Electronic Membership FAQ’s

1. **What is the electronic membership system?**
   - The electronic membership system is an electronic platform that allows people to join PTA at their local unit online.
   - The system (Totem) was developed specifically for California State PTA and it collects the dues payment, provides a receipt and an electronic membership card, and simultaneously distributes the per-capita dues payments among the various levels of PTA.
   - The electronic membership card can be stored on a smartphone and has the potential to link to member perks.
   - The system allows for easy membership renewals in July with automatic reminders.

2. **What are some of the benefits to a local PTA?**
   - Local PTAs will be able to let members join online with a credit or debit card at no cost to the PTA.
   - Local PTA leaders and members will be able to invite friends and family to join with a just a click.
   - The system will reduce the need to print out forms, collect checks and make trips to the bank.
   - Membership campaigns will be able to utilize social media, school all calls, email blasts and other electronic forms of communication to increase awareness and membership.
   - Local PTAs that use TOTEM are included on the California State PTA website and state publications and materials direct people to the site to join.
   - Anyone, anywhere will be able to join any PTA that participates in the program.

3. **How can I get my council or unit started?**
   - For more information on getting started, visit the following page: [bit.ly/starttotem](bit.ly/starttotem)
   - If you are ready to go, you can request to start the process by using this form: [bit.ly/totemsignup](bit.ly/totemsignup)

4. **How do members know their credit card information is secure?**
   - The electronic membership system (Totem) uses Stripe, a well-known and well-regarded payment processing system. The storage of card data will comply with the [Payment Card Industry Data Security Standards (PCI DSS)](https://www.paymentcardindustry.org/security/ ). Stripe has been audited by an independent PCI Qualified Security Assessor (QSA) and is certified as a **PCI Level 1 Service Provider**. This is the most stringent level of certification available in the payment industry.
   - We will not store any credit card information on our California State PTA servers.

5. **How much will this cost?**
   - There is no cost for a local unit to use the system.
   - Each member that joins using the electronic membership system pays a $1 convenience fee per membership. This covers all the processing fees, and other costs of the system. The convenience fee is separate and does not reduce the portion of dues deposited in the local PTA bank account.
   - This may save local PTA units money if they are currently mailing membership cards or paying bank fees on cash and check deposits.
6. **How will local PTA unit leaders know who the members are?**
   - The electronic membership system generates a list of members, which local leaders can access and keep track of members.
   - The leaders can manually enter other members (those who paid with cash or check) into the system.
   - Leaders can also download the list to an Excel spreadsheet to be used with any membership tracking system or communication they like.

7. **Can members still join at a Back to School table?**
   - Of course! Members can join on their smart phones by following the unique link or QR code at the back to school table or they can join with a check or cash the way they have in the past.
   - Some PTAs offer a small incentive for members who join before the back to school night and show their membership card.

8. **Can I enter and manage members who join with check or cash? Will the members receive an electronic membership card?**
   - Yes. As long as the local PTA is participating in the electronic system, and the member is willing to give an email address, the PTA leaders will be able to manually upload members’ names and emails into the system, and the member will receive the PTA electronic membership card and appear on the membership list.

9. **Can I use the system if my unit has different dues and membership levels?**
   - Yes, units who have different dues structures will be able to enter that information into the system.

10. **How will a member search for the PTA they would like to join?**
    - Local PTAs using TOTEM have a unique link to just their PTA and by clicking on that link people will be able to join that particular PTA.
    - Anyone going to the California State PTA website will be directed to the closest PTA through geo-location so they do not have to scroll through a long list of PTA’s.
    - They can also start typing in the name of the PTA and the widget on the website will fine your PTA.

11. **What are the steps PTA leaders will complete to connect and verify a bank account?**
    - The electronic membership system will use a two-factor authentication to connect a bank account.
    - There is a visible record for the user who create or modify any account information.
    - The electronic membership system requires a second authorized leader to confirm new account information.

The system will be available to all PTAs in California as long as they are in good standing, able to provide basic banking information and agree to participate in the program.

For further questions, you may also reach out to [emembership@capta.org](mailto:emembership@capta.org).