

Principles of parliamentary law are

...justice and courtesy to all;

...rights of the minority protected;

...rule of the majority reflected;

...partiality to none;

...consideration of one subject at a time.

The bylaws are specific rules by which the unit is governed, and they supersede any general rule of parliamentary law with which they may be in conflict. They are the “Articles of Organization.” They may not be suspended, even by a unanimous vote. Any action contrary to the unit’s bylaws is null and void and should be so stated when discovered.

The bylaws of the unit, council, district, State and National PTA all state that *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 10th Edition shall be the parliamentary authority. If help is needed in understanding or interpreting “Robert’s” or the bylaws, the council, if in council, or district PTA parliamentarian should be contacted.

The parliamentarian is an officer usually appointed by the president, subject to ratification by the executive board. A parliamentarian “pro tem” should be appointed in the absence of the parliamentarian. “Pro tem” means “for this time only.”

Duties of the parliamentarian are listed in the bylaws (Article VI, Section 10). Additional information can be found in the *California State PTA Toolkit* (2.3.14), the *National PTA Quick-Reference Guide* (available from PTA President) and *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 10th Edition.

ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- Review and study the bylaws and standing rules annually. If changes are required, ask the president to appoint a committee for this review. Proposed amendments must be submitted through council (if in council) and district PTA channels to the state parliamentarian for approval before adoption at an association meeting.
- Use the latest version of *Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units*. (Bylaws are available for purchase from the California State PTA office; some district PTA offices also have copies for sale.) Date is noted on the front or inside of front cover, and should not be more than two (2) years old. Instructions and procedures are included.
- Verify that the PTA council (if in council) and district PTA have a current copy of the unit’s bylaws.
- Assist the president in preparing for meetings, when requested.
- Make sure the unit has a copy of *Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 10th Edition and become familiar with the contents of the book.

- Provide the members and the executive board with training on simple parliamentary procedures; how to state a motion, rules of debate, quorums.
- Advise presiding officer, when requested, on questions of parliamentary procedure. Parliamentarians do not “rule.” Only the chair has the power to rule on a question of order. If the parliamentarian has expressed an opinion at the request of the chair, the chair must still make the ruling.
- Assist the presiding officer by keeping track of the order of those wishing to speak, motions, amendments, voting, etc., during meetings.
- Ensure each member of the executive board has a current copy of the unit’s bylaws and standing rules.
- Encourage attendance at training opportunities for parliamentary procedures and/or bylaw workshops and counterpart workshops and training when offered by the California State PTA, council (if in council) or district PTA.

COUNCIL PARLIAMENTARIAN

In addition to the duties listed for the unit parliamentarian, the council parliamentarian shall:

- Remind all units to use the latest version of *Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units*.
- Receive and review all proposed bylaw changes of member units in council and keep records thereof. Assist with any necessary changes. Forward all proposed changes to the district PTA parliamentarian in a timely manner, within one to two weeks whenever possible.
- Maintain a file of up-to-date bylaws for all member units within the council.
- Offer bylaws and parliamentary procedure workshops for all units within the council.

DISTRICT PARLIAMENTARIAN

In addition to the duties listed for the council parliamentarian, the district parliamentarian shall:

- Remind all units and council to use the latest bylaws.
- Maintain a file of up-to-date bylaws for all member units and councils within the district PTA.
- Maintain an up-to-date file of all member unit and council California State PTA record numbers. National PTA identification numbers, employer identification (EI) numbers, corporation numbers, and charitable trust (CT) numbers within the district PTA.
- Offer bylaws and parliamentary procedure workshops for all units and councils within the district PTA.

BYLAWS

As a part of the national organization, the local, council or district PTA is also governed by the National PTA bylaws, as well as the bylaws of the California State PTA, the council and district PTA (if in council). California State PTA bylaws contain “starred” articles and sections which are to be included in the local association bylaws. **Note:** The adoption of an amendment to any provision of the California Corporations Code identified by a double star or to any provision of the California State PTA bylaws identified by a triple star automatically amends the PTA’s bylaws and does not require a vote of the unit, council or district. Other revisions to the bylaws may be made only as provided in the bylaws themselves (*Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units*, Article XVI; *Council Bylaws*, Article XVII; *District Bylaws*, Article XVIII).

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Basic policies of the National PTA are included in all PTA bylaws as Article III. Parliamentarians often are asked to interpret these policies or give a rationale for them. The council, district and California State PTA also have policies and procedures which must be observed.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The bylaws include, as a duty of the parliamentarian “...shall call the first meeting of the nominating committee...and give instructions in procedure...” These instructions include the eligibility requirements to hold office, the offices to be filled, those sections of the bylaws which pertain to the conduct of the nominating committee, committee voting procedure, etc. The parliamentarian conducts the election of the chairman of the nominating committee. The parliamentarian does not automatically

CHECK UNIT BYLAWS FOR:

Date of meeting to elect nominating committee _____ (Article V, Section 3b)
Date of the election meeting _____ (Article V, Section 3g)
Date of meeting to elect convention delegates _____ (Article V, Section 9)
Date new officers assume duties _____ (Article V, Section 8)
Date of last amendment to bylaws _____ (signature page)
Quorum for association meeting _____ (Article VII, Section 5b)
Quorum for executive board meeting _____ (Article VIII, Section 7b)
Unit Federal Employee Identification Number (EIN) _____ (Article XIV, Section 3)

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serve as a member of the committee, unless elected to it or unless the bylaws so provide. The parliamentarian, if not a member of this committee, should be available for any questions by telephone or at a specific location.

REFERENCES

From the unit, council or district president:

California State PTA Toolkit (includes California State PTA bylaws and policies)

Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units, Council Bylaws, District Bylaws

From the California State PTA office:

The a-b-c’s of Parliamentary Procedure

Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised, 10th Edition

Council Parliamentarian (if in council)

Name _____

Telephone (_____) _____

E-mail _____

District PTA Parliamentarian

Name _____

Telephone (_____) _____

E-mail _____