

STANDING RULES

Standing Rules are the rules an organization uses to administer its affairs under the provisions of its bylaws. A well-organized and efficient PTA should have a written set of procedures for putting its bylaws into effect. Standing Rules are more flexible than bylaws. The original adoption of a standing rule takes only a majority vote. Once adopted however, standing rules become “previous action” and may only be changed, rescinded, or suspended by a majority vote with previous notice or without previous notice, a 2/3 vote. **An executive board may not adopt or change standing rules that impact general membership meetings. The general membership adopts their meeting rules.** Developing procedures is not a difficult task. Here are some simple steps to follow:

- A committee of at least three (3) people, including the chairman, should be appointed by the president to prepare the procedures.
- The committee should include experienced and knowledgeable members of the unit.
- If there is a bylaws chairman this assignment could fall within that chairmanship, if not, the past president could assume the responsibility.
- Using the bylaws, the committee should consider each provision and formulate instructions for applying the provision.
- Unit functions may also be outlined in standing rules.
- The minutes of board or general membership meetings and committee members' experience can serve as resource material.
- There should be complete job descriptions for each officer and chairman.
- It is in executive board standing rules - not bylaws - that items such as "The secretary shall preserve the minutes in a bound volume" and "The treasurer shall register his and the president's signatures at the bank" are found. Examples of general membership standing rules would be, “Any member wishing to speak, make a motion, or debate shall first be recognized by the chair.”
- Standing rules should be in an order that is comfortable for the unit.
- After the committee has finalized the procedures, they should be presented to the body impacted (executive board or general membership) for adoption.
- After approval, a copy should be given to each board member and standing rules impacting general membership meetings should be noted in your membership newsletter.
- Standing rules serve as a guide and become a valuable tool for efficiently transacting the business of the association.
- Good written standing rules ensure the orderly transfer of duties from one administration to the next.

QUESTIONS YOUR STANDING RULES SHOULD ANSWER

- Calendar of PTA events prepared by whom?
- Who approves calendar?
- What committees do you have and how are committee members selected (**make sure that this does not conflict with your bylaws**)?
- Who prepares notices?
- How do you communicate with your membership?
- What are the deadlines?
- What expenses incurred by your board members does the PTA pay? (conventions, dinners, etc.)
- Who does what, when, and how?

OTHER ITEMS THAT STANDING RULES CAN INCLUDE

- Any member wishing to speak, make a motion, or debate shall first be recognized by the chair.
- A member may speak no more than 3 minutes at a time or more than twice on the same question.
- No member may speak for a second time until all other members wishing to speak have done so.
- The chair will alternate debate or discussion between opposing sides if feasible.
- No motion may be on the floor for more than 20 minutes unless a motion to extend debate has been adopted by a 2/3 vote of those present.
- Small group discussions exclusive of business before the executive board are discouraged during the board meetings.
- Any member or non-member wishing to address the body must first inform the President of their desire to be heard and then may be placed on the agenda under “New Business”.
- An executive board may address how they deal with excessive absences of committee chairs from board/general meetings. Standing rules could be used to cover removal of a committee chair since they are generally elected/appointed by the executive committee/board. The removal of an elected official can be included in your standing rules but this process must be approved by your general membership. Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised, 10th Edition addresses the removal of an officer.
- If the nominating committee elected by the association is desired to have equal representation from certain areas (example, middle schools that have several feeder elementary schools), the standing rules could further define the process used to nominate the individuals from each area. The rules could be changed as demographics change and would not necessitate a bylaws amendment.
- Standing rules may be as simple as setting the hour for meetings.