

SUGGESTED STANDING RULES

Standing rules are the specific conditions or rules a PTA/PTSA chooses to impose upon itself within the scope of the Uniform Bylaws. **Standing rules cannot be in conflict with the WSPTA Uniform Bylaws.** While the Uniform Bylaws give identity to and define PTA and its relationship with the Washington State PTA, standing rules give identity to and define each PTA and its relationship with its members. Standing rules should reflect the most important conditions which a PTA wishes to impose on itself; conditions which would, generally, be permanent.

Standing rules are adopted by the membership because they (the standing rules) govern the entire PTA. The standing rules should be reviewed, updated (if necessary), and approved annually.

Standing rules can be amended at anytime. If the membership has been given proper notice prior to the date of the meeting of the intended change, then the change can be approved by a majority vote of the members present (if a quorum has been established). If no notice was given prior to the meeting, a 2/3 vote of the members present is required (if a quorum has been established).

The purpose of this information is to outline those elements which are most commonly addressed by standing rules and to provide some sample language. (Please note: Sample language will not apply in all situations. For help, please contact the Washington State PTA office.)

Identify the PTA

The PTA's name, local unit number, and date of chartering should be stated in the standing rules.

Example: The name of this PTA local unit is: XYZ PTA 13.0.1. It was chartered on April 23, 1986.

Define the Community Served by the PTA

PTA's global purpose is to "work for the health, welfare, safety, education, care, and protection of children in the home, school, community, and place of worship."

Example: This PTA serves the children in the XYZ school community which includes the residences and businesses in the XYZ elementary school enrollment area.

Example: This PTA serves the children in the entire community of ABC, Washington.

Example: This PTA serves the children in the HIJ apartment complex.

Example: This PTA serves all children without regard to physical location or school attendance.

Identify the PTA's Corporate Status

Every PTA should be incorporated as a nonprofit corporation in the State of Washington. Additionally, the standing rules should specify: (a) who is responsible for renewing the corporate status; (b) the registered agent. *Note: The filing date for renewal of the Annual Incorporation Report is the last day of the incorporation anniversary month.*

Example: This PTA was incorporated on _____ (date) and assigned corporation number _____ (number). It was assigned UBI _____ (number). The Treasurer is responsible for filing the Annual Corporation Report. The registered agent for this corporation is the Washington State PTA.

Identify Compliance with the Charitable Solicitations Act

PTA's must register under the Charitable Solicitations Act. The person responsible for maintaining the registration should also be identified.

Example: This PTA is registered under the Charitable Solicitations Act, registration number _____. The treasurer is responsible for filing the annual registration (must be filed by November 15th to avoid penalties).

Identify the PTA's Tax-Exempt Status

PTAs are generally exempt from the payment of federal income tax. Certain forms must be filed with the IRS to achieve this status.

Example: *This PTA was granted tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(4) on _____ (date).*

Example: *This PTA was granted tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) on _____ (date).*

Identify Responsibility for Filing IRS Form 990 or 990EZ

If the annual gross income of the PTA exceeds \$25,000, the filing of IRS Form 990EZ is usually required. If the annual gross income exceeds \$100,000, the PTA must file IRS Form 990. Responsibility for this should be included in the standing rules.

Example: *The current treasurer is responsible for filing IRS Form 990 or Form 990 EZ prior to November 15th if required.*

Example: *The current treasurer, with assistance from the outgoing treasurer, is responsible for filing IRS Form 990 or Form 990 EZ prior to November 15th if required.*

Identify the Amount of the PTA's membership Service Fees

Each PTA sets the amount of its membership service fees, which must include the fees for the Washington State PTA*, plus the National PTA**, plus the PTA council*** (if the unit is a member of a council). This amount should be stated in the standing rules.

Example: *The membership service fees for this PTA shall be Ten Dollars (\$10.00) per person.*

*\$4.50 (WSPTA fees current as of 7/1/2004)

**\$1.75 (NPTA fees current as of 7/1/2004)

***Check with your council for the amount of their assessment fee.

Identify the Elected Officers

Every corporation in the state of Washington is required to have officers. Every PTA is also required to have at least four (4) officers. These are the people elected by the membership to lead the PTA.

Example: *The elected officers of this PTA shall be President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.*

Example: *The elected officers of this PTA shall be President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.*

Co-Presidents/Co-Positions

Some PTAs elect co-presidents or have two people share an elected position. This situation is possible only if the standing rules provide for it.

Example: *Any elected position may be held jointly by two (2) people. Each co-position holder shall be entitled to voice and vote at a board of directors' meeting.*

Example: *Any elected position may be held jointly by two (2) people. Each co-position is entitled to (1) vote at a board of directors' meeting, with the co-position holders rotating voting privileges (every other meeting).*

Define the Composition of the Board of Directors

Every corporation is managed and administered by a board of directors. These are the people who have the legal responsibility for the operation of the corporation, as well as fulfilling the requirements of their individual positions. All members of the board of directors must be members of the PTA.

Example: *The board of directors of this PTA shall consist of the elected officers and the chairs of the following committees: _____. This PTA's board of directors will meet monthly, on a date and time to be determined by the board.*

Identify When General Membership Meetings Will Be Held

The members of the PTA must meet to conduct certain types of business. Meetings should be held only when the reason is important and valuable to the membership.

Example: *Adoption of the budget, adoption of standing rules, election of the nominating committee, and election of officers shall take place at general membership meetings. Meetings shall be held at the direction of the board of directors.*

Example: *This PTA's general membership will meet the first Tuesday of each month.*

Budget Approval

It is highly recommended that the annual budget be approved in the spring. This provides the legal authority to spend funds past the end of the current fiscal year. Without an approved budget, no funds can be spent or disbursed after June 30th or until a budget is approved.

Example: *This PTA shall approve its annual operating budget in the spring of each year.*

Example: *This PTA shall approve its annual operating budget prior to July 1st of each year.*

Legal Documents

Every organization, including a PTA, must preserve and protect certain legal documents and records. A PTA should specify how this will be done and by whom.

Example: *The PTA shall maintain a safe deposit box at the bank where its checking account is maintained. The original copy of any legal documents shall be kept in the safe deposit box.*

Copies are to be made for the president and secretary and kept in a legal documents notebook. Only elected officers shall have access to the contents of the safe deposit box.

Audits

An annual audit – or review of the financial activities of the PTA – is required by the Uniform Bylaws at the end of the fiscal year: June 30th. It is recommended that every PTA also conduct a mid-year audit.

Example: *The PTA shall conduct an audit of its books and records in January of each year in addition to the required audit at the close of the fiscal year.*

Bank Signature Cards

The Uniform Bylaws require two (2) signatures on each check, and only elected officers can sign checks. To avoid problems getting checks signed promptly, it is acceptable for all elected officers' signatures to be on the PTA's bank account.

Example: *The signatures of all elected officers shall be on the signature card for this PTA's authorized bank account.*

PTA Finances

Reimbursement Policies may be defined in the PTA's standing rules.

Example: *All reimbursement requests shall include a receipt and shall be submitted to the treasurer within 60 days of purchase. All requests for reimbursement must be received by June 1st.*

The PTA may include a policy on insufficient funds or NSF checks.

Example: *Should the PTA receive an NSF check, a \$10 service fee will be charged in addition to any bank penalties the PTA may accrue. If the NSF check or checks are not paid for by June 1st, then the PTA will not accept any checks from this individual in the future.*

Gambling Activities

If the PTA serves a school building community, and the PTA conducts bingo, raffles, or carnivals – it should include in the standing rules the necessary language to allow students of that school to fully participate.

Example: *The students of XYZ Elementary School shall be considered honorary members of this PTA without voice, vote, or the privilege of holding office.*

Golden Acorn Recognition

A PTA will usually honor a volunteer by awarding a Golden Acorn to that person.

Example: *One or more Golden Acorn Awards shall be presented annually to an outstanding volunteer(s). A committee appointed by the President shall select the recipient. The board of directors shall determine the number of recipients.*

Outstanding Educator Award

A PTA will usually honor an outstanding teacher or educator.

Example: *One or more Outstanding Educator Awards shall be presented annually to an outstanding teacher or educator. A committee appointed by the President shall select the recipient. The board of directors shall determine the number of recipients.*

Honorary Life Membership Award

A PTA may honor an individual with an Honorary Life Membership Award.

Example: *An Honorary Life Membership Award shall be presented annually to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the growth and development of PTA. A committee appointed by the President shall select the recipient.*

Council Voting Delegates

If the PTA is a member of a PTA/PTSA council, it should specify (by position) who its voting delegates are to that council. This may be regulated by your council's standing rules. Please contact your council to make sure your local unit rules do not conflict with those of your council.

Example: Voting delegates to the council shall be the President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, and Secretary. The alternates shall be the Treasurer and the chairman of the _____ committee.

Vote for Region Director

Each PTA has one (1) vote for the position of WSPTA Region Director – which is a position on the WSPTA Board of Directors and represents the region in which the PTA is located. The Region Director is the PTA's principal contact with the State PTA and provides leadership education for PTA leaders in the region.

Example: The vote of this PTA for the position of Washington State PTA Region Director shall be determined by the board of directors.

Voting Delegates to the State PTA Convention

The annual meeting of the Washington State PTA is held in the spring at its annual convention. Every PTA is entitled to register and vote in the business of the entire association – based upon each PTA's membership size. Those voting delegates need to be defined. The Uniform Bylaws provide that the delegates shall be elected by the membership unless otherwise specified in the PTA's standing rules.

Example: The voting delegates to the annual WSPTA convention shall be determined in the following order: Incoming President, Ongoing President, Incoming Vice President, Incoming Secretary, Incoming Treasurer, Ongoing Vice President, Ongoing Secretary, Ongoing Treasurer. The board of directors shall determine the number of delegates to be funded by the PTA.

Voting Delegates to the State PTA Legislative Assembly

Annually, the State PTA holds a 2-day conference to determine its statewide legislative priorities for the year. Each PTA is entitled to send voting delegate(s), the number determined by the PTA's membership size. The voting delegate(s) needs to be defined in the standing rules. The Uniform Bylaws provide that the delegates shall be elected by the membership unless otherwise specified in the PTA's standing rules.

Example: The voting delegate(s) to the WSPTA Legislative Assembly shall be determined in the following order: Legislation chair, President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer. The board of directors shall determine the number of delegates to be funded by the PTA.

What Does NOT Need To Be in Standing Rules

Parliamentary Authority – The parliamentary authority for PTA is the current edition of “*Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*.” This is specified in the Uniform Bylaws. Therefore, it is not necessary in the PTA's standing rules. Standing rules, when differing from *Robert's Rules*, take precedence.

Job Descriptions – Every PTA should have a written set of job or position descriptions. However, because of the dynamics of interpersonal relationships and the changing abilities of people to volunteer their time, these job descriptions should not be written in “rules.” The elected officers and the board must have the flexibility to negotiate and change the specifics of each position so that volunteers can best contribute their time in ways that are both “meaningful” and “manageable.”

Order of Business – A meeting (whether a board meeting or a general membership meeting) should be called only because there is important business to be conducted; important decisions to be made. Therefore, it is the business or the decisions that determine the agenda and order of business. The “traditional order of business” usually does not meet the needs of members who are willing to attend meetings to accomplish something significant and not have their time wasted.

(Updated July 1, 2004)