



section
1

RESOURCE GUIDE

New York State
PTA[®]
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PTA basics

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PTA basics

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New York State congress of parents and teachers, inc.

historic purposes

- To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, community and place of worship.
- To raise the standards of home life.
- To secure adequate laws for the care and protection of children and youth.
- To bring into closer relation the home and the school, that parents and teachers may cooperate intelligently in the education of children and youth.
- To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental, social and spiritual education.

PTA values

Collaboration: We work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to accomplish our agreed-upon goals.

Commitment: We are dedicated to promoting children's health, well-being and educational success through strong parent, family and community involvement.

Accountability: We acknowledge our obligations. We deliver on our promises.

Respect: We value our colleagues and ourselves. We expect the same high quality of effort and thought from ourselves as we do from others.

Inclusivity: We invite the stranger and welcome the newcomer. We value and seek input from as wide a spectrum of viewpoints and experiences as possible.

Integrity: We act consistently with our beliefs. When we err, we acknowledge the mistake and seek to make amends.



a brief history of PTA

On **February 17, 1897**, the PTA idea took on the force and vitality of a nationwide movement. It was on that day that some 2,000 people came to Washington, DC, to discuss “questions most vital to the welfare of children and the manifold interests of the home.”

They came in response to the call of **Alice McLellan Birney** and **Phoebe Apperson Hearst** and met for three days to talk, to listen and to learn about children. When they left, they had brought into being a national association dedicated to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in home, school, place of worship, and community, an association that was to grow in strength and influence. They formed the National Congress of Mothers, later to be called the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, a name officially adopted in 1924.

PTA in New York actually predates the national meeting in 1897 by two years. Alice McLellan Birney attended the “School for Parents” in Chautauqua and talked with other women about her idea of drawing mothers together for better homes, schools and communities for all children. When she returned to Washington, DC, she made contact with Phoebe Apperson Hearst, and the plans for the national meeting began.

The New York association, which was formed in Washington even before the delegates left for home, became the first state congress. Fannie Barnes was the first president, and the first state meeting was held in Syracuse on September 30 and October 1, 1897. Fifty members attended from Syracuse, Oswego, Utica, Albany, Waterville, Fayetteville, Fulton and New York City.

Today there are congresses in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the US Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico and Europe, serving Department of Defense schools overseas.

Like Phoebe Apperson Hearst and Alice McLellan Birney, **Selena Sloan Butler** also worked to make a dream come true. Through her efforts the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers was founded in 1926 at a time when segregated schools were mandated in the southern United States.

In 1970, with the merger of the National PTA and the National Congress of Colored Parents and Teachers, PTA became a unified association of persons interested in the well-being of children, regardless of differences. Those very differences, when transformed into positive energy, have created a strong, well-balanced association. PTA’s strength lies in its inclusivity, with a membership comprised of parents, grandparents, teachers, single parents, business people, administrators, anyone who cares about children.

mission

The overall purpose of PTA is to make every child’s potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

vision statement

Making every child’s potential a reality by establishing the New York State Congress of Parents and Teachers, Inc. (New York State PTA) as the premier organization for parent involvement and advocacy for all children.



Phoebe Apperson Hearst



Alice McLellan Birney



Selena Sloan Butler

For a complete history, see:
**New York State PTA
 a Century of Caring
 1897–1997
 and
 National PTA
 The PTA Story—A Century
 of Commitment to
 Children.**

achievements of the New York State PTA

1890s New York organized the first state PTA congress in 1897. The first state convention was held. Sex education before puberty was stressed. We encouraged the inclusion of physical education in the public school curriculum. We petitioned Congress for a national health bureau 14 years before the US Public Health Service was established. The PTA called for the evaluation of the juvenile court and probation system.

1900s New York State PTA initiated legislation for the protection of employed children, was instrumental in seeking child labor laws, and established a committee to investigate child employment conditions. PTA recognized the needs of handicapped children. We published a booklet on sex education. President Theodore Roosevelt endorsed the juvenile court and probation system in a message to Congress. We urged supervision of motion pictures and vaudeville.

1910s Working on school-related issues, the state PTA recommended that kindergarten be part of the public school system. PTAs sponsored hot lunch projects in many schools. We advocated that schools provide education for motherhood and homemaking. We urged that automatic sprinklers be installed in addition to existing fire escapes.

1920s PTA urged action to eliminate smoking by minors. The first State Bulletin was published and was later renamed *New York Parent Teacher*. The student loan fund was developed; it later became the Teacher Fellowship. New York State PTA became incorporated. A leaflet on highway safety was

published because of the rise of the automobile.

1930s PTA submitted to the Commissioner of Education resolutions dealing with needs of exceptional children. We stressed the need for separate juvenile courts and detention homes. A nutrition project urged printed information on food values.

1940s During this period, PTA inaugurated a nationwide school lunch program and legislation was enacted for a permanent federal school lunch program. The Jenkins Scholarship was developed. For the first time, convention was canceled in 1945 because of World War II.

1950s PTA worked with the US Post Office to combat the distribution of pornographic material. The Youth Court Act, for 16-21 year olds charged with a crime, passed.

1960s Educating youth on the hazards of smoking was an ongoing project. We held a pilot conference on judicial concern for children in trouble. PTA worked on the financial support of public schools. We addressed health issues, including control of stimulant and depressant drugs, and a smoking and health project. Legislation was enacted for juvenile delinquency prevention and control. The Child Protection and Toy Safety Act was passed in part because of PTA efforts.

1970s PTA amended its “Basic Policy” to read: “... shall seek to participate in the decision-making process establishing school policy...”, a forerunner of the push for parent involvement. PTA began

a major effort to combat TV violence. The Comprehensive School Health Education Act, a PTA-sponsored bill, was introduced in Congress. PTA began a major education campaign to eliminate corporal punishment in the schools.

1980s Legislation prohibiting hazing was passed. A campaign against toxic art supplies in schools began in the state. We published the first report on state aid to non-public schools and testified for public money for public schools. The Regents banned corporal punishment, bringing to fruition a campaign begun earlier. We achieved the passage of legislation requiring school bus drivers to be screened for criminal history and raising the drinking age to 21. Students completing Individual Educational Plans were granted the right to receive diplomas. New York State PTA assumed the administration of the Parents as Reading Partners (PARP) program. We reaffirmed our opposition to tuition tax credits for non-public education and education tuition vouchers.

1990s Child labor laws were strengthened in New York as a result of PTA work. We sponsored a grassroots campaign for aid to education and urged that state financing of public education be increased and distributed equitably. The use of standardized tests below grade three was discouraged. Parent involvement was established as a PTA priority and the Regents amended regulation 100.11 of the Education Law to have parent representatives on school-based planning teams selected by parent organization(s). PTA encouraged the inclusion of the school bus

achievements, con't.

driver safety program in Education Law. We worked for legislation requiring bicycle helmets for children under the age of 14. The state PTA developed a program, “Each One Reach One”, for addressing diversity in education. **New York State PTA celebrated 100 years at its 1996 convention.** New York State PTA helped foster National PTA’s parent involvement standards and introduced them to the State Education Department. The state PTA embarked on a process of long-range planning.

2000s We continued to work to discourage teen access to tobacco and helped pass graduated teen driver licensing in New York State. Parent involvement in all areas, including special education committees, was urged. Legislation

mandating safety devices on electronically operated doors, a priority, was passed. PTA sought legislation to reduce mercury discharge into the environment and to educate communities about the hazards of mercury exposure. We supported the reauthorization of IDEA and called for a legislative task force to reform the formulas for state aid to education.

PTA adopted resolutions to reduce and eliminate trans fats, and for the adoption of healthy school lunch alternatives; we encouraged parents to participate on mandated school district wellness committees. We continued to work to ensure that parents and family involvement in a child’s education is supported. We adopted resolutions to encourage parents to become knowledgeable about the

internet and the safety issues that surround cyberspace, and to raise awareness of the rights of homeless children and their plight in the educational world.

2010s We continue to work to ensure that there is meaningful family engagement in a child’s education and that there be adequate funding for public school education. We passed resolutions requesting air quality standards for indoor ice arenas, for the reduction and phase out of the use of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) plastic, prohibiting the overuse and misuse of antibiotics in food animal production and to amend the guidelines for child safety zones by the NYS Department of Transportation.



organizational structure & governance

national board of directors

Elected officers, elected board member representative and appointees
National Council of States – composed of one member from each state congress who shall not be the state president
(National PTA Bylaws)

New York State PTA

Board of Directors includes officers, appointed coordinators, two (2) youth members and immediate past president
(New York State PTA Bylaws)
Governance Team composed of the Board of Directors, appointed region directors and specialists
(NYS PTA Procedures)

PTA regions

15 regions of New York State PTA
Region director is appointed by NYS PTA Executive Committee
Composed of councils and units in the designated geographic area
Elected officers; chairmen and assistant and/or associate directors to assist units and councils
Membership is represented by voting delegates to the annual meeting (Spring Conference)
(Region PTA Bylaws)

councils

Over 100 PTA Councils
Composed of at least three units in a school district
Develops leadership – Strengthens units
Membership is represented by delegates from each unit belonging to the Council.
(Council PTA Bylaws)

local PTAs

Over 1,350 PTA units in New York
Composed of individual members, all of whom are part of the governing body
Has elected officers and appointed executive board. Is the foundation of PTA
(Unit PTA Bylaws)

PTA members

Nearly 270,000 members in New York
The foundation of the PTA
(PTA membership card)

about unit, council, region, state and National PTA

the local PTA unit

PTA units are organized under National and New York State PTA bylaws to serve the children and youth within their school area. Each unit is a **self-governing group**, planning its programs and activities to meet the needs of children and youth in the community it serves. However, the bylaws of each unit must conform to the policies of the National PTA and New York State PTA and must be approved by the state bylaws coordinator. All PTAs are bound by the Purposes and the “Basic Policy” of PTA. PTAs are required to be noncommercial, nonsectarian and nonpartisan. A unit receives a charter from the New York State PTA, which in turn had received a charter from the National PTA.

Presidents receive a great deal of material from National, state and region PTAs. It is their obligation to share this information with their executive boards and their membership and act upon it if appropriate.

Unit representatives should be encouraged to attend conferences, workshops and conventions. This is a legitimate use of PTA funds. Meetings and programs should be carefully planned to keep the membership well-informed in areas of interest, and study and discuss the needs of the children and youth of the area.

Units must submit membership dues and insurance payments yearly and have bylaws approved every three years to be in good standing. **Refer to page 15.**

special education PTA

Special Education means specially designed instruction, services or programs, provided at no cost to the parent, to meet the unique

needs of students with disabilities, and to ensure their access to the general curriculum that applies to all students.

A Special Education PTA is a unit organized for those interested in the issues of educating special needs and/or gifted and talented children.

centralized unit

A centralized unit is a local PTA unit made up of all of the schools in one school district.

combined unit

A combined unit is a local PTA unit made up of two or three schools in one school district.

empire state PTSA

The Empire State PTSA is a unit of the New York State PTA and the National PTA. This statewide unit enables persons who may not be connected presently with a local PTA unit to continue to be part of PTA. Those desiring to join the Empire State PTSA can do so by going to the New York State PTA website at www.nyspta.org and selecting the link to Empire State PTSA. The Empire State PTSA pin is given upon the initial joining of the unit.

council

A council is a group of three or more PTA units within a school district or a central high school district and is organized under the authority of the New York State PTA. The council is chartered by and operates under bylaws approved by the New York State PTA. Each member unit is represented in the council by delegates who participate in council business as representatives of their units, not as individuals. Units should look to the council for consideration of issues in the school district that are the concern of all the schools.

A council’s role is fundamentally to inform, instruct and inspire the leaders of the units and to be responsive to their needs. Through councils, units have an opportunity to compare methods and projects and share successful experiences. The council may also find it advantageous to cooperate with other community organizations.

A council is in good standing when their bylaws are approved every three years and at least three of the member units are in good standing.

Refer to Section 4, Council Guide region PTAs

PTA regions are geographical divisions of the New York State PTA organized to provide service to the units and councils within their territory. Region boards, composed of the region director, officers, associate and/or assistant directors, chairs and others named in the region bylaws, are its administrators. Directors are appointed by the executive committee of the New York State PTA (based upon recommendations from the region board) and officers are elected by delegates at Spring Conference (annual meetings). The region director voices the interests of units and councils within the region and shares information from the state PTA.

Your region PTA:

- Interprets National and New York State PTA policies, procedures and programs.
- Gives advisory and supportive services to units and councils through the director, officers, assistant and/or associate directors and chairmen.

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unit, council, region, state and National PTA, con't.

- Confers with units and councils on local concerns and helps them resolve problems.
- Provides leadership training through conferences, workshops and schools of instruction.
- Organizes and charters units and councils.
- Helps councils strengthen their units and plan programs.
- Provides assistance from region PTA leaders whenever needed.

Assistant and associate directors are assigned the task of maintaining contact with specific units and councils within a region. The associate or assistant director should be the first person to contact when there is a question about a procedure or a New York State or National PTA program.

Chairmen are appointed to perform specific tasks such as preparing newsletters, processing bylaws, planning conferences or monitoring legislation of interest to PTA. Other chairmen focus on issues such as health and welfare, arts, family engagement, reading, environment, education and special education. These chairmen serve as resource people for units and councils.

Regions send informational mailings and newsletters. host Spring Conferences, presidents' roundtables, Presidents and Principals luncheons or dinners and other workshops to provide leadership development for unit and council officers and chairmen.

Region PTA boards are composed of experienced volunteers who were once unit and council leaders. They understand PTA and the needs of today's volunteers.

New York State PTA

New York State PTA is incorporated as a not-for-profit association under the laws of New York State and serves as a branch of National PTA for the purpose of accomplishing the Purposes of the National PTA. All units, councils and region PTAs are part of New York State PTA and are led by volunteers.

The New York State Congress was the **first state branch** of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers.

The New York State PTA Board of Directors is the administrative body of the New York State PTA and is composed of the state president, officers and coordinators. The New York State PTA Governance Team includes the Board of Directors, Region Directors and Specialists.

The work of the New York State PTA is carried on through its units, in which there is a total **membership of nearly 270,000.**

New York State PTA:

- Coordinates programs statewide on behalf of children and youth.
- Is represented on state and national committees and commissions dealing with children and youth.
- Provides conferences, workshops, publications and resources on issues and leadership development.
- Services units and councils through its region PTA boards.

The state convention provides an opportunity for PTA members to attend workshops on leadership development, issues and resources.

This is the time when PTA positions are determined by action of the delegates. Resolutions submitted by units, councils,

regions or state PTA are debated by the delegate body and, when approved by a majority, become the positions of New York State PTA.

National PTA

National PTA is a not-for-profit educational association seeking to unite home, school and community on behalf of children and youth. It is governed by the National PTA Board of Directors who have the sole authority to manage the affairs of the corporation, except for the authority that is vested by the bylaws in the executive committee or the national convention body.

National PTA:

- Was established in 1897.
- Consists of more than 6.5 million members, over 26,000 local units in 50 states, the District of Columbia, Pacific Congress, and European Congress (serving Department of Defense schools overseas).
- Is the vehicle for a nationwide network of PTA units, councils, regions/districts and states working on behalf of children and youth.
- Is noncommercial, nonsectarian and nonpartisan.
- Seeks out other national organizations and corporations for collaborative effort for the welfare of children and youth.
- Provides materials and resources to enable PTAs in the network to become more effective.
- Is governed by its bylaws which establish the purposes (including the PTA Purposes), basic policies and structure.
- Assigns board members to conduct workshops at state and national convention.

National PTA, con't. legal basics for PTAs

Every individual who is a member of a PTA is, by virtue of that fact, a member of the state PTA and National PTA. Membership is available without regard to race, color, creed or national origin. Any individual who subscribes to the Purposes and Basic Policies of PTA may become a member at any time and is entitled to all the benefits of such membership.



PTA is a 501(c)(3) association.

To qualify for a federal income tax exemption as a charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, a not-for-profit association must be organized and operated exclusively for charitable, educational purposes.

PTAs meet the “organizational test” because the ARTICLE II—Purposes section of their bylaws limits the association’s activities to those consistent with its charitable purposes.

A PTA must also meet the “operational test” in order to maintain its income tax exemption. This means that the PTA’s actual operation is always subject to close scrutiny by the IRS and by the general public. It does this by operating in conformance with the purpose for which it was granted tax-exempt status as stated in BYLAWS, ARTICLE III—Basic Policies.

PTA policies

The association is noncommercial, nonsectarian and nonpartisan. No commercial enterprise and no candidate may be endorsed. The name of the New York State PTA and its regions, councils and units, or their officers in their official capacities, may not be used in any connection with a commercial concern, or with any partisan interest, or for any purpose other than the regular work of the association.

members and dues

Any person interested in the Purposes of the PTA and willing to abide by its basic policies and subscribe to its bylaws may become a member. Membership is all inclusive. A person joins a PTA unit by paying dues.

fiduciary responsibility

Board members of not-for-profit corporations including PTAs must meet certain standards of conduct and attention in carrying out their responsibilities to organizations they serve. Imposed both by the courts and by state and federal statutes, these duties are usually described as the duty of care, the duty of loyalty and the duty of obedience. Collectively they are known as Fiduciary Duties (or Fiduciary Responsibilities).

A fiduciary is expected to act, with respect to the income and assets involved, in a way that is prudent. They are charged with acting with the same degree of judgment – prudence – in administering the affairs of the organization as they would in their personal affairs.

Refer to Section 3, The PTA Board registered trademark/ service mark

The basic policies that govern PTA activities and participation also govern the use of the PTA name. Parent Teacher Association, PTA and PTSA are registered service marks of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers and may be used only by those in membership with the National PTA. A service mark has the same legal status as a trademark but is the designation used for services rather than commercial products; it should appear as PTA® or PTSA®.

The symbol ® designates that PTA titles have been registered with the federal government and may not be used by organizations not affiliated with the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. Do not use hyphens, periods or small letters. When used as a plural

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legal basics, con't.

noun, it should be written as PTAs or PTSAs.

official PTA emblems

In 2001, the National PTA adopted use of the logo “PTA®” and tagline “*everychild.onevoice.*®” New York State PTA has adopted this logo and tagline and encourages all PTAs to adopt this style. The official name of a unit, council or region could be placed above “PTA®” and should be done in the same typeface and size in relation to the logo on all the materials you publish. Consistent use of the logo and tagline will identify all PTAs as part of our national association, unified in a network that advocates for all children and youth.

The seal of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers is a registered insignia of the association. Its use is limited to the official documents, publications and materials of the National PTA and its division. The New York State PTA seal is an adaptation of the National seal.

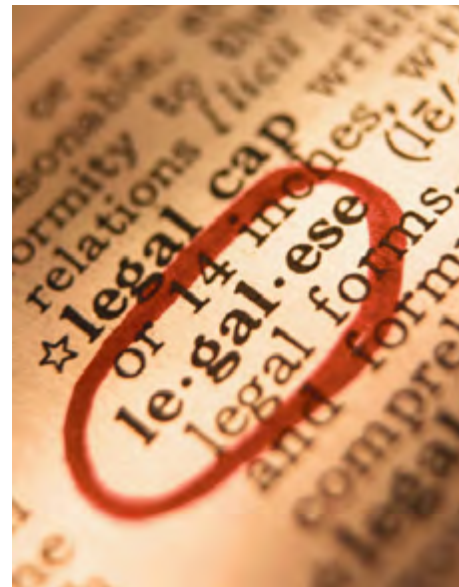
Neither may be used in connection with any commercial enterprise.

PTA is a self-governing association

A PTA generally provides services to a school community and students in that community; and the members generally work closely with school principals, teachers and staff. However, this relationship is one of a private association (the PTA) working with a public organization (the school district). PTA works within the school community, yet is an “independent entity” from the school district

Anyone can join a local PTA unit. There is no requirement that a member must have children in school.

Thus, for example, PTA records, unlike public school records, are not open and available for any member of the public to see. While PTA believes in “transparency” for its members, PTA also wants to protect their privacy with respect to identifying information that may be considered confidential, or which they may not wish to be widely disseminated, including phone numbers, addresses, email addresses and other information that might appear in class lists or membership lists.



use of school facilities

PTAs frequently use school facilities for meetings, programs, projects and fundraising activities. Most school districts require a PTA or other community group to sign a facility use permit as a condition for using a school building or grounds.

PTA unit certificates of insurance are mailed to the unit president once the unit’s annual insurance payment is made and the unit has provided updated officer contact information. A copy should be given with the facility use form.

Refer to Section 9, School and Community

logo usage

New York State

PTA®

everychild.onevoice.®

This logo and tagline is to be used as our official logo.

South Central Region

PTA®

everychild.onevoice.®

You may add your individual PTA’s name above the “PTA” in place of “New York State”.

PTA®

everychild.onevoice.®

This logo is also acceptable to use.

legal documents

charter

A charter document is issued to new units or councils by the New York State PTA upon approval of the association's bylaws and, in the case of units, on payment of dues to the state office for its charter members. If a charter document has been lost or destroyed, a duplicate charter document will be issued from the state office upon written request.

There are procedures for the proper organization or dissolution of PTAs in the bylaws. Contact your region director if you have any questions.

code numbers

Each unit and council is assigned a code number by the state office because many units have the same name. This code number is on the bylaws and on every address label from the PTA office. The number preceding the hyphen indicates the PTA region. The numbers following the hyphen are the numbers assigned the individual unit or council. Use this code number on all checks, forms and correspondence.

Examples:

- 21-123 Any School PTA
The region is 21, Any PTA Region; the unit is 123.
- 21-013 Any PTA Council
The region is 21, Any PTA Region; the council is 013.

bylaws

The bylaws of a PTA unit or council determine its structure and provide specific rules for governing its affairs. Members should become familiar with the bylaws and abide by them. Every unit/council should have available for its officers and members current copies of the bylaws. Bylaws can be changed only with prior notice and by two-

thirds vote of the membership. Bylaws may not be suspended at any time.

Every three years from the date of state PTA approval, each unit and council is required to review its bylaws, revise them if necessary, and vote to adopt them at an association meeting. Whether revised or not, enter the bylaws electronically using the Bylaws EZ process and send the signed and dated Bylaws Cover Page to your region bylaws chair (or the region director in the absence of a bylaws chair) who, after reviewing them, will forward them to the state bylaws coordinator for approval. Bylaws do not take effect until after they are approved by the state bylaws coordinator.

Refer to Section 7, Bylaws, Procedures, Nominations and Elections

procedures

Procedures – sometimes called **standing rules** – are the rules an organization uses to administer its affairs under the provisions of its bylaws. It is here that the PTA can give detailed instructions for carrying out each provision of the bylaws.

Procedures are presented to the executive board for approval by a majority vote and take effect at that time. Unlike bylaws, procedures can be suspended temporarily. They can be amended by a majority vote of the executive board.

Refer to Section 7, Bylaws, Procedures, Nominations and Elections

minutes

The minutes are the legal records of the association. They should be as brief as possible and reported in the order in which business was presented at the meeting. The action taken by the PTA, not what was said by the members, should

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legal documents, con't.

be recorded. The secretary may request the maker of a motion to put it in writing. Minutes should be kept as a permanent record with the word “approved” and the date of approval written at the end of the minutes of each meeting. They are signed by the secretary.

financial documents

Refer to Section 5, Finance and Insurance

Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN)

Every PTA must acquire an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Employer Identification Number (EIN or FEIN). The number is a part of the permanent record of the local PTA, and should also be on file with the region PTA and New York State PTA and should be used on all financial documents (bank accounts, IRS filings, etc.). Questions regarding a unit or council’s EIN should be directed to your region director. Do not contact the Internal Revenue Service directly.

NYS Sales Tax Exempt Number

In order for a unit or council to be exempt from paying New York State sales tax on purchases made for PTA business, the PTA must have a Sales Tax Exemption Number. If it does not already have a number and needs to obtain one, please contact your region director for assistance.

Once a tax exemption number has been assigned to the PTA, copies of the Exempt Organization

Certification should be signed by the president and filed with each vendor when purchases are made. When subsequent purchases are made, a vendor should be reminded that a certificate is on file.

budget

The year’s budget should be planned in advance, presented to the association for approval and adopted by vote of the members. If there are additional expenses or a change in an allocated expenditure, the budget may be amended by a vote of the association at any regular meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose.

record retention

Essential records of the PTA must be retained for various lengths of time. **Refer to Section 5.**

treasurer’s annual report

At the close of a PTA’s fiscal year (**June 30**), the treasurer should close the financial records and prepare an annual financial report

covering the entire fiscal year. The report becomes official after an audit has been completed and the audit report is officially adopted by the membership.

audit report

An audit involves an examination of financial transactions and the procedures used to conduct those transactions. The purpose of the audit is to assure both the membership and the board that the funds of the PTA have been properly administered and that good financial practices have been followed.

The books and records must be audited annually (at a minimum), or at any time there is a change in the position of treasurer, or at any time there is a question about the financial well-being or performance of the PTA.

The treasurer’s annual report and the audit report are filed with the permanent financial records after the association has formally adopted the audit report.

contracts

PTAs should be aware of the possibility of legal involvement as a consequence of signing contracts or acting as agents for any commercial enterprise.

No contract may be signed on behalf of a PTA unless the association has voted to enter into the agreement. That vote must be recorded in the minutes. Following that vote, only the president may sign contracts.

financing PTA activities

PTA fundraising should be carried on within the framework of National and New York State PTA policies. PTA’s not-for-profit status is determined by how funds are earned as well as how they are spent.

Refer to New York State PTA position paper “[Fundraising and the PTA](#),” found online under Advocacy.

fidelity bond and liability insurance

Units are billed annually by AIM, New York State PTA’s insurance agency, for their share of the premium. The unit’s share is determined yearly to reflect the current insurance market. Councils are insured because each PTA unit that is a member of that council is insured.

The fidelity bond protects PTA against loss of money and

IMPORTANT:
Once a tax exempt number has been assigned to the PTA, copies of the Exempt Organization Certification should be signed by the president and filed with each vendor when purchases are made.

legal documents, con't.

other property by dishonest acts of volunteer members, officers or employees.

Liability protection is coverage provided by an insurance policy protecting the named insured against claims made by anyone other than employees which are a result of physical injury to an individual or damage to their property. The policy protects the state association and all affiliated local units. The policy is extended to additionally protect all employees and volunteers while acting on PTA business.

This is a liability policy, not an accident policy. Negligence must be proven for a claimant to collect.

Many PTA-sponsored activities are covered under the policy currently in force. However, there are some activities that have higher incidences of injury and should be avoided if at all possible. Contact your region director for guidance when planning an activity to be sure the PTA has proper coverage before undertaking an event.

Refer to Section 5, Finance and Insurance

volunteer protection act

The Volunteer Protection Act of 1997 reformed laws that provide certain protections from liability abuses related to volunteers serving nonprofit organizations and governmental entities. The Act applies to volunteers only and does not provide for additional protection to the nonprofit organization itself. Under the new law, volunteers, but not the organizations they serve, cannot be held liable for negligent acts or omissions that occur during the course of their duties. However, if someone is injured because of a volunteer's willful and wanton

misconduct, this protection would not apply.

standard mailing permits (bulk mailing)

Units, councils and regions may apply at their local post offices for a standard mailing permit. The cost for a standard mailing permit is paid yearly. Form 3624, available at the post office, should be submitted. A tax exemption letter (which can be requested by submitting the Request for 501(c)(3) Letter of Determination Form to the New York State PTA treasurer), a copy of the unit/council/region bylaws, and a copy of meeting minutes are required for documentation.

Upon approval of the application, the post office will send a letter to the unit/council/region. Mailing rates and procedures for preparing this mailing can be obtained from the post office.

copyright guidelines

PTAs may reproduce and distribute materials from the National PTA and the New York State PTA without express written permission (except where noted). These materials may not be duplicated by any other organization or person without written permission of the National PTA or New York State PTA.

Do not reproduce comic strips, newspaper or magazine articles, items from other organization newsletters, or other printed material without permission from the owner of the copyright. To request permission to reprint materials other than from National PTA or New York State PTA, contact the owner of the copyright directly. Be prepared to answer how and when the material will be used, who the audience is, the quantity to be distributed, and

whether the publication that the reprint would appear in is for sale.

movie/music licensing guidelines

Any time copyrighted music is used at a convention or public meeting, or a movie is shown by the sponsoring association, the PTA is responsible for either securing permission to perform the piece from the copyright holder or paying a licensing fee to the holder of the copyright.

When a PTA shows a movie or plays walk-in music or our "National Anthem", or hires a choir, musical group, band or disc jockey to perform at a meeting, the PTA, not the group hired or invited, is responsible for securing the appropriate permissions and paying licensing fees. Just purchasing a DVD, CD or cassette tape does not give your PTA the right to play that music or show a movie "publicly" as a part of a convention or meeting.

parliamentary law

Parliamentary law is an accepted set of rules by which deliberative assemblies arrive at the majority opinion of those present – accurately, impartially and in the minimum amount of time. These rules should be observed in every meeting of the PTA. Every member should understand at least the fundamentals of correct procedure and consider it a duty to be able to use them in taking part in the business meeting of the association.

Parliamentary law is designed to maintain order, to insure justice and equality, to expedite business, and to enable an organization to accomplish the objectives for which it was formed. The principles upon which it is founded are courtesy and justice to all,

continued on page 14

legal documents, con't.

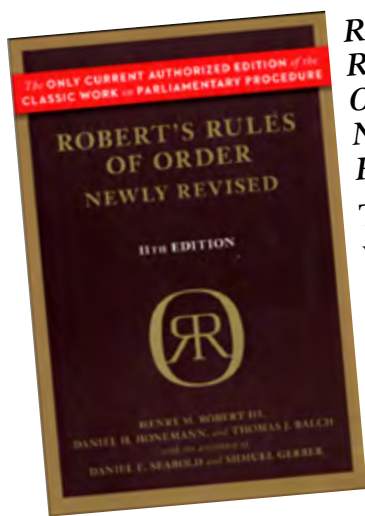
orderly consideration of one subject at a time, the rule of the majority, the rights of the minority, and partiality to no one. Parliamentary procedure is democracy in action.

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised is the parliamentary authority adopted by the National PTA. Its use by units and councils is required. It is essential that every president be familiar with the basic rules of parliamentary procedure.

The bylaws of an organization serve as a contract among its members and provide specific rules governing organizational affairs. They supersede any parliamentary rule with which they may conflict. Bylaws may not be suspended even by unanimous vote. Bylaws should be available to members, and each member has a duty to be familiar with the bylaws and to abide by them.

The New York State PTA retains both a parliamentarian and an attorney. Referrals to either are made only by the New York State PTA president. Questions should be addressed to the region director.

Refer to Section 2, The President's Guide



Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised

The latest version is the 11th edition. Every unit should own and use this.

governance

local PTA units

- Every member is part of the governing body, called the association.
- There is an executive board and executive committee.
- Is governed by the bylaws.

councils

- The membership is represented by delegates from each of their member units.
- There is an executive board and executive committee.
- Is governed by the bylaws.

region PTAs

- The membership is represented by the voting delegates to the annual meeting.
- There is a region board and executive committee.
- Is governed by the bylaws.

New York State PTA

- The membership is represented by the voting delegates to the annual convention.
- New York State PTA Board of Directors and executive committee.
- Is governed by the bylaws.

National PTA

- The membership is represented by the voting delegates to the annual convention.
- There is a representative to the National Council of States.
- Is governed by the bylaws.

within units and councils:

executive committee

The officers are elected by the general membership of a unit and by the voting body of a council and are responsible to those who elected them. The elected officers are the members of the executive committee.

executive board

The members of the executive board are listed in the bylaws and are the people responsible for carrying out the work of the PTA in keeping with the budget adopted by the general membership or the voting body (council).

committees

Most associations are too large and their meetings too brief to do more than plan for work to be done, lay out general policies for doing it, and make final decisions. The work itself must be delegated to committees.

A committee has no authority, must never incur debt, or commit the association in any way not authorized in the bylaws or by vote of the executive board or general membership.

elections

The election of officers is held at a regular meeting of the PTA in accordance with the bylaws. The minimum essential officers of a PTA are a president, secretary and treasurer. Terms of office are specified in the bylaws.

Newly elected officers may be installed in a ceremony, but this formality is not necessary. Contact your PTA region director for assistance.

units in good standing

In accordance with the National, state and PTA unit bylaws, a unit is in good standing when it:

adheres to the purposes and basic policies of PTA

Every officer and member should be familiar with the Purposes and basic policies of the PTA as covered in Articles III and IV of the bylaws. The Purposes of PTA are the core that binds all units together, thus forming the National PTA. They should be carefully considered when planning activities and when raising and spending PTA funds. These are IRS rules that affect PTA. PTA is a not-for-profit and tax-exempt association. Violation can put a unit in jeopardy of losing that status.

remits the national portion of the dues through New York State PTA to reach the national office by dates designated by New York State PTA

New York State PTA requires every unit to submit its first dues payment on or before October 31. If payment is not received by that time, the unit is delinquent. Units are required to make installment payments thereafter.

Refer to Section 6, Membership

has bylaws approved according to the provisions of the New York State PTA

Bylaws must be reviewed by the unit, updated as necessary and approved by the New York State PTA every three years for the unit to be in good standing.

Refer to Section 7, Bylaws, Procedures, Nominations and Elections

meets other criteria as may be prescribed by the New York State PTA

A unit should have no fewer than 25 members. Every unit must pay a yearly premium for the fidelity bond and liability insurance. This payment is due in the New York State PTA office on or before May 31, after which the non-paying unit is placed on the delinquent list.

When a unit is delinquent in any of the above criteria, its tax-exempt status, liability insurance and fidelity bond coverage are in jeopardy. The unit becomes ineligible for the state and national awards that are listed in the awards section of this *Resource Guide*.

The unit is ineligible for council and region PTA awards.

Reflections entries will be refused. Such a PTA cannot submit resolutions to convention. The members of the delinquent unit can be denied voting privileges at council meetings, the privilege of attending region PTA functions, participation on region boards, and participation as a voting delegate at the convention of the New York State PTA. If left unresolved the unit will be disaffiliated from New York State PTA.

membership cards and dues

New York State PTA has an

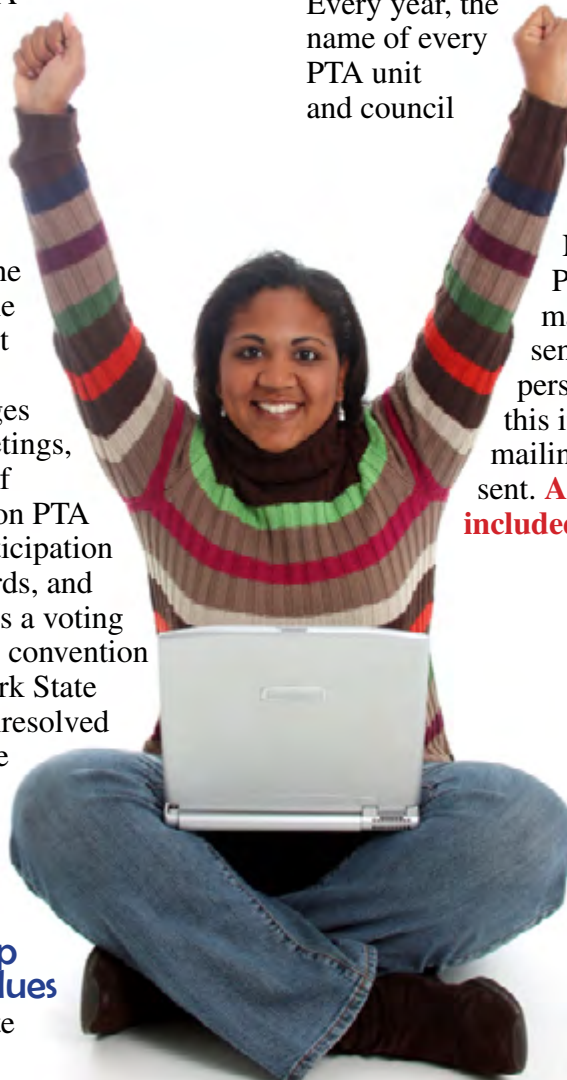
Online Unit Portal, which includes an online membership system and eCards. This was done for many reasons – some environmental, some financial, but mostly because our members have been asking for it. Please **refer to Section 6, Membership**, check out the Online Membership System FAQs located at www.nyspta.org/pdf/YourPTA/Membership/FAQs-NYSPTA-Online-Membership-System.pdf or check out the membership section of the NYS PTA website.

If you have any immediate questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at membership@nyspta.org.

annual officers' contact information (Form A)

Every year, the name of every PTA unit and council

president must be submitted to New York State PTA, so that mailings can be sent to the correct person. Without this information, mailings cannot be sent. **A sample is included in Section 2.**



recognitions and awards



All PTA workers are volunteers who thrive on encouragement and appreciation. Initiate plans to recognize the contributions of those who help with the work of the PTA.

PTA pins and certificates, Honorary Life Memberships, a donation to the Founders Day Fund and Distinguished Service Awards are ways to show appreciation. The Diamond and Golden Oak Awards can be ordered for the special recognition of honorees for their PTA involvement.

Outstanding unit programs also deserve recognition. The region PTA may offer regional awards. Most entries to New York State and National PTA awards are sent to the region PTA director.

Refer to Section 10, Programs, Awards and Recognitions and the New York State PTA website, www.nyspta.org.

operations

publications

Unit and council presidents receive many publications from the National and New York State PTAs; the materials are meant for all PTA members and should be shared with them.

These publications include: the National PTA magazine, *Our Children (OC)*, the New York State PTA e-publication, *New York Parent Teacher*, “Fast Facts”, “Advocacy Newsbriefs”, the *New York State PTA Resource Guide* and the Quick-Reference Guides from National PTA. Statewide, PTA publications are produced by volunteers and include state brochures, PTA position papers and informational mailings. The New York State PTA and the National

PTA both maintain websites that provide additional information from their associations.

Units and councils need to set aside funds to subscribe to PTA publications and to purchase program materials for executive board members, a legitimate expense to help them carry out their responsibilities.

NYS PTA website www.nyspta.org

New York State PTA, and many units, councils and region PTAs, maintain websites to highlight their activities and inform their members and school community of meetings, events, issues and items of general interest or concern. To link to our website, send a message

to website@nyspta.org and include your unit/council name and number.

The New York State PTA website is a valuable and informative tool which evolves constantly. It is the most up-to-date publication that our state PTA maintains. Visit our website often at www.nyspta.org.

National PTA website www.pta.org

This site is maintained by National PTA and provides vast resources for members, units and councils, and the general public. To have access to the members only section, you must activate your membership card.

operations, con't.

mailings

As a service of the state PTA, unit and council presidents receive information and material throughout the year by email and through region PTA channels. Current state and national materials prepared to aid the local association in planning programs and projects are distributed at appropriate intervals on our website, by email and on social media.

the state PTA office

In New York State the members of the office staff are the only salaried people in PTA. The state office services the PTA membership as follows:

- Processes dues for both New York State and National PTAs.
- Processes insurance premium payments from units.
- Maintains membership and financial records.
- Fills orders for PTA materials and supplies.
- Emails registration information and other materials for Annual Convention, Legislation/ Education Conference, Summer Leadership Conference and other workshops and conferences.
- Maintains online registration for all state PTA events.
- Emails applications for the Twin Projects Awards – the Jenkins Memorial Scholarship for Teacher Education and the Teacher Fellowship for Graduate Study in Memory of Richard Gazzola.
- Processes requests for all honorary awards.
- Processes requests for “in honor of” and “in memory of” cards.
- Provides resources for members of the governance team.

- Prepares reports, some of which are forwarded to the National PTA.

New York State PTA
One Wembley Court
Albany, NY 12205-3830
Phone: 1-518-452-8808
Toll free: 1-877-569-7782
Fax: 1-518-452-8105

Always put your unit code number on anything mailed to the state office, including checks (which should be made payable to New York State PTA). All PTA checks must contain two signatures (usually treasurer and president or secretary or vice president.)

your membership dues at work

The state and national portion of the dues enable the New York State PTA’s Board of Directors and Governance Team, who are

volunteer PTA members, to execute statewide or nationwide PTA programs. It also:

- Finances representation of PTA at meetings of cooperating agencies.
- Promotes legislative activity affecting education, health and safety issues.
- Publishes and emails newsletters, resource guides and special announcements.
- Provides leadership training opportunities.
- Maintains websites and social media.
- Provides communications and news releases.
- Provides a state and national convention.
- Provides program-planning kits.
- Maintains the NYS PTA Office.
- Plus much more.

leadership training

“A mind stretched to a new idea never returns to its original dimension.”
– Oliver Wendell Holmes

PTA leaders at the local, council, region and state levels change constantly, and each level of service in PTA requires different and unique qualities in an individual. Recognizing that development of skills will help each leader realize his or her greatest potential, the New York State PTA seeks to ensure that it provides opportunity to focus on leadership training.

Most leadership training opportunities are offered at nominal cost and are scheduled to allow the maximum number of PTA volunteers to be able to attend. The fees are always considered legitimate PTA expenses and funds should be included in every unit and council budget.

PTA board orientation

New board members are often unaware of specific responsibilities, PTA structure and the services and assistance available through state and National PTA.

New York State PTA Board of Directors and Governance Team members, as designated, attend an orientation in the spring prior to assuming their new position. Region board members attend an orientation provided by their region and state board members.

Units and councils should arrange a meeting of new board members with the retiring board members. This meeting provides a way for new leaders to learn their responsibilities and is a good time to transfer all materials and procedure books. It is also a good time to discuss needs and establish goals for the coming year.

schools of instruction

Units and councils can receive in-depth training on a particular topic by requesting a school of instruction from their region PTA. Contact your region director.

region PTA workshops

Regions provide workshops on timely issues at various events throughout the year. Information is mailed to PTA presidents. Open to all PTA members, presidents are encouraged to make the

information available to all their board members.

summer leadership conference (SLC)

Summer Leadership Conference, which began in 1988, is a leadership training conference where PTA officers and chairmen learn to become more effective leaders, obtain information about issues affecting children and youth, share concerns with PTA people from across the state, learn about programs, take home new ideas – and have fun as well.

Workshops are presented by members of the Governance Team on a variety of topics to assist attendees to learn new skills and become more effective in their PTA positions.

Held on a college campus over a weekend, Summer Leadership Conference has a relaxed, casual atmosphere enabling attendees to meet PTA people from other areas in New York. Dormitory housing adds to the informality. Pool and gym facilities are used, and fun activities are part of the weekend.

The registration fee is reasonable and includes meals, housing, registration, a packet of materials and a Summer Leadership Conference T-shirt. Information is provided to presidents in the spring.

convention

As part of Convention, following the general sessions, numerous leadership education workshops are provided. Open to all PTA members, these workshops help local PTA leaders learn skills and techniques which enable the unit or council to better identify and meet the needs of its PTA membership. They help PTA members develop programs, projects and activities.



training, con't.



upcoming convention dates and locations:

November 3-5, 2017

NYS PTA 121st Annual Convention
The Conference and Event Center
Niagara Falls, NY

November 9-11, 2018

NYS PTA 122nd Annual Convention
The Saratoga Hilton Hotel and
Saratoga Springs City Center
Saratoga Springs, NY



New York State PTA Convention

The New York State PTA Convention is our premier event each year. PTA delegates from across the state meet to elect state PTA officers, amend the bylaws when necessary, and conduct other business as authorized by the bylaws. **It is here that PTA policy is determined**, as delegates have a voice in the decision-making process of New York State PTA.

Delegates also attend workshops to develop leadership skills, learn about issues and increase understanding of their role as child advocates and of the importance of belonging to a statewide association. There are opportunities to network with PTA members from across the state, share experiences and increase knowledge that can empower the local unit.

Convention is also lots of fun! Guest artists offer entertainment, keynote speakers inform and inspire, and student musicians perform. Saturday's dinner is a banquet with brief inspirational speeches. You will return to your unit rededicated to the ideals of PTA!

preparing to attend convention

The number of delegates that units, councils and region PTAs are entitled to send to Convention is specified in New York State PTA Bylaws. Sending delegates to Convention is a legitimate use of PTA funds. Money for this should be provided in the budget, but, if it is not, a special Convention fundraiser may be held.

Presidents receive a copy of the "Basic Policy" and proposed "Resolutions". This material should be studied before Convention. Consider assigning the appropriate

chairmen to do research on the various resolutions.

Schedule a general membership meeting to discuss and vote on the proposed "Resolutions". Members may suggest amendments to the resolutions that they want their delegates to make at Convention. These should also be voted on by the membership. This review will help your members understand the Purposes of PTA and how our association works.

Delegates should be sent with a "vote of confidence." This means the delegate is required to vote the unit's intentions on the resolution and can evaluate changes that are made on the Convention floor. Delegates who are given an "instructed vote" instead of the "vote of confidence" must vote exactly as their members directed them. If changes are made at Convention, these delegates are then restricted when voting on amendments.

Any unit, council or region PTA may submit resolutions for possible consideration by the delegates.

after convention

Delegates should report back to their unit and council on the resolutions that were adopted at Convention. PTAs should determine their priorities and plan of action for the coming legislative year.

A unit or council need not take action on any item. It should not, however, work contrary to a PTA position since the issue was considered and adopted by the delegates at the New York State PTA Convention and, thus, became part of the New York State PTA "Where We Stand".

continued on page 20

convention, con't.

resolutions

A resolution is an original main motion that, because of its importance, length or complexity, is submitted in writing. At Convention, new business is introduced through resolutions.

Convention resolutions call for action by the New York State PTA, or its constituent bodies, and seek to address problems, situations or concerns which affect children and youth in New York State. A vote can be taken to forward the resolution to the National PTA Convention for consideration if it addresses problems, situations or concerns which affect children and youth nationwide and which require nationwide action for solution.

Upon adoption, Convention resolutions are advocacy positions of the New York State PTA and may serve as a basis for further action by the state PTA and all of its divisions. They are added to “Where We Stand”.

A resolution usually consists of two main parts:

1. **Whereas:** The preamble part of the resolution consisting of a statement(s) providing information on the resolution, reasons for the resolution and why it should be adopted.
2. **Resolved:** This is the main motion. The resolved clauses constitute the request for action and express the opinion or will of the group.

Refer to Section 8, Advocacy, the NYS PTA Convention information on our website and the National PTA Quick Reference guides

advocacy

For the PTA, advocacy means mobilizing individuals and local units to work with the state and National PTAs to spark changes in programs and policies that benefit children.

Today our children are more at risk than ever before. They are exposed to an increasingly violent world and to a peer culture that does not always value learning or understand that educational achievement is a key factor in success. They did not make these conditions, and few understand how to make their voices heard by those with the power to solve these problems. They need advocates from their school and community to speak for them.

legislative activity

The “Basic Policy” and “Where We Stand” of the New York State PTA, the National PTA’s Public Policy Agenda, and the resolutions adopted at the state and National PTA conventions establish and guide all PTA legislative goals.

Because of the wide range of children’s issues in which PTA is involved, a unit or council may

wish to select one or two topics which are particularly relevant to its members. Interest and participation will be higher and easier to maintain if members feel that their activity is having a positive impact on the children in their community. However, when issues such as funding for education are discussed, PTA members must take care that they are speaking for all children and not demanding funding at the expense of other children or agencies working for the improvement of children’s conditions.

As a tax-exempt association, **it is imperative that PTAs refrain from participating in political campaigns or making donations to a political party or candidate.** Phone calls, letter writing and visits requested by the state association are appropriate and effective ways to address children’s issues.

Refer to Section 8, Advocacy and the National PTA Quick Reference guides



school and community relations

public relations

Public relations are part of everything we do in PTA; it becomes the job of every PTA member. It means winning public understanding of, recognition of and support for PTA/ PTSA goals and programs. Public relations is far more than “publicity” because it involves two-way communication – finding out what others think about PTA and telling them what they want or need to know. Every PTA officer and member shapes public opinion of the association. Groups are often judged on the basis of the behavior of a single member.

A newsletter, website and social media pages offer vital links between home and school, promoting pride in membership and bringing each reader in touch with PTA. Newsletters, left at public libraries or wherever permitted, are also valuable links between PTAs and their communities.

working with schools

PTA believes that 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 groups such as PTA.

All PTAs have certain organizational rights, which are:

- To function as an independent, nonpartisan child advocacy group.
- To seek enactment of policies and practices that protect children and youth.
 - To participate in making decisions affecting policies, rules and regulations.
 - To meet with appropriate school officials to discuss matters of mutual concern affecting children.

It is necessary to remember that **the PTA is separate from the school district; it is an independent organization.** The

PTA is a voluntary group of citizens that acts in an advisory capacity to school boards, superintendents and principals (New York State Education Law). PTA may meet in a school, use school district facilities at no cost, have meetings noted on a school district calendar, and use school district communication media. But school district officers are out of line if they insist on what may or may not be printed in a PTA council or local unit newsletter, on what may or may not be addressed during a PTA meeting, or the use of PTA funds. Only if PTA’s self-governing status is clearly understood by both the unit and school district members will relations between the two be most productive.

PTA is a partner in education that helps bring the community into the schools. The more the community is involved, the more support is generated for education. PTA should not provide for the needs of the school district or individual school. Monetary gifts cannot substitute for public policy.

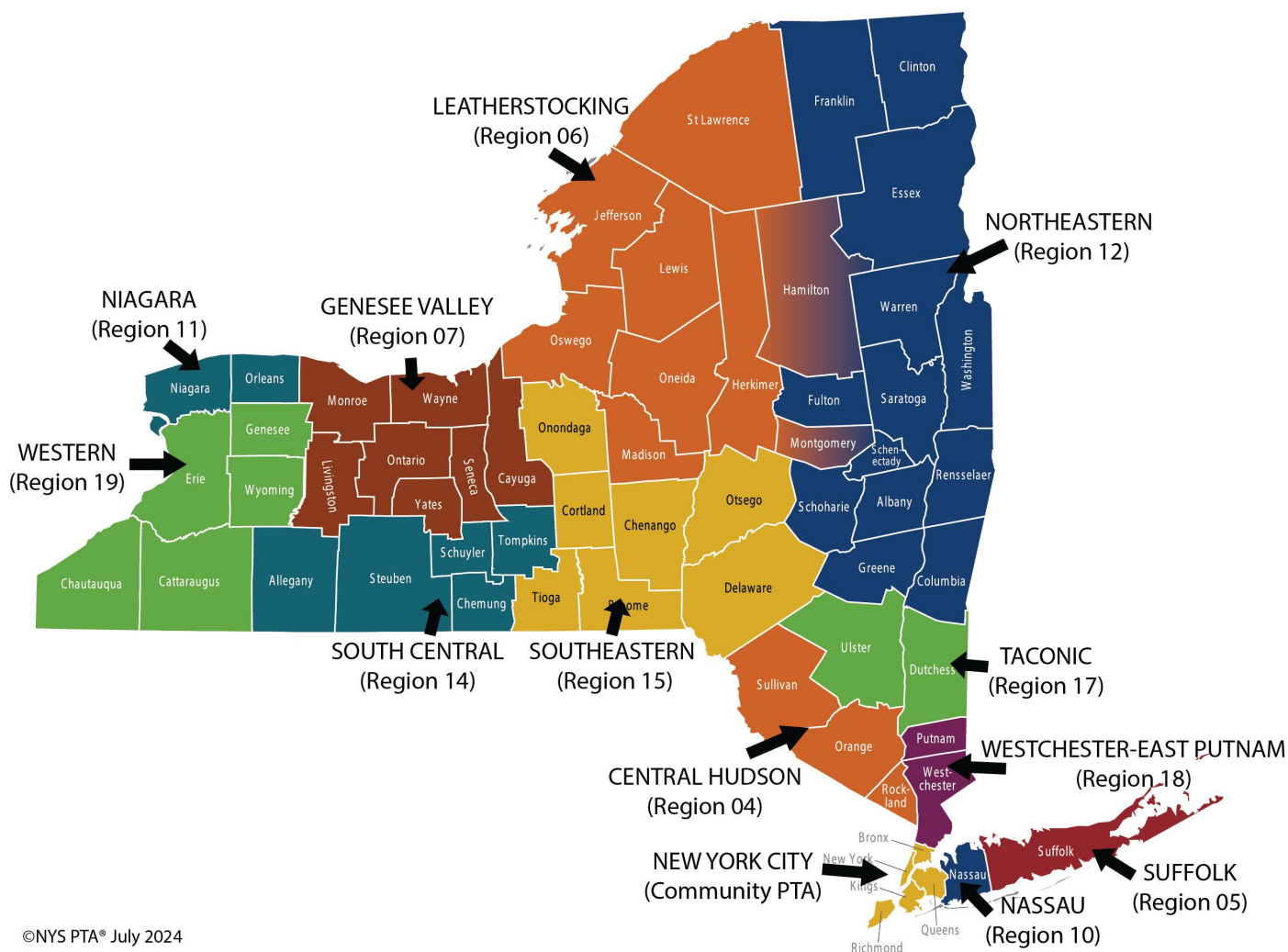
community outreach

PTAs are encouraged to form a community network between units, councils, school personnel and boards of education. Programs and projects based on meaningful issues may also be an outreach to uninvolved parents in need of leadership as they recognize the part that they and the community should play in the education of all students.

Refer to Section 9, School and Community



regions of New York State PTA



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Region Number	Region	Region Director's Email address
04	Central Hudson	centralhudsonrd@nyspta.org
05	Suffolk	suffolkrd@nyspta.org
06	Leatherstocking	leatherstockingrd@nyspta.org
07	Genesee Valley	geneseevalleyrd@nyspta.org
10	Nassau	nassaurd@nyspta.org
11	Niagara	niagarard@nyspta.org
12	Northeastern	northeasternrd@nyspta.org
14	South Central	southcentralrd@nyspta.org
15	Southeastern	southeasternrd@nyspta.org
17	Taconic	taconicrd@nyspta.org
18	Westchester-East Putnam	westchestereastputnamrd@nyspta.org
19	Western	westernrd@nyspta.org

Every region PTA has an executive board, led by the region director, whose role is to assist members, units and councils with bylaws, membership, topics of concern and leadership training. You should call your region director for referral to the appropriate region board member for assistance. A directory of the region board should also be sent to each president.