

# Parliamentary Procedure

## How to Keep a Meeting Running Smoothly

### What is parliamentary procedure?

- A process by which a group of people can hold a meeting, be fair, productive, and stay on task. It helps PTAs to maintain order, guarantee justice and equity to all members, and accomplish the group's goals.
- Ensures the rights of the majority, the minority, and individual members
- Parliamentary procedure should be used during PTA meetings.
- *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* is the parliamentary authority adopted by the National PTA.

### Basic principles of parliamentary procedure:

- ✓ Consider one thing at a time.
- ✓ Show courtesy to all and partiality to no one.
- ✓ Decide matters by majority vote.
- ✓ Allow the minority to be heard.

### Who should be concerned with parliamentary procedure?

PTA President--A PTA unit represents wide differences of experiences and opinions. For a group to discuss important issues and come to a decision, the differences must be aired. It is the president's responsibility to be sure that differences of opinion are brought out in an atmosphere of respect for the rights of every member. Therefore, every president, as a presiding officer, should be familiar with the basic rules of parliamentary procedure.

PTA Officers and Committee Chairs--Members of the Executive Board in a PTA should have familiarity with parliamentary procedure to operate within bylaws and govern the association, to participate in meetings, and to propose or take action as a PTA.

Parliamentarian--The role of parliamentarian is to advise the presiding officer on meeting procedure. The parliamentarian should be selected on his knowledge of the PTA's bylaws and ability to serve impartially. The parliamentarian doesn't need to memorize everything, but they do need to know where to find answers in the bylaws or *Robert's Rules of Order* in order to advise the president on points of procedure, and assist in preparing meeting scripts and agendas.

All PTA members should be familiar with the procedure so they may take an active role in the democratic process.

## Did You Know?

- **Your PTA Unit Bylaws** are the guidebook for running your unit. The bylaws will contain answers to most of your questions.
- **Members must be given written notice** of all association meetings, along with an agenda that includes all action items to be considered, at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting.
- PTA business can only be conducted at a meeting if a **quorum is present**. (Check your bylaws for your PTA's specific quorum.) The minutes should reflect that a quorum was present. Discussion may take place without a quorum, but decisions cannot be made.
- **Any action** (spending money, adopting programs, etc.) to be taken **requires a motion**.
- Most motions require a **majority vote** for passage or adoption.
- A **two-thirds vote** is required to change any action previously adopted by the group, such as changes to the bylaws or the budget.
- **Only members** are legally qualified to **make motions, discuss and vote**.
- **Voting by proxy is prohibited**.
- **The PTA president protects the impartiality of the “presiding chair”** by exercising the right to vote (or by abstaining) only when the vote will affect the outcome, i.e., to break a tie vote, or when the vote is by ballot.

## Looking for more on Parliamentary Procedure?

- ✓ *Robert's Rules of Order: Newly Revised* (10th Edition)
- ✓ *Robert's Rules for Dummies*
- ✓ The Official Robert's Rules of Order Web Site: [www.robertsrules.com/](http://www.robertsrules.com/)
- ✓ CUCPTSA – Parliamentarian Resources: [www.cucptsa.com/index.asp?scid=60](http://www.cucptsa.com/index.asp?scid=60)
- ✓ Fourth District PTA: [www.fourthdistrictpta.org/parliamentarian.html](http://www.fourthdistrictpta.org/parliamentarian.html)
- ✓ California State PTA: [www.capta.org/sections/management/parliament-procedure.cfm](http://www.capta.org/sections/management/parliament-procedure.cfm)
- ✓ National PTA Leadership Training -- E-Learning: [www.pta.org/leadership\\_training.asp](http://www.pta.org/leadership_training.asp)
- ✓ California State PTA Toolkit
- ✓ *The A-B-C's of Parliamentary Procedure* (available through CAPTA)
- ✓ Your PTA Unit Bylaws
- ✓ CUCPTSA Parliamentarian: Kathy Fischer @ 949-831-1163 or [kfischerpta@yahoo.com](mailto:kfischerpta@yahoo.com)

# EIGHT STEPS TO A MOTION

A motion to take action is introduced by a member, seconded, discussed, and is voted upon. Only persons who have been members for at least 30 days are legally qualified to make motions, discuss, and vote. Any action (spending money, adopting programs, etc.) to be taken requires a motion. A quorum of the membership must be present. (See unit bylaws for quorum).

## 1. Obtain the floor.

The PTA member rises or raises his hand and waits to be recognized before speaking further.

## 2. Recognition by the PTA president.

The PTA president grants the member the right to speak by a nod or by announcing the member's name.

## 3. Make the motion.

The member speaks clearly, stating the motion concisely, **saying, "I move ..."** (Never say, "I so move," or "I motion that ...") Motions are always in the affirmative. The PTA president has the right to request that the motion be in writing, unless the rules indicate otherwise.

## 4. The motion is seconded.

A second indicates that more than one person wishes to consider the subject. Another member says, "I second the motion," or simply, "Second!" If there is no second, the PTA president says, "Motion fails for lack of a second." Motions coming from a committee do not need a second.

## 5. PTA president restates the motion.

Only the PTA president can formally place a motion before the assembly. The PTA president repeats the exact motion, "It has been moved and seconded that..." The motion is now pending. Once stated by the PTA president, it cannot be changed or withdrawn without consent of the members.

## 6. Debate or discussion.

Immediately after stating the question the PTA president asks, "Is there discussion?" The maker of the motion has the right to speak first. Discussion must remain relevant to the pending question. The PTA president should endeavor to alternate pro and con speakers. The maker of the motion may vote against the motion, but may not speak against it.

## 7. Putting the question – the vote.

When discussion appears to be concluded, the PTA president asks, "Are you ready for the question?" If the discussion has been long, or amendments made, the motion should be restated as it presently stands. The PTA president says, "The question is on the adoption of the motion that ..." The PTA president then calls for the vote by saying, "All those in favor of the motion say 'Aye'" and pausing for response. "All those opposed say 'No'." Always call for the negative vote, no matter how unanimous the affirmative vote may appear.

## 8. PTA president announces result.

No motion is complete until the PTA president has announced the result of the vote. The PTA president says, "The 'ayes' have it and the motion is adopted," or, "The 'nos' have it and the motion is defeated." In a counted vote, the PTA president should first announce the count, then the result of the vote. The PTA president then states the effect of the vote.

# HOW MOTIONS MAY BE AMENDED

**MAIN MOTION:** I move that we have a parenting program at the park.

This **main motion** may be amended by making a motion:

- To **strike** a particular word or phrase:

I move to amend the motion by striking the words, “at the park.”

**OR**

- To **insert** a particular word or phrase:

I move to amend the motion by inserting “in October” after the word “program.”

**OR**

- To **strike and insert** a particular word or phrase:

I move to amend the motion by striking “at the park” and inserting “in November on the school grounds.”

**OR**

- To **substitute** the entire motion:

I move to substitute the following: “That we have an ice cream social.”

**In addition:** A motion may be made to **amend the amendment** following the same procedure: *to strike, to insert, to strike and insert, or to substitute.*

For example, if the amendment is to insert in the substitute motion:

I move to amend the amendment by inserting “in October in the park.”

**NOTE:** A vote must be taken on the motion to amend the amendment before any other amendments may be proposed. The main motion must be voted upon after all amendments have been addressed.