

Principles of parliamentary law are
 ...justice and courtesy to all;
 ...rights of the minority protected;
 ...rule of the majority reflected;
 ...partiality to none;
 ...consideration of one subject at a time.

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

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

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

Duties of the parliamentarian are listed in the bylaws (Article VI, Section 10). Additional information can be found in the California State PTA Toolkit (2.3.15, 49), the National PTA *Annual Resources for PTAs* (available from PTA President) and *Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 10th Edition*.

WHAT TO DO

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

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

BYLAWS:

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

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES:

Basic policies of the National PTA are included in all PTA bylaws as Article III. Parliamentarians are often asked to interpret these policies or give a rationale for them. The National PTA *Annual Resources for PTAs* discusses them in detail. The California State PTA, PTA districts and councils also have policies and procedures which must be observed.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE:

The bylaws include as a duty of the parliamentarian “...shall call the first meeting of the nominating committee...and give instructions in procedure...” These instructions include the eligibility requirements to hold office, the offices to be filled, those sections of the bylaws which pertain to the conduct of the nominating committee, committee voting procedure, etc. The parliamentarian does not automatically serve as a member of the committee, unless elected to it or unless the bylaws so provide. The parliamentarian, if not a member of this committee, should be available for any question.

REFERENCES

From the unit president (one free copy received annually)

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

The National PTA Annual Resources for PTAs

Bylaws for Local PTA/PTSA Units

From the California State PTA office

The a-b-c's of Parliamentary Procedure

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

Council Parliamentarian (if in council)

Name _____

Phone (_____) _____

District Parliamentarian

Name _____

Phone (_____) _____

CHECK UNIT BYLAWS FOR:

Date of meeting to elect nominating committee _____ (Article V, Section 3b)

Date of the election meeting _____ (Article V, Section 3g)

Date of meeting to elect convention delegates _____

Date new officers assume duties _____ (Article V, Section 8)

Date of last amendment to bylaws _____ (page 26)

Quorum for association meeting _____ (Article VII, Section 5b)

Quorum for executive board meeting _____ (Article VIII, Section 7b)

Unit Federal Employee Identification Number (EIN) _____ (Article XIV, Section 3)