

## **PTA Policies for All**

### **Noncommercial Policy**

- All PTA bylaws--national, state, region, district, council, and local--include the requirement to be noncommercial.
- PTAs are prohibited under federal law from engaging in substantial business activities that are unrelated to their tax-exempt purposes, which are legally defined as educational and charitable.
- PTAs should not endorse products, companies, or foundations.
- PTAs may accept and acknowledge contributions of sponsors of PTA programs.
- PTAs may accept advertising as long as it stays within postal regulations (no more than 10 percent of the total document including any self-advertising such as conventions and other events) and does not jeopardize the Purposes and nonprofit status of PTA.
- PTAs should familiarize themselves with local, state, and federal regulations and requirements regarding licensing and liability before sponsoring or conducting public events.

### **Nonsectarian Policy**

- All PTA bylaws, whether national, state, district/region, council, or local, require the association to be nonsectarian
- PTA welcomes into membership people representing a diversity of cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and political and religious beliefs.

The Purposes of the PTA acknowledge the importance of a spiritual life in the development of children and youth. As an association, PTA has the right to offer inspirational messages to open or close its meetings, but such messages by PTA leaders or invited religious leaders should be inspirational rather than sectarian, recognizing that in this pluralistic nation not all members share the same beliefs. Poetry, quotations from great men and women, uplifting anecdotes, and moments of quiet meditation can be used.

### **Nonpartisan Policy and Legislative Activity**

- All PTA bylaws, whether national, state, district/region, council, or local, require the association to be nonpartisan in that it cannot support or oppose a political candidate. These bylaw provisions address the prohibitions and limitations regarding political and legislative activity engaged in by entities that are tax exempt under IRC Section 501(c)(3). Failure to comply with these restrictions could result in a PTA losing its federal tax-exempt status.
- PTAs may propose, support, or oppose legislation needed to achieve the Purposes, provided that those efforts do not exceed the limitations placed upon such organizations under the federal tax laws. Such efforts should be subject to careful recordkeeping with respect to the amount of time, money, and volunteer activity they involve, in order to ensure that the IRC limitations are not exceeded.

## **PTAs perform their work in partnership with others and must consider the following:**

### Working with Schools:

- National PTA believes that the public schools, which provide the common experience that helps ensure a democratic society, are essential and must be strengthened and supported. It also believes that parents and other adults have the right to join together to affect the education of all children through membership in the PTA.
- PTAs should ensure that the process for establishing school policy is clear and provides an opportunity for the public to express its concerns.
- PTAs should maintain contact with school board members as well as school administrators and other school professionals; establish and maintain lines of communication between and among their members, the school staff, and school board; attend school board meetings regularly and report on the proceedings to the PTA membership; and make statements representing the PTA to a school board only after official authorization by that PTA.

### Working with School Support Groups:

- There are numerous school support groups that serve important roles within the education system. They vary in purpose, composition, and relationship to schools and districts/regions, some being formed voluntarily, others required by federal or state law or local policy.
- PTAs can serve, when the purpose of the school support group doesn't conflict with the basic policies of the PTA, as the advisory group or committee for mandated school programs and in an advisory capacity regarding school management and other school-related concerns.

### Cooperating with Other Organizations:

- PTAs often act jointly with other organizations to achieve common goals. Such cooperative efforts are frequently in response to an invitation from another group, or may be initiated by the PTA.
- Some of the official agencies with which the PTA cooperates are public, tax-supported government organizations established to serve the people, such as departments of health and education, public welfare commissions, children's courts, recreation commissions, police and probation departments, and federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Education.
- PTAs may also cooperate with youth-serving groups and professional organizations in education, health, social welfare, and related fields to undertake joint studies, surveys, or projects.