

parents  
teachers  
students  
& community  
are the **basics**  
of every PTA

**secretary**  
resource guide  
2015-2016



**Comm***you***nity**



# INTRODUCTION

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The secretary is a very important position on a PTA board, and one of only two positions that are required by law as organized entity. The PTA secretary is responsible for keeping accurate records of the proceedings of the association, complete records of members and leaders, as well as sending communications on behalf of the board of directors. Never say, “I’m just the secretary!”

An effective secretary should be prompt, accurate, dependable and have a thorough knowledge of the PTA Purposes, bylaws, policies and methods. This guide will familiarize you with the responsibilities required and opportunities available to be an effective secretary.

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# ABOUT PTA

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## VISION

Every child's potential is a reality.

## MISSION

To make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

## 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 will work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to broaden and enhance our ability to serve and advocate for all children and families.
- **Commitment:** We are dedicated to children's educational success, health, and well-being through strong family and community engagement, while remaining accountable to the principles upon which our association was founded.
- **Diversity:** We acknowledge the potential of everyone without regard, including but not limited to: age, culture, economic status, educational background, ethnicity, gender, geographic location, legal status, marital status, mental ability, national origin, organizational position, parental status, physical ability, political philosophy, race, religion, sexual orientation, and work experience.
- **Respect:** We value the individual contributions of members, employees, volunteers, and partners as we work collaboratively to achieve our association's goals.
- **Accountability:** All members, employees, volunteers, and partners have a shared responsibility to align their efforts toward the achievement of our association's strategic initiatives.

# PLAN OF WORK

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At the beginning of each term all board members are required per the bylaws to complete and present a Plan of Work to the board for approval.

A Plan of Work is a detail list of all goals and expenses that a board member has for their term of office. Plans of Work must be approved before any expenses can be incurred for a position.



## Plan of Work Plan de Trabajo

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**Officer/Chairman Name:**

(Nombre de Oficial/Presidente de Junta) \_\_\_\_\_

**Position:**

(Posición) \_\_\_\_\_

**Year:**

(Año) \_\_\_\_\_

*Reproduce as needed for the appropriate number of goals.*

*(Se puede reproducir para metas adicionales.)*

<b>Responsibilities/- Duties:</b> (Responsabilidades)		<b>Committee Members:</b> (Miembros del Comité)	
<b>Goal:</b> (Meta)		<b>Evaluation Process:</b> (Proceso de Evaluación)	

<b>Specific Action Steps</b> (Proceso Especifico de Acción)	<b>Start Date</b> (Fecha de Empezio)	<b>Completion Date</b> (Fecha de Terminación)	<b>Budget</b> (Presupuesto)

<b>Resources:</b> (Recursos)	
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# POSITION RESPONSIBILITIES

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## SECRETARY

- Participate with the full rights of a board member, make motions, nominate candidates, enter into discussion, and vote.
- Prepares order of business, if asked by the president, on all pending matters known in advance.
- Record in the minutes all business transacted at each meeting of the membership and the board.
- Report all board member information to Texas PTA within 15 days of their election or appointment.
- Sit close to the president, standing to read the minutes or when making the board report.
- Notifies board members, as requested, by telephone, fax, email or mail of called meetings.
- Assist the president in establishing a quorum and maintain a roll call record. At board meetings, the general method of roll call is by voice. At membership meetings, the general method is to have the members sign in or use membership/credential cards.
- Present a report, when requested, of the board meeting, its actions and recommendations, at the next meeting. When recommendations are contained in the report, move the adoption of each recommendation.
- Assist in counting a standing vote when requested by the president.
- Calls the meeting to order in the absence of the president and vice president(s) and presides until a temporary chair is elected by the membership.
- Prepares for the president, a draft of the minutes of a meeting within two to five days after each meeting.
- Ensure all members of the executive board have completed the following:
  - Completed FOUNDATIONS: Leader Orientation
  - Signed the Local PTA Ethics/Conflict of Interest Policy
  - Reviewed annually, and submitted to the membership for adoption, the Records Retention Policy
- Maintain the following:
  - Current copy of the bylaws
  - Minutes record books
  - Standing rules (if adopted)
  - Current membership list (in alphabetical order)
  - List of all current committees including members' names
  - Copy of the approved budget
  - Copies of the agendas
  - Committee reports
  - Adopted records retention policy
  - Signed Local PTA Ethics/Conflict of Interest policies (originals)
  - List of the names and dates of board members who completed FOUNDATIONS: Leader Orientation
  - List of assets of the association, and assets for the school that were purchased with PTA funds.
- Act as corresponding secretary if one is not designated in the bylaws. *Note: When there are two secretaries, the recording secretary is usually referred to as "the secretary" and the corresponding secretary is referred to by the full title.*
- Assume the duties of the historian if one is not designated in the bylaws.
  - Collect and preserve documents relating to the history of the association
  - Present a written report to the membership as the official history to be adopted at the annual meeting
- Provide successor all minutes, records, reports, procedure book and other pertinent materials.

*Note: The secretary, as the keeper of the records, may not serve on the financial reconciliation committee*

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## CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

- Conducts the correspondence of the association. Local PTAs who have the corresponding secretary as an officer must list that officer's duties in the standing rules.
- Read communications at meetings. In reading correspondence, first read the name of the person and/or organization, and then proceed with the body of the letter or note. In some cases, the corresponding secretary is asked to serve as newsletter chair.
- Write thank-you notes, as requested, to someone who gave a presentation to your PTA. Note: This responsibility may be assigned to some other office or committee.
- When thanking a program participant:
  - Be prompt in expressing appreciation.
  - Date the letter. In an informal note of appreciation, the date may be written below and to the left of your signature.
  - Quote a worthy comment made by the presenter.
  - Reaffirm the group's appreciation for the time and thought the speaker gave to the presentation.
  - Sign the PTA's name followed by your signature. Be sure to identify your relationship to the PTA, i.e., Jane Smith, Corresponding Secretary.
- Write "sympathy/sunshine" notes, as requested. When writing notes to members concerning grief, illness, a new baby, etc.:
- Keep in mind that the message is from the PTA, not the writer.
- Recognize the specific reason for writing.
- Express the group's interest and reaction to what has happened to the member.
- End on an appropriate note.
- Date your letter.
- Sign the PTA's name and your name as corresponding secretary.

# SAMPLE MINUTES

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**Minutes are the permanent record of all action taken by the association; they are a legal document. The following sample is offered as a guide for the secretary. Wording in *italics* provide an example of how the minutes should be stated.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
*(Association/Executive Board) Meeting (Month, Day, Year)*

The *(regular/special)* meeting of the *(name)* PTA/PTSA was called to order on *(month, day, year)* at *(time)* *(a. m./p. m.)* in the *(place meeting held)* by president, *(name)*, the secretary being present or *(name)* acting as secretary. A quorum was *(established/not established)*. *(Name)* presented the invocation, and *(name)* led the pledge OR *(name)* led the pledge, and *(name)* presented an inspirational thought. The minutes of the *(previous date and type of meeting)* were: *(read and approved)* or *(read and approved as corrected)*. The treasurer's report showed *(beginning balance, receipts, disbursements, ending balance)*. Report should be attached. *The treasurer's report was filed.*

Reports from officers would follow any correspondence and should be read after the treasurer's report. If a vote on the reports is necessary, the minutes should state:

*(Name)* moved the adoption of the *(name of the committee/executive board)* recommendation to *(state exact wording)*. After discussion the motion *(carried/failed)*.

Reports from the standing committees would follow in the order given. State who presented the report for each committee and include a summary of the facts and action taken, if any. If the report is very long, it is permissible to attach the report to the official copy of the minutes (with a notation in the minutes to refer to the attachment).

If a member of the association makes a motion, minutes should state who made the motion and the exact wording of the motion. It is not required to list the name of the person who seconded the motion, but the minutes should indicate that the motion was seconded and the action taken. For example:

*(Name)* moved that *(exact wording of the motion)*. The motion was seconded and *(carried/failed)*.

If the motion requires a two-thirds (2/3) vote, such as an amendment made to the bylaws or standing rules, the minutes should state that *the amendment carried by a 2/3 vote*.

If an election is held, the minutes should state the names of the nominees and the results of the election. After unfinished business, new business, programs, and announcements have been noted in the minutes, the adjournment is recorded.

*The meeting was adjourned at (time) (a.m./p.m.).*

*(Signature)*  
*(Name), Secretary (or Secretary Pro-tem)*

*Approved (or Approved as Corrected) (month, day, year) (Initials of Secretary)*

Any corrections should be written on the minutes in the correct place and initialed by the secretary.



# SAMPLE AGENDA

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## ABC PTA Regular Meeting Agenda September 1, 2012

### **Call to Order:**

*The Chair stands, raps the gavel one time and says “The ABC PTA regular meeting will come to order.”*

### **Opening Ceremonies**

*This part of the agenda varies from PTA to PTA – Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance, poem or inspirational message (in this order, if presenting some or all of these items).*

### **Establish Quorum**

*The Chair declares a quorum. (Quorum for an executive board meeting is a majority of all filled board positions; for an association meeting, look in your bylaws, Article IX: Meetings, Section 3).*

### **Approval of Minutes**

*The Chair states if the minutes have been handed out or calls the secretary forward to read the minutes. The Chair only asks for corrections to the minutes but never asks if there are any additions – corrections are additions. The Chair states whether the minutes stand approved as (written, read or corrected).*

### **Treasurer’s Report**

*The treasurer reads the report (even if distributed), stating the beginning balance as of (date), total income, total expenses and ending balance (as of today’s date). The Chair asks if there are any questions about the report. The Chair states that the report will be filed. (The president and secretary receive a hardcopy of the report even if the treasurer did not distribute copies.)*

### **Correspondence**

*If there are any thank you notes or other correspondence, the secretary stands and reads them.*

### **Officer and Standing Committee Chair Reports** (These may be listed separately.)

*All officers and committee chairs should present their own report. If a report also has a motion in it, the officer or committee chair makes the motion. “By recommendation of the executive board, I move to... (state the motion).*

### **Special Committee and/or Special Orders**

*This is where you would have the election of the nominating committee, the nominating committee report, the election of officers, the appointment of the financial reconciliation committee and the financial reconciliation committee report. The chairman of the financial reconciliation committee reads the report and makes the motion to adopt the report: “By direction of the financial reconciliation committee, I move the adoption of the financial reconciliation committee report.” You must vote to approve the financial reconciliation report.*

### **Unfinished Business**

*This should only be brought up if the Chair knows that there is business to come back before the group. Otherwise, you do not have to say anything or have it on your agenda.*

### **New Business**

*The Chair always asks if there is any new business to come before the association.*

### **Program**

*The Chair introduces the officer or committee chair who will present the program. The Chair never “turns the meeting over” to someone else.*

### **Announcements**

*The Chair states any announcements and also asks if anyone has any other announcements.*

### **Adjournment**

*The Chair states, “If there is no objection, the meeting will now adjourn. (pause) Since there is no objection, the meeting is adjourned.” You do not need a motion to adjourn.*

# MINUTES

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Minutes are not a report, but a record of the business of the association. They contain a record of what is done, not what is said. Personal opinions are not recorded. Minutes specify in the first paragraph the date, place, time, type of meeting and the names and presence and of the presiding officer and secretary or names of their alternates. Accuracy is the keynote of a good secretary.

The minutes contain a record of all action taken by the group, including the exact wording of every motion, the name of the maker of the motion and the action taken on the motion. Personal opinion and/or discussion are not included in the minutes.

Minutes are efficiently written – complete, concise and accurate. They must be as brief as possible, but include all necessary information. Action must be recorded in the order in which it took place.

## WRITING THE MINUTES

Minutes are written as briefly as possible, and items of business are reported in the order in which the business was presented in the meeting. They record action taken by the group, including:

- The exact wording of motions as stated by the chair. (The presiding officer can require any main motion or amendments to the motion to be in writing before it will be stated by the chair. The secretary can request the presiding officer to require that this be done.)
- The name of the member who moved the adoption of a motion, but not the name of the individual who “seconds” the motion, unless the assembly orders that it also be included.
- The action taken on the motion.

The minutes are typed or written legibly in permanent ink and signed by the secretary.

Minutes are recorded in an official minutes record book. This book, also called a ledger, can be a hardbound ledger but must have numbered pages in order to avoid alteration or removal of pages.

Taping the meeting has special considerations. There can be technical issues, it requires 100% consent of the body and disposal and use in case of lawsuits is another factor.

Each PTA maintains two separate minutes record books — one for the board and one for the membership.

Minutes are read (or printed and distributed) and approved or corrected immediately after the call to order, opening ceremonies and after a quorum has been established.

Should minutes not be available for approval, then those minutes are approved first at the next meeting. Minutes are approved in the order that the meetings occurred.

Minutes of a membership meeting may not be approved at a special meeting.

Minutes are read only to the body creating them, i.e., board minutes and membership meeting minutes for the next membership meeting. Minutes protect the association and its dues-paying members. Unless password-protected, do not post on websites. Do not publish in newsletters or post on doors for non-members to access.

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Minutes are signed by the secretary, using the secretary's given name. Example: Sue Jones, Secretary. The words "Respectfully submitted" represent an older practice that is not essential in signing the minutes.

Minutes of the preceding meeting may be printed and distributed if clearly marked as "draft."

If the secretary is not present at a meeting, the president appoints a secretary pro-tem, who then provides a draft to the secretary for approval at the following meeting.

After the minutes have been read (or distributed) and approved, the secretary writes "Approved as read (or printed)" or "Approved as corrected," the date of approval and the secretary's initials. If your minutes are approved by a three-person committee (e.g. your last meeting of the school year), the review committee is appointed by the president to approve the minutes. Each committee member will sign and date the minutes after reading and making necessary corrections. The president simply states, "The minutes of the \_\_\_ (date) meeting were approved by a committee consisting of \_\_\_ (names)." If someone wishes to correct those minutes, they may, but the president does not ask for corrections.

## **CORRECTING THE MINUTES**

Corrections are made in ink either above the information (if space allows) or in the margin. Draw a line through incorrect information or indicate an addition. Red ink is preferred. One minutes record book is maintained for board meetings and another for membership meetings.

Corrections are suggested without motion or vote. They may be made whenever an error is discovered, regardless of the time that has elapsed. However, after minutes have been approved, a 2/3 vote is required to amend. Be grateful for corrections to the minutes. At least someone was listening closely enough to detect an error, and those corrections enable you to keep a more accurate record for the association.

Minutes may be corrected whenever the error is noticed, regardless of the time that has elapsed. To correct minutes after they have been approved requires a 2/3 vote. Corrections are made in ink by drawing a line through the information with the correction above (if space allows) or written in the margin. Red ink is preferred to indicate a correction. Nothing is ever erased.

Any member has a right to examine the minutes of the association, but this right must not be abused. The original minutes must not be released from the custody of the secretary except upon written order of the president. If a committee needs records held by the secretary, the secretary provides a copy to the committee chair after consulting with the president.

For help or questions, call your Council PTA, Field Service Representative or Texas PTA secretary.

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## CONTENTS OF MINUTES

1. First paragraph
  - Kind of meeting (membership, special, adjourned)
  - Name of association
  - Date, place and time of meeting
  - Quorum established
  - Presence and names of president and secretary or names of their alternates
  - Details of whether minutes of previous meeting were read (or printed and distributed) and approved (or approved as corrected)
  - Names of members present (usually in board or committee meetings with 20 or less members) may be included or attach a sign-in sheet.
2. Second paragraph: Treasurer's report
  - Beginning balance (ending balance at last meeting)
  - Total receipts (since last meeting)
  - Total disbursements (since last meeting)
  - Ending balance (current meeting date)
  - Attach report to the minutes
3. Third paragraph: Communications reading
4. Fourth paragraph: Reports of the board, standing committees, special committees (copies of reports may be attached to minutes)
5. Unfinished and New Business Motions--Separate paragraph for each subject covered
  - All main motions (except those withdrawn), name of maker of motion, second, disposition of motion, whether adopted or not adopted
  - Announcement of previous notice of motions to be made at a later meeting
  - Points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost
  - Number of votes for and against on a vote by ballot or a counted vote
6. Program topic, method of presentation, names of participants
7. Announcements
8. Time of adjournment—no motion necessary
9. Signature, typed or printed name and title of secretary (“Respectfully submitted” is not used in signed minutes)

# BEST PRACTICES

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## PREPARATION

If you are required to take the minutes of the meeting, bring along pens, writing paper, and blank motion forms. Arrive at the meeting site early to ensure that everything is ready. To take the minutes, have plenty of materials available (paper, forms, etc) to get through a possibly lengthy session. Make sure you have a copy of the agenda, the roster, as well as any reports, financial statements, or other documents that may be referred to during the meeting.

## WHAT TO RECORD

The most difficult part of taking minutes is deciding what information has to be written down verbatim, what can be paraphrased, and what is nonessential for the official record. Minutes are meant to be concise, factual and objective records of what has happened during the meeting. Therefore, you cannot allow personal preferences to influence your note-taking, and you cannot give more weight to what certain people say while not recording the pertinent remarks of others. You must be able to interpret statements for what is truly being said--not what you hear by way of the deliverer's voice inflections, intonations or mannerisms.

It can be very difficult to discriminate from among all the opinions and facts just what will be recorded in the minutes, and to record the proceedings fairly, it is necessary to take a disinterested position. As a recorder, you must listen carefully and take down information even when more than one person is talking at the same time, insuring that you attribute all statements to their correct sources.

It is necessary to record motions verbatim as well as names of the individuals those who made them. You may want to have blank copies of motion forms or index cards for this purpose.

## RECORDING GUIDELINES

To begin your note-taking, follow these guidelines.

- Write down the date, location and time the meeting begins.
- Record the names of those present and absent (usually if the number is 20 or less). A quorum check is necessary for larger meetings.
- Identify the type of meeting (such as membership, board, special, adjourned).
- Identify the presiding officer and secretary or their alternates.
- Record the action. When the meeting begins, key your notes to match numbered items on the agenda. When drafting, you simply refer to your agenda to transcribe the key.
- You may want to number the motions as you receive them in order to place them correctly as the action occurred.
- When you receive the copy of the motion, make sure it contains the name of the person who made the motion, whether there was a second, the date, and whether the motion was made in the board or membership meeting.

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- Remember: If a motion is withdrawn, it is as though it never happened.
  - If deciding to personalize a template to help record the minutes for meetings, make sure template is consistent with the agenda that is drafted. You may want to bullet your entries in order to facilitate the recording of all actions.
  - Consider making a template for the order of business and make it available for the minutes review committee to follow the proceedings as well.
  - Record the time of adjournment.

Since the minutes serve as the official records of meetings, it is imperative that they be objectively recorded and conscientiously transcribed into a final document.

## **DRAFTS**

When you sit down at your computer, you must have the following materials accessible:

- The agenda
- Your notes Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised
- Any reports or other documents distributed at the meeting
- Verbatim copies of motions
- Copy of bylaws

## **FORMAT GUIDELINES**

Prepare a draft according to these general guidelines. To determine the specific format, examine previous copies of the minutes in your files, and follow the format established for your PTA unless it has been determined that you will use a new format.

- Double space the draft, even if the final version will be single spaced, so that handwritten corrections can be made between the lines.
- Number the pages consecutively at the top or bottom of the pages.
- Identify the meeting and date at the top of the page.
- Identify the participants (if 20 or less — according to the guidelines established for your PTA) and the presiding officer and secretary in the first paragraph, and state when the meeting was called to order.
- Make sure that you indicate there was a quorum present in order to proceed with the order of business.
- Use subheads for different topics if warranted by the length and complexity of the minutes.
- Conclude with the time of adjournment.
- Assemble all attachments for inclusion with the final copy.

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## **COPY DISTRIBUTION**

It is good practice to present the president with a draft to help find misinterpretations or sensitive material that should not be printed.

## **FINAL COPY**

The final copy may be single or double spaced. Check copies of previous minutes for your PTA's preferred style. Most minutes are written in a narrative style.

Once minutes are approved, all drafts, notes and audio or video recordings will not be retained in the official files; they must be discarded.

You may keep a copy of the minutes on your computer to transfer to a external drive for your successor.

# SAMPLE MOTION FORM

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**I move that:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## **For Secretary's Use**

Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Motion Number \_\_\_\_\_

Carried \_\_\_\_\_

Amended \_\_\_\_\_

Failed \_\_\_\_\_

Withdrawn \_\_\_\_\_



# OFFICER & CHAIR REPORT FORM

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Name \_\_\_\_\_

Position \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

- \* Please use this form to write the points of your report to be recorded in the official minutes. Please give completed form to the secretary before the meeting is adjourned.
- \* Please type or print.

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# RESOURCES

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Texas PTA is committed to providing our volunteer leaders across the state with the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in their role within PTA. Access to quality educational resources is a key component in supporting this success, as well as continuing to build strong Local and Council PTAs.

## FOUNDATIONS

*FOUNDATIONS* courses provide a broad overview of “what” PTA is, and share important information that every PTA leader should know. In addition to the courses offered for all board members, Texas PTA has also created a series of brief *FOUNDATIONS* courses that provide general information for many Local PTA board positions. It is important to note that these position-specific courses are not meant to be comprehensive training, rather a quick review of each position for newly-elected or prospective nominees. Other than *FOUNDATIONS: Leader Orientation*, all *FOUNDATIONS* courses are web-based presentations.

### ALL BOARD MEMBERS

- Council PTA Board Orientation
- Inclusiveness
- Leader Orientation
- Local PTA Board Orientation

### POSITION SPECIFIC

- Arts in Education
- Communications
- Environmental Awareness
- Fundraising
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Historian
- Legislative Action
- Membership
- Parent Education Programs
- Parliamentarian
- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Volunteer Coordinator

## BASICS

The *BASICS* series contains detailed information to support volunteer leaders in their specific board position. Texas PTA strongly encourages every board member to attend a *BASICS* course for their own position, as well as any other related positions.

*BASICS* courses are currently available for face-to-face presentations during LAUNCH and through your Council PTA or Field Service Representative, as well as scheduled web-based trainings hosted by Texas PTA. In addition to the training presentation, all *BASICS* courses have a companion Resource Guide, Quick-Start Guide, and Duties-at-a-Glance. These guides are available via download from the Texas PTA website or for purchase through Texas PTA’s STAR Co-op (online store). Courses marked with an asterisk (\*) will debut at a future date.

- Arts Education
- Communications
- Environmental Awareness\*
- Fundraising
- Healthy Lifestyles
- Legislative Action
- Membership
- Parent Education / Programs
- Parliamentarian
- President
- Secretary
- Treasurer
- Volunteer Coordinator

## SPOTLIGHTS

PTAs have many unique programs, processes and responsibilities as healthy, thriving non-profits. *SPOTLIGHTS* courses offer an in-depth review of some of these most important and recurring PTA functions.

*SPOTLIGHTS* courses are available during LAUNCH and through on-demand, web-based presentations hosted by Texas PTA.

- Bylaws and Standing Rules
- Conducting a Meeting
- Financial Reconciliation
- Nominations and Elections

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