

# Nominations, Voting, and Elections Handbook

*PTA's mission is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.*

## Ohio PTA

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# **NOMINATIONS ARE IN ORDER...**

## **WHERE LEADERSHIP BEGINS**

Serving on a Nominating Committee is an honor and a privilege. This committee is your PTA's most responsible, sensitive, and deliberative body. The decisions of the nominating committee will impact on the future of your PTA.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

**It is essential that committee members:**

- Be chosen carefully to include both experienced, ongoing leadership as well as newer members.
- Be elected on merit and ability - not on popularity.
- Have knowledge of PTA unit/council goals, purposes and programs.
- Have knowledge of potential candidates' qualifications and abilities.
- Be able to give objective consideration to find the best qualified leaders for your PTA.
- Have courage to express ideas and to defend one's convictions.
- Use sound judgment and skill in evaluating possible nominees.
- Be tactful, have integrity and discretion, and be able to keep all deliberations confidential.

## **NOMINATING COMMITTEE CHAIR**

**The chair shall:**

- Select a time and place for the meeting as soon as possible after the election of the committee.
- Make every effort to hold the meeting(s) when all members can attend.
- See that the committee has copies of the bylaws, procedures, these guidelines, and the membership list.
- Ask the president and other board members for input as to the performance of present board members and share this information with the committee at its meeting(s).
- Contact potential nominees (unless delegated specifically to another committee member) only when agreed upon by the committee and inform them of specific responsibilities of the office.
- Inform committee members of the results of the contacts if calls are made after the meeting.
- Advise nominees to attend the election meeting (although not mandatory) and the installation of officers.
- See that names of nominees are presented in accordance with the bylaws.
- Reconvene committee in the event a nominee withdraws before election is held.
- Present the nominating committee report in accordance with the bylaws.

## NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEETING

The President is not a member of this committee and does not attend its meeting(s). The committee should be familiar with the duties of the offices to be filled before discussing any candidate. Study your bylaws and procedures. Refer to unit/council bylaws ARTICLE VI – Officers and ARTICLE VII – Nominations and Election. Article VI defines the officers to be elected. Article VII explains the method of selecting the Nominating Committee and its chairman and what their job involves. It defines the time and method of election, and the terms of officers. In addition this Article explains the method of dealing with a vacancy in office. The bylaws may also include requirements of candidates as will the unit's standing rules.

Should a member of the committee find it necessary to resign before the committee has completed its work, the member need not be replaced unless the bylaws or procedures provide for such replacement. Often the bylaws will offer provisions to elect an alternate for such times.

The alternate member to the nominating committee serves only to replace a member of the committee once a meeting date has been set and a committee member is unable to attend the first meeting. If an alternate is asked to replace a committee member who cannot attend the first meeting, the alternate continues to serve on the committee for the duration of the nominating committee. Vacancies on succeeding meetings are left vacant.

## SELECTING NOMINEES

The committee's responsibility is to nominate the best qualified candidate for each office.

Any PTA member may suggest the name and qualifications of persons to be considered, however, the committee is not bound by such recommendations.

A presidential nominee should not be asked whom they would like for running mates. This decision rests with the Nominating Committee. All nominees should be selected with the same care as the presidential nominee.

Members of the Nominating Committee can approach a potential candidate as to willingness to hold office before the committee meets, but should **never** offer or promise the office to any potential candidate.

The Nominating Committee may send out a call for nominations to their membership prior to meeting to select their officer recommendations to gain a better understanding of who may be interested in serving in an elected position. This should be done in a manner that allows all members the opportunity to respond and ensures that all comments about a nominee are only viewable by the committee members.

### **The committee should:**

- Consider the kind of leadership that will best achieve the goals and purpose of your PTA.
- Review the tenure of incumbent officers to determine their eligibility for another term in the same office or in another position. Try to avoid simply reshuffling the officers, but try to find the best fits for each office and encourage new leadership to come aboard.
- Think carefully about possible candidates: their qualifications, their ability to work well with others, and if they have sufficient time to do the job.
- Nominate one person to serve in an office.

- Develop a tentative slate of officers with possible alternates for each office to be filled. Unanimous consent is desirable, but only a majority is needed for someone to be considered a nominee and called for the position.
- Avoid putting a past president into a vice-presidency. This is a position where one can learn about being president. Past presidents can give needed advice while holding other positions on the board.
- Keep all deliberations of the nominating committee completely CONFIDENTIAL and see that no information on the names of persons considered for office or those who declined to accept nomination are ever made public. It is unfair to the association and to the member who accepts the nomination to discover that others received prior consideration.

## **DELIBERATIONS – CONFIDENTIALITY**

- Do not use a nomination as a reward.** The committee is not obligated to call an existing officer for a second term.
- Determine if the nominee can give time to the position.**
- Ohio PTA has no rule for expected movement through the “chairs”.**
- The person most qualified should be the nominee.** Make objective decisions based on qualifications, availability, and commitment.
- Consider what is best for the association.** Just because a candidate desires a role, doesn't mean it is the best fit for them, and in turn, for the association. What is best for the association may be a different role for that candidate or it may be finding a different candidate. Putting thoughtful discussion and time into searching for the best candidates is not always easy, but the benefits the association gains are worth the effort.
- Discussion about nominees should not leave the committee meeting.**
- Committee members who become nominees should leave the room while their candidacy is being discussed.**
- The number of nominations a candidate receives does not necessarily indicate their qualifications for office.**

## **CRITERIA FOR SELECTING NOMINEES**

The Nominating Committee should consider carefully each potential nominee. The well-being of the PTA unit/council must be the top priority. The criteria listed below should be considered and evaluated. The potential nominee:

- Must be a PTA member.
- Must be enthusiastic and supportive of the PTA unit/council.
- Must believe in the Purpose and Mission of PTA and believe that PTA is the best association for working for children and youth.
- Should have had experience in PTA, though other associational work may also be considered.
- Should have knowledge of the association and its role in the school and community.
- Should be relied upon to give a PTA a satisfactory level of priority and commitment.
- Should be able to work well with people.
- Should have done a good job carrying out any prior responsibilities.

Unless the bylaws state otherwise, a member of the Nominating Committee may become a candidate for office without resigning from the committee. The member proposed for nomination should withdraw from the meeting while his/her qualifications are discussed and to allow for additional names to be submitted for consideration. The member may return to vote.

If the chairman is being considered as a candidate, another committee member becomes acting chairman until they are ready to vote. The acting chairman may be appointed by the chairman or by the committee.

## CONTACTING NOMINEES

Potential nominees should be contacted by the chairman (unless delegated specifically to another committee member) only when agreed upon by the committee and informed of the specific responsibilities of the office.

The consent of each nominee should be obtained to place the name in nomination while the committee is in session if possible. If this cannot be accomplished, the chairman should inform the committee members of the results of the contact before writing the report.

It is rarely advisable to talk a reluctant candidate into accepting a nomination.

The chairman should advise nominees to attend the election meeting and the installation of officers.

In the event that a selected nominee cannot be contacted, the committee should elect an alternate for the position in question. If this nominee declines the nomination, the chairman may offer the nomination to the alternate selected. The chairman should then immediately contact the committee informing them of this situation and whether the alternate accepted the nomination.

If the name of a nominee is withdrawn after the committee completes the selection, and the alternate declines also, the chairman shall contact each Nominating Committee member informing them of this change and the need to meet again to select another nominee.

## REPORTING

The chairman sees that the names of those who have agreed to be nominees are presented in accordance with the bylaws.

The committee's report may be presented to the executive board for information but does not need its approval before presenting the slate to the membership.

The chairman presents the report, written and signed by each member of the Nominating Committee, who agrees with the slate, at the time specified by the bylaws but does not move for its adoption or acceptance.

After the report is read to the PTA membership, additional nominations may be made from the floor by any member attending the election meeting. If there are additional nominations, the elections should be by written ballot.

If the committee is unable to find a nominee for an office, it reports that fact and nominations are taken from the floor. If the office is not filled at the election meeting, ***an election is on the agenda at every succeeding meeting until the office is filled.***

The Nominating Committee is automatically discharged when its report is presented to the membership.

## RESIGNATIONS

A Nominating Committee is automatically discharged when its report is formally presented to the assembly, although if one of the nominees withdraws before election, the committee is reconvened and should meet immediately to agree upon another nominee, providing there is sufficient time to do so. (Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised, Twelfth Edition)

If a newly elected officer resigns before the new executive board is in place:

-Check the unit/council bylaws for the time frame and to determine what body (executive committee/ executive board/association) has the authority to fill the vacancy. Notice of the election may be required.

- Have the new executive committee/executive board/association, as determined in #1 above:
- a. Accept the resignation
  - b. Fill the vacancy

## GUIDELINES FOR ELECTIONS

### CHECK BYLAWS TO ASCERTAIN:

- When the election meeting should be held.
- How much notice should be given prior to the election meeting.
- When the Nominating Committee report is to be presented – at a previous meeting, in meeting notice, or the time of the meeting.
- If bylaws have additional stipulation: i.e., nominations from the floor at a previous meeting and publishing names of all nominees.

### THE ELECTION MEETING

1. The presiding officer asks for the Nominating Committee report.
2. After the report is read additional nominations may be made from the floor:
  - a. Nominations do not require a second.
  - b. Nominations can only be made by a voting member of the association. Nominating Committee members can only make nominations from the floor if they have not signed the committee report.
  - c. The presiding officer can:
    - i. Ask for additional nominations for all positions in the order listed in the bylaws before closing nominations for all offices and then proceed with the election. Write the name of nominees on a blackboard/easel.

### OR

- i. Ask for additional nominations for each position, one at a time, in the order in which listed in the bylaws and then proceed to elect the officer after nominations have been closed on each position.

**NOTE:** An individual can be nominated for more than one office at a time but can serve in only one. If elected to two positions, the individual must choose the office in which he will serve. An election should then be held to fill the vacancy created by this decision.

- ii. The chair says “\_\_\_\_\_ has been nominated for the office of \_\_\_\_\_. Are there further nominations for the office of \_\_\_\_\_?”
- iii. If other members are nominated from the floor, their names are added to the list for election.
- iv. When ample time has been allowed, the chair may say, “Hearing no further nominations, the chair declares the nominations for the office of \_\_\_\_\_ closed.”

3. If there is only one nominee for each office, bylaws may provide for:

- a. *A voice vote:* the presiding officer asks for all those in favor of the nominees to say “aye” and all opposed to say “nay”.
- b. *A vote by ballot:* The tellers shall distribute ballots (similar pieces of paper can be used) to the members of the PTA unit/council present and eligible to vote. Unit members should show their membership card and/or membership lists should be checked before a ballot is issued to anyone. Each person puts the name of the nominee(s) of his/her choice on the ballot and hands the ballot to a teller or puts it in a ballot box.

4. If there is more than one nominee for some offices:

- a. The president appoints tellers (at least two) who distribute ballots to voting members, collect, and count them. Membership cards should be shown and/or membership lists used.
- b. Dispense with those positions that have only one nominee (See 3a and 3b)
- c. Take each position that has more than one nominee and follow 3b.

**OR**

Have ballots ready with all positions on them so that voters can write in the name of the nominee they prefer.

5. The procedure for collecting ballots should be established before the election begins.

Possible methods are:

- a. Tellers give ballots to members and collect them.
- b. Tellers give ballots to members and the voter places the ballot in a ballot box set-up for that purpose.

Members should sign in and receive a ballot from the teller. The membership chair or recording secretary should have a list of members available.

6. Members must be advised prior to election when and how ballots are to be collected.

- a. At least two people designated by the president should serve as an election committee (tellers) to ensure that proper procedures are followed.
- b. No nominee should be involved in the election procedure (as tellers, collecting ballots, counting ballots).
- c. In a contested election each nominee may designate a person as an observer at the time ballots are counted.
- d. If a ballot box is used, the hours that the polls will be open for the election must be publicized to the membership with sufficient time.

- e. A sealed box (taped closed) should be used and opened by tellers only after polls are closed.
  - f. If the ballot box will be left in a designated place for a period of time, there must be people assigned to the ballot box to be sure that only voting members receive ballots and each person only votes once.
  - g. The ballots are to be counted by the tellers (two neutral people or else one acceptable to each nominee).
  - h. The tellers give the count to the **presiding officer** who **announces the results** and declares the winners elected.
7. Blank ballots are not counted.
8. Ballots are considered illegal if:
- a. They are illegible.
  - b. They contain the names of a nominee who is not a member.
  - c. Two or more ballots folded together. These are recorded as an illegal vote.
  - d. Illegal votes are counted to determine the number of votes cast but are not applied as a vote for or against any nominee.
9. If ballots have been counted and no one nominee for a particular office receives a majority of the votes, a revote must be taken with all nominees for the position on the ballot until one nominee receives a majority of the votes cast unless the bylaws provide for election by plurality vote—which means the nominee with the largest number of votes wins.
10. A motion should be made to destroy the ballots. Once this motion is approved, have a procedure to destroy the ballots in place. (Typically, one of the tellers ensures the ballots are destroyed.)

## SAMPLE BALLOT

President Mark w/ "X" Fold

Eleanor Jones \_\_\_\_\_

Jim Block \_\_\_\_\_

Rita Smith \_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE TALLY SHEET

President

Jim Block IIII IIII 9

Eleanor Jones IIII IIII IIII IIII 20

Rita Smith IIII IIII 10

John Doe (ineligible) III 3

## SAMPLE TELLERS' REPORT

President

Eligible to vote 42

Number of votes cast 42

Necessary for election 21

Eleanor Jones received 20

Rita Smith received 10

Jim Block received 9

Illegal votes 0

Ineligible votes 3

Tellers' Signature \_\_\_\_\_

## VOTING

### TYPES OF VOTES

One very basic principle must always be observed. When determining the outcome of a vote we are concerned only with the votes cast, not the number of people present, as no one is required to vote.

**Majority:** This means more than half the votes cast. For example, if 19 votes are cast, a majority would be 10; if 20 votes are cast, a majority would be 11. This is commonly used in elections and on most motions.

**Two Thirds:** This means  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the votes cast. If 30 votes are cast, a two-thirds vote is 20; if 31 votes are cast, a two-thirds vote is 21. To determine if you have a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote, double the number of "no" votes and, if it adds up to less than the number of "yes" votes, the motion is carried; if it adds up to more than the number of "yes" votes, the motion is defeated. This is used only in the case of certain motions such as to close debate, which takes away certain rights of a person or gives another person additional rights. These motions are listed in the current edition of Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised.

**Plurality:** This is the largest number of votes to be given to any nominee where three or more choices are possible. Election by plurality is possible only where the bylaws authorize. Example: Three people are running for office. Andy receives 15 votes, Betty receives 14 votes, and Chris receives 13 votes. On a plurality basis Andy is elected.

## VOTING RIGHTS OF OFFICERS

All PTA officers have the same voting privileges as other members. The presiding officer should protect his impartiality by voting only:

1. When the vote is by ballot.
2. When their vote will change the outcome:
  - a. Break a tie, thus passing the motion.
  - b. Make a tie, thus defeating the motion.
  - c. Cast a deciding vote in the case of a motion requiring a 2/3 vote.

*This is an option of the presiding officer, not a requirement. A good presiding officer casts the deciding vote only when it is considered for the good of the association.*

## VOTING METHODS

**Acclamation or Voice:** “Aye”--“No”

**By Rising:** method used in verifying an inconclusive voice vote, where a close vote is anticipated, or in voting on motions requiring a two-thirds vote.

**Show of Hands:** An alternate method that can be used in place of a rising vote in very small assemblies. **Ballot:** Used when secrecy of the members’ vote is desired, such as in elections.

**Roll Call:** Members respond when their name is called.

PTA does not provide for absentee voting, voting by mail or electronically, or proxy votes.

## VOTING PROCEDURE

**General Consent:** Useful as a shortcut in voting, permitting the assembly to take action without going through the process of a regular vote. It is an excellent time saver and should be used whenever there seems to be general agreement among the members. For example, “If there is no objection, the minutes stand approved as read”. After a slight pause if there are no objections, the presiding officer merely says, “They stand approved as read”. Should one or more persons say “I object”, then the motion must be put to a regular vote.

**Abstaining:** An abstention is not a vote and therefore is not counted. No member should vote on a question where they have a direct personal interest. For instance, if a motion proposes that the PTA enter into a contract with a firm of which a PTA member is an officer and would derive a profit from such a contract, the member should abstain from voting on the motion.

## YOU WANT A REVOTE

When a member doubts the result of a voice vote or a vote by a show of hands, they can call for division, thereby requiring the vote to be taken again by rising or ballot. In a very small meeting where all present can clearly see one another, an inconclusive voice vote may be retaken by merely requesting a show of hands. Normally the presiding officer will take a count on a revote. However, he is not required to count unless someone makes a motion to that effect. Such a motion requires a second, is not debatable, and requires a majority vote.

## PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF YOUR PTA/SUCCESSION PLANNING:

To effectively recruit PTA officers: start early, be inclusive, and communicate clearly about the roles. Highlight the importance of each position and the positive impact volunteers have on the school. Consider individuals who may not initially seem like leaders and actively seek out those who demonstrate enthusiasm and willingness to help.

Strategies for Effective Recruitment:

**Start Early:** Begin the recruitment process at the start of the school year or even earlier. Reach out to your entire membership and even those incoming families who are moving up in grade levels (i.e. from elementary school to middle school). Unless your bylaws state specific circumstances that must be met for an elected office, a person may become a member of your PTA if they wish to run for an elected position for the following year.

**Be Inclusive:** Reach out to a wide range of parents, including those who may not typically volunteer, to create a diverse pool of potential leaders.

**Personalize Invitations:** Instead of only mass emails, try to connect with individuals in person or through personalized messages, emphasizing their specific skills and potential contributions.

**Highlight the Impact:** Clearly explain how each role contributes to the success of the PTA and the school, emphasizing the positive impact on students and the community.

**Break Down Roles:** If a position seems too daunting, consider breaking it down into smaller tasks or sharing it with another parent. This can only be done if the bylaws account for this option. There can only be one president. However, there may be multiple vice presidents to help share the load of PTA responsibilities. There can be only one treasurer, but there can be an assistant treasurer. There can be either one secretary or this role can be broken down into one recording secretary and one corresponding secretary. Be sure to follow your current PTA bylaws.

**Build Relationships:** Foster connections with parents throughout the year, not just when you need volunteers.

**Provide Support:** Offer resources and training to new officers to help them transition into their roles smoothly.

**Seek Recommendations:** Ask principals, teachers, and other staff for suggestions on potential candidates, as they may know parents who would be a good fit but haven't been actively involved.

**Make it a Team Effort:** Let potential candidates know that they will not be alone in their roles. The PTA board works together! Find people who will work well with others to make the PTA a strong team and encourage collaboration.

**Be Patient:**

Recruitment can take time, so be persistent and don't be discouraged if you don't find candidates immediately. Many times it takes a greater understanding of the need for someone to come forward and serve. Be sure that your PTA is providing the officer job descriptions (brief summary) to the members so they understand the importance of those roles in maintaining the association.

