

# Chapter 4

# Committees





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# Committees

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## The Basics

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Committees are the working machinery of PTA and are essential to its effectiveness. Each committee is formed to address a specific need. Their work is subject to the direction and approval of the membership. Committees should consist of members who have been appointed or elected on the basis of their qualifications and their willingness to work to accomplish the association's goals.

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## Types of Committees

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There are two types of committees for PTA work: Standing and Special.

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### Standing Committees

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A standing committee has a permanent function, which is fundamental to the operation of the unit.

The number and type of standing committees will vary according to the needs of each unit. The following are usually identified as standing committees:

- ⇒ Membership
- ⇒ Programs
- ⇒ Legislation
- ⇒ Historian
- ⇒ Reflections/Cultural Arts
- ⇒ Publicity
- ⇒ Budget
- ⇒ Ways and Means
- ⇒ Newsletter
- ⇒ Volunteer
- ⇒ Hospitality

Standing committee chairs are elected by the members of each new administration's executive board (elected officers). The newly-elected officers may meet for the purpose of appointing the chairs of standing committees. These committees serve for a term of one year. Oregon PTA Bylaws do not prohibit individuals from being re-appointed to a committee by successive administrations.

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### Special Committees

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Special committees are created as the need arises.

They are appointed for a specific task and cease to exist when their job is completed and their final report is given. The following are examples of special committees:

- Nominating
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Founders Day Program
- Auction Committee

Special committee chairs are appointed (with the exception of the Nominating Committee, which elects its own chair) by the president with the approval of the executive committee/board (the elected officers and standing chairs).

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### Committee Chairs

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Committee chairs should be chosen on the basis of their qualifications and willingness to commit adequate time and energy to completing their assignments. Committee chairs **MUST** be members of their local unit!

The chair of a committee is responsible for:

- Reviewing the procedure book, job description and resources before beginning work.
- Coordinating the work of the committee.
- Speaking on behalf of the committee.
- Presiding at committee meetings.
- Organizing preparation of a Plan of Work/Action Plan and budget requests.
- Presenting Plan of Work/Action Plan and budget requests for approval.
- Keeping accurate financial records.
- Preparing and presenting reports.
- Providing copies of reports and forms for the unit secretary and procedure book.
- Updating and returning the procedure book.

The **chair of a committee** should also:

- Remember that the unit president is an ex officio member of all committees (by virtue of office), except the nominating committee, and should be advised of all meeting dates, times and locations.
- Give meaningful assignments to each member of the committee.
- Create an environment of fairness and courtesy in which all committee members will feel comfortable participating.
- Encourage opportunities for committee members to develop leadership skills and enhance personal skills.
- Periodically evaluate the work being done.
- Recognize and appreciate the members of the committee.

- Use the resources and expertise available through Oregon PTA and National PTA.
- Undertake substantial work only with approval.
- Speak or act on behalf of the unit only with authorization.
- Seek approval for changes to the plan of work or spending beyond budget allotment.
- Establish a timeline and guidelines for status reports from members of the committee.
- Avoid “burn-out” by requesting additional committee members for heavy work overloads.
- Have all publicity, notices, etc., approved prior to sending out.
- Provide unit treasurer with receipts for all reimbursements.
- Take advantage of opportunities to improve knowledge and skills by attending council meetings, workshops, and convention.
- Contact counterpart at the state or council level for assistance.

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### Committee Members

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The efforts and commitment of its members will determine the success of any committee. When selecting members for a PTA committee, consider the following characteristics:

- Skills, experiences, or interests that will benefit the committee.
- Willingness to devote time and energy to accomplish the association’s goals.
- Ability to work well with others.
- Receptive to training opportunities.
- Courage to try new things.
- Dependability.
- Enthusiasm for PTA work.

Note: the unit president is an ex officio member (by virtue of office) of all committees, except the nominating committee. Ex officio status enables the president to attend committee meetings with all the privileges of other committee members (offering motions, speaking to motions and voting).

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### Committee Preparation

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It is the responsibility of the unit officers to provide each committee with the instructions, materials and information needed to accomplish its task in a proper and efficient manner.

A little time invested in preparing a committee at the onset of its work will preclude misunderstandings and disappointments later.

Arrange to meet with each committee chair to review the following:

- Committee Assignment – Providing a written copy of the committee’s assignment will ensure a clear understanding of the task to be accomplished. (See sample form #1.)
- Procedure Book and Materials – Discuss contents of the procedure book and available materials. If a procedure book has not been established for the committee, start one. (See Developing a Procedure Book.)
- Preparing a Plan & Budget – Review procedures for preparing and submitting a plan of work/action plan and budget for approval. (See A Committee’s Plan of Work/Action Plan.)

Committees should be encouraged to develop new ideas and ways of doing their work. They should be challenged to improve on past good work and to strengthen the effectiveness of the committee.

Units may wish to develop a standard form for work proposals: (See sample form #2.)

- Status Reports – Establish a timeline for status reports. Provide guidelines for reporting or a supply of report forms to be used. (See Tracking Committee Progress)
- Committee Evaluation Form – Advise the chair to prepare a final evaluation upon completion of assignment. (See sample form #3.)
- Final Financial Statement – If funds are involved in committee work, instruct the chair to submit a final statement. (See sample form #4.)
- Contracts – Remind committee chairs and members that they do not have authorization to sign contracts for services or products on behalf of the unit. **All contracts must have the approval of the Executive Committee/Board or membership and be signed by the president.**

Additional Information –

- Discuss proposed dates for projects, programs, committee meetings, etc.
- Confirm timeline for accomplishing work.
- Provide information about sources and contacts (including former chairs) that might be useful to the committee.

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## Tracking Committee Progress

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Once a committee's plan of work/action plan and budget have been approved, the responsibility for accomplishing the work is relinquished to the members of the committee.

As long as the committee operates within the limits of its approved plan and budget, they should be allowed to proceed, unhampered, with their work.

Routine status reports keep the executive committee/board and membership informed of the committee's progress and confirm that it is operating within the scope of its assignment.

To encourage consistent, timely, and concise reporting, create a "generic" status report form for committee use. Utilizing a prepared form will simplify the filing of reports by the unit secretary and provide committee chairs with a guideline for preparation.

A status report should include:

- The name of the committee.
- The date of the report.
- The name of the body hearing the report. (Membership, Executive Committee, etc.)
- The name of the chair.
- Evaluation of progress to date.
- Current status of work.
- Preview of upcoming work.
- Recommendations or requests.

If the report includes a recommendation or request from the committee, the person giving the report (usually the chair of the committee) moves for its adoption. Motions offered on behalf of a committee do not require a second to be discussed.

Copies of status reports should be provided for the unit secretary and the committee's procedure book. Copies may also be requested for the president and treasurer.

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## Productive Committee Meetings

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A chair can improve the effectiveness of committee meetings by keeping in mind the following pointers.

Before the Meeting

- Notify all committee members and the unit president of the meeting date and location. Be specific about the purpose of the meeting, the topics to be discussed, and the starting and ending times.
- Prepare an agenda in advance. If possible, distribute the agenda prior to the meeting.
- Make sure you have everything needed for the meeting. Gather all information and materials that will be useful to the committee.

During the Meeting

- Start on time.
- Review agenda and tasks to be accomplished.
- Select a member of the committee to record minutes.
- A majority of committee members must be present to transact business.
- Stay on task; accomplish all of the agenda items before moving on to unrelated discussions.
- Give everyone an opportunity to participate.
- The chair of the committee has the right to vote and be an active participant in discussions.
- Make decisions by a vote of the committee members when consensus cannot be reached.
- Stay within the parameters of your approved Plan of Work and Budget.
- At the end of the meeting, review decisions and assignments.
- Establish a timeline for status reports.
- End on time.

After the Meeting

- See that the summary of the meeting (minutes) is sent to all committee members and the unit president.
- Follow up on assignments; confirm that work is being accomplished.
- Prepare and present a status report for the membership.
- Update the procedure book.

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## **A Committee's Plan of Work/Action Plan**

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A committee's first task is to prepare a plan of work/action plan to submit for approval. The terms plan of work and action plan are interchangeable and refer to a proposal for accomplishing the committee's assignment. No work should begin until a plan has been approved.

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### **Developing a Plan of Work/Action Plan**

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- Review assignment. Confirm that committee members have a clear understanding of the purpose and scope of their responsibility.
- Gather State and National PTA materials that apply to work.
- Ask president for copies of relevant sections of the Oregon PTA Officers' Manual.
- Examine Procedure Book and past committee's reports and recommendations.
- Check with unit secretary to determine if association's minutes contain comments or suggestions pertaining to committee's work.
- Brainstorm ideas for achieving task. Consider new ideas to improve the performance of the committee.
- Reach consensus on a plan for accomplishing the committee's work.
- Determine funding needs (if applicable) and prepare a budget for approval.
- Prepare a written plan of work/action plan. (See sample form #2.)
- Submit plan to executive committee/board for approval.

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### **Committee Budgets**

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Most local units will include a line item on their annual "proposed budget" for standing committees and the special committees that will repeat established projects or programs.

When a new committee is formed or an established committee is not included in the unit's budget, it will be necessary for the committee to submit a budget for approval. Funds cannot be spent without approval.

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## **Developing a Budget Request**

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Committee budget requests begin with a careful examination of the committee's plan of work/action plan. The members of the committee will need to anticipate the amount of funding necessary to accomplish their task.

Make a list of the products and services that will require funding. Determine their potential costs by reviewing a minimum of three estimates for each product, service, etc. (The exception: services offered or required by the school or district.)

If the committee functioned last year, examine the past committee's final financial statement. How well did the budget meet the needs of the previous committee? What impact will this year's plan of work/action plan have on funding?

Do not rely on past figures. Confirm current costs for products and services.

After the committee has identified its projected expenses, draft a budget request that reflects the findings.

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### **Budget Approval**

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The committee chair should present the budget request to both the executive committee/board and then to the unit's membership for approval.

Whenever possible, the budget request should be attached to (or incorporated within) the committee's plan of work/action plan when it is presented to the executive committee/board for approval.

Authorization for the expenditure of funds is not granted until the committee budget has been approved by the unit's membership. Once the committee's budget is approved, the committee need not get further authorization unless their plan changes.

**The next pages have samples of the following forms:**

- Committee Assignment Sheet (#1)
- PTA Committee Plan of Work/Action Plan (#2)
- PTA Committee Evaluation Form (#3)
- PTA Committee Financial Statement (#4)

## Sample Committee Forms

Sample Form #1

### Committee Assignment Sheet

To: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Thank you for your willingness to serve PTA as chair of the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee. The committee has been assigned the following task/responsibility: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

The following people have been assigned to or expressed an interest in serving on the committee:

(Name)	(Phone)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

This committee DOES/DOES NOT have an established Procedure Book. If a Procedure Book is not available, please start one by saving useful information and materials for next year's chair.

Meet with the committee to develop a proposed Plan of Work/Action Plan to submit for approval. The plan must be approved before work begins.

Please present your proposal (using a Plan of Work/Action Plan form) to the Executive Committee/Board by \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Date)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 (PTA President)  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Phone)

Sample Form #2

### PTA Committee Plan of Work/Action Plan

Name of Committee: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Committee's Goal/Task: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Plan to accomplish Goal/Task: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Estimated expenses:  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 Requested Budget: \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (if approval needed)

Committee Chair: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Committee Members

(Name)	(Phone)
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

.....  
 Executive Committee/Board

Additions/Changes: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Plan approved: \_\_\_\_\_ (date)  
 Budget approved: \_\_\_\_\_ (date)  
 President's initials: \_\_\_\_\_

Final Report

PTA Committee Evaluation Form

Name of Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Chair: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Description of Committee's Job: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Describe Plan of Work: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Committee members: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Was committee size adequate? \_\_\_\_\_

Recommended size: \_\_\_\_\_ Why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Committee budget: \$\_\_\_\_\_. Was budget adequate?

\_\_\_\_\_ If not, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Briefly evaluate committee's work (were goals met,

successes, challenges, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Recommendations for next chair: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_

Final Report

PTA Committee Financial Statement

Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

Approved Budget: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Income (if applicable):

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Expenses:

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Profit or unused funds: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted By: \_\_\_\_\_

(Committee Chair)

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## Nominating Committee

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It is the responsibility of the nominating committee to recognize and seek qualified nominees for the elected leadership of your PTA. The members of the committee, therefore, have a tremendous influence on the future of your PTA and should be carefully selected. Nominating committee members should have a broad acquaintance with the membership and an understanding of the organization's functions and its purpose.

The rules for electing PTA officers are defined in the Oregon PTA Unified Local Unit Bylaws. The following is an outline of the step-by-step procedures necessary to adhere to the requirements set forth in the bylaws.

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### Nominating Process

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The elections of officers should always begin with a nominating process. This process provides the entire membership with an opportunity to have a say in the selection of the unit's officers.

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### Nominating Committee

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Being elected to the nominating committee is one of the highest honors that can be bestowed on PTA members. The general membership has chosen these fellow members to represent them in the process of identifying, screening, and recommending the best potential candidates for office. The committee should include both experienced leadership as well as newer members. All candidates for PTA office must be members of that PTA.

The Oregon PTA Unified Local Unit Bylaws state: "there shall be a nominating committee composed of at least three (3) members, to be elected by this local PTA/PTSA unit at a general meeting, at least one month prior to the election of officers. The committee shall elect its own chair."

Each unit's standing rules may indicate the number of persons to serve on this committee (a minimum of three and an odd number is preferable) and when they will be elected.

The president may not appoint the committee, nor be an ex-officio member; nor is it appropriate for the president to exert any influence on its selection of nominees. Note: The principal, if a member of your PTA/PTSA, may be elected to the nominating committee, or serve as a resource.

Members of this committee should possess:

- Current PTA membership status.
- A clear understanding of the duties and expectations stipulated in the bylaws and standing rules for the various offices.
- Interest in and enthusiasm for the purpose and programs of your PTA, and the willingness to work and devote time to them.
- Objectivity.
- High qualities of tact, integrity, and confidentiality.
- Courage to express ideas and to defend one's convictions.
- Sound judgment and skill in evaluating possible nominees.
- Knowledge of your PTA's goals.
- General knowledge of potential candidates' qualifications and abilities.

It is recommended that a member not serve on the nominating committee for two (2) consecutive years.

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### Alternates

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Alternates, also elected by the membership, do not attend meetings, but should be advised of the date and time of the first meeting.

Any elected members who cannot attend the first or any succeeding meeting must notify the chair of the nominating committee immediately to ensure that the first alternate is contacted to serve. The alternate then serves as a permanent member of the committee for that and all future Nominating Committee meetings.

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### Duties of a Nominating Committee

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Members of the nominating committee should meet as soon as possible to elect a chair. This first meeting should be held early enough to have a second and a third meeting if necessary.

Only members of the committee may attend meetings. Meetings must be rescheduled if a quorum is not present. A quorum is the majority of the members of the committee. A majority is defined as one more than half of the number possible.

The chair of the committee is responsible for:

- Presiding at committee meetings.
- Coordinating the work of the committee.
- Speaking on behalf of the committee.
- Contacting potential nominees approved by the committee.
- Informing committee members of the results of contacts.
- Preparing and reading the official committee report.
- Advising the nominees to attend the election meeting and the installation of officers.

Prior to considering names, the committee should study the bylaws and standing rules of the organization in order to define its duties and to refresh its members' understanding of the requirements of those offices. Membership lists from the association should be provided to the committee. Only those persons who are eligible (current PTA members) and who have given their consent to serve, if elected, shall be nominated for office.

It is also recommended that the committee choose a member to record minutes; recording decisions, not individual discussion of potential nominees. The minutes can then be destroyed once the final report is presented to the membership.

Note: It is not the responsibility of the nominating committee to fill committee chairs or appointed offices for the new term.

Remember that the nominating committee must put the good of the organization above personal obligations. While a good friend or popular member may want to be the new treasurer, another possible nominee may be an accountant, a bookkeeper, or have previous experience at another organization that makes this person a better choice. Remember, too, not to allow personality clashes between committee members and those being considered for office to influence your good judgment.

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## **Committee Deliberations**

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The selection of nominees should be an orderly process. Open and frank discussions must be held between members of the committee. Discussions are strictly confidential, and no information should leave the committee meeting, even after the officers have been elected.

Every effort should be made to provide your PTA with a slate of officers that is balanced in terms of new as well as experienced officers, represents the school attendance area, and reflects the diversity of the school population.

The majority of the committee must approve each potential nominee before the person is approached for consent to place his/her name in nomination. All votes taken by the committee should be by ballot. This is essential, no matter how silly it may seem. It prevents hurt feelings. All ballots should be destroyed after the slate has been filled.

The committee is not obligated to nominate the president or any other current officer to serve a second term or to nominate automatically the first vice president for president. Each nominee must be evaluated equally and by the same criteria as all other nominees.

Don't limit deliberations to people the committee members know. Ask for recommendations from the board, the membership, and also from PTA presidents of any feeder schools. The committee is not obligated to select nominees from the recommendations it receives.

Members of the nominating committee are not excluded from becoming nominees for elected office. During committee meetings, should a member be nominated, this member should be excused from the meeting room during the discussion regarding that office, but may return for the vote, which shall be by ballot.

A PTA member may not serve more than two (2) consecutive terms in the same office (Oregon PTA Unified Local Unit Bylaws). A PTA member may not serve in more than one (1) elected position at a time in a local unit (Oregon PTA Unified Local Unit Bylaws).

Nominees for president, president-elect (if applicable), vice president(s), secretary, and treasurer should be obtained in that order. If possible, fill one position before moving on to the next. It is not the job/duty of the presidential nominee to decide their running mates. This decision rests solely with the nominating committee.

The nominating committee is not required to select more than one nominee for each office (unless directed in unit's standing rules). If, however, two equally qualified people wish to run for the same office and the committee endorses each, submit both names and let the membership express their preference.

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## Questions for Nominating Committee

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Nominating committee members should ask themselves these questions as they go about the task of considering candidates for office:

- What do we need? (People with specific expertise, ties to community, representatives of the cultural diversity of the membership)
- What do we expect? (explain in detail – time, meeting attendance, committee work)
- Where are we going? What is our mission?
- Why are we doing this? What are our goals?

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## Qualifications to Look for in Potential Candidates

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- **Must be a PTA member – even candidates for office must be a member**
- Desire to be in the position
- PTA experience
- PTA knowledge
- Commitment to PTA
- Family support
- Awareness of duties/expectations for the position
- Sufficient time and energy to devote to the job
- Objectivity and personal flexibility
- Organizational skills
- Ability to speak up and express opinions
- Team oriented
- Understands the value of training to improve skills

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## Contacting Potential Nominees

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The committee chair usually contacts nominees to tell them the duties of the office and to obtain their consent to serve if elected. Remember that the majority of the committee should endorse the nominee before the nominee is contacted.

The person who makes the contact should advise each potential nominee that his name is being submitted to the committee “for consideration” and that the final decision for selection of nominees is up to the committee. To avoid hurt feelings, the contact person should make no promises or commitments, asking only for the individual’s consent should he/she be selected as a nominee.

Suggestions for making contacts:

- Don’t catch people unaware. Arrange a convenient time to talk.
- Let the person know that you want to talk about pursuing a leadership role in PTA.

- Be positive in your approach. Stress the individual’s qualities and how they would benefit PTA.
- Don’t minimize the duties of the office. Provide an honest and complete job description, including the time involved and the opportunities for leadership training. (If requested, and available, a printed job description could be provided.)
- Don’t insist on an immediate answer. Allow time for consideration, if needed. Call back for response before approaching others about the same position.
- Accept a “No” response graciously. Express appreciation, and encourage continued involvement.

Individuals considering accepting a nomination for an elected office should be advised that the responsibilities of the office may include attending leadership training meetings, workshops and/or the Oregon PTA annual meeting held during the state convention.

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## Report of the Nominating Committee

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Once the committee has completed its slate of nominees, a written report is submitted to the membership. This may be done at a general meeting or through a flyer or newsletter. Each unit’s standing rules should indicate when the committee will present its report and when elections will be held. To allow the general membership time to consider nominees, units should present the report one (1) month prior to elections. The report should list each office and the committee’s nominee(s). The report should be dated and signed by all members of the committee.

The nominating committee is automatically discharged when its report is presented to the membership. However, if a nominee withdraws prior to the election, the committee is reconvened to seek another nominee.

**Note: If a vacancy occurs during the year, the elected office shall be filled by a person elected by a majority vote of the general membership. Prior notice of a minimum of fourteen (14) days of such election shall be given. (Oregon PTA Unified Local Unit Bylaws)**

The nominating committee report is also read at the election meeting (if different from the meeting at which it was first presented). The written report is then handed over to the presiding officer. No action is taken on the report itself, but is entered into the minutes. The president reads the complete report again. At this time, nominations may be made from the floor.

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## **Nominations from the Floor**

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After reading the report of the nominating committee, the presiding officer calls for nominations from the floor, office by office, being careful to give members adequate opportunity to present names of their choice.

This procedure allows the membership to add additional names to the slate if they are not content with the recommendations of the nominating committee.

Nominations from the floor do not require a second.

When it appears that all nominees have been named, the chair (president) again asks if there are further nominations, then **declares the nominations closed**.

Nominations may be reopened by a motion and a majority vote, provided no votes have yet been cast.

Oregon PTA Bylaws do not prohibit eligible members from running for more than one office. If elected to two (2) positions, the candidate, if present, must choose which office he/she will accept. If the candidate is not present, the assembly decides by majority vote which office the person will fill and votes again to fill the other office.

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## **Elections**

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The Oregon PTA Unified Local Unit Bylaws state that officers are elected by ballot; but if there is only one candidate for any office, the election may be by voice vote. (Oregon PTA Unified Local Unit Bylaws, Article VI; Officers and Their Election, section 2, subsection b. )

All business, including the election of officers, is conducted by the president. He or she announces if the election will be by ballot or voice vote based on the number of nominees for each office.

Prior to elections, the president should appoint a Tellers Committee composed of members (usually three) who are not candidates for office, nor are members of the Nominating Committee. One teller is designated as the chair.

Voting for each office should be handled separately. A majority of the votes cast (whether by ballot or voice) is necessary to elect an officer.

The chair of the Tellers Committee should have ballot slips available even though the Nominating Committee may have presented only one name for each office.

The ballots should indicate the name of the PTA, date of the meeting, list of nominees from the nominating committee, with additional space provided for each office for nominations from the floor, and be uniform in color, size, and shape. If a member requests a vote by ballot for any office, the request must be recognized and voted upon without debate.

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## **Conducting the Election**

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Confirm that a quorum is present. If not, voting cannot take place and the election will need to be rescheduled. The quorum for conducting business should be indicated in the unit's standing rules.

The president explains the voting process and restates the list of nominees. The president also reminds the membership that:

- Only members may vote. (A membership list must be available at this meeting.)
- A majority vote is necessary to elect an officer.
- Absentee or proxy ballots are prohibited (Oregon PTA Unified Local Unit Bylaws, Article X; Meetings, section 2.)

If voting is done by ballot, the tellers distribute, collect, and count the ballots. They prepare a report listing the number of votes cast (including illegal ballots), the number of votes needed to elect, and the number of votes received by each candidate (announcing this last one is optional). "Write in" votes are listed on the report. Each teller signs the report. It is the duty of the teller's committee to account for every vote cast, not to announce the "winners".

Ballots are considered illegal if:

- They are illegible.
- They contain the name of a nominee who is not a current PTA member.
- Two or more filled out ballots are folded together. These are recorded as one illegal vote.
- If it is not clear whom the vote is for.

The teller's report is read by the chair of the tellers committee, and then given to the president.

The president restates the election results and declares those elected by a majority. If a majority has not been reached for an office, the president states that there is no election, and another vote is taken for that office. It may be necessary to vote several times to achieve a majority. All names remain on the ballot until a majority is reached.

The teller's report is entered into the minutes. The membership may give consent to destroy the ballots once the election is complete. If the ballots are not destroyed, it is customary for the secretary to hold them for one month. A challenge to the election procedure or outcome must be made during the election meeting.

Each unit's standing rules should indicate the date on which the new officers will assume their duties (usually July 1<sup>st</sup>).

**Congratulate your new officers!**

Applaud yourselves for completing an election process that allowed the entire membership to contribute to the selection of capable, qualified leaders.

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**Installations**

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Newly elected PTA officers may be installed in a special ceremony. Although not a requirement, an installation ceremony provides an opportunity to reaffirm the purposes of PTA, recognize the efforts of the outgoing board, and express support for the new officers.

The installing officer may be the outgoing president, a current or former PTA leader, a council or state board member, or your principal.

An installation may be as formal or informal as your membership desires. Each unit may create its own ceremony or adapt one from the files maintained in the state PTA office.

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## A Suggested Installation Ceremony

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*Installing Officer* (who may be a past president, the region director, or someone else devoted to the PTA unit and its members):

PTA membership is local involvement, state support and services, national solidarity and influence.

Our membership card commits us to the Vision, Mission, and Values of PTA.

PTA membership brings us a rich, cumulative store of insight and experiences to draw on for the benefit of children and youth.

PTA membership enables us to enrich the whole texture of our efforts through the local-state-national interchange of parents and teachers, to become advocates of children.

The individual local unit, the collective state congress and the overlapping National organization – each with its own rights and responsibilities, and its own tasks to perform, each borrowing insight from the others – can have a combined strength, resourcefulness and capacity for growth that no one segment alone could have. In PTA, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

### To the Retiring Officers

Will (*recite their names*) please rise to be recognized. We express our gratitude to you for the devoted, effective service that has marked your tenure as officers, and we urge you to continue your efforts to promote the interests of children and youth. Answer, “I will.” Thank you; please be seated.

### To the Continuing Officers

Will (*recite their names*) please rise to be recognized. We ask for your ongoing support of the new officers who join you at this time. Answer, “I will.” Thank you; please be seated.

### Hear now these several principles of PTA leadership:

A leader can best be defined as a *unit of contagious influence*: one who has an unusual capacity to get other people to support his or her outlook and purposes. Whether or not this person is good to have around will depend on the nature of his or her aims and the means employed to realize them.

The kind of leader we want in PTA is one who cleaves to our American concept of a free society, who respects and feels the drama of “chore work,” *and who can create an atmosphere in which others can and want to grow.*

And above all, the PTA leader never forgets – or lets us forget – that we are working for children through our PTA Values.

\_\_\_\_\_ PTA has chosen these  
(*Insert PTA Name*)

leaders to work for children through the fulfillment of our Values. Think of all that is implied, as we recite together what the PTA stands for.

### Recital of PTA Values

The Values can be found in the front of this *Officers’ Manual*.

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### Installing of Officers

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#### To the New Officers

(*Name each new officer and position in turn*): Will you each separately and in united effort work toward the fulfillment of our Values in the service of children and youth? Answer, “I will.”

The present and the future of \_\_\_\_\_  
(*Insert PTA Name*)

PTA now rests on your beliefs and abilities, your commitment and powers of implementation, joined to the skills of the officers who will serve with you, and the faith and help of all other members of the association. Will you pledge yourselves to these people and that service? Answer, “I will.”

#### To Audience of PTA Members

Members of \_\_\_\_\_ PTA, please  
(*Insert PTA Name*)

rise. Here are your new leaders of the coming year. They will need your encouragement and support. Will you pledge them your loyalty, your cooperation, in the names of the children of this school community? Answer, “I will.”

#### To the New Officers

With a strong belief in your several abilities, and with renewed hope for \_\_\_\_\_ PTA, I now  
(*Insert PTA Name*)  
declare you the duly elected officers for 20\_\_-20\_\_.

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## Newsletters

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A PTA/PTSA newsletter can be an effective communication tool for your local unit. It is an excellent way to heighten awareness of PTA's role in your school or community. A PTA/PTSA newsletter should focus on PTA news (local, state and National) with all other information secondary.

### Tips for a Successful PTA Newsletter

- Determine the purpose of your newsletter. Will it promote your PTA goals and meet the needs of your readership?
- Establish a regular publication schedule.
- Identify your newsletter with an attractive nameplate (title/logo). Clearly identify it as a PTA publication.
- Develop a format that is easily read and consistent throughout each issue.
- A masthead containing your PTA's name, address and other relevant information (editor's name, publishing schedule, etc.) should be included in each issue.
- Blend Oregon PTA news and National PTA information with news of your unit's programs and activities.
- Articles should be concise, interesting, accurate, timely, and well written. They should inform, educate and motivate.
- Design your "editorial formula" - the mix of articles that makes up your newsletter, advances its goals and gives it its personality.
- Make use of devices such as clip art, borders, titles, subtitles, graphics and white space to break up copy, organize material, and call attention to important items.
- Categorize and prioritize articles:
  - ✓ Hard news: necessary, undeniably important
  - ✓ Soft news: useful but not critical
  - ✓ Fluff: just for fun, inspirational
  - ✓ Copy should be carefully edited for accuracy, clarity, timeliness, and copyright requirements.
- Periodically evaluate your newsletter's effectiveness.
  - ✓ Are you meeting your objectives?
  - ✓ Is your production procedure efficient?
  - ✓ What would you like to improve?

### Suggestions for Articles

#### Regular articles might include:

- A message from the PTA/PTSA president, the school principal, or the newsletter editor.
- A calendar of events.
- Oregon PTA and National PTA news.
- The agenda for the next PTA meeting.

#### Special articles might include:

- PTA election results.
- Chair appointments or committee reports.
- Summary reports about meetings, workshops, and conventions.
- Biographies of new school staff and PTA board members.
- Information about election days, or voter registration.

#### Feature stories might include:

- News of PTA projects and programs.
- Special PTA events and activities.
- Recognizing people for their service to PTA.
- District activities/projects/decisions that affect your school.

#### Alternatives to the President's Message

Offer to give your PTA president a break from having to write a message for every issue. Try one or several of the following ideas:

- Write a question-and-answer interview with the president or other officer, or school personnel such as the principal, counselor or a teacher; get their thoughts on major or emerging issues in your PTA or community.
- Profile a new officer in each issue, giving personal information and major goals in office. Or profile a new member each issue, giving personal background and their purpose for joining PTA.
- Feature a locally owned or operated business in your area and write an article about the service they provide. Is the owner/manager a member of PTA?
- Ask a student member to submit copy, and if it works well, offer to give the space to the students in every issue.

- Ask an expert or other knowledgeable person in a field of interest to your PTA to write a feature article. Or interview such a person. Topics might include early childhood education, suicide prevention, teen pregnancy or day care.
- How about a short editor's message giving the main topics in the issue, written in such a way that it entices the reader to read the stories?

### Copyright Information

Although much of National PTA's material is copyrighted, all PTA affiliates may reprint the material as desired. You should, however, clearly acknowledge the source from which it was taken by including the statement, *Reprinted from the \_\_\_\_\_ (month, year) issue of \_\_\_\_\_ (PTA publication).*

You may also choose to excerpt from the material rather than reprinting it entirely. If you prefer to excerpt, be sure to cite the source of the material by saying, *Excerpted from \_\_\_\_\_*. You may reprint all articles from *onevoice* citing the source.

Note: Simply stating, *Borrowed* will **not** satisfy copyright law requirements.

Please be aware that **reprinting** in your publication and **duplicating** for distribution to PTA members are two different matters. All National PTA copyrighted material may be duplicated for distribution by the PTA network. Copyright rules apply primarily to material that is going to be reprinted in a source such as a newsletter. It is always appropriate to use the full citation for National PTA materials.

Duplication of non-PTA material must be in accord with general copyright rules pertaining to the amount and kinds of material that can be duplicated. Current copyright regulations pertaining to photocopying and other forms of duplication are available through your local library.

### Oregon PTA Newsletter Awards

Each year, Oregon PTA recognizes outstanding newsletters at the annual state PTA convention. See the "Awards Section" of this *Officers' Manual* for an awards application and additional information.