

# STANDING RULES CHECKLIST FOR LOCAL PTA UNITS

*This document is intended to assist Local PTA Units in completing quality Standing Rules. It works hand-in-hand with the Standing Rules Template.*

The following items must be included in your Standing Rules:

- Name of PTA unit:** Make sure it's the one that Montana PTA has on record for you and that it's correct!
- National PTA and Montana PTA ID number:** This number is the same for National PTA and Montana PTA. Can be found on any piece of mail from NPTA. You need this to order anything from NPTA. You can find your National PTA ID# and the date your PTA was chartered and tax ID# in the Unit Tools section of the Montana PTA website. Must be an eight digit number – for example 00001111 – so that your members can access the National and State “members only” sections of the websites and must be used on all Reflections Forms.
- Charter date:** If you don't know, check the Unit Tools section of the Montana PTA website or contact the Montana PTA office for help.
- Corporate status:** Each PTA is required to be incorporated as a nonprofit corporation in the state of MT. This is done through the Secretary of State's office. Include the date of incorporation and who is responsible for filing the Annual Corporation regulatory form prior to April 15 along with the fee —usually the unit treasurer is responsible for this duty.
- Registered agent for corporation:** Hopefully someone who will be around for awhile so that you needn't change it every year but if you have to, you have to! A permanent address (a post office box with year round access by a current officer) is highly recommended.
- Responsibility for filing appropriate 990 IRS form:** Your unit is required to file a 990-N, 990-EZ, or 990. The person responsible for filing the appropriate 990 is your unit's treasurer. This regulatory form must be filed by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month following your fiscal year end. Please note here when your fiscal year end is. IRS help is right around the corner at the Montana PTA. *If you don't know, ask!*
- Employer Identification Number (EIN):** Forms available from IRS. As per the Uniform Bylaws for Local PTA Units, each unit is required to file for and be assigned a federal EIN.
- Annual membership dues amount:** Local unit annual dues must allow for the MPTA and NPTA dues each unit is required to remit per member. PTA is not a fundraising organization. The bulk of your treasury should come from your membership dues, which are then used for the work of your organization in accordance with the NPTA mission and objects. If your unit offers a membership discount to second and subsequent members from a household, you must still remit the full MPTA and NPTA dues *for each member!* *Each member must be reported to MPTA!*

Membership dues amounts need to be decided and voted on by your unit. Include the date the current dues were voted upon. Units may only change dues once per membership year. Payment for the National and State portion of the dues must be remitted by November 1<sup>st</sup> and again prior to April 1<sup>st</sup> for any additional members.

- The unit treasurer shall remit the Liability Insurance Premium by November 1<sup>st</sup>.
- If your local unit is a member of a council, list membership dues amount and date due here.**
- Elected officers, date of assuming office, length of term, and any term limits:** Every PTA is required to have at least 4 officers (president, vice president, secretary, treasurer). This is where you would list additional officers such as vice president of leadership, membership, program, legislative program, etc. Outline your particular method of electing officers—annually, perhaps on a staggered 2-year term so that the entire board doesn't vacate at once (some are elected on odd years, some on even). The President or the President's designee will enter officer information into the National PTA online membership reporting system.
- Nominating Committee:** Number, method of election, duties of committee. Uniform Bylaws for Local Units give nominating committee protocol. Remember that the local unit president may not serve on this committee. *The Uniform Bylaws for Local Units requires that nominating committee members be elected.*
- Define Board of Directors:** Usually includes the elected officers and chairs of standing committees. They have legal responsibility for the operation of the organization between meetings of the general membership in addition to fulfilling the requirements of their individual positions.
- Define board of directors meetings: (when they are held, quorum and special meetings)**
- Define Executive Committee:** Usually the elected officers of the organization. They are responsible for conducting the business of the organization between meetings of the *board of directors or on behalf of the board of directors in emergencies or when given authority to act. (when are they held, quorum and special meetings)*
- Standing Committees:** List committees here. Standing Committees function year round as opposed to ad hoc committees, which do a job and disband. Example: A cultural arts committee as a standing committee facilitates the arts in many forms year round. A committee formed to study interest in a particular program is an ad hoc committee. It completes its study, submits a final report, and ceases to exist. Chairs of standing committees are usually appointed and must be members of your PTA.
- General membership meetings:** Don't get too specific—you don't want to violate your standing rules by changing or eliminating a meeting in order to better serve your members. Must have an annual meeting for election of officers and budget approval, usually in the spring, and should identify months of election of nominating committee and presentation of nominated slate of officers. Never have a meeting just to have a meeting and remember to make them *meaningful and manageable* to the people served by the unit, the *members!*

- **Special meetings of the general membership:** Who may call for the meeting, how may it be called for, advance notice, etc.
- **Define quorum for membership meetings:** A quorum for general meetings must include 2 officers, one in role of president and one in role of secretary, plus however many members you can *count on* to attend each meeting (otherwise, you will not be able to conduct *business* although you *can* still have your *program!*).
- **Define any awards your unit may give annually:** If your unit decides to award an outstanding volunteer each year with an honorary National or Montana PTA membership, include it here, along with any specific criteria, so that it is budgeted for. Your unit may wish to nominate an outstanding educator or volunteer. All awards can be found on the Unit Leadership Information CD.
- **Voting delegates:** How are they chosen and when. Develop a criteria used to identify unit representatives sent to MT PTA Convention and/or PTA Council Meetings. Perhaps you will decide that in order to attend a leadership opportunity (PTA or other sponsored) *paid for by the unit* the candidate must submit a written application demonstrating relevance to his or her own PTA work. Perhaps you will send one member to National PTA Convention or a certain number of delegates to Montana PTA Convention. Put in writing the criteria you will use to decide. *This only applies to training opportunities your PTA is paying fees for!* At the Annual Montana PTA Convention, your PTA shall have one voting delegate for the President and an additional voting delegate for every twenty-five (25) members. Voting delegates for the Montana PTA Convention shall be determined by the Executive Board of this PTA unit.
- **Define fiscal year:** The Montana PTA's fiscal year is July 1 to June 30, we recommend this time frame to our local units. However, your fiscal year **MUST** match that on file with the IRS. If you are unsure of your fiscal year, contact the Montana PTA Office for assistance.
- **Define when budget will be approved:** May be listed under annual meeting.
- **Legal documents to be maintained:** The secretary is responsible for maintaining the original legal documents and providing updated copies to all officers and others who require them. These documents include the *National PTA Bylaws, Montana PTA Bylaws, Uniform Bylaws for Local PTA Units, Uniform Bylaws for Councils and your unit's Standing Rules.*
- **Record retention required: Permanent** records include *all incorporation papers, EIN, PTA charter, bylaws and amendments, state or federal reports, check registers, accounts payable ledgers, minutes, financial reports, agendas, and membership numbers, and the IRS 501(c)(3) Letter of Determination.* 10-year retention includes *audit reports.* 5 year retention includes *cash receipts records, bank deposits and statements, general correspondence.* 3-year retention includes *budgets, invoices, and petty cash records.*
- **Details of annual review:** An annual review is required. Your unit may desire a mid-year review, too. See PTA Money Matters Quick Reference Guide for further information.

- **Bank signatures defined:** At least 2 officer's signatures should be required on each check. To avoid problems getting checks signed promptly, it is recommended that all officers' signatures be on the PTA bank account. It is recommended that all PTAs use *Request for Funds* forms. These forms are filled out by the person requesting PTA funds and must be signed by the president or vice president before the treasurer writes the check. It is a good check and balance plan. The receipts and cashed check are then attached to the request for funds form and kept for the annual audit. It is best to write checks directly to the party to which they are owed. Writing a check to a PTA member who has paid from a personal account is not good practice. Avoid doing it.
- **Process of amendment:** Standing rules must be reviewed annually but may be amended at any time. If the membership has been given notice prior to the date of the meeting where standing rules are to be amended (through a timely announcement at the meeting the month before or via the *regularly scheduled* posting of a meeting agenda—posting a surprise agenda the day before you intend to amend the standing rules doesn't count), the amendment(s) may be approved by a majority vote of the members present (assuming, of course, that a quorum has been established). If no notice was given prior to the meeting (perhaps a member suggests an amendment that requires immediate action) a 2/3-majority vote of the members present is required as long as a quorum has been established. All amendments must be recorded in the minutes.

Remember, if you have any questions or problems, call the Montana PTA office, we will be happy to help!