

Key Role – PTA Secretary

- Takes minutes at board and association meetings
- Co-signs formal papers with president: authorizations for payment, resolutions and formal letters
- Handles PTA correspondence as directed by the president
- Maintains and preserves PTA records and important documents to pass on at the end of the term

Getting Started

Preparation – Review files and procedure book from last term to better understand the scope of your new position. Materials should include:

- Secretary's minute book with minutes from board and association meetings
- PTA records – Bylaws, membership list, charter, rosters and correspondence

If your PTA has a recording secretary and a corresponding secretary, discuss how you will work together.

Find out more about:

- PTA policies, best practices and resources
- *Insurance Guide*

It's also worthwhile to talk to last term's secretary to get advice and tips about your new role.

How Tos

Minutes – Quick Tips

As one of three required officers for a PTA, the secretary plays an important part in running a unit. One main task is to provide concise and complete minutes for board and association meetings.

Here are some tips on how to produce and handle meeting minutes to help you get started.

Recording – When taking minutes at a meeting, focus on noting:

- Actions taken by group in the order they took place
- What is done, not what is said

This means that any detailed discussion or personal opinion is not included in the minutes.

Whether you hand-write or use a laptop or device to take notes at a meeting to produce the minutes, remember to include the following information:

1. Meeting Details:

- Name of your PTA
- Date, place and type of meeting
- Start time and end time of meeting
- Attendance list
- Name and title of presiding officer

2. Business Items:

- Approval of previous meeting's minutes 'as written' or 'as corrected' with a list of corrections
- Summary of treasurer's report listing date and balance on hand in the last report, income, expenses and date and balance on hand in the current report
- Motions to adopt budget, financial reports, audit reports and resolutions
- List of payments authorized or expenditures ratified to pay bills
- Motions to approve projects, fundraisers, contracts and bylaws changes, noting person's name making a motion and vote's result if adopted or defeated
- For motions with a counted vote, record if a quorum or majority was needed and the number for and against the motion
- For motions requiring a two-thirds vote, note that a two-thirds vote was required for approval after the outcome of the motion

3. Summaries of Reports/Presentations:

- Summary of officer, chairmen and administrator reports with important, written reports attached
- Election results with nominees' name and the number of votes each nominee received
- Brief reference to program presented at an association meeting, noting type of presentation, presenter, title and organization represented

In addition, at the end of the minutes, add your signature and title: e.g. 'Maria Perez, Secretary'.

Distributing – It's always best to complete the minutes soon after a meeting. Send a copy to the president to review before distributing minutes to the group that generated them.

There are several ways to share minutes with your members. For a smaller group, such as a board, you can email the minutes for review before the next meeting.

For association meetings, you can prepare hard copies of minutes as handouts or to post at a meeting. And, you can also publish minutes in a unit newsletter if it is sent only to PTA members.

However, it's important to keep in mind that PTA minutes are produced only for members and are not for public distribution.

For this reason, they are not posted on any website, on social media or in a newsletter in their entirety.

Instead, for association meetings, provide only a summary of the minutes online and in school newsletters that highlights the main actions taken at the meeting.

SAMPLE – SUMMARY OF ASSOCIATION MEETING

ABC ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PTA ASSOCIATION MEETING JULY 1, 2017

RECOGNITIONS – Tanya Brown was recognized for her efforts as a PTA volunteer.

REPORTS – Committee reports were given for Membership, Ways and Means and the Book Fair.

CONSENT ITEMS – Consideration and approval of:

- Field trip to the Natural History Museum for Grades 4-5
- Science Camp for Grades 4-5 in Sacramento, CA

ACTION ITEMS – Consideration and approval of:

- 2017-18 proposed budget
- 2017-18 fundraising project with Acme Gift Wrap, Inc., to raise funds for Science Camp
- 2017-18 fundraising project to provide guest speaker on family engagement in school

PLANNING ITEMS – Discussion on:

- Organizing Reflections Arts Program in September
- Organizing Red Ribbon Week in October

Approving – Minutes are presented for approval at the next meeting of the group as a standard agenda item. This action is recorded in two, different places in the master copies of the minutes:

- Minutes of current meeting – Note that previous meeting's minutes were approved 'as written' or 'as corrected' and list the corrections
- Minutes of previous meeting – Write the word 'Approved' and the date after your signature and title

The president can also appoint a committee, ideally three people, to approve minutes during the term. This helps to save time at a meeting.

When using this method to approve minutes, committee members must be present at the meeting to:

- Read the minutes on behalf of members

- Report on corrections at the next meeting
- Sign and date approval of the minutes after secretary's signature on the master copy of the minutes

Correcting – Corrections to minutes are made when they are presented for approval at a meeting. They can also be made at any subsequent meeting when an error is discovered.

Only the group involved in the meeting – the board or the association – may correct minutes from one of their previous meetings.

To record a correction in the master copy of the minutes, use a red ink pen to:

- Circle the incorrect words
- Write, in the margin, the correction, the date and your initials

Preserving – Minutes are the legal, permanent records of a PTA as a nonprofit organization and are kept forever. At the end of the term, the master copy of the minutes, from board and association meetings, should be bound and passed on to your successor.

Beyond the Minutes

As secretary, you are assigned a few other tasks as indicated in your bylaws. At meetings, be prepared to refer to minutes of previous meetings, bylaws and the current membership list, if asked. You may also be asked to provide blank paper for voting by ballot and to help count a vote.

For an association meeting, the secretary presents a board report and moves the adoption of board recommendations.

In addition, some administrative tasks carried out by the secretary include:

- Sending notices of board meetings
- Preparing a list of unfinished business from meetings for the president to follow up on
- Notifying officers and committee members of their election or appointment

Did you know? ... PTA Board Members:

- Adhere to PTA financial procedures as outlined in Bylaws and State and National PTA guidelines
- Protect members' privacy by utilizing member information for PTA work only
- Attend PTA sponsored workshops or trainings
- Maintain a current procedure book to pass on to a successor, in hard copy or electronic format
- Work together as a team to improve the lives of all children and their families