

BYLAWS BASICS



What are Bylaws?

Bylaws are the basic rules by which an organization governs itself. The bylaws are always superior to and supersede the standing rules and parliamentary authority. For a ruling on any question, look first in the bylaws, then PTA standing rules (if they exist), and finally Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised.

Why are Bylaws Important?

The structure and specific rules of a PTA are contained in its bylaws. Rules provide for a smooth-running association. Bylaws are a guide for the PTA, but should not unnecessarily restrict its operation. If something is not working, the PTA should consider amending the bylaws.

General Bylaws Information

- Each local PTA/PTSA unit and council must review its bylaws every two years.
- A current (not more than two years old) copy of the PTA's bylaws must be on file with the district/region director or designated representative of the state board of directors. If approved bylaws do not exist, the current Illinois PTA Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units or Councils shall be in effect. Your district/region director can supply you with these.
- All articles and sections preceded by double stars (**) are in conformity with the Regulations of Section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code. All articles and sections preceded by the number symbol (#) are required by the Illinois PTA. Both double starred (**) and number symbol (#) articles and sections are required to be in local PTA/PTSA unit and council bylaws. They must appear word for word exactly as they appear in the Illinois PTA Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units or Councils. These articles and sections do not have to be voted upon by the PTA membership. They were adopted by the Illinois PTA convention delegate body.

Create a Bylaws Committee

The committee should:

- Familiarize itself with the PTA's bylaws and ensure that the local PTA/PTSA unit or council abides by its adopted bylaws.

BYLAWS BASICS



- Help all members become familiar with their bylaws. Various articles or sections could be explained at a meeting or in a newsletter article.
- Review the bylaws early in the PTA year and determine what changes are needed.
- Use the Illinois PTA Bylaws for [Local PTA/PTSA Units Template](#) or [Councils Template](#), and complete all blanks. Suggested wording is given in parentheses. If the wording offers a choice, select what fits the PTA's procedure. Do not include the underline or parenthesis in the final copy of the bylaws. Statements in parentheses and underlined, following bylaws sections, are suggestions for the PTA to consider. The statement itself should not appear in the bylaws.
- Use the proper form when stating a number in the bylaws, which is to state the number as a word, then as a numeral in parenthesis. For example, if three days' notice is required to call a meeting, it would be stated "three (3) days' notice."

The committee chairman should:

- Prepare the proposed amendments; present them to the executive board for their approval to present them to the general membership for adoption; and send the amendments to the district/region director or designated representative of the state board of directors, for their review, prior to presentation to the membership.
- Give notice of proposed amendments to the membership at the previous meeting or in writing thirty (30) days before the general meeting at which the amendments will be voted upon. For councils only, proposed amendments should be presented by member units to their own membership for consideration and approval, prior to being adopted at a general council meeting.
- Present the proposed amendments to the membership at a general membership meeting, for their adoption. The adoption of bylaws amendments requires a two-thirds affirmative vote.
- Send two copies of all adopted amendments to the district/region director or designated representative of the state board of directors for final approval. Upon approval, the district/region director or designated representative of the state board of directors will sign, date, and return one copy, which becomes the official copy. A copy should be given to each board member and all members who request a copy. Council bylaws should be given to each member local PTA/ PTSA unit.