

Bylaws & Standing Rules



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The Importance of Being a **PIG** – PTA In Good standing



Arkansas PTA is making special efforts to ensure that every PTA in Arkansas understands the importance of being a “**PTA in Good Standing**”. We have two specific goals.

- **Inform** PTA leaders why being a “**PTA in Good Standing**” is important.
- **Educate** PTA leaders on the six steps to achieve and keep a “**PTA in Good Standing**”.

We call it our BEAPIG Promotion because the term “BEAPIG” (be a pig) is an acronym for the six components of maintaining the good standing status of a local unit PTA.

Arkansas PTA wants every PTA to “BEAPIG” or be a “PTA in Good Standing”.

- B** **Bylaws**; PTA bylaws must be current and on file with the state PTA office. Bylaws are required to be renewed every three (3) years on December 1st.
- E** **Elected Officers Form**; PTAs must keep a list of current PTA officers on file with the state PTA office.
- A** **Audit Form**; PTAs must prepare an Audit Report and submit it for review with the state PTA office.
- P** **Paid Membership Dues**; PTAs must have submitted all state/national PTA dues with the state PTA office.
- I** **Insurance**; PTAs must purchase bond insurance with a policy date of November 1st. If a PTA uses AIM, AIM will provide a list of insured PTAs to the state PTA office.
- G** **Government Agency Reporting**; PTAs must file a Form 990-N (ePostcard) or Form 990-EZ with the IRS and submit a copy of filing with the state PTA office.

Preface

This **Bylaws & Standing Rules Handbook**, along with all other Arkansas PTA Kit of Tools, is published as a supplement to the National PTA Back to School Kit annually. They are intended to assist the officers and chairmen of the Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and Parent Teacher Student Associations (PTSAs) carry out their responsibilities. Materials in this or any other Arkansas PTA Kit of Tools book may be reproduced and distributed to the appropriate officers and board members for PTA use.

Remember, you are the elected leader. Be familiar with the contents of this book and set goals for your local PTA/PTSA unit or council that will include leadership training and submitting applications for awards that may be available to you.

For additional copies of this or any of the Arkansas PTA Kit of Tools materials, please go to www.ArkansasPTA.org.

The Parent Teacher Association

Membership is open to anyone who believes in the mission and purposes of the Parent Teacher Association. Individual members may belong to any number of PTAs and pay dues in each. Every person who joins a local PTA automatically becomes a member of both the state and national PTAs. Together we are a powerful voice for children. With your help, we can continue to work toward PTA's goal of a quality education and nurturing environment for every child.

PTA Vision

Making every child's potential is a reality.

PTA Mission

To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

PTA Values

- **Collaboration:** We work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to accomplish our agreed-upon goals.
- **Commitment:** We are dedicated to promoting children's health, well-being, and educational success through strong parent, family, and community involvement.
- **Accountability:** We acknowledge our obligations. We deliver on our promises.
- **Respect:** We value our colleagues and ourselves. We expect the same high quality of effort and thought from ourselves as we do from others.

- **Inclusivity:** We invite the stranger and welcome the newcomer. We value and seek input from as wide a spectrum of viewpoints and experiences as possible.
- **Integrity:** We act consistently with our beliefs. When we err, we acknowledge the mistake and seek to make amends.

PTA Purposes: Historical Goals of PTA

- To promote the welfare of the children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship.
- To raise the standards of home life.
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
- To bring into closer relation the home and school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.
- To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

Bylaws – What Are They?

Bylaws are the “framework” for the work of any organization. They define the characteristics of the organization and how it functions.

Bylaws contain the basic rules related to an organization that are so important that they cannot be amended without previous notice (30 days) and a 2/3 majority vote at a general meeting of the membership; nor be subject to being suspended. **Bylaws CANNOT EVER BE SUSPENDED!**

Bylaws are an IRS requirement because of PTA’s special tax status as a 501(c)(3) organization.

Bylaws are the key to understanding your PTA, to answering questions about nominations, elections, duties of officers, auditing of financial records, dues, etc.

When an item is not specified in the bylaws, the parliamentary authority prevails---- ***Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised***, and ***Arkansas PTA Bylaws***.

Bylaws are the local unit’s safety net and can usually settle all disputes and assist in conflict resolution.

Bylaws usually contain the name of the organization, and its purposes, basic policies, members, officers, nomination & election procedures, duties of officers, committees, parliamentary authority, and amendments procedures.

Bylaws must be renewed every three (3) years.

Bylaws should be a part of each officer’s/chairperson’s Procedures Book.

Updating Your Bylaws

An electronic form to submit unit and council bylaws is available on the Arkansas PTA website at: www.arkansaspta.org . There is also a worksheet with the questions asked about your bylaws in the form so that you can prepare your answers.

Please refer to this list when amending your bylaws and completing the Bylaws Amendments Form.

- Local units may amend only the following items in their bylaws. ***ITALIC ITEMS MAY NOT BE CHANGED***
 - All amendments must be approved by the general membership.
 - The general membership must be given 30 days notice of the proposed bylaws amendments.
 - Do not be overwhelmed by sixteen Articles fourteen page document—remember,
 - The ** are your friends! These sections are mandatory and cannot be changed.

Bylaw Form Questions:

- 1) Full Name of School PTA/PTSA
- 2) PTA/PTSA (choose one)
- 3) Address
- 4) Region
- 5) Council – if any
- 6) Unit President
- 7) Unit Secretary
- 8) Name of PTA Person to Contact
- 9) Contact Information
- 10) What month do you hold elections? (Found in Article VII, Section 2 b.)
 - a) Elections have to occur at least 30 days after nominating committee is elected.
- 11) Officers shall assume their official duties following the close of the meeting in what month? (Found in Article VII, Section 2 b. i.)
- 12) How many years is an officers term? (Found in Article VII, Section 2 b. i.)
 - a) Choose one or two years.
- 13) How many members of the nominating committee? (Found in Article VII, Section 3 a.)
 - a) Minimum of three people and must be an odd number.
- 14) The nominating committee presents its report at the general meeting in? (Found in Article VII, Section 3 b.)
- 15) A person shall/shall not be eligible to serve two consecutive terms in the same office. (Found in Article VII, Section 2 c.)
- 16) Section 7 (choose one)
 - a) The executive board shall present nominees for delegates to represent the unit at convention (as per Article XIII, Section I.a.), to the unit for approval. Additional nominations may be made from the floor
 - b) The executive board shall elect the delegates to represent the unit at convention (as per Article XIII, Section I.a.)
- 17) How many meetings will you hold during the year? (Found in Article X, Section 1)
 - a) Must be a minimum of four.

- 18) How many days notice are required for a meeting date change? (Found in Article X, Section 1)
- 19) How many days notice are required for a special meeting? (Found in Article X, Section 2)
- 20) How many years are there in a term for committee chairs? (Found in Article XI, Section 2, a.)
- 21) How many delegates in addition to the president and the principal are chosen to be Council Representatives?
- 22) What month is the delegate or alternate elected or chosen? (If your unit is not in a council please type N/A. Found in Article XII, Section 1, b.)
- 23) Delegates to the council PTA shall serve how many years? (choose 1 or 2)
- 24) Submitter's name
- 25) President's email
- 26) Date Submitted
- 27) This last section is for Bylaw Amendments only. If you are not changing any wording within your bylaws this section is not necessary and you may skip to the submit button and submit your bylaws. If you are amending your bylaws use the Amendment Form on our website for each amendment.

Bylaws Tips

- **Items denoted by ** are required by Arkansas PTA and cannot be changed.**
- Amendments must be submitted on the Bylaws Amendment form (one per update).
- Once Bylaws have been reviewed and approved by the Bylaws Chair, AR PTA will return a proposed copy with Arkansas PTA approval via e-mail to the person submitting the bylaws. A copy will also be e-mailed to the PTA President if an email has been provided.
- The State Bylaws Chair may contact the person submitting the bylaws, by e-mail, to clarify information or request revisions.
- Once the unit has reviewed the bylaws for at least 30 days and the vote has been taken, submit the vote through the Membership Approval form that should be sent from Arkansas PTA with the proposed copy.

Bylaws Checklist

Before you submit your amended bylaws, check the following:

- ✓ In Article VII, Section 2 a., if you have indicated 2 or more elected vice presidents you will need to add specific duties for each, in Article VIII, Section 2 c. The following is an example of what this might look like:

SAMPLE
Section 2. The **1st, 2nd and 3rd** Vice-president(s) shall:
 - a. Act as aide(s) to the president;
 - b. (In their designated order) perform the duties of the president in the absence or inability of that officer to serve; and
 - c. Perform specific duties assigned to their respective positions by the president. **The 1st VP** shall be responsible for Special Projects. The **2nd VP** shall act as staff liaison. **3rd VP** shall be responsible for Courtyard Projects.
- ✓ If additional elected officers, such as parliamentarian or historian are listed in Article VII, Section

2,a., their title and specific duties will need to be listed following Article VIII, Section 4. This can be done by adding additional sections for each officer and re-numbering the last section, which is currently listed as Section 5.

- ✓ Finally, review your current bylaws carefully to make sure any past additions or changes have been included in the updated version. We suggest you highlight these changes to assure they are carried over each time your bylaws are revised.

Standing Rules – What Are They?

Standing Rules contain the rules related to the details and policies of your individual PTA. Items included might be meeting times, responsibilities of committees, policies on finance, etc. See sample Standing Rules below.

Standing Rules are not required, and are not sent to Arkansas PTA for approval.

Standing Rules may be amended, adopted, or suspended at any meeting of your PTA.

Standing Rules do not over rule Bylaws.

Sample Standing rules

Standing Rules for _____ PTA

Meetings:

General meetings of the _____ PTA will be held _____ (day of month, i.e. 2nd Thursday), at _____ (time) in the _____ (place).
The Executive Board will meetings will be held _____ (time),
_____ (day of month, i.e. 1st Tuesday).

Responsibilities of Board/Committee Members:

Each member of the Executive Board shall present a written report at each meeting.
All officers and committee members are expected to attend all meetings of the association unless excused by the president.

Printed materials to be distributed to the general membership shall be reviewed by the president and the school principal before distribution.

All officers/committee chairpersons shall keep a Procedure Book containing current materials pertinent to their position. Procedure Books are the property of the PTA and shall be passed on to successors upon change of office/committee.

All officers/chairperson are expected to attend PTA Leadership Training and to keep current with PTA trends and procedures.

Any officer/chairperson who misses three consecutive meetings or who fails to present written reports shall be removed from the board by the remaining Executive Board members. The secretary shall prepare a letter to be signed by the president to be mailed to the person who has been removed.

The Secretary shall keep an up to date record of all members of the association.

The Treasurer shall present a written financial report at each meeting, which will become part of the official minutes of the association.

State Convention:

As provided in the budget, we will be represented by _____(number) of delegates.

Selection of officers to represent our unit at Convention will be based on _____(vote of the Executive Board).

Expenses covered for convention will include registration, meals, lodging and travel at a rate of _____ cent per mile for the driver of car.

Each representative is expected to attend the entire convention and to submit a written report to the Executive Board during the meeting following the convention.

Finance

A bond covering the treasurer and other persons handling funds of the PTA shall be secured each school year.

The official financial records of the unit shall be kept at the school, including the checkbook.

The Hospitality budget shall include an allowance for bereavement gifts (cards, flowers) as well as congratulatory gifts birth, wedding, etc. to be sent to PTA members as approved by the Executive Board.

Nominations and Elections

The Chairperson of the Nomination Committee shall be the official spokesperson for the committee. No nomination is final until contacted by the chairperson.

No absentee voting will be permitted.

When a ballot election is necessary, the membership of all eligible voters will be determined by the secretary.

These Standing Rules may be changed at any meeting of the Executive Board by a majority vote with a three-day notice.

Standing Rules Approved at Executive Meeting_____ (date)

Parliamentary Procedure

For 120 years *Robert's Rules of Order* has been recognized as the guide to smooth, orderly, and fairly conducted meetings. All PTA Bylaws state that *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* will govern the National PTA and its constituent organizations in all cases to which they are applicable and in which they are not if conflict with the bylaws.

It is not necessary to know all of the rules; however, it is helpful to know the basics and to have a copy of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* on hand as a reference.

Parliamentary Quick Reference

THE PURPOSE OF PARLIAMENTARY LAW IS TO EXPEDITE BUSINESS, TO PROTECT THE MINORITY, TO RESPECT THE RIGHTS OF ALL, AND TO KEEP ORDER.

- ALL members have equal rights, privileges, and obligations. Partiality is shown to none. The majority decides. EVERY member has the right to debate or discuss each proposal presented so long as courtesy is observed. Members should understand the effects of any proposed action before a vote is taken.
- WHEN presiding one refers to himself/herself as "The Chair" or "Your Chairman" not "I".
- THE president is a member ex-officio of all committees (**except the Nominating Committee**) and as such is notified and can attend and participate in such committee meetings. They are not counted in determining the presence of a quorum of the committee.
- A quorum is the number needed to transact business, as specified in the bylaws. If the number of a quorum is not specified, it is a simple majority. Any action taken without the presence of a quorum must be ratified by majority vote at the next meeting or the action is invalidated.
- THE Chair rules on parliamentary questions. A parliamentarian serves only as an advisor.
- BEGIN on time, in fairness to those who have arrived on time. Assign someone to monitor and inform you when a quorum is present. Use a typed agenda. It is helpful to provide copies to all meeting participants. Unfinished business should be stated as such, not as OLD business. The presiding officer should announce each order of business as it appears on the agenda.
- MOTIONS are expressed as a clear, concise affirmative statement, containing only main ideas. Only one main motion may be on the floor at any one time. The maker of the motion should state "I move that..." or "I move to..." NOT "I make a motion that..." and should be allowed to begin discussion of the motion if they choose to.
- THERE should be no discussion until the motion has been stated by the chair and opened to discussion. Everyone who wishes to speak should have an opportunity to do so before anyone is allowed to speak for a second time.

- A motion may be changed or withdrawn by the maker before the Chair has stated it. After the motion has been stated by the Chair it belongs to the assembly and all changes or withdrawals require a motion and a vote. Once a main motion has been stated by the chair, it must be adopted or rejected by vote or dispatched in some other official way (referred to a committee, postponed, tabled, etc) before another subject may be introduced.
- If a motion has been made and no second is forthcoming, the chair may ask “Is there a second?” If this does not elicit a second, the Chair says, “Since there was no second, the question is not before the assembly,” and continues to the next item of business. REMEMBER, not all motions require a second.
- WRITTEN copies of long motions should be given to the chair.
- AMENDMENTS are secondary motions, requiring a second and open to discussion, unless the main motion to which they are affixed has other regulations. A motion may be amended by adding words at the end, by insertion between words, by striking words and inserting different words, or by substituting. The amendment is voted on before the vote is taken on the motion in its entirety.
- ROUTINE questions will arise that the assembly can be expected to agree upon. The Chair may handle these by general consent, by saying, “If there is no objection, we will...” Pause to give members an opportunity to object. Proceed by stating “Hearing no objections, we will...” Should a member be opposed to the action, he should speak up clearly and say “I object”. At this time the Chair says, “An objection has been raised” and he will proceed with the steps for handling a motion and taking a vote.
- WHEN someone “moves the previous question” or calls “question”, the motion is to close debate. The Chair then takes a vote to stop discussion, with 2/3 affirmative vote required for passage. If passed, debate is closed and a vote is taken immediately on the pending question.
- THE usual methods of voting on motions are by voice or a show of hands. If the outcome of the vote is too close and the Chair is unsure of the result, the Chair may declare itself in doubt as to the outcome and direct the vote to be repeated using an alternate method.
- If a member feels that the presiding officer is incorrect in stating the outcome of the vote on the motion he should speak up at once and call out “division” or say “Mr. Chairman, I call for a division”. The Chair is then obligated to take a rising vote. IF the outcome is still in doubt, the Chair will take a counted vote.
- A motion to reconsider may only be made by a member who voted on the prevailing side and normally can only be made at the meeting during which the original vote took place or on the next succeeding day of the same session.
- A motion to rescind a motion previously adopted requires a 2/3 vote to carry, if prior notice of intent to rescind has not been given. If previous consent has been given only a majority vote is

required for the motion to carry. There are no time limitations on motions to rescind action taken earlier.

- THE report of the nominating committee is **PRESENTED** to the Chair, who will re-read the slate and then solicit nominations from the floor for each office. It is **NOT** “accepted,” by a motion of the committee chairman or anyone else. A copy of the report is filed with the secretary.
- A nomination is not a motion and therefore need not be seconded.
- READ your **BYLAWS** and use **ROBERT’S RULES OF ORDER, NEWLY REVISED** for reference.

Motions

A member wishing to make a motion must first obtain the floor by addressing the chair and waiting to be recognized by the presiding officer. The member makes a motion “I move to ...” or “I move that...” Another member must second the motion before discussion and a vote may be taken. After discussion the chair restates the question and puts it to a vote. “All those in favor say aye” “those opposed say no”. A rising vote may be used by having members stand when asked for all those in favor and all those opposed. The majority of motions made are usually main motions.

Types of Motions

Main Motion - brings business before the assembly.

Subsidiary Motion - assists the assembly in treating or disposing of a main motion and sometimes other motions. Example – Motion to Amend - is used to change or perfect the motion under consideration, or Motion to Refer or Commit – requests that a motion be investigated.

Privileged Motion – deals with special matters of immediate importance not relating to the pending business. Example – Motion to Recess – used to provide an intermission,

Motion to Adjourn – to close the meeting, or Question of Privilege – a request relating to the rights and privileges of the members.

Incidental Motion – is related to the Parliamentary situation in such a way that it must be decided before business can proceed. Example - Point of Order – used when a member thinks that the rules have been violated.

Debate

Members are entitled to speak once to a question, sometimes more if there is no objection. Courtesy should be maintained at all times. Members indulge in no personalities, and avoid reference to others by name. All inquiries are made through the Chair. The maker of the motion has the privilege of beginning and closing debate. The presiding officer must remain neutral during debate. The Chair may ask the next person in the designated order outlined in the bylaws to preside at the meeting while they

leave the chair to debate and may not return to the chair until the pending question is decided. However, this does not pertain to board meetings, or committee meetings, at which the Chair may offer points of information from the Chair.

Sample Ethics/Code of Conduct Policy

_____ PTA

Ethics/Code of Conduct Policy

I. Introduction

What is a Code of Conduct? A code of conduct is a set of guiding principles that act as a benchmark for professional behavior. It is a promise to adhere to the values we all share as PTA members such as honesty, respect, responsibility, fairness, and compassion.

II. Organizational values

As a PTA Board member, I promise to abide by the fundamental values that underpin all the activities of this organization and remember that it is all about the children.

A. Integrity and honesty

These will be the hallmarks of all conduct when dealing with colleagues within PTA and equally when dealing with individuals and institutions outside it. As a Board Member, I will treat those I come in contact with, with the same courtesy and consideration I expect from others.

B. Accountability

The activities I perform for the board will be able to stand the test of scrutiny by the members, the general public and I.R.S. and other nonprofit regulators if applicable.

- I will discharge the duties and responsibilities of my individual office with fidelity, integrity and honest and declare any and all personal and/or extended family conflicts of interest when PTA issues, decisions and funds are involved.
- I will not misuse the PTA's federal tax-exempt status or exemption from sales tax for personal or unauthorized purposes nor disburse funds for any purpose other than authorized, budgeted PTA programs, projects and activities.

C. Transparency

PTA strives to maintain an atmosphere of openness throughout the organization. Our members decide the course of our organization and we keep them informed at all times.

D. Law, mission, policies

- I will not break the law or go against nonprofit regulations in any aspect of my role as a board member.
- I will support the mission of PTA and consider myself its guardian.
- I will abide by and represent our PTA bylaws, the Arkansas PTA policies, positions, procedures and National PTA purposes and mission statement.

III. Conflicts of interest

- I will always strive to act in the best interests of the PTA.
- I will declare any conflict of interest, or any circumstance that might be viewed by others as a conflict of

interest, as soon as it arises.

- If I am uncertain whether or not a conflict exists I will consult with the executive board and abide by their decision.
- As a board member, I shall not use my relation to this PTA for financial, professional, business, employment, personal and/or political gain.
- A conflict of interest exists when a board member would have to participate in the deliberation or decision of any issue of this PTA while, at the same time, the board member and/or their extended family has financial, professional, business, employment, personal and/or political interests outside the PTA that would predispose or bias the board member to a particular view, goal or decision.
- I shall declare to the officers of the Arkansas PTA any conflicts of interest between my duties of the PTA and my extended families' interest.
- When a conflict of interest is declared, I shall not use my personal influence of position to affect the outcome of the vote and shall leave the room during deliberations and the vote.
- The minutes of the meeting shall reflect that a conflict of interest was declared.

IV. Person to person

- I will not break the law, go against nonprofit regulations or act in disregard of organizational policies in my relationships with fellow board members, school staff, volunteers, fellow PTA members or anyone I come into contact with in my role as PTA Board member.
- I will strive to establish respectful, collegial and courteous relationships with all I come into contact with in my role as a PTA Board member.
- I will agree to disagree when necessary without anger or rancor.
- I will take to my work an attitude of open-mindedness- a willingness to be trained for it and to bring to it interest and attention.

V. Protecting the organization's reputation

- I will not speak as a Board member of this PTA to the media or in a public forum without the prior knowledge and approval of the President. However, I still maintain all rights to speak as a private citizen in such forums.
- When prior consent has not been obtained, I will inform the President at once when I have spoken as a PTA Board member to the media or in a public forum.
- When I am speaking as a PTA board member, my comments will reflect current organizational policy and positions even when these do not agree with my personal views.
- When speaking as a private citizen I will strive to uphold the reputation of the PTA and those who work in it.
- I will respect PTA, board and individual confidentiality.
- I will not share working copies of documents or other organizational information until those materials have been finalized and are available for release to the general public.

VI. Personal gain

- I will not personally gain materially or financially from my role as board member, nor will I permit others to do so as a result of my actions or negligence.
- I will document expenses and seek reimbursement according to procedure.
- I will not accept substantial gifts or hospitality intended for my personal use.
- I will use PTA resources responsibly, when authorized, in accordance with procedure.

VII. In the boardroom

- I will strive to embody the principles of leadership in all my actions and live up to the trust placed in me by the PTA membership.
- I will abide by board governance procedures and practices.

- I will strive to attend all board meetings, giving notice ahead of time to the President (Chair) if unable to attend.
- I will study the agenda and other information sent me in good time prior to the meeting and be prepared to debate and vote on agenda items during the meeting.
- I will honor the authority of the President (Chair) and respect his or her role as meeting leader.
- I will engage in debate and voting in meetings according to Robert's Rules, maintaining a respectful attitude toward the opinions of others while making my voice heard.
- I will accept a majority board vote on an issue as decisive and final.
- I will maintain confidentiality about what goes on in the boardroom unless authorized by the President (Chair) or board to speak of it.
- I will participate in induction, training and development activities for Board members.

VIII. Leaving the board

- I understand that substantial breach of any part of this code may result in my removal from the board.
- If for any reason, I am unable to fulfill the duties of my position, I will do what is best for the association, even if that means resigning from my position.
- Should I resign from the board I will inform the President (Chair) in advance in writing, stating my reasons for resigning. Additionally, I will participate in an exit interview.

We, the undersigned board members, have read and agree to abide by this policy and understand that the failure to adhere to the above guidelines may result in termination of the undersigned as board members and will require the immediate return of all PTA property, documents and materials belonging to this PTA.

PTA Ethics/Code of Conduct Agreement

NAME	POSITION	DATE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____