

Document #7

The Benefits of a Year-round Nominating Committee



PTAs, heed this advice from past National PTA President Shirley Igo: "If you truly want the possibility to strengthen the leadership of your PTA, you'll opt for a year-round nominating committee whose members look at who's really best for each position."

That's what National PTA did when its governance was restructured in June 2001. Both Igo and Lee Ann Clark, a former National PTA director of field service, agree that National PTA's current Nominating and Leadership Recruitment Committee (NLRC) is a model to others.

"Having a year-round nominating committee is an opportunity to evaluate a PTA's needs and meet those needs with people who have those specific qualifications," Igo explained.

"Someone needs to accept the onus of finding suitable candidates for office," said Clark. "The president can't do it. He or she already has a full-time position leading the organization, not to mention the fact that nominating leaders is a conflict of interest for PTA presidents."

According to Sue Gatton, former chair of National PTAs' committee "many PTA's bylaws say the nominating committee should be elected at least 60 days prior to the election meeting. My elementary school PTA had a committee elected at the same time as the officers," Gatton said. "That way we could watch throughout the year and see what leadership skills should be developed."

Clark advised that PTAs take care establishing a nominating committee from the onset so there aren't any issues of impropriety. Here are some suggestions to help. For additional information, refer to the New York State PTA's Resource Guide Section 7.

Establishing a Year-round Nominating Committee

- Hold an election at a PTA meeting for members to elect the nominating committee to serve a term as set forth in your bylaws as soon as possible in your new year.
- Create a recommendation form and make it available to members to recommend themselves or others.
- Keep the elected officers and committee chairs informed of individuals demonstrating leadership potential.
- Periodically report to the general membership, identifying vacant positions, providing committee/job descriptions, and requesting recommendations.



Job Description:

Members of the nominating committee shall:

- Be a member of the PTA
- Identify characteristics and skill sets needed in the leadership of your PTA
- Screen, evaluate, and nominate candidates for officers.
- Recommend continuing education that enhances leadership development within the PTA
- Participate fully as a member of the nominating committee

- Prepare a final report to be read at the election meeting

Electing nominating committee members

Just as National PTA's Nominating and Leadership Recruitment Committee members are elected by voting delegates at the annual convention, PTAs at the state, district, council, or local level must also be sure their committee members are elected, not selected, by general membership. Keep in mind that the PTA president may not be an ex-officio member and may not exert any undue influence on the selection of nominees.

Establishing length of term

Because each constituent PTA establishes its terms of office for serving as an officer or committee chair/member, the bylaws should define the length of terms.

Another benefit of a yearlong nominating committee, regardless of the term limitation, is that members have the time to get to know one another and to feel comfortable having open, honest conversations about the leadership needs of their PTA.

Electing the committee chair

The chair of the committee is selected according to the provisions of the bylaws. **Unit** and **Council** bylaws state that the chair of the committee is elected by the committee. **Region** bylaws state that the chair is elected by the Region Board. *According to Robert's Rules, the first named member of the elected committee should call a meeting to elect the chair.*



Identifying potential leaders

Sample Potential Leader Referral Form

Date _____
Submitted by _____
Daytime phone number _____
Evening phone number _____
E-mail address _____

Check one:

I am referring myself for the position of _____

I am referring [person's name] for the position of _____

His or her contact information:

Mailing address _____
Daytime phone number _____
Evening phone number _____
E-mail address _____

Why are you nominating this individual for the position?

What leadership qualities do you see in this person?

Further comments/remarks:

Please return to [nominating committee chair].

The primary role of the nominating committee is to identify potential leaders for PTA vacancies. When seeking nominations for officers, check with your unit/council/region for procedures containing job descriptions for your use. If your PTA does not have procedures, refer to the NYS PTA Resource Guide Section 7. (This also applies for your PTA's search for nominating committee members.) PTA members who are elected to serve a position should be knowledgeable about the PTA and the qualifications for each committee or office.

"Most units I'm familiar with have recommendation forms for people to say what their skills and interests are," Gatton said. She explained that National PTA's NLRC uses referral forms because committee members at the national level don't have the opportunity to know all PTA members like committees at the local level do.

While attending multi-state conferences, National Council of States meetings, and National PTA Board of Directors meetings, National PTA's nominating and leadership development

committee distributes its leader-referral forms and talks about what it takes to be a leader. Other PTAs could opt for a similar referral/recommendation form to be distributed to members when the committee reports out during PTA meetings.

"Asking for qualifications is truly critical," Igo affirmed. "Ask people if they want to serve and what they feel qualified to do. For some, self-nominating is hard; a recommendation form gives all members a chance."

Forms also enable the nominating committee to identify people who are leaders or potential leaders and assess their skills. "Bring forward the best-qualified persons," Igo asserted. "Make sure the person is best qualified for each particular position."

When looking for skills, Igo also said the nominating committee should look for diversity. "I don't mean just age, socioeconomic background, gender, race. I mean diversity in the broadest sense," Igo clarified. "Look for parents, teachers.... Your PTA leadership should represent not only membership but the population of your school."