Basic Parliamentary Procedure:
Did You Know?

- Following basic parliamentary procedure at PTA meetings ensures order, promptness and fair and impartial treatment for all.

- The parliamentary authority for PTA is Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

- Bylaws provide the basic framework for the PTA purposes and the governing structure.

- Bylaws may never be suspended.

- Bylaws should be reviewed annually to determine if any changes are needed. Follow the California State PTA procedures to amend bylaws.

- Standing rules provide detail regarding procedures for the PTA.

- A standing rule may be amended at any association meeting by a majority vote. (A two-thirds vote is required if no previous notice has been given.)

- Each board member should have a copy of the bylaws. At the beginning of a new term of office, the bylaws should be reviewed by the entire board.

- Every board member needs to know and understand the bylaws – “the rules of the game.”

- A copy of the bylaws must be provided to any member upon request.

- The executive board should be trained in parliamentary procedure in order to model it for the membership.

- The parliamentarian advises the president who rules on points of order and procedural questions.

- A motion chart may be laminated and placed between the president and the parliamentarian for easy reference at meetings.

- Many district PTAs keep a supply of standard Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSAs and Council Bylaws available for purchase.

- Units should provide the council and district PTA with a copy of their bylaws.

- A PTA position may be filled by only one person.

- One position equals one vote.

- Minutes should contain records of all actions taken by the group, including the exact wording of every motion, the maker of the motion and the actions taken on that motion.

- The secretary or chair should request that the motion be in writing if the motion is long or involved.
• Only one action may be considered at a time.

• Any action (spending money, adopting programs, etc.) to be taken requires a motion.

• When several PTA members wish to speak to the same issue during a meeting, the parliamentarian may assist the president by noting the names of those wishing to speak and the order in which they should be called.

• Only members of the group that is meeting have the right to attend unless the group grants permission for guests to attend. However, the right to vote cannot be granted to a guest.

• PTA bylaws define each separate meeting group – committee, executive board and association – and assign separate responsibilities and authority to each group.

• A special meeting may be called to consider one or more items of business requiring urgent action before the next regular meeting.

• Voice vote is the regular method of voting on motions requiring a majority vote. If the chair believes the vote will be close, he may call for the vote by a show of hands.

• A rising vote is the regular method of voting on motions requiring a two-thirds vote. It is also used to verify an inconclusive voice vote.

• The chair may order a “rising count” or “count of the house” to verify an inconclusive voice vote.

• A two-thirds vote is required to change any action previously adopted by the group, such as bylaws or the budget.

• A standing rule may be adopted to limit the length of time for any motion and to limit the number of speakers on each side of the issue and the time to be allotted for each speaker.

• Voting by proxy is prohibited.

• The president protects the impartiality of the chair by exercising the right to vote (or by abstaining) only when the vote will affect the outcome, i.e., to break a tie vote, or when the vote is by ballot.

• Members must be given written notice of all association meetings, along with an agenda that includes all action items to be considered, at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.

• Only members are legally qualified to make motions, discuss and vote.