

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.

