

Key Role – Parliamentarian

- Assists the president to manage meetings and advises on parliamentary procedure
- Chairs bylaws committee to review unit bylaws each year and revise bylaws every three years
- Arranges nominating committee's first meeting, providing information on nomination and election process

Getting Started

Preparation – To know more about your new position, review files from last term including your unit bylaws and standing rules. It's also worthwhile to talk to the outgoing parliamentarian for advice and tips about your new role.

Visit California State PTA – www.capta.org – and learn more about:

- PTA resources and templates on parliamentary basics for meetings
- Bylaws review process
- Free *e-Bylaws* system online to revise and update unit bylaws
- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*

Meetings – Meet with the incoming president to identify ways to work together to make board and association meetings even more effective.

At the first board meeting, hand out copies of the bylaws and go through them together. This helps everyone learn more about PTA and who does what on a board.

To make board meetings run smoothly, provide information on parliamentary basics such as how to make a motion.

Important Tasks – Contact your PTA council/district to verify that it has a copy of your current bylaws on file. And, remember to update the username and password for access to California State PTA's *e-Bylaws* system online.

How Tos

Parliamentarians act as a facilitator for bylaws, consultant to manage meetings and mentor for members on parliamentary procedure.

Here are some quick tips to help you get started.

Facilitator – Bylaws are the legally binding document of your PTA as a nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization. They provide the basic framework of your unit and how it functions.

Information on your board, committees, membership, meetings and elections is in the bylaws.

Details on PTA policies and required procedures for board rosters, financial reports, audits, dues and bylaws review are also supplied.

In addition, your unit's legal name and identification numbers – issued by National and State PTA as well as Federal and State government agencies for tax filings – are listed in bylaws.

As a facilitator, be prepared to know more about how bylaws shape your unit and how it operates as a nonprofit organization.

A good first step is to create a quick bylaws' reference guide to use throughout the term.

Go online – www.capta.org – and download the resource, *Running Your PTA Made Easy*. Here, you will find the *Unit Bylaws Information Summary* sheet: a one-pager to print and fill in with details on your PTA.

During the year, you also take the lead in reviewing the bylaws.

If changes are needed, ask the president to appoint a bylaws committee to prepare revised bylaws and send them to your PTA council/district parliamentarian. In turn, he or she will submit your bylaws to California State PTA for approval.

Consultant – Assisting the president to manage meetings well is another aspect of your new position.

For instance, if a question on parliamentary procedure comes up, the president might ask for your advice before making a ruling. That's why knowing more about *Robert's Rules of Order* for parliamentary basics will prove useful.

Start the year right by working with the board to set ground rules for meetings.

This might include agreement on how many can speak in favor and against a motion and how much time is allowed for each speaker. If these agreed norms work well, consider adding them to your unit's standing rules.

To make meetings run smoothly, encourage participants to focus discussion on the agenda item at hand. You can also help everyone stay on task by acting as a timekeeper so meetings start and end on time.

And, remember to keep a speakers' list for the president to use when people raise their hands to be recognized. That way everyone has an equal chance to be heard.

Mentor – Members often rely on the parliamentarian to clarify how meetings are conducted and how to participate to achieve your PTA's main goals and objectives.

Be proactive to raise awareness of how parliamentary procedure is a reliable way to run meetings. This includes understanding the five, basic 'rules of the game':

- Order – One business item at a time
- Equal Opportunity – Chance to participate
- Justice – Fairness | Everyone understands
- Right of Minority – To be heard
- Right of Majority – To decide

To explain the basics, provide how tos at meetings with mini-training or handouts on motions, voting and the rules of debate. For wider outreach, post these tips on your PTA website, e-news or social media.

You also mentor the nominating committee. This includes setting up its first meeting and conducting an election for the chairman.

To help it get started, supply information from your bylaws on nominating and election procedures. Take time to explain what positions to fill and who is eligible to serve on the board for the upcoming term.

Did you know? ... PTA Board Members:

- Adhere to PTA financial procedures as outlined in bylaws and State and National PTA guidelines
- Protect members' privacy by utilizing member information for PTA work only
- Attend PTA sponsored workshops or trainings
- Maintain a current procedure book to pass on to a successor
- Work together as a team to improve the lives of all children and their families

Other Useful Information

Resources:

California State PTA – www.capta.org

- PTA Leaders tab and more
- *California State PTA Toolkit*
- *Running Your PTA Made Easy*
- *Insurance and Loss Prevention Guide* – Mailed annually to PTA presidents
- *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised*

Free Online Services:

- Officer Contact System – To enter officer and board member information and generate useful reports
- e-Bylaws – To revise and update PTA unit bylaws

National PTA – www.pta.org

- PTA Leaders tab and more
- E-Learning Workshops
- *Back-to-School Kit*

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