

Top Ten Things to Read in Your Bylaws

Help! I've just been elected as an officer, and I have no idea what these bylaws mean. If you have ever been in this position, check out the list of the most important things to know about your bylaws:

1. **Dues** – The amount of your unit's dues is found in your bylaws. This also tells you how much state and national dues are. Make sure you are collecting this amount from every person who is a member of your PTA. Found in Article V
2. **Officers' Duties** – This section will tell you what you should be doing as an officer of your PTA. You may have additional duties as well, but make sure you are at least doing the job listed in the bylaws. Found in Article VII
3. **Quorum** – This is the number of people you need at your membership meetings in order to conduct business. It is impotent to advertise your meetings so that enough people come. For you Board of Directors and Executive Committee meetings, quorum is a majority of the members. Found in Article XI
4. **Membership Meetings** – This section will tell you how many meetings you need to have a year. You can have more, but you should plan to have at least the minimum stated in your bylaws. This section will also tell you any rules related to scheduling these meetings. Found in Article XI
5. **Nominating Committee and Election Month** – This section lays out how many members you need in the nominating committee, and when they should be elected. Your bylaws also list a specific timeframe for electing officers. Build your meeting calendar around this and verify when you need to elect the nominating committee. Found in Article VI
6. **Council Membership** – Your bylaws will tell you what Council your PTA is a part of. Check to see what your obligations are to the council regarding the selection of delegates as well as dues. You may need to consult the council bylaws to confirm the correct amount of dues. Found in Article XII
7. **Officers' and Their Terms** – Verify what officers your PTA needs. In general, you will have at least a President, Secretary, Treasurer, and a Vice President. You may have more or the ability to have more but check to be certain. You should also check how long each person is supposed to serve, and if there are any term limits. Found in Article VI
8. **Audit** – Your bylaws contain certain rules about who should do your audit as well as deadlines for selecting the auditor and resending the report to the membership. Plan your calendar with these dates in mind. Article VII
9. **Fiscal Year** – Your PTA's fiscal year is listed in your bylaws. 990s must be submitted in a certain month based upon your fiscal year, so make sure you know these dates! Found in Article XIV
10. **Amendments** – There may be some things you want to change in your bylaws. In most cases, this is doable as long as it does not violate the integrity of the bylaws template. If not, check the section on amendments for what is required. You will have to vote on it as a Board, then present it to the membership with a certain amount of time prior to voting. Finally, you will have to submit the change to the State for approval. Found in Article XVI