Secretary

2022 - 2023

Table of Contents

The Importance of the Secretary

The secretary is a critical position on a local PTA executive board, and one of only two positions that are required by law as an organization in Texas. The PTA secretary is responsible for keeping accurate records of the proceedings of the association, completing records of members and leaders, and sending communications on behalf of the executive board. Never say, “I’m just the secretary!”

An effective secretary should be prompt, accurate, dependable, and thoroughly know the PTA purposes, bylaws, standing rules, policies, and methods. This guide will familiarize you with the responsibilities required and opportunities to be an effective secretary.

About PTA

VISION Every child's potential is a reality.

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

PURPOSES

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, places of worship, and throughout the community;
- To raise the standards of home life;
- To advocate for laws that further the education, physical and mental health, welfare, and safety of children and youth;
- To promote the collaboration and engagement of families and educators in the education of children and youth;
- To engage the public in united efforts to secure the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and social well-being of all children and youth; and
- To advocate for fiscal responsibility regarding public tax dollars in public education funding.

VALUES

- **Collaboration**: We will partner with a wide array of individuals and organizations to broaden and enhance our ability to serve and advocate for all children and families.
- **Commitment**: We are dedicated to children's educational success, health, and well-being through strong family and community engagement while remaining accountable to the principles upon which our association was founded.
- **Diversity**: We acknowledge the potential of everyone without regard, including but not limited to: age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, legal status, marital status, mental ability, national origin, organizational position, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual orientation, and work experience.
- **Respect**: We value the individual contributions of members, employees, volunteers, and partners as we work collaboratively to achieve our association's goals.
- **Accountability**: All members, employees, volunteers, and partners have a shared responsibility to align their efforts toward achieving our association's strategic initiatives.

PTA NATIONAL STANDARDS FOR FAMILY-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS

- Standard 1: **Welcoming All Families into the School Community** Families are active participants in the life of the school and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to school staff and to what students are learning and doing in class.
- Standard 2: **Communicating Effectively** Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.
- Standard 3: **Supporting Student Success** Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and school and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills effectively.
- Standard 4: **Speaking Up for Every Child** Families are empowered to advocate for their own and other children to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities to support their success.
- Standard 5: **Sharing Power** Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.
- Standard 6: **Collaborating with Community** Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

Leadership Competencies

Skills and Abilities Effective Leaders Demonstrate

Successful leaders are effective leaders. Think of some of the most effective PTA leaders you have worked with. They fill their PTA role well, but their leadership capacity goes beyond that. They have skills and abilities that allow them to step into various roles. They see the value people have to offer and seek their involvement. They provide a clear purpose that others want to follow. They lead with integrity and strive to improve continually.

Texas PTA has identified a set of competencies effective leaders demonstrate. Current and potential leaders can use these skills and abilities to help them improve their leadership and by Local or Council PTA nominating committees to recruit, nominate, and elect effective leaders. These competencies also drive our Full Circle Leadership Development program.

This list is by no means exhaustive. Rather, it is representative of the qualities PTA leaders demonstrate in the work they do to make every child's potential a reality.

Competencies	Descriptions
Self-Awareness	An individual's ability to assess their own strengths and weaknesses
Vision	Demonstrates a clear understanding of the future and how to get there
Relationship Building	Develops trust, mutual respect, and values diversity
Critical Thinking	Obtains all the relevant information, identifies problems and causes, evaluates information, and determines criteria that indicate solutions
Time & Resource Management	Effectively prioritizes and manages resources to accomplish goals of group or project
Motivation	Demonstrates and promotes interest and enthusiasm
Empathy	Expresses verbal and nonverbal recognition of feelings, needs, and concerns of others
Creativity	Sees and thinks of new ideas, alternatives, and ways to do things
Communication	Listens actively and conveys information clearly, concisely and accurately in both writing and speech
Collaboration	Works as a team to achieve a common purpose Puts service before self
Delegation	Shares responsibilities including guidance and follow up
Continuous Learning	Pursues development of skills and knowledge
Integrity	Doing the right thing when no one is watching
Initiative	Steps up unprompted or going above and beyond with excellence

Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion Policy

This Policy has been developed by the Texas PTA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Task Force, adopted by the Texas PTA Board of Directors ("Board"), and is intended to be consistent with the National PTA's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy. This Policy is also intended to further the commitment of Texas PTA to diversity, equity, and inclusion, which is: To continually be a voice for all children by reflecting diversity and being inclusive in our membership, leadership, program content, advocacy, training, partnerships, and communications.

We acknowledge the potential of everyone without regard, including but not limited to: age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, legal status, marital status, mental ability, national origin, organizational position, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual orientation, and work experience.

Effective Date: This policy was adopted as of April 19, 2021, shall be reviewed by the Board every two years, and shall remain in effect until amended or replaced in its entirety as a result of action by the Board.

Scope: This policy shall apply as guidance to Texas PTA, all constituent divisions (Local PTAs and other divisions, including Council PTAs), and their respective members.

Definitions: For the purpose of this policy:

- *Diversity* is the representation of, and respect for, people from different backgrounds and identities—including but not limited to race, culture, religion, socio-economic status, age, geographic area, sexual orientation, and gender identification, language, approaches to learning, diagnoses, or exceptionalities impacting learning or access to learning, and physical appearance. It also involves bringing different ideas, perspectives, lived experiences, talents, values, and worldviews to the table to represent the broad variety of children, caregivers, educators, and communities within the PTA family.
- *Equity* provides fairness and access to resources, opportunities, and outcomes so that all communities get what they need to be engaged and successful. This moves beyond an "equal across the board" approach to
    - a) Recognizing and addressing bias and privilege.
    - b) Understand and attend to specific individual and community needs, providing additional resources to those with greater needs.
- *Inclusion* is actions, behaviors, and social norms that strive to ensure all people feel they are safe, welcomed, and that they belong. This means putting diversity into action with skill and intentionality, striving to ensure everyone feels respected, supported, and valued—and can fully participate with equal voice and right to be heard. This includes actively seeking out voices that have been traditionally underrepresented and/or marginalized.

Policy: Texas PTA and its constituent divisions (Local PTAs and other divisions including Council PTAs) shall:

- Promote awareness, inclusion, and engagement of all diverse populations represented in the community and encourage all;
- Openly assess beliefs and practices to ensure inclusiveness, equity, and to guard against discrimination;
- Strive to ensure that the membership, leadership, programs, partnerships, and printed materials across Texas reflect the diversity of their communities;
- Communicate with families in their communities in languages which they understand, to the extent possible;
- Identify and address barriers that hinder inclusivity;
- Foster programs and practices that eliminate bias, prejudice, and misunderstanding;
- Advocate for funding, laws, and regulations that support programs, policies, and services that meet the health, safety, and educational needs of all student populations in Texas public schools; and
- Provide resources and training that develop a more diverse and inclusive group of Texas PTA members, leaders, and community.

Texas PTA first adopted a Cultural Diversity and Inclusion policy on July 26, 2012

Getting Started

Quick-start Actions

- Register as a PTA Leader at txpta.org/submitting-board-member-information.
- Work with the outgoing secretary to review your responsibilities and become familiar with your Local PTA's practices.
- Develop a Plan of Work and submit it to the executive board for approval.
- Guide incoming executive board members on best practices for your PTA.
- Sign the Texas PTA Confidentiality, Ethics, and Conflict of Interest Agreement.
- Ensure all members of the executive board have completed the following:
    - Completed FOUNDATIONS training (Essentials and Basics)
    - Signed the Local PTA Ethics/Conflict of Interest Policy
- Confirm the executive board has reviewed the Texas PTA Records Retention Policy annually, and the membership has approved any changes annually.

Duties At A Glance

The PTA secretary is responsible for keeping accurate records of the proceedings of the association, maintain required PTA documents, as well as sending communications on behalf of the executive board.

- Ensure your PTA meets all requirements of the Standards of Continuing Affiliation.
- Keep on permanent file the PTA Employer Identification Number (EIN), as assigned by the IRS, and the sales tax permit, if applicable, as assigned by the Texas Comptroller.
- Maintain records in compliance with the PTA's records retention policy.
- Access the Texas PTA Training Completion Report to ensure that all officers and board members have completed each year's appropriate training.
- Participate with the full rights of an executive board member, make motions, nominate candidates, enter into discussion, and vote.
- If asked by the president, prepare an order of business on all pending matters known in advance.
- Record in the minutes all business transacted at each meeting of the membership and the executive board.
- Sit close to the president and stand if reading the minutes or when making the executive board report.
- Assist the president in establishing a quorum and maintaining a roll call record. At executive board meetings, the general roll call method is by voice. The general method is to have the members sign in or use membership/credential cards at membership meetings.
- Assist in counting a standing vote when requested by the president.
- Calls the meeting to order in the absence of the president and vice president(s) and presides until the membership elects a temporary chair.
- Prepare for the president, a draft of the minutes of a meeting within two to five days after each meeting.
- Assume the historian's duties if one is not designated in the bylaws.
    - Collect and preserve documents relating to the history of the association.
    - Present a written report to the membership as the official history adopted at the annual meeting.
- Provide successors with all minutes, records, reports, procedure book, and other pertinent materials.
- Study all references to duties in the PTA bylaws, policies, and standing rules.

Required Monthly Duties

- Notify executive board members, as requested, by telephone, email, or mail of called meetings.
- Present a report, when requested, of the executive board meeting, its actions, and recommendations, at the next meeting. When recommendations are contained in the report, move the adoption of each recommendation.
- Coordinate with the membership chair to report members/dues to Texas PTA.
- Check the Local PTA Roster to confirm that your PTA is in Good Standing. If not, follow up on what's missing.

Plan of Work

Officer/Chairman Name: _____

Position: Secretary **Year:** _____

Reproduce as needed for the appropriate number of goals.

Responsibilities/ Duties:	To manage and keep the records of local PTA business, conduct and maintain correspondence, and be the custodian of the historical records of the PTA.	Committee Members:	Minutes Committee, only if appointed by the president to review the minutes of the executive board and/or membership meetings.
Goal:	To record, maintain, and keep an accurate record of the PTA's executive board and membership meetings	Evaluation Process:	Approved minutes by the committee, executive board, and membership.

Specific Action Steps	**Start Date**	**Completion Date**	**Budget**
Keep all minutes, reports, records, governing documents, policies, and a procedure book per the records retention policy.	July	July	$10
Collect, maintain, and preserve the historical records/files of the organization by assuming the duties of the historian *(if there is not one)*.	July	July	$10
Assist the president/and or the executive board as they prepare for meetings (send meeting announcements, help develop agendas, etc.).	July	July	$10
Act as a corresponding secretary (read communications, write thank you notes, sympathy/sunshine notes, etc.).	July	July	$10

Resources:	Council secretary and executive board, Texas PTA Field Service Representative, Texas PTA Secretary, Texas PTA Secretary Resource Guide and website, Texas PTA Parliamentarian Resource Guide, Records Retention Policy, National PTA website (e-learning)

Historian

The position of a historian is optional. If the PTA does not have a historian, these duties are the secretary's responsibility. Check your PTA bylaws to determine if your PTA has a historian or not.

The PTA may have a tradition that a history book or scrapbook be compiled. It includes all activities sponsored by the PTA and the Historian Report. This book should be kept conveniently located in the school library or office. In this case, the historian is usually a designated position and NOT the secretary's responsibility.

Responsibilities and Objectives
The historian prepares and updates a record of the activities and achievements of the PTA and makes historical facts available on request to the membership.

The historian's formal, written report is the official history, presented and adopted at the annual membership meeting and filed with the minutes. It summarizes all the PTA's activities for that fiscal year.

Historian Report includes

- A list of the executive board members and when they were elected or appointed;
- All executive board meeting and membership meeting dates along with any major business conducted by the executive board and presented to the membership;
- The programs and activities hosted by the PTA during the year including a brief description of each
- Training or other events or activities that executive board members attended.

  **Note that this report should be broad and contain only things that would be accessible to the general public.*

Sample Agenda

ABC PTA
Meeting Agenda
September 1, 20XX

Call to Order
The president, as the chair, stands, raps the gavel once, and calls the meeting to order. The president declares whether or not a quorum is present, so both the members are aware, and the secretary notes the fact in the minutes.

If the secretary and/or the parliamentarian are not present, the chair appoints a member(s) to perform those responsibilities for the meeting.

Opening Ceremonies (Optional)
An invocation, pledges to the flags, a poem, a song, or an inspirational message may be presented. If more than one of these is used, use the rule of “God before country” when determining the order.

Approval of Minutes
The chair recognizes the secretary for the approval of the minutes.

The secretary stands, and either

- reads the minutes,
- announces the minutes draft has been distributed or
- announces that the minutes were approved by a committee.

The chair can either accept a motion to approve the minutes (presented or amended) or use unanimous consent.

The chair may allow the membership to approve the minutes at the next meeting or appoint a committee to approve the minutes for the current meeting. Committee approval is recommended when the time between meetings causes concern for accuracy (for example, the last meeting of the year).

Minutes are presented at every meeting unless they were previously approved by a committee, which is announced and noted in the current meeting minutes.

Report of Treasurer
The chair recognizes the treasurer for the financial report. A financial report is not optional and must be presented at every meeting.

The treasurer stands, addresses the chair, and reads the report, which includes (at the least) the beginning balance, total income, total expenditures, ending balance, change in sales tax and state/national dues liability/escrow, and sales tax and state/national dues liability/escrow balance. The chair states that the report is filed for financial reconciliation.

Letters or Communications
The secretary reads any communications received. Action is considered if required.

Report of the Executive Board
The secretary reads a summary report (not the minutes) for the information of the members. If recommendations are presented, the secretary moves the adoption of each recommendation individually in the form of a motion (no second required).

Reports of Officers and Standing Committees
The chair calls for the committee's report (not the chair’s report).

A report from a committee may be informational or require action, as determined by a majority vote of the committee. Reports with information only are read to the voting body. Those reports requiring action are presented as a motion to the membership (no second required), and the members either vote to approve—as presented or amended—or vote to reject.

The member (usually the committee chair) presenting the report moves the adoption of the motion. If no recommendation is made, no motion is needed.

The chair need not recognize the committee chair if there is no report.

The principal will often report at this time, following the president's report.

Reports of Special Committees and/or Special Orders (if Needed)
The chair calls for the report of the special committees if needed.

The reports of special committees follow the same rules as those of standing committees. If no special committees exist, this item of business does not appear on the agenda.

Motions made a "special order"—by a two-thirds vote at an earlier time—are addressed at this point. Also, matters required by the bylaws to be taken up at a specific meeting are in order (election of Nominating Committee, Financial Reconciliation Committee report, the election of officers, etc.).

Note: The chair may determine that this business needs to be moved higher in the agenda to maintain quorum.

Unfinished Business
The chair announces (but does not call for) business under this item. Unfinished business consists of business left unfinished at the previous meeting or business postponed to this meeting (if the group meets at least quarterly). Minutes of the previous meeting will indicate any unfinished business. If there is no unfinished business, the chair states, "there is no unfinished business."

New Business
The chair calls for new business. Members may bring any new business before the association (if it is within the scope of the association). A motion is necessary to introduce new items of business.

Program
If there is a program within the PTA meeting, the chair introduces the program/parent education chair who will introduce the program and program presenter(s).

The meeting is not "turned over" to the program chair, nor does the program chair "turn the meeting back to the president." The chair remains in control of the meeting from the call to order until adjournment.

Announcements
The chair should, if possible, make all announcements. Announcements include the date of the next meeting, important events, activities, etc.

The principal may be asked to speak here.

Adjournment
The chair asks if there is any further business. If any additional business exists, it is handled at this time. If no further business exists, then the chair declares the meeting adjourned.

No motion to adjourn is necessary.

Minutes

Minutes are not a report but a record of the association's business. They contain a record of what is done, not what is said. Personal opinions are not recorded. Minutes specify in the first paragraph the date, place, time, type of meeting, and the names and presence of the presiding officer and secretary or names of their alternates. Accuracy is the key to good minutes.

The minutes contain a record of all actions taken by the group, including the exact wording of every motion, the name of the maker of the motion, and the action taken on the motion. Personal opinions and/or discussions are not included in the minutes.

Minutes are efficiently written – complete, concise, and accurate. They must be as brief as possible but include all necessary information. Action must be recorded in the order in which it took place.

Writing the Minutes

Minutes record the actions taken by the group, including

- The exact wording of motions as stated by the chair. (The presiding officer can require any main motion or amendments to the motion to be in writing before the chair states it. The secretary can request the presiding officer to require that this be done.)
- The name of the member who moved the adoption of a motion, but not the name of the individual who "seconds" the motion, unless the assembly orders that it also be included.
- The action taken on the motion (pass/fail).

The minutes are typed or written legibly in permanent black ink and signed by the secretary. Minutes are recorded in an official minutes record and must have numbered pages to avoid alteration or removal of pages.

Membership and executive board meetings may be recorded by one executive board member, preferably the secretary, to accurately document the business conducted during the meeting. Everyone present must be told at the start that the meeting will be recorded, and anyone may request the recording to be paused during the discussion. Additional attendees are prohibited from recording the meetings, and all recordings are to be permanently destroyed after minutes have been documented.

PTA maintains two separate minutes record books — one for the executive board and one for the membership meetings.

Minutes are read, a draft printed and distributed, or electronically distributed before the beginning of the meeting) and approved or corrected immediately after the call to order, opening ceremonies, and after a quorum has been established. Distribution can include emailing members, posting in a password protected folder, or printing a draft to hand out. Never post minutes on a public site or social media.

Should minutes not be available for approval, those minutes are approved first at the next meeting. Minutes are approved in the order that the meetings occurred.

Minutes of a membership meeting may not be approved at a special meeting.

Minutes are read-only to the body creating them, i.e., executive board minutes are for the executive board to approve, and membership meeting minutes are for the membership to approve. Minutes protect the association and its dues-paying members. Unless password-protected, do not post on websites. Do not publish in newsletters or post on doors for non-members to access.

Minutes are signed by the secretary, using the secretary's given name. Example: Sue Jones, secretary. The words "Respectfully submitted" represent an older practice that is not essential in signing the minutes.

Minutes of the preceding meeting may be printed and distributed if marked as "draft."

If the secretary is not present at a meeting, the president appoints a temporary secretary, who then provides a draft to the secretary for approval at the following meeting.

After the minutes have been read (or distributed) and approved, the secretary writes "Approved as read (or printed)" or "Approved as corrected," the date of approval, and the secretary's initials. If a three-person committee approves your minutes (e.g., your last executive board and membership meeting of the school

year), and the review committee is appointed by the president to approve the minutes. Each committee member will sign and date the minutes after reading and making necessary corrections. The president simply states, “The minutes of the ___(date) meeting were approved by a committee consisting of ___ (names).” If someone wishes to correct those minutes, they may, but the president does not ask for corrections.

Correcting the Minutes
Corrections are suggested without motion or vote. Be grateful for corrections to the minutes. At least someone was listening closely enough to detect an error, and those corrections enable you to keep a more accurate record for the association.

Minutes may be corrected whenever the error is noticed, regardless of the elapsed time. Correcting minutes after they have been approved requires a 2/3 vote. Corrections are made in ink by drawing a line through the information with the correction above (if space allows) or written in the margin. Red ink is preferred to indicate a correction. Nothing is ever erased once the minutes have been approved and signed. If you are correcting digital minutes, use the strike-out feature with the red text color.

Any member has a right to examine the minutes of the membership meetings, but this right must not be abused. The original minutes must not be released from the secretary's custody except upon the written order of the president. If a committee needs records held by the secretary, the secretary provides a copy to the committee chair after consulting with the president. For example, during the financial reconciliation process, the secretary should present the approved minutes from membership and executive board meetings (along with the current membership roster and the current bylaws and standing rules).

For help or questions, contact your Field Service Representative, Council PTA (if applicable), or the Texas PTA Secretary.

Contents of Minutes

- First paragraph
  - Kind of meeting (membership, special, adjourned)
  - Name of association
  - Date, place, and time of the meeting
  - Quorum established
  - Presence and names of the president and secretary or names of their alternates
  - Details of whether minutes of the previous meeting were read (or printed and distributed) and approved (or approved as corrected)
  - Names of members present (usually in executive board or committee meetings with 20 or fewer members) may be included or attach a sign-in sheet, but this is not required.
- Second paragraph: Treasurer's report
  - Beginning balance (ending balance at last meeting)
  - Total receipts (since the last meeting)
  - Total disbursements (since the last meeting)
  - Ending balance (current meeting date)
  - Change in sales tax and state/national dues liability/escrow (since the last meeting)
  - Sales tax and state/national dues liability/escrow (current meeting date)
  - Attach the financial report to the meeting minutes
- Third paragraph: Communications read
  - Resignations can be read and accepted and should be noted in this section. (Note that resignations are not approved, but accepted.)
- Fourth paragraph: Reports of the executive board, statement review by non-signer, standing committees, special committees (copies of reports may be attached to minutes)
- Unfinished and New Business Motions--Separate paragraph for each subject covered
  - All main motions (except those withdrawn), name of the maker of the motion, second, disposition of the motion, and type of vote
  - Announcement of a previous notice of motions to be made at a later meeting
  - Points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost
  - Number of votes for and against on a vote by ballot or a counted vote
  - Number of votes per person for plurality or ballot election
  - Program topic, method of presentation, names of participants
- Announcements
- Time of adjournment—no motion necessary
- Signature, typed, or printed name, and title of secretary ("Respectfully submitted" is not used in signed minutes)

Sample Minutes

Minutes are the permanent record of all actions taken by the association; they are legal documents. The following sample is offered as a guide for the secretary. The wording in italics provides an example of how the minutes should be stated.

ABC PTA/PTSA
(Membership/executive board)
Meeting (Month, day), 20__

The (regular/special) meeting of the (name) PTA/PTSA was called to order on (month, day), 20__ at (time) (a.m./p.m.) in the (place meeting held) by President, (name), the secretary being present or (name) acting as secretary. A quorum was (established/not established). (Name) presented the invocation, and (name) led the pledge, or (name) led the pledge, and (name) presented an inspirational thought. The minutes of the (previous date and type of meeting) were: (Read and approved) or (read and approved as corrected) or (approved as distributed, posted, or published) or (approved as corrected). The treasurer's report showed: the beginning balance, receipts, disbursements, ending balance, change in sales tax and state/national dues liability/escrow, sales tax and state/national dues liability/escrow balance. The treasurer's report was filed for financial reconciliation.

Secretarial reports, including the Report of the Executive Board and the Statement Review by Non-Signer, would be presented before other officers' reports.

Reports from officers would follow any correspondence and should be read after the treasurer's report. If votes on the reports are necessary, the minutes should state:

(Name) moved the adoption of the (name of the committee/executive board) recommendation to (state exact wording). After discussion, the motion (carried/failed).

Reports from the standing committee would follow in the order given. State who presented the report for each committee and include a summary of the facts and action taken, if any. If the report is very long, it is permissible to attach the report to the official copy of the minutes (with a notation in the minutes to refer to the attachment).

If a member of the association makes a motion, minutes should state who made the motion and the exact wording of the motion. The name of the person who seconded the motion is not included, but the minutes should indicate that the motion was seconded and the action taken. For example,

> *(Name) moved that (the exact wording of the motion). The motion was seconded and (carried/failed).*

If a motion is amended, the minutes should not include the amendment(s) or the name(s) of the person(s) making the amendment. The minutes should only state the motion's final approved wording.

If the motion requires a two-thirds vote, such as an amendment made to the bylaws or standing rules, the minutes should state that a two-thirds vote carried the amendment.

If an election is held, the minutes should state the names of the nominees and the election results. After unfinished business, new business, programs, and announcements have been noted in the minutes. The adjournment is recorded.

The meeting was adjourned at (time) (a.m./p.m.).

(Signature)
(Name), Secretary (or Secretary Pro-tem)
Approved (or Approved as Corrected) (Month, day), 20__ (Initials of secretary)

Any corrections should be written on the minutes in the correct place and initialed by the secretary.

Best Practices

Preparation

If you are required to take the meeting minutes, bring along pens, writing paper, and blank motion forms. Arrive at the meeting site early to ensure that everything is ready. To take the minutes, have plenty of materials available (paper, forms, etc.) to get through a possibly lengthy session. Make sure you have a copy of the agenda the roster, and any reports, financial statements, or other documents that may be referred to during the meeting.

What to Record

The most difficult part of taking minutes is deciding what information has to be written down verbatim, what can be paraphrased, and what is nonessential for the official record. Minutes are meant to be concise, factual, and objective records of what has happened during the meeting. Therefore, you cannot allow personal preferences to influence your note-taking.

It can be challenging to discriminate among all the opinions and facts that should be recorded in the minutes and to record the proceedings fairly.To do so, it is necessary to take a disinterested position. As a recorder, you must listen carefully and ask the president or chair for clarification if needed.

It is necessary to record motions verbatim and the names of the individuals who made them. You may want to have blank copies of motion forms or index cards.

While it is important to record some things verbatim, like motions, you want to be cautious about including too much information. Discussion should never be noted or recorded in the minutes, nor should how an individual cast their vote. Recording too much detail can cause trouble if someone takes a screenshot and shares it. While this is against the PTA confidentiality policy, if someone breaks the policy and shares the information with others, it could be disparaging to the PTA. As you record the association's business, remember that it is nothing more than that, a record of the business.

Take caution when using services like Google Suites or other online storage for your documents. A version history is always available, so if your minutes are redacted before approval, it is still possible for individuals to access the unredacted version. Executive Board meetings should have extra caution taken. The Executive board's composition is designed to have the protection of a safe place to talk and make decisions.

Recording Guidelines

To begin your note-taking, follow these guidelines.

- Write down the date, location, and time the meeting begins.
- Record the names of those present and absent (usually if the number is 20 or less). A quorum check is necessary for larger meetings.
- Identify the type of meeting (such as membership, executive board, or special).
- Identify the presiding officer and secretary or their alternates.
- Record the action. When the meeting begins, key your notes to match numbered items on the agenda. When drafting, you simply refer to your agenda to transcribe the key.
- You may want to number the motions as you receive them to place them correctly as the action occurred.
- When you receive the copy of the motion, make sure it contains the name of the person who made the motion, whether there was a second, the date, and whether the motion was made in the executive board or membership meeting.
- Remember: If a motion is withdrawn, it is as though it never happened.
- If deciding to personalize a template to help record the minutes for meetings, make sure the template is consistent with the drafted agenda. You may want to bullet your entries to facilitate the recording of all actions.
- Consider making a template for the order of business and making it available for the minutes' review committee to follow the proceedings.
- Record the time of adjournment.

Since the minutes serve as the official records of meetings, they must be objectively recorded and conscientiously transcribed into a final document.

Recording the Meeting
Meetings may be recorded by one executive board member, preferably the secretary, for the purpose of accurately documenting business. The following must be followed:

- Members shall be notified the meeting is being recorded at the start.
- Members may request recording be paused during discussion.
- Recordings shall only be used for the purpose of accurately documenting business conducted at the meeting. No one shall attend in-person meetings virtually.
- Recordings shall be permanently destroyed after minutes are documented.
- All other attendees are prohibited from recording meetings.

Drafts
When you sit down at your computer, you must have the following materials accessible:

- The agenda
- Your notes
- Any reports or other documents distributed at the meeting
- Verbatim copies of motions
- Copy of bylaws

Format Guidelines
Prepare a draft according to these general guidelines. To determine the specific format, examine previous copies of the minutes in your files, and follow the format established for your PTA unless it has been determined that you will use a new format.

- Double-space the draft, even if the final version will be single-spaced, so handwritten corrections can be made between the lines.
- Number the pages consecutively at the top or bottom of the pages.
- Identify the meeting and date at the top of the page.
- Identify the participants (if 20 or less — according to the guidelines established for your PTA) and the presiding officer and secretary in the first paragraph and state when the meeting was called to order.
- Make sure that you indicate there was a quorum present to proceed with the order of business.
- Use subheads for different topics if warranted by the length and complexity of the minutes.
- Assemble all attachments for inclusion with the final copy.

Copy Distribution
It is good practice to present the president with a draft to help find misinterpretations or sensitive material that should not be printed.

Final Copy
The final copy may be single or double-spaced. Check copies of previous minutes for your PTA's preferred style. Most minutes are written in a narrative style.

Once minutes are approved and signed, all drafts, notes, and audio or video recordings will not be retained in the official files; they must be discarded.

You may keep a copy of the minutes on your computer to transfer to an external drive for your successor.

Beyond the Meeting

Financial Reconciliation

The outgoing secretary presents the following records to be reviewed by the committee:

- Minutes from membership and executive board meetings (including presented financial reports, last financial reconciliation report, Statement Review by Non-Signer forms, etc.)
- Current membership roster and executive board roster
- All bylaws, standing rules, and/or policies in effect during the period under review
- Confidentiality, Ethics, and Conflict of Interest Agreement
- Current contracts

Helpful Hints

- Keep a ballot kit on hand at each meeting containing customized ballots with the PTA name or simply strips of paper. For an election meeting, use colored paper so that each office needing a vote by ballot can be easily differentiated by separate colors. Also include pens or pencils and a blank teller report.
- Coordinate with your membership chair to have a sign-in table where verified members can receive a voting card at membership meetings. This can also be a colored notecard, piece of paper, or something more personalized. This is especially helpful when your membership meeting is right before an assembly or performance at the school or when a popular program is being offered. The membership chair should also have the ability for individuals to join the PTA at each meeting and to be ready to welcome new members.
- Have blank forms available at each meeting - sample motion forms, teller reports, and sign-in sheets.
- Create a minutes template with ample note-taking space designed to make it easier to record the minutes based on the meeting's agenda.

Sample Motion Form #_____

I move that:

_____

Printed Name: _____ Signature: _____

For Secretary's Use

Meeting _____

Date _____

Motion Number _____

Carried _____

Amended _____

Failed _____

Withdrawn _____

Records Retention Policy for Local and Council PTAs

The _____ PTA/PTSA adopted this policy regarding records retention on _____ *(date).* This policy shall be reviewed by the executive board annually and only the Storage Location (e.g., Google Drive, binder in PTA closet) may be changed by a majority vote of the membership present and voting at a regular meeting. This document shall be maintained by the Secretary of this PTA.

Description of Record(s)	PTA Leader Responsible	Storage Location & Record Type (Electronic/Printed)	Disposition
Bylaws and Standing Rules	PTA Secretary		Permanent
Confidentiality, Ethics and Conflict of Interest Agreement	PTA Secretary		Permanent
Contracts and Leases	PTA Secretary		7 Years After Expiration
Correspondence – Customers and Vendors	PTA Secretary		2 Years
Correspondence – General	PTA Secretary		2 Years
Correspondence – Legal	PTA Secretary		Permanent
Financial Records – Account Statement Reviews by Non-Signer (bank, credit card and e-commerce; attached to minutes)	PTA Secretary		Permanent
Financial Records – Account Statements & Reconciliations (bank, credit card and e-commerce)	PTA Treasurer		3 Years
Financial Records – Canceled Check Images (Incidental)	PTA Treasurer		3 Years
Financial Records – Canceled Check Images (Legal/Contractual)	PTA Treasurer		Permanent
Financial Records – Deposit Forms	PTA Treasurer		3 Years
Financial Records – Duplicate or Image of Deposit Forms	Funds Counter		1 Year After Fiscal Year End
Financial Records - Budgets (adopted at membership/delegate meeting; attached to minutes)	PTA Secretary		7 Years

Financial Records – Financial Reports	PTA Secretary		7 Years
Financial Records - Financial Reconciliation Reports (adopted at membership/delegate meeting; attached to minutes)	PTA Secretary		Permanent
Financial Records – Funds Request Forms (including associated invoices/receipts)	PTA Treasurer		3 Years
Financial Records – General Ledger(s)	PTA Treasurer		Permanent
Financial Records – Tax-Exempt Documents (EIN Notification, Accepted IRS Form 990, IRS Correspondence, Sales and Use Tax Permit and Sales Tax Returns)	PTA Treasurer		Permanent
Grant Agreements	PTA Secretary		7 Years
Insurance Records – Policies, Claims and Certificates	PTA Secretary		Permanent
Inventory List – Equipment and Property	PTA Secretary		Permanent
Inventory List – Products and Materials	PTA Secretary		3 Years
Meeting Minutes – Membership/Delegate and Executive Board (and attached reports)	PTA Secretary		Permanent
Policies (adopted annually)	PTA Secretary		Permanent
PTA Charter	PTA Secretary		Permanent
Records Retention Policy	PTA Secretary		Permanent
Scholarship Records and Case Histories	PTA Secretary		Permanent

Confidentiality, Ethics, and Conflict of Interest Agreement For Local PTA or Council PTA Executive Board Members

Name of PTA	
Name of School District	
Name of PTA President	

Members of the board of directors (board members) of this Council or Local PTA/PTSA (hereinafter referred to as "PTA") serve in a fiduciary capacity and owe a duty of care, a duty of obedience, and a duty of loyalty to this PTA. Board members shall conduct themselves with integrity and honesty and act in the best interests of this PTA. Disclosure by a board member of any potential or actual conflict of interest is required by the standard of good faith and for the benefit of the PTA and the protection of each individual.

In consideration of our PTA affiliation with the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers (the Texas PTA), for the protection of its integrity and its 501(c)(3) status, and our protection, we, the undersigned officers, individually, during our terms of office, shall:

1. Abide by and represent our PTA bylaws, the Texas PTA policies, positions, procedures, and National PTA purposes and mission statement;
2. Discharge the duties and responsibilities of our offices with fidelity, integrity, and honesty and declare any and all personal and/or extended family conflicts of interest when PTA issues, decisions, and funds are involved;
3. 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.
4. Refrain from making any slanderous or defamatory statement(s) that will in all likelihood result in harm to the PTA name or brand.
5. Publicly present a united front on decision made as an executive board.
6. Maintain confidentiality as a member of the executive board.
7. Follow the Texas PTA and school district guidelines for fundraising.
8. Abide by the following conflict of interest policy:
    a. Executive board members and/or their families shall not use their relation to this PTA for financial, professional, business, employment, personal, and/or political gain.
    b. A conflict of interest exists when an executive 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 his/her extended family has financial, professional, business, employment, personal and/or political interests outside the PTA that could predispose or bias the board member to a particular view, goal or decision.
    c. Executive board members shall declare to the officers of this PTA conflicts of interest (stating the nature of the conflict and pertinent information as appropriate) between their duties of this PTA and their and/or their extended families' financial, professional, business, employment, personal, and/or political interests.
    d. When a conflict of interest is declared, the executive board members shall not use his/her personal influence of position to affect the outcome of this vote and shall leave the room during deliberations and the vote.
    e. The minutes of the meeting shall reflect that a conflict of interest was declared.
    f. Executive board members shall not:
        i. Use PTA's name, influence, or resources for their benefit or gain when running for any publicly elected office or while serving as an elected official.
        ii. Directly or indirectly use their current PTA position, the PTA name or organization for or against any specific candidate for elected public office, which is contrary to federal tax laws and the guidelines and policies of the PTA.

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 the termination of the undersigned as board members and will require the immediate return of all PTA property, documents, and materials belonging to this PTA.

Date	Executive Board Member Name	Position	Signature

The PTA Secretary shall obtain the signatures of all board members on this form, provide a copy for all signers, and keep the original signed document. PTAs may use additional signature pages if needed.

Finance for Executive Board Members

Financial Considerations
Every single executive board member should be knowledgeable about the financial responsibilities of the PTA. Below is basic information on finances that every executive board member needs to know. There is so much more involved in the everyday financial management of a PTA…these are the basics.

Fiduciary Responsibility
The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) (as included on Form 990) requires reporting by nonprofits on a range of governance issues that reach far beyond financial reporting, including executive board member "fiduciary duty."

Executive board members have three fundamental fiduciary duties: a duty of care, a duty of loyalty, and a duty of obedience.

- The **duty of care** means that the executive board member actively participates, attends executive board meetings, is educated on the industry, provides strategic direction, and oversees the day-to-day operations of the PTA;
- The **duty of loyalty** requires the executive board member to operate in the interest of the local PTA and not to use the position to further personal agenda;
- The **duty of obedience** requires the executive board to know the state and federal laws and regulations that apply. This includes the regulations and guidance issued by the IRS. Obedience to governing documents requires a deep understanding of the operating documents (by-laws, rules, executive board manuals). Finally, obedience requires that the executive board not act outside the scope of the organization's legal documents.

Fiduciary responsibility in a PTA means the executive board members act as trustees of the organization's assets and must exercise due diligence to oversee that the organization is well-managed and that its financial situation remains sound. The executive board verifies that all filing requirements and tax obligations are completed. If theft, fraud, or embezzlement is suspected, a PTA must follow the Texas PTA Theft, Fraud, and Embezzlement policy.

Budget Basics
The budget creates the framework for program management and overall administrative decisions. An approved budget must be in place at all times for expenditures to be made and fundraisers to be conducted. The budget for the following year is presented and adopted by the membership at the last membership meeting of the year. It is amended at the first membership meeting based upon approved Plans of Work submitted by the new executive board members. The members always approve expenses and income via the budget, which can be amended as needed.

Payments
Payments are never made in cash, and blank checks are never issued. All payments must relate to an approved budget item and have a funds request form attached with a receipt and/or invoice. No other organization may pass its money through the PTA account to achieve tax-exempt status, and money can never be "turned over" to the school and/or principal to spend at their discretion.

Deposits
All monies collected are turned over to the treasurer as soon as possible. At least two people count money simultaneously, and both counters and the treasurer each sign and keep a copy of the completed deposit form. The treasurer may be one of the two counters.

Financial Reports
To keep people informed, a current financial report is presented at every regular executive board and membership meeting that covers the financials since the last meeting of that type. The financial report should include each budget line's current period actuals, year-to-date actuals, and the approved budget amount. The verbal report should include the starting balance, total income, and total expenses for the current period, the change to sales tax and state/national dues liability during the current period, and the ending balance. As the funds belong to the members, they have the right to access the financial reports presented at membership meetings.

Statement Reviews
The president appoints a member, subject to the executive board's approval, who is not authorized to sign on the bank account to review each account statement. The statement reviewer utilizes the Texas PTA Statement Review by Non-Signer Form. The secretary presents the result of this review at the executive board meeting.

Financial Reconciliation
A financial reconciliation is performed: at the end of the fiscal year when any authorized check signer is added or deleted on any bank account; and at any time deemed necessary by the president or three (3) or more members. The president appoints the financial reconciliation committee consisting of not less than three (3) members who are not authorized signers, the current secretary, incoming treasurer, nor be related by blood or marriage or reside in the same household as the authorized signers or current secretary. The financial reconciliation committee report shall be adopted by a majority vote of the association at the regular membership meeting immediately following the financial reconciliation.

Insurance
It is in the PTA's best interest to cover the treasurer and all other persons authorized to handle money with an embezzlement (bond) policy and directors and officers liability insurance to cover losses through any fraudulent or dishonest act. Insurance premiums are budgeted as an expense line. For these policies to apply, account statements are regularly reviewed by a non-signer, and financial reconciliations occur at least annually.

For more details on financial procedures for your PTA, please visit txpta.org/treasurer.

Keeping Records

Compiling and maintaining a complete record of your activities can help those PTA Leaders who follow behind you. Passing along important information to your successor gives them what they need to get started! New Leaders who access previously implemented PTA practices can more easily adjust and make needed changes. Additionally, a PTA should closely follow its records retention policy to be sure they are properly storing the records they need to maintain regulatory compliance.

How to Compile Your Records

Ask yourself, "If I knew nothing about the job, could I do it with this information?" Depending on your position, you may need hard copy materials at your fingertips. If so, use a loose-leaf folder or binder with tabbed dividers. Other positions could easily keep their records electronically via cloud-based storage or a USB drive.

Suggested Content

Bylaws/Standing Rules

- A current, date-stamped copy of the PTA Bylaws and Standing Rules. Each year (after August 1), the parliamentarian should request a copy of your PTA's bylaws and standing rules from Texas PTA. They should be distributed to all executive board members and reviewed annually. Visit www.txpta.org/bylaws for the request form and more information.

Rosters

- Current roster of executive board members with their contact information
- Contact information for Texas PTA Field Service Representative, Council PTAs (if applicable), Texas PTA Board members with comparable responsibilities, the Texas PTA State Office
- Resources, and related agencies and organizations in the community relevant to your position

Items Related To Your Position (As Applicable)

- Description and responsibilities of your position
- Current Texas PTA BASICS Resource Guide(s)
- Plan of Work approved by the executive board
- Reports prepared for meetings (executive board, membership, and committee)
- Financial records including approved budgets, detailed reports with copies of your PTA Funds Request Forms with receipts, and copies of all deposit forms that you have signed
- Promotional material, newsletter articles, evaluations, etc.
- Award applications submitted to Council, Texas, or National PTA
- Summary of your term, including recommendations for the following year

PTA Meetings

- Agendas and approved minutes from each meeting
- Financial reports
- Relevant committee reports
- Information on upcoming events and programs sponsored by PTA at all levels
- Record of volunteer hours to be reported to the volunteer coordinator (if applicable)

Local PTA

Standards of Continuing Affiliation

Each membership year, Local PTAs must meet both of the following requirements to attain Active Status with Texas PTA. The membership year begins on August 1.

1. Remit to Texas PTA state and national membership dues for at least 20 members.
2. Submit to Texas PTA the name and contact information (mailing address, phone number, and email address) of at least one current executive board member, preferably the president.

Local PTAs must comply with all of the following standards to remain in Good Standing with Texas PTA. Local PTAs that do not maintain Good Standing will be subject to a Local PTA Retention Plan as described below.

1. Maintain Active Status with Texas PTA.[1] (see requirements above)
2. Report all additional members and remit state/national dues to Texas PTA each year.
3. Submit to Texas PTA the name and contact information for all additional executive board members within 15 days of election or appointment.[2]
4. Review Local PTA bylaws (and standing rules, if applicable) every three years and submit to Texas PTA for approval.[3]
5. Each year, within 60 days of fiscal year-end, electronically file and have accepted by the IRS the appropriate "Form 990 Return of Organization Exempt from Income Tax".

Local PTA Retention Plan *(initiated when a Local PTA does not maintain Good Standing)*

Notification: Texas PTA will notify the PTA of the actions required to attain Good Standing. The PTA will have 30 days from the date of the notification to meet all Good Standing requirements to avoid moving into the Restriction Phase.*

Restriction: While in the Restriction Phase, the PTA is not eligible for awards, programs, or grants administered by Texas PTA or National PTA. The PTA will have 30 days to meet all Good Standing requirements to avoid moving into the Restructure Phase.

Restructure: For PTAs that do not attain Good Standing following the Notification and Restriction Phases, Texas PTA may begin the process of restructuring the leadership of the PTA or revoking the PTA's charter. A PTA that signs an Action Plan may temporarily move into Intervention, giving them time to resolve any outstanding issues. The PTA will continue to be ineligible for awards, programs, and grants administered by Texas PTA and National PTA until Good Standing is achieved.

Intervention: Once in the Intervention Phase, Texas PTA will assign a support team to assist the PTA. If all Action Plan requirements are not resolved by the agreed-upon date, the PTA will be moved back into Restructure. **With cause, Texas PTA may place a Local PTA that has not met all Good Standing Requirements into the Intervention Phase early.*

1. *Active Status is used to determine eligibility in many Texas PTA programs and services. Please reference specific program eligibility requirements to ensure your PTAs participation.*
2. *PTAs submit executive board member information to Texas PTA electronically via the Texas PTA website.*
3. *Bylaws are submitted via the Bylaws Submission Form found on the Texas PTA website.*
4. *Proof of filing and acceptance is the Exempt Organization Business Master File issued regularly by the IRS.*

Resources

Texas PTA believes that volunteer at-home accessibility to FOUNDATIONS Training is important. As such, training can be found at txpta.org/courses. Our volunteer leaders across the state can access quality educational resources to support success within their roles and build strong Local and Council PTAs.

FOUNDATIONS Trainings:

1. **ESSENTIALS** is a high-level orientation to PTA that is taken online via the Texas PTA website at www.txpta.org/training. It contains the mainstay information that every PTA Leader should know. Executive board members should take this training at least once in their PTA career. Leaders are encouraged to take Essentials (formerly titled Foundations Leader Orientation and Leadership Orientation Training) again whenever the training is updated.
2. **BASICS** contain detailed information to support PTA Leaders in their specific executive board position. Every executive board member must attend a BASICS course for their specific position at least once every two years. These training sessions are available on-demand via the Texas PTA website. Visit us online at www.txpta.org/training to register.
    a. BASICS includes a workshop and companion Resource Guide, along with other supporting resources.
    b. PTA Leaders can access the Resource Guides via the Texas PTA website or online store. Visit www.txpta.org/local-pta-leaders to download free PDFs or www.txpta.org/shop to purchase hard copies.
3. **SPOTLIGHTS** offers a short, in-depth review of some of the specific yet important topics and recurring PTA functions such as Bylaws and Standing Rules, Financial Reconciliations, Conducting a Meeting, and Nominations and Elections. Spotlights are free and are not mandatory but offer vital insights on specific and timely topics.

Reminder: Both the ESSENTIALS and BASICS are mandatory for executive board members. Visit www.txpta.org/training to learn more!

Newsletters and Alerts:

Texas PTA provides content-specific newsletters based on your PTA position. Please submit your information to Texas PTA each year. Registering as a Local PTA Leader will help ensure you receive important updates and position-specific newsletters! Visit www.txpta.org/officer-intake to access the form.

All executive board members are encouraged to closely follow Texas PTA legislative advocacy efforts by subscribing to Under the Dome, our advocacy newsletter. Sign up at txpta.org/take-action.

Leadership Development Resources:

Texas PTA training goes beyond the FOUNDATIONS by offering Leadership Development resources. The topics covered are the result of polling local and council PTA leaders across the state.

All PTA leaders are encouraged to go to txpta.org/leadership to discover what Extra Credit course they might like to take next to continue exploring their leadership development and investigate the Full Circle Leadership development program rolled out in March of 2022.

Texas PTA Staff and Board Support

BOARD OF DIRECTORS | *Contact Form*
The Texas PTA Board of Directors are your volunteer representatives at the state level. From the president to the secretary, Texas PTA Board can help answer your questions and address your individual needs. You can reach them at: https://bit.ly/3zp81Es.

COMMUNICATIONS | *communications@txpta.org*
The Communications team manages and produces all Texas PTA communications, including *The Voice* (our quarterly newsletter), specialized newsletters (advocacy, healthy lifestyles, arts in education, environmental awareness, membership, and field service), social media outlets, and the Texas PTA website. They also serve as Texas PTA's contact for all media inquiries.

FINANCE | *finance@txpta.org*
Texas PTA understands the responsibility of managing your member dollars. The Finance team is charged with monitoring Texas PTA resources according to the annual budget, as adopted by the Board of Directors.

Members of the Finance team are also available to support PTA leaders in their compliance with state and federal financial requirements, such as filing the annual 990 with the IRS and sales tax filings with the State Comptroller.

MEMBER SERVICES | *memberservices@txpta.org*
The Member Services team gives direct support to PTA leaders and members. They assist with member recruitment strategies, bylaws and standing rules, organizing PTAs, and general questions on leading and managing a PTA.

The Member Services team is responsible for developing recruiting resources that may be adapted for all levels of PTA – early childhood, elementary and secondary. Staff processes officer information, membership rosters and dues, and requests for copies of bylaws and standing rules. Staff also coordinates membership awards and the distribution of membership cards to Local PTAs.

PROGRAMS | *programs@txpta.org*
The Programs team is focused on connecting PTA members and leaders with the information they need to be successful and develop programs. Whether your PTA is registering for LAUNCH or requesting a Connect Program, the Programs team is available to assist you.

The Programs team is also your contact for student programs, such as Reflections, Camp Just Imagine, and Texas PTA's scholarship program.

Texas PTA

txstatepta

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THIS ITEM IS FOR PTA USE ONLY