teachers, or the school community at large.

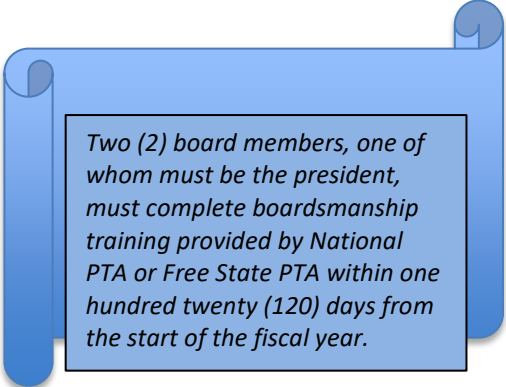
In extreme cases, the PTA could lose its 501(c)(3) classification.

The PTA Authority – Bylaws

The bylaws are the governing rules of the association. Problem solving is much easier when you know the bylaws and every PTA member should have a copy of them or access them from their leaders or on a PTA website. It is important to read the bylaws as it is a required document that needs membership approval and needs to be submitted for review by Free State PTA every three years even if no changes are being made. Local PTAs as well as Council PTAs must use the bylaws template provided by Free State PTA and found on the fspta.org website.

Standards of Affiliation (SOA)

Standards of Affiliation are a set of compliance standards set by the Free State PTA Board of Directors that determine affiliation with Free State PTA. These standards maximize the effectiveness and success of constituent PTA and upholds as well as protect the National PTA name, identity, and brand. All board members are responsible for making sure that their PTA unit is compliant – **not just the president.**



Two (2) board members, one of whom must be the president, must complete boardsmanship training provided by National PTA or Free State PTA within one hundred twenty (120) days from the start of the fiscal year.

Every PTA must:

- ◆ Be incorporated in Maryland.
- ◆ Be registered with Maryland Secretary of State as a fundraising organization.

Every PTA must annually:

- ◆ File the appropriate IRS Form 990.
- ◆ File a Personal Property Report with the State of Maryland.
- ◆ Have liability insurance. (*We use AIM Insurance*)
- ◆ Input officer contacts for at least President, Treasurer, and Secretary into Givebacks.
- ◆ Pay National and Free State PTA dues for at least 10 members by March 31st.
- ◆ Submit updated bylaws at least once every 3 years to Free State PTA for approval

Givebacks and SOA Submissions

Givebacks is a free online platform that many PTAs nationwide use to:

- ✓ Manage and Track Memberships
- ✓ Pay Dues
- ✓ Submit Compliance Documents

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- ✓ Distribute Newsletters
- ✓ Orchestrate Fundraising campaigns
- ✓ Sell Merchandise at the PTA Store, etc.

How to Upload in Givebacks

- ◆ Compliance documents can be uploaded into Givebacks under the Compliance section -> Enter submissions.
- ◆ Officer contacts can be entered into Givebacks under the Compliance section -> Update officers.
- ◆ Membership can be paid using Givebacks or by check using the Membership Form found at www.fspta.org/resources.
- ◆ By entering information into Givebacks you provide your Council and Free State PTA evidence of your compliance.
- ◆ Compliance documents entered into Givebacks will be approved or rejected to provide real-time feedback.

Furthermore, Givebacks offers training on a multitude of matters at the website, givebacks.com

Good Standing

While good standing is not defined in the bylaws, it is a subset of requirements under Standards of Affiliation (SOA), that is considered the minimum standard to be identified as a PTA. When PTAs are in good standing, it makes their members eligible for participation in the Reflections Art Program, scholarships and awards via Free State PTA, eligible to serve as a delegate at the state and national level PTAs, and so much more. There are only four submissions that the PTA needs to make to be considered in good standing:

- Officer Contact List
- Declaration Page of AIMs Insurance
- The Bylaws
- Remission of Dues

NOTE: Along with bylaw templates, and membership forms, SOA checklists, FAQs, and SOA documents may be found on the Free State PTA website at fspta.org.

Responsibilities of the Board of Directors

As an Officer, Chair, etc.

In the bylaws template, Article VII describes the duties of officers: president, vice president(s), treasurer, and secretary. Because the Board of Directors may include chairs of committees, a

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student, parent, teacher, or administrator representative, it would be wise to develop job descriptions and duties for those members of the BOD.

Board members must write plans of work and present reports at the general membership meetings, etc. They are also expected to write succession plans and develop a transition document to help their successor fill in their new role.

As a Board of Director (BOD)

Not only does each officer and member of the board of directors have their individual job descriptions but the BOD has a collective role as a body. The local unit PTA and council PTA bylaws template outlines the responsibilities of the Board of Directors in Article VIII, Section 4 as follows:



A great book to read that is short and poignant is *STEP UP! How to be an Excellent Association Board Member* by Elizabeth Bailey and Nancy Schmidt, 1st Edition.

Section 4. The duties of the board of directors of this PTA/PTSA shall be to:

- a. transact necessary business in the intervals between general membership meetings and such other business as may be referred to it by this local PTA/PTSA;
- b. create standing and special committees;
- c. approve the plans of work of the standing committees;
- d. present a report at the general membership meetings of this local PTA/PTSA;
- e. select an auditor or a financial review committee to review the treasurer's accounts;
- f. approve and submit an annual budget to this local PTA/PTSA's general membership for adoption;
- g. approve routine bills within the limits of the adopted budget; and,
- h. fill vacancies other than president.

Board members are the elected officers, standing committee chairs, the principal, possibly others (all according to the bylaws). Only dues-paying members may serve on the Board of Directors.

- Be informed about the PTA's mission, services, policies, and programs.
- Attend all board and committee meetings and functions, such as PTA Reflection Awards.
- Review agenda and supporting materials (reports) prior to board and committee meetings.
- Serve on committees or task forces and offer to take on special assignments.
- Inform others about the PTA and advocate for its programs, advocacy and association in general.
- Know the role of committees.

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Required

- *Assist the board in carrying out its fiduciary responsibilities.
- *Obtain training.
- *Identify quorum.
- *Understand association dues and governing structure.
- *Adhere to the National PTA and Free State PTA [position statements](#), policies, legislative priorities and [resolutions](#).

Expected

- *Suggest possible nominees to the board and committees.
- *Keep up-to-date on developments in the field of the Association (education, child advocacy, family engagement, etc.).
- *Develop board norms.
- *Follow conflict-of-interest and confidentiality policies.
- *Abide by the [National PTA branding guidelines and style guide](#).

Team Building

It's important for all board members to build a team and develop a consensus.

Team building is defined as

an energetic group of people who are committed to achieving common objectives, work well together and enjoy doing so, produce high quality, planned results.

What is Team Building

The core of team building addresses the following questions.

1. What are we here to do?
2. How shall we organize ourselves?



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3. Who is in charge?
4. Who cares about our success?
5. How do we work through problems?
6. How do we fit in with other groups?
7. What benefits do members need from the team?

A lot of team building can occur during the summer months at a Board Retreat where board members meet to plan out the PTA year, exchange ideas, have team-building exercises that foster intermingling and familiarity with others, possibly set meeting dates, and strategize on their achieving their goals. It is also a great time to have a motivational speaker come to energize the board and boost their morale as they look forward to the new school year.

10 Basic Board Responsibilities

Team building can help board members take pride in what they represent and bolster their ability to adhere to 10 basic board responsibilities:

1. Follow the mission and purposes of PTA.

- a. Decisions are made based on PTA mission and purposes.
- b. Boards advocate on behalf of PTA's mission.
- c. Boards set goals to fulfil their mission.
- d. And boards create plans and job descriptions that align with PTA mission achievement.

Ask: Does the PTA mission drive the work my board does?
Is every board member prepared to advocate on for PTA's mission?

2. Select the chief executive/chief staff member:

- a. Determine what staffing is necessary for your PTA to thrive.
- b. Develop appropriate job descriptions for staff members.
- c. Determine what skills, expertise, and personal attributes are needed by your chief staff person and research industry standard compensation accordingly.
- d. Conduct an informed staff search and seek all candidates appropriate for the job.
- e. Ensure smooth transition for new staff and for new staffing structures.
- f. Plan for future and assess the level of staffing required to meet PTA's mission now and in the future.

Ask: How will volunteer trends affect the future or my association?
What type of staffing will we need in five years and how do plan to make that happen?

3. Support and evaluate the chief executive/chief staff member:

- a. Your PTA clearly delineates the difference between staff work and volunteer work.

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- b. Staff and volunteer have complementary responsibilities that do not overlap.
- c. Your board provides a supportive environment for staff, ensures frequent two-way feedback.
- d. Your board ensures a yearly staff evaluation takes place.

Ask: Do we provide a non-interfering work environment for staff?
Do we understand state employment laws?
Does every board member know how to work with staff?

4. Ensure effective planning:

- a. Set long- and short-term goals and create a strategic plan.
- b. Your board agrees on outcomes and holds the board accountable to achieve those outcomes.
- c. Your board assesses forward progress, monitors plans, and makes necessary adjustments.
- d. Your board looks at the big picture and plans for future.

Ask: Is at least one of our meetings used for planning each year?
Do we all agree on the same definition of success? What do we measure?
Do we consider societal and economic changes as we plan?

5. Ensure adequate resources:

- a. Boards ensure adequate “people” resources—professional staff, volunteers with a variety of skills and contacts, board members that ensure diversity of opinion and perspective.
- b. Boards ensure a reliable stream of financial resources by diversifying funding streams and easing reliance on membership dues.
- c. Boards ensure influence by growing and diversifying your membership.
- d. Boards ensure professional support to assist in governance and organizational compliance.
- e. Boards ensure all resources are used wisely on actions that get results.

Ask: Do we assess expenditures vs. outcomes? Do we have a sponsorship plan?
Does our board donate to PTA?
Who is our professional attorney, parliamentarian and accountant?

6. Monitor and strengthen programs and services:

- a. Boards discuss and brainstorm ways to assess, improve and effectively deliver programming and services.
- b. They poll/survey members/volunteers to evaluate the needs and effectiveness of services.
- c. They monitor attendance and outcomes of events.
- d. Evaluate the effectiveness of PTA’s current structure to provide service and meet needs.
- e. Boards evaluate programs and services on their impact on children and families and achieving the mission of PTA.

Ask: Do we set aside time to discuss and evaluate the work we do?
Do we ask our members what they want?
When was the last time we did away with or added a new service, program or event?

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7. Enhance PTA's public image:

- a. Board are aware of PTA's public image—inside and outside of PTA-- and clearly message success, value and achievement.
- b. All board members are PTA ambassadors, speak positively of PTA, protect PTA's image.
- c. All members know the state constituent association's goals, mission, and successes.
- d. The greater community knows PTA, has a high opinion of PTA, and recognizes PTA as a trusted partner and successful association.

Ask: Do our members know what we do?
Are all board members able to clearly message PTA value?
Do we use all types of media to get the word out?

8. Ensure legal and ethical integrity:

- a. Board members are all aware of state and federal compliance requirements and diligently ensure compliance.
- b. Board acts transparently, providing accurate info about revenues, expenses, and function to government agencies and to members.
- c. Board holds itself accountable to mission/purpose, bylaws, and values of association and maintains the trust of its members.

Ask: Do we have a Code of Ethics? Do we hold each other accountable?
Does the entire board see and understand federal and state filings?
Do we have good financial oversight and written policies?

9. Build a competent board:

- a. Board understands board composition matters and creates policy and environment that lead to boards with diverse skills, opinions, and perspectives.
- b. Board has a recruitment policy and practices that seeks and grows new leaders and engages entire board in this process.
- c. Board ensures orientation for new members and continuing education and development for all members.
- d. Board assesses regularly its overall function and the function of individual board members.
- e. Board members hold each other accountable, and clear job descriptions and plans of work exist.

Ask: What skills does our board need to achieve the PTA mission now and in the future?
Do we assess our needs? Do we prioritize board recruitment, orientation and diversity?
Do we have a plan?

10. Protect PTA assets and provide financial oversight:

- a. Board has sound financial planning and reviews and approves budget.

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- b. Board receives and reviews regular financial reports and monitors budget expenditures.
- c. Board ensures adequate reserves are in place.
- d. Board minimizes unnecessary risk, is aware of potential liability, and properly insures.

Ask: Is everyone on the board able to read a financial report?
Are practices and policies in place to protect assets? Do we have adequate savings?
Do we require a professional audit on a regular basis?

Decorum During Debates

How board members interact with each other during meetings is likely to reveal itself at PTA sponsored functions where the public, namely, students and their families, teachers and administrators, and partners can see it. This is why emphasis on the mission of PTA is placed at the beginning of each meeting, assembly, or training, to remind ourselves why we assemble, plan programs, advocate and have family engagement activities.

Boards only have authority as a group, not as individuals.

Each and every board member is bound by the decisions that the board makes collectively.

The board meetings are most impactful when there is an agenda and there is business to conduct. That business primarily is in the form of motions, a formal proposal made to bring a subject before an assembly for its consideration and action. These proposals should be written and if the board is considered a small board, a second isn't necessary to help open up debate. Yet, if the board is operating under large board norms (normally 12 or more people), then a second is needed to allow for discussion, not necessarily agreement.

Keep in mind the following recommendations when debating on a motion:

- Board members should RESPECT each other. *(one of the PTA values)*
- It's not personal; there may be disagreements but remember the debate is about ideas, not relationships. (refer to people with Mr. or Ms. (PTA Title), i.e. Madam Secretary or Mr. Treasurer)
- Disagree without being disagreeable. *(take a position on the merits of the proposal and not the maker)*
- When the board of directors takes a position, ALL board members are obliged to support that stance or be silent. (the Board of Directors has ONE voice)
- Board business remains with the BOARD. *(deliberations are confidential until a decision is publicized)*

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Lastly, debates are timed so the President or Chair should appoint a timekeeper and keep of how many opportunities everyone has had to speak. The chair should manage the debate and allow everyone to have a voice during a situation that may be heated or calm.

Addressing Conflicts

“Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress.” ~Mohandas K. Gandhi

Conflicts are struggles that can arise during an active disagreement of opinions or interests. Conflict is not a dirty word. In fact, they can be healthy so don't fear them. Conflicts may remain unresolved but can still be managed. And they are natural as well as inevitable. Here are just a few suggestions as it relates to harnessing conflict.

Conflict Management

- Believe that both parties want to come together
- Assume the best intentions
- Keep an open mind
- Resolve differences as win – win
- See the other person's point of view
- Talk about issues – not people
- Keep talking

PTA leaders can get ahead of conflicts by establishing board norms, which are a set of written or unwritten rules that guide and influence the relationships between board members and board decisions. These norms provide guidance and direction to board members, particularly in areas where policy is unclear or additional counsel is needed. Board etiquette is part of a larger board meeting protocol and is essential to good corporate governance. Board culture is defined by the unwritten rules that influence directors' interactions and decisions.

Additionally, the bylaws can help resolve conflicts. The field service teams of either the Free State PTA or Council PTA, if applicable, can help provide guidance on resolving conflicts. Board members, especially those elected by members, should only be removed as a last resort. Because PTA belongs to its members who run the association through elections and bylaw approval, boards of directors must avoid subverting members' intent. Board members do not have to like each other to be effective as a team; boards simply must learn to work with each other.

Fiduciary Duties of the Board of Directors

When an individual becomes a board member, either through election or appointment, that person becomes legally obligated to conduct themselves prudently and responsibly and ensure

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the organization conducts itself in a manner so that the best interests of the organization and its members are protected and preserved.

- **Duty of Care** — Requires officers and directors to exercise ordinary and reasonable care in the performance of their duties, exhibiting honesty and good faith. Attend meetings and pay attention to the organization’s activities and operations.
- **Duty of Loyalty** — Requires undivided allegiance to the association when making decisions affecting the association. In other words, you cannot put personal interests above the interests of the association.
- **Duty of Obedience** — Requires us to act in accordance with PTA’s bylaws, and other governing documents, as well as all applicable laws and regulations. Therefore, every board member has a legal responsibility to read and understand them.

Duty of Care

The Duty of Care:

1. Describes the level of competence that is expected of a board member and is commonly expressed as the care that an ordinarily prudent person would exercise in a like position and under similar circumstances.
2. Means that a board is expected to exercise reasonable care when they make a decision on behalf of the organization, as they would in their personal and professional life.
3. Requires that you pay attention to the organization’s activities and operations. Board members are expected to make decisions with the organization’s best interest in mind.

Examples include:

- Board members do no harm. They protect PTA assets, including the PTA’s name and reputation.
- Board members advocate for and participate in their PTA’s work.
- Board members act in good faith using their best judgement and base decisions and actions on what is in the best interest of PTA.
- Board members attend meetings, participate, educate themselves on issues, research, discuss, and stay informed

Instances of a Breach

- Excessive meeting absence.
- Failure to ask questions about a proposed action

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Duty of Loyalty

Duty of Loyalty:

1. Means board members are expected to put the interest of the organization before their own personal and professional interests.
 - There is a conflict-of-interest policy* embedded in the nonprofit law regarding charitable board members.
 - It is still a best practice for organizations to have a formal conflict-of-interest policy.
2. Means board members intend to make sure that the organization is foremost in decision-making by board members.
 - That includes an expectation that board members recuse themselves if there is a vote that could benefit them or their family or with which you have a conflict.
 - The laws set an expectation of loyalty to the organization first and foremost.

Examples include:

- When making PTA decisions, board members place their PTA's interests over those of individuals, including family and friends.
- Board members maintain confidentiality about sensitive PTA issues and information and allow a safe atmosphere for decision making.
- Board members disclose all potential conflicts of interest and do not personally gain from board participation.

Instances of a Breach

- Choosing and hiring a company owned by a board member who has a professional stake or will receive a commission. For example, if the board hires an HVAC company owned by a board member.
- Renting meeting space from the family of the board member or to the family of a board member.

The above examples may be acceptable if the conflict is disclosed ahead of time, a board discussion is held, and a proper and equitable bidding process is conducted. It is important to note that what may be allowable under the law may be different than what is considered appropriate in public opinion.

Examples that will likely not be considered acceptable include:

- Any of the above without a process, discussion, or vote.
- Allowing family members to stay rent-free in organization-owned space when others are charged and pay a fair market rate.

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Duty of Obedience

Duty of Obedience:

1. Requires board members to comply with the applicable federal, state, and local laws.
2. Requires adherence to the organization's bylaws and policies.
3. Requires service as guardians of the organization's mission.
4. Requires honoring donor intent.

Examples include:

- Board members do not create standing rules and policies that are more restrictive than bylaws.
- Board members follow the applicable sections of the National PTA Bylaws and keep their associations in good standing by abiding by Free State PTA "good standing" status and Standards of Affiliation Policy.
- Board members are faithful to PTA's mission, using the mission as the foundation to rule and decision-making.

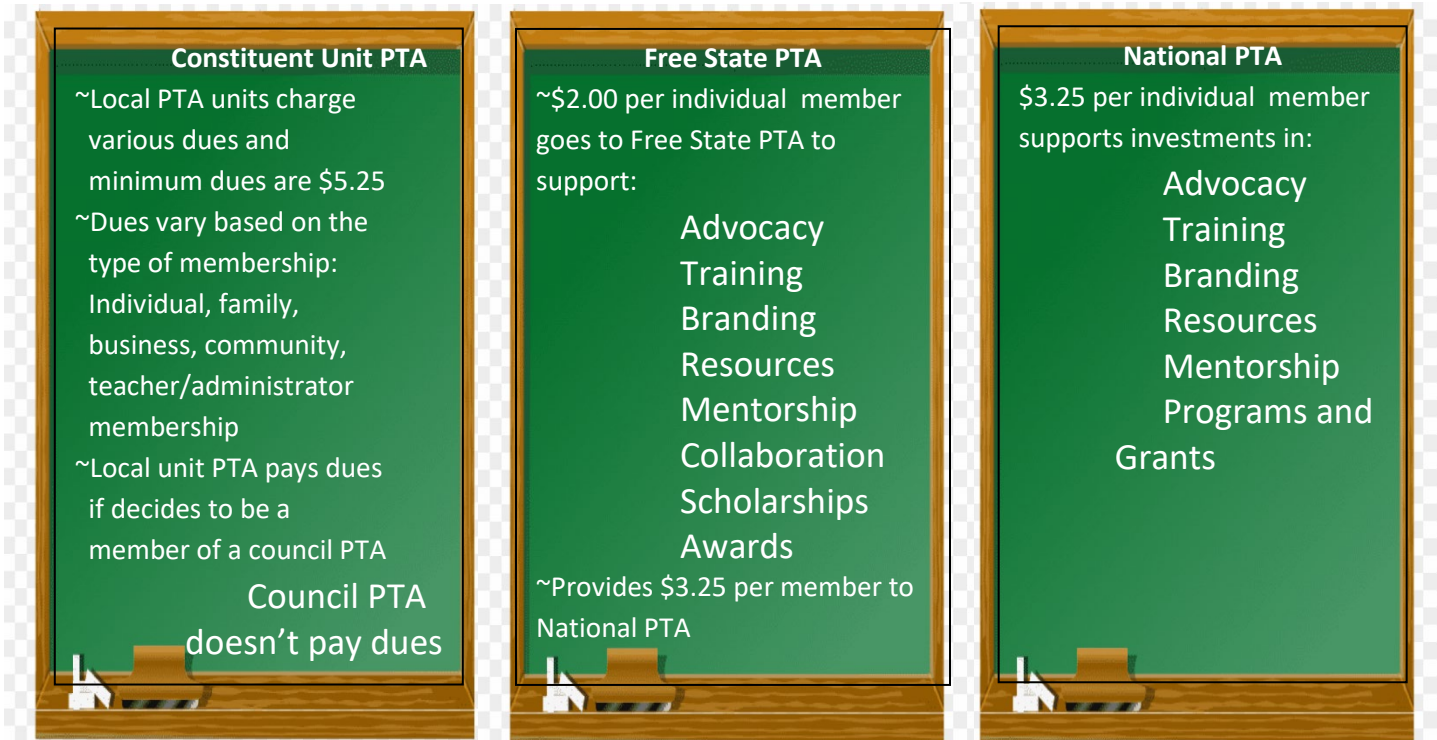
Instances of a Breach

- Knowing that the homeless shelter is supposed to have multiple places for egress but allowing one exit to remain blocked.
- Accepting a donation for a specific project but spending that money on something else.
- Not following the financial policies requiring separation of duties when handling money.

Benefits of PTA Membership

Membership in PTA shall be open, without discrimination, to anyone who believes in and supports the mission, purposes, and principles of National PTA and pays dues as required in these bylaws. Membership at the local unit level automatically makes individuals members of the Free State PTA and National PTA. Membership of council PTAs is optional for local unit PTAs. Council PTAs do not pay dues to Free State PTA or National PTA. Membership of council PTAs are comprised of local units as a whole and not actual individuals. Hence, council PTA dues will be higher than individual membership dues.

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Leading Practices

- **Consent Agendas:** The board should include consent agendas in its board meeting agendas.
- **Executive Sessions:** The board should have regularly scheduled executive sessions.
- **Board Diversity and Inclusion:** The board should be intentional in its recruitment and engagement of diverse board members and foster a culture of inclusivity.
- **Board Evaluation:** The board should conduct a comprehensive self-assessment approximately every two years to evaluate its own performance.
- **Bylaws Review:** The board should review the bylaws periodically and ensure timely amendments when necessary.
- **Board Job Description:** The board should have a written job description outlining the responsibilities of the full board and of individual board members.
- **Managing Conflicts of Interest:** The board should adopt a conflict-of-interest policy that defines what a conflict of interest is and how it is managed.
- **Personal Giving:** If the PTA/PTSA engages in fundraising, then every board member should make a meaningful personal contribution



A bright idea would be to place at the bottom of each agenda, the status of the Board's compliance submission, the date of submission, and by whom to make sure the board remains accountable to SOA and Good Standing.

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according to his or her means (while not conflicting with any legal stipulations). The board should attain 100-percent board giving.

- **Board Retreat (summer planning meeting):** The board should include an annual retreat in its meeting schedule and articulate the retreat’s objective and purpose.
- **Board Size:** The board should determine its optimal size based on its needs.

Types of Committees, Bodies, Meetings, and PTAs

Types of Committees

- **Special:** A special committee is a committee constituted by the board for a specific purpose and for a limited time. It is not a permanent committee.
- **Standing:** Committees that a board uses on a continual basis. They can be established in the association’s bylaws. They remain in existence permanently for the life of the assembly that created it, unless they are voted out by the membership. Committee members serve a term specified in the bylaws.
- **Subcommittee:** A committee can appoint a subcommittee, which are responsible to and report to the committee and not to the board.

Bodies of Reference

- **General Membership:** Everyone who purchases annual membership in your PTA.
- **Executive Committee:** Elected Officers of the Constituent Unit
- **Board of Directors:** This body includes the officers of a constituent PTA/PTSA, the chairs of standing committees, the delegates to the PTA Council, and the principal of the school or a representative appointed by him/her. *For council PTAs, the Board includes at least all elected officers and any additional persons identified in their bylaws.*

Types of Meetings

- **Committee:** Needed to consider various items of business and operational matters outside the regular meetings
- **General (regular):** Only members can vote, and it is composed of general membership.
- **Annual:** This meeting is usually the last meeting of the year where the state of constituent PTA association may be shared, elections occur, and business that generally concludes at the end of the school year is conducted.
- **Closed:** Meetings restricted to members only.
- **Convention:** These are the annual meetings of the Free State PTA as well as National PTA. At convention, one must be a delegate to participate in the business of voting on bylaw amendments, resolutions, and in elections. However, all paying members may participate in the training workshops.
- **Executive Session:** This is a meeting that is held privately to discuss sensitive topics pertaining to the removal of an officer, confidential matters of a constituent unit, or specific employment or personnel concerns. May apply to any meeting where the body goes into an executive session which is a time to discuss and decide on confidential

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matters. It is intended to protect the innocent and assure confidentiality about sensitive matters. Board members don't take any parliamentary action during executive sessions. A member must make a motion to move into executive session. Another member must second the motion. Upon concluding the meeting, a member must move out of the executive session and another member must second that motion.

- **Interest:** This meeting is called either by individuals wanting to establish a local unit PTA or PTA representatives wanting to establish a council PTA.
- **Open:** Meetings at which the public (non-members, media) may attend but may have to follow certain rules.
- **Special:** Outside of a regular meeting that happens periodically, for a specific purpose.

Types of PTAs

- **Local PTAs:** PTA at the local level is linked to the state PTA and the national PTA organization and usually represents a particular school community.
- **Council PTA:** A constituent unit chartered by Free State PTA that services local PTA units in its immediate area. The Free State PTA Board of Directors establishes procedures for the organization and chartering of council PTAs. Council PTAs may set their own dues and local PTA units have the option to join them.
- **Early Childhood PTAs:** Preschool groups often round up parents from several neighborhoods and various early-childhood programs. They involve child-care providers, grandparents, and others concerned with the education and development of children from birth to age five.
- **Parent-Teacher-Student Associations:** PTSAs provide youth members with the opportunity to make a difference by developing leadership skills, learning about the legislative process, increasing their self-esteem, and contributing to the school. In turn, adult members gain a new perspective for program development, as well as acquire a better understanding of the youth of today.
- **Special Education PTAs:** PTA believes that all children have the right to a quality public education, which allows each child the opportunity to reach his or her fullest potential. [Special Education PTAs](#) are designed to help parents advocate for special-needs children.

PTAs may be at charter schools as well as private schools, and PTAs may be virtual.

Governance Documents

Governance documents are those that are an essential part of the association's structure and rules. It provides a framework for addressing issues systematically. Nonprofit governance documents typically include articles of incorporation, bylaws, and conflict of interest policies. These documents define the organization's structure, purpose, and how it operates. Other important documents include meeting minutes, strategic plans, and annual budgets.

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Provisions in a particular governing document cannot be more restrictive than provisions found in a higher-ranking governing document. For example, if the state bylaws do not have eligibility requirements to hold office, the state policies and procedures document cannot impose eligibility requirements. The bylaws must be amended to set office requirements.

There is a [hierarchy of governing documents](#) that moves from federal and state laws to National PTA governance documents and Free State PTA governance documents. Lastly, the local unit PTA governance documents as well as council PTA governance documents, if applicable. The chart below describes the governing entities of constituent PTAs which also include National PTA governance documents, particularly for state PTA congresses.

Federal Law	State Law	Bylaws
Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Code	Code of Maryland Regulations	Standing Rules or Standard Operating Procedures
Group Exemption	Articles of Incorporation	Policies and Procedures
990 Form	Attorney General Secretary of State	Parliamentary Procedures

Legal Nonprofit Terminology

- Articles of Incorporation:** A legal instrument that sets for the name and objectives of the association and any other additional information as the state of Maryland may require to incorporate as a nonprofit.
- Nonprofit:** In the case of Free State PTA, it is a tax-exempt state organization under the federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax code under Section 501(c)(3), as operating exclusively for charitable, religious, scientific, educational, or certain other purposes recognized by the IRS.
- COMAR:** COMAR is the acronym for Code of Maryland Regulations.

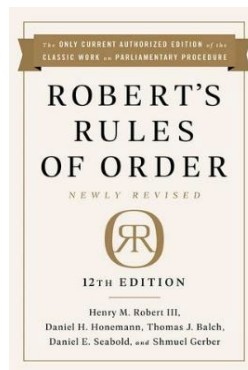
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4. **Tax-Exempt:** Tax-exempt organizations are recognized under the federal Internal Revenue Service (IRS) as operating exclusively for charitable, religious, scientific, educational, or certain other purposes recognized by the IRS.
5. **Resident Agent:** A resident agent is a person or entity that is designated to accept service of process on behalf of the entity in the event of a lawsuit. The address of a Maryland resident agent must be an actual physical location and not a post office box.
6. **Group Exemption:** The IRS sometimes recognizes a group of organizations as tax-exempt if they are affiliated with a central organization.

Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedures are a set of rules for conducting orderly meetings that accomplish goals fairly. Most PTAs use Robert’s Rules of Order. Benefits of parliamentary procedure include the following:

- Justice and courtesy for all
- Maintenance of order
- Consideration of one item at a time
- All sides get heard.
- Ability for each member to provide input
- Majority rule
- Maintenance of the rights of the minority



Record Retention Guidelines

A PTA’s standing rules should state who maintains and updates the legal documents, how many copies will be kept, where the copies are kept, and who is responsible for any passwords. Digital and paper records are acceptable as well as on a USB drive. Routine e-mails are kept for a year. Many PTAs maintain records in a three-ring binder (or several binders) with tabs for different categories of documents. Also, a copy of records may be maintained in secure online storage.

Record	Length of Maintenance	Length of Maintenance	Length of Maintenance
Signed (approved) Minutes	Permanently file		
Board Roster	Permanently file		
Membership Roster	Permanently file		Double Check

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Employer Identification Number (EIN)	Permanently file		
Bylaws & Standing Rules	Permanently file		
PTA Charter	Permanently file		
Confidentiality, Ethics, and Conflict of Interest Policy	Permanently file		
Tax and Legal Correspondence	Permanently file		
Insurance Policies and Claims	Permanently file		
Contracts and Leases		7 years	
Budgets adopted at meetings		7 years	
Financial Report		7 years	
Grant Agreements		7 years	
Bank Statements			3 years
Deposit Forms			3 years
Expense Forms			3 years
General Correspondence			3 years

Contacts

National PTA

1250 N. Pitt Street Alexandria, Virginia 22314 Phone: 1-800-307-4PTA Fax: (703) 836-0942
E-mail: info@pta.org; Website: www.pta.org

Free State PTA

5730 Cottonworth Ave., Box 20924, Baltimore, MD 21209
E-mail: info@fspta.org; Website: www.fspta.org

Council PTAs

[Anne Arundel County Council of PTAs](#)
[PTA Council of Baltimore City](#)
[PTA Council of Baltimore County](#)
[PTA Council of Frederick County](#)
[Harford County Council of PTA](#)
[The PTA Council of Howard County](#)

info@aaccpta.org
presidentptacbc@gmail.com
president@bcptacouncil.org
president@frederickpta.org
president@hccpta.org
office@ptachc.org

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[Montgomery County Council PTA](#) _____ office@mccpta.org

Frequently Asked Questions and Answers (FAQ)

1. Can guests speak at meetings?

It depends on their purpose and if there is no objection from the body. If the guest is a trainer or observer from the Free State PTA then it is likely that the person may speak. However, permission from the chair may be needed as well.

1. During debate, what's the proper way to get my question answered by the motion maker?

All inquiries during the debate must be made through (directed to) the chair. The chair will appoint a person (namely the motion maker) to answer but if the question can be answered by the chair, he or she has the discretion to answer it directly.

2. As a board member, who do I call when I have problem with the president?

If there is a concern you have with the president, your first line of contact should be the field service support of your council PTA, if applicable. If there is no field service team, you can inquire of the council PTA president. And, if there is no council PTA, then you can contact Free State PTA at info@fspta.org and your inquiry will be channeled to the appropriate board member who addresses your concerns.

3. Where can I get a copy of my unit bylaws? Leadership in my PTA cannot find them.

Ordinarily, the secretary or president should have a copy of a constituent PTA bylaws. However, if they don't, try to access the latest copy of your local PTA or council PTA bylaws from a previous officer. The principal may have such contact information. If that doesn't work, outreach to the Governance Team of Free State PTA at info@fspta.org. There is a chance that they may have the most up to date version depending on when it was last submitted.

4. What do we do when the treasurer's report isn't given or the minutes aren't provided.

Its disconcerting when a report or minutes aren't provided in a timely fashion, especially in writing. However, if there is a unique or special circumstance that caused this delay, please try to be understanding. However, if it is habitual, the Board may want to develop guidelines on when they should be done and distributed to membership a certain number of days or weeks prior to the following meeting. If it continues, maybe the officer needs help or may want to consider volunteering in another capacity.

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5. How can I add items to the agenda?

Prior to the meeting, the president should inquire of agenda items to help compose the agenda. On the president's behalf, the secretary may send out the correspondence. At the meeting, after establishing a quorum, the chair (namely, president) will inquire if there are any edits to the agenda. At that time, you may add business items as well, but it may go last on the agenda. No vote is needed to add agenda items. Sometimes there are board norms to discuss business items first due to time constraints.

6. Why isn't the Free State PTA President-Elect called a Vice President?

The Free State PTA President-Elect is akin to a Vice President. The only difference is that the term, "Elect" signifies that he or she has been elected the next President to succeed the current one. Free State PTA elects its president two years (one term) in advance. This helps the President-Elect transition to President smoother given the two-year training period. Vice Presidents don't always run for president, but the President-Elect always become the president barring something unforeseen doesn't happen.

7. Do all council PTAs have an office?

No. For the time being only the Montgomery County Council PTA and the PTA Council of Howard County have employed staff at an office.

8. Can any other board member sign contracts outside of the President?

Typically, no. Because the President is the lead representative of the PTA, any binding agreements should be signed by him or her with approval from the Executive Committee or the Board of Directors. However, in lieu of any governance document stipulating such, the Executive Committee or Board of Directors should exercise a *Duty of Care* and ask itself what an ordinary prudent body would exercise in a like position and under similar circumstances. The title of President grants such authority to sign contract with awareness and approval of a body he or she presides over. The only exception would be to grant such authority to a Vice President should the President was unable to fulfill his or her duties.

9. What is a small board

A small board has a dozen or less members and conducts business with flexibility by not using the strict rules of parliamentary authority. *Motions need not be seconded in a small board or a committee.*

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PTA Glossary

3-to-1 guideline: For every fundraising activity, there should be at least three non-fundraising programmatic or advocacy projects aimed at helping children, their families, teachers, or the school community at large.

Abstentions – To abstain means to not vote. Abstention doesn't mean the board member is in favor of or against a vote – it simply means the board member made a conscious decision to not vote. Abstentions do not count in tallying the vote negatively or positively. When members abstain, they are in effect just contributing to a quorum. Members have the right not to vote on a particular issue or office for election.

Adopt – Accept or agree to, usually a motion or recommendation.

Adjourn (adjournment) – This refers to moving to end the meeting. A member would say, “I move to adjourn,” and another member would second the motion. If the majority then votes to adjourn, the meeting is over. However, if business is done, the presiding officer may adjourn the meeting with no motion.

Amend - To change the wording of a motion by inserting, adding, or striking out, or by substitution.

Approval of Minutes - The secretary addresses the chairman and reads the minutes. Or with the approval of the group, the minutes may be posted, distributed in advance or assigned to a committee of three or more for approval or correction, especially for the last association meeting.

Association - The voting body for all action taken, including adopting bylaws, adopting the program and budget for the year, electing the nominating committee, electing officers, and approving all money spent by the organization.

Board of Directors (Board) – The governing body of the PTA as defined in the constituent PTA bylaws. These individuals represent the members and have a legal obligation to fulfill the PTA's mission and meet the PTA's goals.

Bylaws – The governing rules of the association. Any change in bylaws requires a two-thirds vote of the association with thirty days' prior written notice to the membership. The Bylaws should be reviewed every year and need to be submitted to Free State PTA for good standing every three years.

Call of the Meeting – Meeting notice

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The Board (of Directors) – An administrative, managerial, or quasi-judicial body of elected or appointed persons whose functions are determined by responsibilities and powers delegated to it or conferred on it by PTA bylaws and other governance documents.

Call to Order – When the presiding officer begins the meeting upon establishment of a quorum and ideally on time. For example, the president may rap the gavel once and calls the meeting to order by stating “The meeting will now come to order.”

Constituent Unit - All PTAs chartered by Free State PTA - local PTAs/PTSAs, council PTAs, statewide PTA, special education PTAs, community PTAs, etc.

Convention - The annual business meeting where representatives from constituent units may elect state officers, amend bylaws, adopt resolutions, and attend workshops. The National PTA and Free State PTA Conventions are usually held in June and July, respectively. Units should budget enough money to cover the cost of registration, hotel room, transportation, and food for the allowed number of delegates based on the unit’s membership.

Council PTA – A division of and chartered by Free State PTA that services local PTA units in its immediate area. Normally, it is composed by a group of three or more local units. The Free State PTA Board of Directors establishes procedures for the organization and chartering of council PTAs. Council PTAs may set their own dues and local PTA units have the option to join them. The purposes of council PTAs are in their bylaws.

Debate – Discussion on the merits of a pending motion (question). In other words, whether the proposal under consideration should or should not be agreed upon.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) – DEI is a practice well supported by National PTA and its constituent bodies. The definition of DEI may be found in the National PTA [resource guide](#). Additionally, there is a [local leader guide](#) for DEI. Also, the National PTA has a [multicultural guide](#).

EIN - Employer Identification Number. The EIN is necessary for a unit’s tax return. A PTA receives their EIN upon organization of their PTA.

Executive Committee - PTA executive officers compose the executive committee who are tasked with the following four duties:

1. Transact business referred to it by the board of directors
2. Elect standing and special committee chairs
3. Act in emergencies between meetings of the board of directors, and
4. Submit a report at each board of directors meeting

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Executive Session – A meeting conducted in secrecy, that discusses sensitive or controversial information. Minutes must be taken and approved at that executive session. Only the body in which the executive session took place may be privy to the minutes and discussion, unless they voted to lift the secrecy. All discussions that take place during executive session should be held in the strictest of confidence. Violators can be disciplined, removed from office, or sued.

Ex-officio – The president serves as ex-officio a member of committees (except for the Nominating Committee; and likely disciplinary committees) and has the same rights and privileges as other committee members but is not obligated to attend meetings of the committee and is not counted in determining the number required for a quorum or whether a quorum is present.

Favor – To support a pending decision as in a motion or resolution; often denoted with an “aye” in a voice vote.

Fiduciary Duty - Accepting legal responsibility for duties of care, loyalty, good faith, confidentiality, and more when serving the best interests of a beneficiary. Fiduciary duty refers to the relationship between the fiduciary and the principal or beneficiary on whose behalf the fiduciary acts.

Founders’ Day - Each year in February (17th), PTA honors the three founders as well as past and present PTA leaders. Through special programs and events, PTA also attempts to increase the awareness of its members and the community by highlighting achievements, activities, projects, and goals. Founders’ Day can be celebrated at the local unit, council, and state levels.

FY/SY – Acronyms for fiscal year and school year.

Givebacks – An online membership platform that many PTAs nationwide use to pay dues, submit documents to adhere to Standards of Affiliation, distribute newsletters and email correspondence, sale PTA merchandise and overall manage PTA affairs.

Good Standing - While good standing is not defined in the bylaws, it is a term of art used to describe a subset of requirements under Standards of Affiliation (SOA), that is considered the minimum standard to be identified as a PTA. When PTAs are in good standing, it makes their members eligible for participation in the National PTA programs, scholarships and awards via the Free State PTA, eligible to serve as a delegate at the state and national level PTAs, and so much more.

Governance – Includes all the elected and appointed people who serve on the board and committees.

Installation of Officers - A ceremony that officially declares new officers (*The announcement of the results of the election is not the installation. That is done by the president after voting takes place. The absence of an installation ceremony does not negate the fact that the officers were*

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elected and are to serve in those positions - unless the bylaws state otherwise, which should not be the case)

Lay on the Table – Temporarily sets aside a pending motion to enable consideration of something needing immediate attention.

Letter of Interest (LOI) – A document expressing interest in being considered for a specific office, position or award. It serves as a preliminary expression of interest and may be a required step in the nomination process. The LOI often outlines the nominee's qualifications and why they are a suitable candidate, potentially including a brief overview of their relevant experience and achievements.

Membership Dues - Membership dues may differ in amount in each PTA. To alter a unit's dues the approval of membership must be achieved. Each member shall pay annual dues as determined by the local PTA. The local dues shall include the local, state, and national PTA portions, as well as the council PTA dues, if applicable.

Majority Vote – More than half of the votes cast by persons entitled to vote, at a regular or properly called meeting.

Membership Dues - Membership dues may differ in amount in each PTA. To alter a unit's dues the approval of membership must be achieved. Each member shall pay annual dues as determined by the local PTA. The local dues shall include the local, state, and national PTA portions, as well as the council PTA dues, if applicable.

Membership List - Each PTA is required to maintain a list of the PTA's current members, including dates of membership and contact information. A current list of members shall be kept on file with the president, secretary, and membership chair. The membership list should be available at association meetings from the secretary to determine who is eligible to vote and be provided to the nominating committee. The membership list of the association shall be for the exclusive use of the PTA associations and shall not be available for distribution or purchase by any other organization or commercial entity.

NOTE: According to the Bylaws of Free State PTA, Article V, Subsection 4: Free State PTA shall maintain a list of local constituent association leaders and members with current, accurate contact information, which shall be shared with National PTA.

Motion - A formal proposal made to bring a subject before an assembly for its consideration and action. It is considered business and only PTA members of its respective PTA may make or vote on a motion.

Objection – A term used to stop a possible decision from moving forward. It doesn't require a second and is not debatable or amendable.

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Objection to the Consideration of a Question – A term used to stop a motion from being considered. It doesn't require a second and is not debatable or amendable. It requires a $\frac{2}{3}$ vote against consideration to sustain (adopt) the objection.

Oppose - To contest a pending decision as in a motion or resolution; often denoted with an "nay" in a voice vote.

Parliamentary Procedure - A set of rules for conducting orderly meetings that accomplish goals fairly. Most PTAs use the latest version of Robert's Rules of Order.

Plan of Work (Workplan) - A document that helps everyone communicate more clearly about the project. It usually includes goals and project objectives, project tasks, task assignments (if working with a team), milestones, key deliverables, required resources, timelines, including due dates, and budgets.

Point of Order - A member calls to attention of the presiding officer (chair) in a meeting, usually the president, that the rules have been breached. For example, not taking a second, or failing to state the outcome of a vote.

Postpone – Ends debate by delaying a vote and disposes of the matter to a future time.

PTA or PTSA – Acronyms for Parent, Teacher, Association or Parent, Teacher, Student Association

Question - A member may say, "I call the question" to end a debate or discussion. The motion must be seconded and voted upon without further discussion. A call for the question requires a two-thirds vote to adopt. If it is adopted, the chair must immediately put the motion to a vote. The chair will proceed with "the question is on.... All those in favor of ... say aye..... All those opposed say no".

Quorum – The minimum number of members required for a PTA to conduct business. PTAs cannot vote on business matters unless a quorum is present. A quorum should be defined within the bylaws.

Ratification - The approval by the membership at an association meeting of an action taken by an entity that was not authorized to take the action or action taken at a meeting with no quorum.

Recuse - Some boards use the terms abstention and recusal interchangeably, yet they have different meanings. Abstention refers to withholding a vote. By contrast, **recusal** refers to board members who remove themselves from a particular matter, especially regarding a conflict of interest. While technical, an abstention is a decision not to vote on a particular matter whereas a recusal refers to withdrawing from the entire matter.

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Reflections - The National PTA Reflections program is PTA's cornerstone arts program used to encourage students to explore their talents and express themselves. Students in grades Pre-K – 12 who participate in the Reflections program reflect on a specific theme and create original artwork in the following six categories: dance choreography, film production, literature, musical composition, photography and visual arts (including 3D Art).

Robert's Rules of Order - A book of parliamentary procedure used as the basis for conducting meetings. The rules contained in the current edition shall govern the National PTA and its constituent organizations when they are not in conflict with the bylaws of Free State PTA, National PTA or Articles of Incorporation.

Roster - A listing of all current PTA officers' and contact information.

Running from the Floor – Sometimes referred to as open nominations, these are names not on the slate submitted to the president for election to an office (members can self-nominate or be nominated by someone else self). Bylaws, special rules of order, or standing rules can be developed to ascertain when members may run from the floor. (Unless the bylaws state otherwise, the president **MUST** call for nominations from the floor the day of elections)

Second – After a motion has been introduced, a second means that another member agrees that the motion should come before the meeting and not necessarily that a member favors the motion. The requirement of a second is the chair's guidance whether to state the question on the motion and thus, placing it before the assembly. In accordance with Robert's Rules of Order, 4:10, *motions need not be seconded in a small board or a committee*. Such a decision on what is defined as a small or large committee can be stated in standing rules.

Secretary Pro Tem – If the secretary is absent a secretary pro-tem should be elected OR the president may appoint a person to take minutes. It should be noted in the minutes who the designated appointee is for that meeting. ***Pro tem refers to any person temporarily acting in place of.***

Slate - A list of all individuals who have been nominated for a particular position.

Special Committee (Ad hoc) - A type of committee that is appointed as the need arises to perform a specific task, then is dissolved.

Standards of Affiliation – A set of standards set by the Free State PTA Board of Directors that determine affiliation with Free State PTA. These standards maximize the effectiveness and success of constituent PTA and upholds as well as protects the National PTA name, identity, and brand.

Standing Committee - A permanent committee created to perform a continuing function. The details of administration of an association. They are adopted by majority vote as needs arise by

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the body they govern - this is the definition of a special committee. Standing committees can only be authorized in the bylaws UNLESS the bylaws state otherwise.

Standing Rules – They are sometimes called, “standing operating procedures” by some organizations and provide more details on the policies and procedures than there are in the bylaws. They cannot conflict with the bylaws, and they can be changed more easily than the bylaws. Not every PTA has standing rules.

Table (lay on the table) – Disposes of a matter and kills a motion.

Vote – A process conducted when members are asked to cast a decision on a motion. They may either provide a vote via a show of hands, voice, or ballot. In the case of voting electronically, a vote may be conducted electronically via a poll. There is no absentee voting.

Unanimous Consent – A method to adopt a motion or take an action without a vote by not taking the usual steps of stating the question and putting the motion to a formal vote. “Unanimous consent” does not necessarily imply that every member present is in favor of the proposed action; it may only mean that the opposition, feeling that it is useless to oppose or discuss the matter, simply acquiesces.