

People tend to think of several things when they hear the term “bylaws” including “restrictive,” “rules,” and “Who needs them?” to name a few. But the more familiar you are with unit, council or district bylaws, the more you’ll appreciate their contribution to running an organization smoothly. The cover page indicates the date your PTA was organized. The internal signature page indicates when bylaws were last adopted. Bylaws should be reviewed each year and updated at least every **three** years or whenever changes are needed. Contact your PTA council or district parliamentarian for assistance or information on updating your bylaws.

Article I of the bylaws states the **name of the organization** as it was chartered. This is the legal PTA name and must appear on all legal documents such as minutes, tax filings, any communication to state PTA, etc.

Article II states the **purpose of the organization**. The board should review its PTA’s goals to ensure alignment with the purposes of PTA.

Article III outlines the **basic policies of PTA**, including noncommercial, nonsectarian and nonpartisan policies. It states PTA cannot enter into memberships with other organizations – with exceptions. Study the Toolkit to learn what the exceptions are. Article III also details what to do should the unit, council or district be dissolved.

Article IV details **membership**: per capita dues and how much goes where, remittance deadlines and other pertinent membership information.

Article V lists **required officers, nominating committee requirements, term restrictions and dates of elections**.

Article VI gives **details of officers and their duties** as stated in the bylaws. This covers president, vice presidents, secretary, treasurer, etc.

Article VII could be retitled *Everything You Always Wanted to Know about Association Meetings but Didn’t Know Where to Look*.

Literally **everything to know about an association or general meeting is contained here**: day of the week and the meeting months; which meeting elections are held; the required meeting quorum; who can make motions, debate and vote; the budgets, programs and expenditures which must be approved by the membership; and requirements for calling special meetings – and there a few. Finally, this article discusses proxy voting, which is never allowed.

Article VIII is full of **information about the executive board**; who is included on the board, what the board does, how the board approves payments, what committees it can create, and how to fill board vacancies. Members of the executive board may not serve as paid employees of or under contract to the association (conflict of interest). Here learn how to call a special meeting and how to legally remove a non-attending officer or one whose conduct is injurious to the organization. “Due process” is fully outlined and must be followed.

Article IX covers **committees**. Essential knowledge in this section is how to form committees, how long the committees serve, how to make and file committee reports and the due process for committee chairmen.

Article X covers **council PTA membership**. It states to which council you belong (if in council), the amount of council per capita dues, and who represents the PTA at council meetings. Out-of-council PTAs strike this article and renumber the remaining articles.

Article XI details the **charter procedure for all local PTAs** organized under the authority of California State PTA. The requirements of constituent organizations – *units in good standing* – are found here.

Article XII explains **PTA’s relationship with National PTA and California State PTA** and that the bylaws may not conflict with either.

Article XIII contains the **Articles of Organization**.

Article XIV states the **start and end of the fiscal year and various identification numbers** assigned to the PTA.

Article XV states the **parliamentary authority** that is Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised. Parliamentary authority empowers PTAs in achieving proper meeting procedures and respecting every member’s opinion.

Article XVI outlines the **bylaw amendment procedure**.

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Bylaws play an essential role in the PTA organization. Open your copy, review them as a board, and start learning today!
