

# Three key elements govern all PTAs

All PTAs chartered in California are governed by three key elements of organizational framework – bylaws, standing rules and procedures.

## Bylaws

**Bylaws** define the primary characteristics of the association and how it will function. Unit, council and PTA district bylaws all contain shared characteristics: name, the purpose of the organization, how to become a member, officers required and their duties, meetings to be held, committees and how they function, parliamentary authority and amendment procedures. The bylaws are so important that they cannot be amended without prior notice to the membership and must be approved by a two-thirds majority of that membership. The California State PTA also requires that proposed bylaws amendments be submitted through channels to the California State PTA for approval *prior* to submission to the membership for adoption. Bylaws cannot be suspended.

## Standing Rules

**Standing Rules** provide details and policies for administering the business of the association. For example, the bylaws state that the executive board will meet monthly during the school year, and a standing rule provides details as to the day of the month for that meeting. A standing rule may not contain any directions or procedures contrary to any provision in the bylaws. Standing rules may be changed by the association under the same conditions as any act of the group. A standing rule may be suspended for a particular meeting with a majority vote of the present and voting members.

## Procedures

**Procedures** provide guidelines and instructions for handling specific functions of the association. All officers and committee chairmen should maintain procedure books that detail instructions for their particular positions, and the instructions should be updated annually. Procedures must not conflict with either bylaws or standing rules. Procedures may be changed without membership approval.

As your new board members begin their plans for the coming term, make sure that part of the process is a thorough review of the bylaws, standing rules, and procedures of your organization.

