

# SOS – Standing Rules to the Rescue

Have you ever run into a situation with your PTA that you had no guidance or precedence for, didn't know what to do, or where to turn? If so, you may find that your Standing Rules could come to the rescue. For most PTA issues, answers can be found in your bylaws. But what if the item doesn't fit in your bylaws? Standing Rules might just be the place to look. What is the difference between the bylaws and the standing rules? The bylaws are those items that are essential to the organization of the group. The standing rules are administrative and operational rules. Often these are guided by the bylaws but not appropriate/or the bylaws. For instance:

Reference bylaw ARTICLE IV, "f":

*"No part of the net earnings of the association shall inure to the benefit of or be distributable to its members, directors, trustees, officers, or other private individuals except that the association shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in the ARTICLE—OBJECTS/PURPOSES as contained herein ."*



Possible Related Standing Rules:

- > Guidelines for what PTA does when a student, parent, staff member, or PTA member becomes seriously ill or passes away. PTAs often are asked to make a donation for an ill child, a family who has lost their home, etc. Because of the bylaws and legal requirements, PTAs should not make a monetary donation, but there are other ways for the PTA to be involved. In the instance of a death, it might be appropriate for the PTA to donate books to the library in the deceased's memory. This serves all of the children, while recognizing the loss.

- > Procedures for gifts to staff from PTA i.e. school secretaries, a staff member who is retiring, a staff member who makes a presentation for PTA at no charge etc. Check your school district's policy on this as well.

There are more situations where Standing Rules would be appropriate:

- > Guidelines established for your PTA's awards. This could be locally established awards, as well as the Illinois PTA Scholarship Awards given by your unit/council, or PTA Life Achievement Awards.
- > Procedures to determine who your PTA's delegates are for District/Region Annual meetings, Illinois and National PTA conventions, etc.

By their nature, local units/councils are often put in the middle of these situations because they are community-wide. The adoption of Standing Rules, which are best determined *before* a situation arises, can assure that consistency is used in application of the rules, that legal difficulties don't arise from the PTA's actions, and that precedents are not set which may be cause for future strife.

Creating a committee to look at possible standing rules and bringing them forward to the member units is a good start. Standing Rules can be adopted at any general membership meeting without prior notice being given. *These do not need a 30 day notice as bylaws do, and may be suspended, as bylaws may not.* For more information, check with your District/Region Director. Let Standing Rules come to your rescue!



## SAMPLE PTA District Standing Rules

1. Board members and assistants are required to attend board meetings and the Fall Annual Meeting, unless excused. Council presidents unable to attend meetings are required to send a representative.
2. The Secretary of the District Board shall be notified of any absence.
3. District board meetings shall be held as agreed upon at the first district board meeting of the year.
4. All district board members and assistants are encouraged to attend the annual state and national conventions. If funds are available, District will pay the registration of board members (up to 5 delegates available) who are not on the board of a local unit or council. Reimbursement of additional expenses will be in accordance of Illinois PTA State Board adopted rates as funds are available.
5. Any district board member or assistant planning a workshop and/or program should bring it before the district director and/or the board.
6. For the Fall Annual Meeting, the district shall pay for the dinners for the district director, any district assistant not representing a local unit or council, members of the Illinois PTA Executive Committee, past district directors, and an invited key note speaker. State board members residing in the district, not representing a local unit or council, may be guests of the district, if funds are available. \* If the Illinois PTA president does not attend, the president's appointed representative shall be a guest of the district.
7. All funds from the Fall Annual Meeting shall be deposited into the District bank account.
8. In the case of the death of a past district director or present board member or assistant, or the immediate family thereof, the district shall send an "In Memoriam" card, not to exceed \$25.00.
9. District assistants shall maintain a procedure book, including a copy of the current standing rules, and the information shall be passed along to their successors by the close of the fiscal year.
10. All district board members and assistants shall provide an annual report to the district director no later than June 30<sup>th</sup>.
11. The District Unit Honor Award committee shall include at least one representative from each council.
12. The District Illinois PTA Lillian E. Glover Scholarship selection committee shall include one PTA representative and one administrator from each council, and one District representative. The district director shall not serve on the selection committee.
13. There shall be one host council for District each year. This council will host the annual meeting, Reflections/Scholarship reception and any other activity planned and budgeted for by the district board.
14. The books shall be audited annually at the close of the fiscal year, or upon change on treasurer. No one authorized to sign checks may serve on the audit committee. Financial records and documents shall be turned over to the new treasurer immediately upon completion of the audit.