



An Introduction to the  
Parent Teacher Association (PTA)  
and  
Parent, Teacher, Student Association (PTSA)

*A Resource for All Current PTA Leaders and Members in Harford County, Maryland*

*June 2025*

<b>The PTA Mission Statement</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The PTA Purposes</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The PTA Values</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Who can be a PTA Member?</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PTSA: The “S” is for Student!</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>What is a PTA Leader?</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Fiduciary Responsibilities</b>	<b>5</b>
Duty of Obedience	5
Duty of Care	5
Duty of Loyalty	5
<b>Goals and Objectives for Your PTA</b>	<b>6</b>
From Goals to Plans	6
Why Do We Fundraise?	6
Have You Heard About HCPS North Star?	7
<b>Advocacy and the Board of Education</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Welcome to a PTA Meeting</b>	<b>9</b>
Board of Directors Meeting versus General Membership Meeting	9
The PTA Agenda	9
Officer, Committee, Representative Reports	10
What’s in an Officer/Committee/Representative report?	10
<b>Parliamentary Procedures (Robert’s Rules of Order)</b>	<b>10</b>
Eight Steps to a Motion	11
Amendments to a Motion	11
Types of Motions	11
Privileged motions	11
Subsidiary Motions	11
Incidental Motions	12
Motions that bring a question again before the assembly	12
Motions You May Hear in a PTA Meeting	12
<b>What Do Your Bylaws Say?</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Join and Help, Please</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Volunteerism Isn’t “Free”</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Please Be Mindful (Electronic Correspondence)</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Please Be Empathetic</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>The Harford County Council of PTA Is Here for You</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Appendix A - Plan of Work Example</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Appendix B - Sample Meeting Agenda</b>	<b>19</b>

# The PTA Mission Statement

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

## The PTA Purposes

1. To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, places of worship and throughout the community;
2. To raise the standards of home life;
3. To advocate for laws that further the education, physical and mental health, welfare, and safety of children and youth;
4. To promote the collaboration and engagement of families and educators in the education of children and youth;
5. To engage the public in united efforts to secure the physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social well being of all children and youth;
6. To advocate for fiscal responsibility regarding public tax dollars in public education funding.

## The PTA Values

(<https://www.pta.org/home/About-National-Parent-Teacher-Association/Mission-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.

## Who can be a PTA Member?

PTA and PTSA is an interchangeable terminology within the PTA community. Both associations fall under the National PTA umbrella. Anyone who pays the annual dues is a PTA member. You don't have to only be a "parent" or "teacher." You can be a grandparent, guardian, caregiver, community member, member of the Board of Education, Harford County Council member, member of the Harford Delegation, etc.

If you have a vested interest in the outcomes of public education in Harford County, welcome to PTA!

## PTSA: The "S" is for Student!

Both PTAs and PTSAs fall under the National PTA umbrella. In PTSAs, the "S" is for students. If a middle school or high school chooses to include students, they can be members and you would have a PTSA. Student membership and advocacy is integral in the positive trajectory of the PTSA. Student voices are needed. And, student officers are allowed for all positions except President and Treasurer (since most student members are minors through most of high school).

PTSAs offer a safe place for students to learn about parliamentary process, to advocate for what's important to them, and to participate in the PTSA business (student members can vote)!

What is the difference between the PTSA and SGA (Student Government Association)? Parent and caregiver involvement. The PTSA is a great way for students to engage with their parents as equals and to practice sharing their perspectives. PTSA offers open discussion/debate of most items on the agenda. The PTSA also is a community activity that should be included on a student resume.

# What is a PTA Leader?

A PTA leader is anyone who is involved in the decision making process of the Association. A leader can be an elected officer (President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.). A leader can be appointed (a Board member position). A leader can be anyone involved in the completion of the business through voting. Yes, even general members are PTA leaders. They are our representatives in the volunteerism, financial support, and final decisions of the organization.

## Fiduciary Responsibilities

Board members of a non-profit corporation owe important duties to the organization they serve. These duties are imposed by the courts and by state and federal statutes. They are: Duty of Obedience, Duty of Care, and Duty of Loyalty.

### Duty of Obedience

A board member must adhere to the mission and purpose of PTA and the applicable rules of the organization as set forth in the bylaws. This is accomplished through reading and understanding the bylaws, incorporation regulations, and IRS guidelines.

### Duty of Care

A board member must have the ability to carefully and responsibly manage the financial affairs of the organization. Board members also have the duty to act in good faith, prudently serving the best interests of the organization. Members should ensure that the books and records are accurate and complete and that all tax deadlines are met. Members should also exhibit fair dealing, openness, and honesty while being alert to potential problems.

### Duty of Loyalty

Board members must give their undivided loyalty to the mission and purpose of PTA. This is accomplished through helping to further the goals of the organization. Board members must not take advantage of the organization for their own gain.

# Goals and Objectives for Your PTA

What do you want to do? How do you plan to accomplish it? Having defined goals and objectives will help you understand where your PTA's advocacy resides.

Maybe a PTA goal is: to help students acclimate to new school surroundings in a safe and unassuming environment. That's a great goal! The transition from preschool to kindergarten, 5th grade to middle school, and 8th grade to high school can be terrifying for students and caregivers! There may also be opportunities to reach out to new families transitioning into the school who are not in those typical transitioning grades. If this is a goal for your association, how do you make it a reality? How many people do you need to coordinate efforts? Where will it take place? When will it take place? Who from the school needs to be involved?

## From Goals to Plans

Plans of work help us organize our thoughts in a process oriented manner. Plans of work don't have to be prescriptive (you need "this" before you can do "that"), but they can help in identifying the resources needed to breathe life into your plan. A sample plan of work is available in [Appendix A](#).

## Why Do We Fundraise?

Making in-the-moment decisions inhibits us from being intentional about planning for and eventually completing the task. For many of us, our primary desire is to do good things for the students. We want to buy the kids T-shirts and field trips. We want to find ways to thank our school's teachers and staff. Most of the time, there is an associated expense. And, a lot of the time, PTAs step up to the challenge and fundraise, fundraise, fundraise!

Yes, we need money to do some things. But remember, the PTA's mission statement is to "make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children."

Increasing morale is a large part of the PTA experience. Staffing shortfalls on our education system do present a heavy burden. But, we only really hear about these shortfalls once a year. It is consistent and evolving.

For example:

- Did you know that funding for the school system predominantly comes from the State of Maryland and the Harford County Government?
- Did you know that HCPS manages two budgets: an operating budget (learning objectives) and a capital budget (school buildings)?
- Did you know that laws are being codified in Annapolis that affect how both the State and County monies provided to the school system can be spent?
- Did you know that the Board of Education meets approximately twice a month during the calendar year?
- Did you know that the Board of Education codifies school system norms and guidelines that affect all children?

These are areas for consistent engagement within PTA. Engagement in any of these areas could be part of your PTAs annual goals.

## Have You Heard About HCPS North Star?

North Star, an initiative designed by HCPS Superintendent, Dr. Sean Bulson, is an equitable, accessible, inclusive, and systemic Pre-kindergarten through grade 12+ framework supporting students as they successfully achieve post-secondary interests and goals.

# NORTH STAR GRADUATE OUTCOMES

HCPS is committed to student success after high school by ensuring all students can demonstrate skills through earned college credit or industry-recognized career credentials outlined in the three outcomes below:

## OUTCOME ONE

Earned Potential College Credit via AP; IB; CTE

- **Advanced Placement (AP):** Achieving a score of 3 or higher on one or more AP assessment.
- **International Baccalaureate (IB):** Achieving a score of 4 or higher on IB exam or A, B, C on Extended Essay or Theory of Knowledge.
- **Career and Technology Education (CTE):** Achieving a GPA of 3.0 or higher in each course of a Maryland State Department of Education approved CTE program of study.

## OUTCOME TWO

Earned College Credit via Dual Enrollment

Successfully passes one or more dual enrollment course with a course grade of D or higher earns college credit at Harford Community College.

## OUTCOME THREE

Earned an Industry-Recognized Career Credential via Licensure, Apprenticeship, TSA

Earned a career licensure, apprenticeship completion, certification (such as Seal of Biliteracy) or met the Technical Skills Assessment requirement in a CTE program.



[WWW.HCPS.ORG](http://WWW.HCPS.ORG)



What's important to consider is the path to reach North Star goals starts at the beginning! The lessons our kids take through their HCPS journey have a direct impact on the future Harford County citizens they become. How can the PTA influence that locally?

We all want our children, all Harford County children, to be college and career ready (CCR) by the time they graduate from high school. To learn more about the Maryland Blueprint and how it affects the trajectory of our students' success in Harford County through North Star:

<https://www.hcps.org/superintendent/blueprint.aspx>.

## Advocacy and the Board of Education

Share an issue, concern, or item of pride or excitement with the Board of Education! The BoE are parents, caregivers and Harford County citizens just - like - you! They have a vested interest in our children and our community.



It is easy to communicate with our elected and appointed BoE members. You can contact them as a [group or individually](#). The BoE even allots time to hear from the community during public comment sessions. Admittedly this can be a scary venue for first time speakers. In all honesty, it can take practice to feel comfortable. Fortunately, practice makes proficiency (another lesson we can share with our students).

The public comment process is advertised on the HCPS website. Post COVID, the BoE continues to have hybrid public comment solutions. [Learn more about public comment expectations.](#)

## Welcome to a PTA Meeting

### Board of Directors Meeting versus General Membership Meeting

In the world of PTA, there are two types of meetings. There are Board meetings and General membership meetings. Sometimes PTAs hold these meetings at the same time, but this is not a best practice.

The Board of Directors meetings are defined in the bylaws and include the officers, chairmen, and the principal or his representative. Duties are to transact necessary business, create standing committees, approve plans of work, prepare reports to the general membership, select an auditor, prepare and submit an annual budget, and approve routine bills. The Board of Directors meetings generally occur once a month, or as agreed to by your board membership.

The General membership meetings are held for the entire membership of the local unit as defined by the bylaws. These meetings usually occur 3-4 times per year. The purpose of general membership meetings is to ratify business, elect officers, and to present information that will meet the Mission and Purposes of PTA for all parents and community members.

### The PTA Agenda

Because your time is valuable - and your members' time is valuable - organized PTA meetings are critical to keeping your business and discussions on track! Presidents create the PTA agenda. Agendas can be tailored to address your specific discussion points and/or needs. Agendas should be shared in advance so the board or membership can be prepared for the

discussion. The Board or membership can request changes to the agenda. Depending on the allotted time for your meeting, your requests and or inquiries may need to be discussed at a later time. A sample agenda can be found in [Appendix B](#).

## Officer, Committee, Representative Reports

Because your time is valuable, organized reports are critical to keeping your meeting on schedule. Written board reports from officers and committee chairs help keep time spent on discussing past events to a minimum. And, because officer and committee reports are recorded in the minutes, an advance hard copy or digital record helps the Secretary and the board members because they can read reports in advance and ask follow up questions at the meeting.

### What's in an Officer/Committee/Representative report?

- Name of PTA
- Officer/Committee Chair Name
- Committee/Event, if applicable
- Date of Report
- Financial data (expenses to date/income to date)
- Synopsis of occurrences since the last PTA meeting. The synopsis can be in bullets or full sentences.

## Parliamentary Procedures (Robert's Rules of Order)

PTA meetings operate most effectively through using parliamentary procedures. They give everyone time to share their thoughts, concerns, expectations, and updates. The bylaws state that Robert's Rules will be followed in all cases where applicable.

### Eight Steps to a Motion

1. Obtain the floor: Member addresses the chair. "Madam/Mister President."

2. Assign the floor: Member is recognized by the chair, who nods or announces the member's name.
3. Make the motion: "I move that..."
4. The motion is seconded.
5. Chair states the motion: "It is moved and seconded that..."
6. Debate or discuss: "Is there any discussion?"
7. Vote: "All in favor say 'Aye,' 'All those opposed, say 'no.'"
8. Chair announces the result: "The 'aye's' have it. The motion carries and we will..." or "The 'no's' have it. The motion is lost."

## Amendments to a Motion

Before the vote is taken on a motion, it may be amended by:

- Inserting or adding a word, words, phrase or paragraph.
- Striking out a word or consecutive words.
- Striking out words and inserting other words in their place.
- Substituting one paragraph or another motion for the original motion.

## Types of Motions

This legend supports the notation included in the motions.

S = Second is required.

M = Majority vote is required.

$\frac{2}{3}$  = Two-thirds vote is required.

\* = Special consideration applies.

<h3>Privileged motions</h3> <p>Privileged motions are urgent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Fix the time for which to adjourn (S, M)</li><li>• Adjourn (S, M)</li><li>• Recess (S, M)</li><li>• Raise a question of privilege</li><li>• Call for the orders of the day</li></ul>	<h3>Subsidiary Motions</h3> <p>Subsidiary motions are motions that modify, delay, or dispose of another motion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Lay on the table (S, M)</li><li>• Call for the previous question (S, <math>\frac{2}{3}</math>)</li><li>• Limit or extend limits of debate (S, <math>\frac{2}{3}</math>)</li><li>• Postpone to a certain time (S, M*)</li></ul>
--	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commit (refer to a committee) (S, M)</li> <li>• Amend (S, M)</li> <li>• Postpone indefinitely (S, M)</li> </ul>
<b>Incidental Motions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appeal (S, M*)</li> <li>• Consider by paragraph or seriatim (S, M)</li> <li>• Call for division of the assembly</li> <li>• Call for division of a question (S, M)</li> <li>• Raise an objection to the consideration of a question (<math>\frac{2}{3}</math> against)</li> <li>• Raise a parliamentary inquiry</li> <li>• Request a point of order</li> <li>• Suspend the rules (S, <math>\frac{2}{3}</math>)</li> </ul>	<b>Motions that bring a question again before the assembly</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take from the table (S, M)</li> <li>• Reconsider (S, M)</li> <li>• Rescind or amend motion previously adopted (S, M [with notice]; <math>\frac{2}{3}</math> [without notice])</li> </ul>

## Motions You May Hear in a PTA Meeting

### Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance

Here are some motions you might make, how to make them and what to expect of the rules.

You Say This	To Do This	May You Interrupt the Agenda?	Do You Need a Second?	Is It Debatable?	Can It Be Amended?	What Vote is Needed?	Can It Be Reconsidered?
"I move that..."	Introduce business	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
"I move to amend the motion by..."	Amend a motion	No	Yes	Yes (3)	Yes	Majority	Yes
"I move to refer the matter to committee..."	Give closer study of something	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes (2)
"I move to postpone the discussion until..."	Postpone discussion for a certain time.	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Majority	Yes
"I move the previous question."	End debate and amendments.	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No (1)

## HCCPTA Introduction to PTA/PTSA (June 2025)

### Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance

Here are some motions you might make, how to make them and what to expect of the rules.

You Say This	To Do This	May You Interrupt the Agenda?	Do You Need a Second?	Is It Debatable?	Can It Be Amended?	What Vote is Needed?	Can It Be Reconsidered?
"I move to table the motion."	Suspend further consideration of an issue.	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
"I rise to a question of privilege."	Complain about heat, noise, etc.	Yes	No	No	No	No Vote	No
"I move that we recess for..."	Call an intermission	No	Yes	No	Yes	Majority	No
"I move we adjourn."	Adjourn the meeting.	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No
"I rise to a point of order."	Protest breach of rules or conduct.	Yes	No	No	No	No vote. (4)	No
"I appeal the chair's decision."	Vote on a ruling of the chairain.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Majority (5)	Yes
"I move to suspend the rules so that..."	Suspend the rules temporarily.	No	Yes	No	No	2/3	No
"I object to consideration of this motion."	Avoid considering an improper matter.	Yes	No	No	No	2/3 (6)	Only if the main question or motion is not in effect.
"I call for a division or "Division."	Verify a voice vote by having members stand.	Yes	No	No	No	None	No
"Point of information."	Request information.	Yes	No	No	No	None	No
"I move to take from the table..."	Take up a matter previously tabled.	No	Yes	No	No	Majority	No

### Parliamentary Procedure at a Glance

Here are some motions you might make, how to make them and what to expect of the rules.

You Say This	To Do This	May You Interrupt the Agenda?	Do You Need a Second?	Is It Debatable?	Can It Be Amended?	What Vote is Needed?	Can It Be Reconsidered?
"I move to reconsider to vote on..."	Reconsider a nasty action.	Yes	Yes	Only if motion to be considered is debatable.	No	Majority	No

#### Notes:

- (1) Unless vote on question has not yet been taken
- (2) Unless the committee has already taken up the subject.
- (3) Only if the motion to be amended is debatable
- (4) Except in doubtful cases.
- (5) A majority vote in the negative is needed to reverse the ruling of the chair.
- (6) A 2/3 vote in the negative is needed to prevent consideration

## What Do Your Bylaws Say?

The bylaws say all members of a PTA pay dues. The local unit bylaws also say that the school Principal is a member of the Board of Directors.

All members of a local PTA unit are entitled to access to the bylaws. The bylaws establish the PTA operating guidelines. They identify the overarching responsibilities of the officers and board members. They establish the minimum number of general membership meetings. The bylaws tell you the minimum number of members who must be present for quorum. They even provide the member-agreed timing on elections.

The bylaws do not establish *how to do* something. If your PTA has those types of processes established, it is a best practice to document those in a separate process document. Process documents are helpful in reflection (*did this work the way we wanted it to?*) and to inform new officers and board members of the procedures that have been codified to this point in time.

## Join and Help, Please

For many years there was a narrative about PTA: All you have to do is join. Or, all you have to do is give, and you don't have to help. It is easy, right? *I can write a check and I don't have to do anything? Cool!*

But, behind the boardroom doors, you have had to figure out what to do with a minimalistic support structure and few active volunteers.

If you haven't experienced this, consider yourself fortunate! One of the benefits of PTA is you get to help. You get to gain a better understanding of what goes on within the school building. You get to build relationships with other families and educators. You get the opportunity to understand the challenges of the school system's annual operating and capital budgets - and how cuts and/or "plus-ups" affect your kids. You may even get an opportunity to contribute on an HCPS committee or task force.

No one can do everything. Even PTA leaders need a community of support to complete the goals and objectives for that year. PTA leaders also need people to carry on the PTA legacy at that school when they transition out. You can only be successful when you have help.

## Volunteerism Isn't "Free"

Even though volunteers don't get "paid," did you know that there is an intrinsic value in what you do? [Independentsector.org](https://independentsector.org) has published the "[2024 Value of Volunteer Time by Report](#)" on their website. In the State of Maryland as of 2023, your time is worth \$34.99/hour.

Thank you for sharing your time, gifts and talents to help someone else!

## Please Be Mindful (Electronic Correspondence)

Even though e-mail has been around for over 20-years, it's important to keep these tips in mind:

- ☐ Don't write anything in an electronic message that you wouldn't want to see printed in a memo to all Board members or on the front page of a newspaper. Electronic messages can easily be forwarded on to people you didn't intend to see the message, so be careful what you say.
- ☐ Electronic messages are not private communications unlike the letters you receive at home. Courts have determined that organizational email users do not have the right to

privacy where email messages relating to the business of the organization are concerned. Many email servers automatically maintain an audit log for a period of time which tracks from whom and to whom messages are sent.

- ☐ Proper email etiquette requires that you refrain from swearing, using derogatory terms, typing in all capital letters (SHOUTING!), and trolling others.
- ☐ Your local PTA correspondence should not be used for personal gain. This means you cannot use it to advertise your personal after hours work efforts such as selling Avon, Mary Kay, Pampered Chef, or any other income-producing function.
- ☐ Soliciting contributions to charities, fundraisers, blood drives, cookie/candy sales, raffles, etc., is prohibited unless the event is sanctioned.
- ☐ Please keep use of unnecessary creative graphics and fonts to a minimum.

## Please Be Empathetic

All PTAs in Harford County are 100% volunteer associations. All officers within the PTA structure through National PTA are 100% volunteers. In these associations, we need to put ourselves in others' shoes and meet people where they are. A lack of empathy can result in misunderstandings, complaints and arguments.

The Harford County Council of PTA (HCCPTA) can be a neutral mediator when stressful situations arise. The HCCPTA also is dedicated to training our local unit leaders and members. Your success is our kids' success! And, in Harford County, success exists when all students are on the path of meeting the North Star goals: to be college and career ready (CCR) by the time they graduate from high school. That's what matters. How can we get there together?

## The Harford County Council of PTA Is Here for You

The Harford County Council of PTA, Inc. (HCCPTA) serves local PTAs and the ~38,000 students attending HCPS, and their families, HCPS staff, and community members.

Established in 1939, the Harford County Council of PTAs serves as a resource for local PTA leaders in Harford County. Our mission is to provide guidance, support, and training



## HCCPTA Introduction to PTA/PTSA (June 2025)

through advocacy based activities to all local PTA leaders. We serve as a liaison between the local units and Free State PTA.

HCCPTA partners with Harford County Public Schools (HCPS) and seeks parent representatives for task forces and committees. Through our [website](#), [Facebook page](#), and [email](#), we encourage community participation in HCCPTA [meetings, trainings and events](#), HCPS workshops and events, HCPS Board of Education, Harford County Council, and County Executive meetings.

The HCCPTA Board of Directors is here to assist local units. Please [contact us](#) with questions. If you are interested in sharing your lessons learned and supporting other local leaders on the HCCPTA, please [contact us](#).

## Appendix A - Plan of Work Example

_____ PTA/PTSA Plan of Work			
Officer/Chair Name			
Position			
Year			
Goal:			
Responsibilities/Duties:			
Specific Action Steps		Start Date	End Date
1			
2			
3			
4			
Budget (Itemized preferred)			
1			\$
2			\$
3			\$
4			\$
5			\$
Total budget requested			\$
Resources (People, Places, Things)			
Committee Members:			
Approved by the BoD on (date):			

## Appendix B - Sample Meeting Agenda

**ABC PTA, Inc.**  
**Board of Directors Meeting (or General Membership Meeting)**  
**Location of Meeting**  
**Date of Meeting**  
**Time Scheduled for the Meeting**

Call to order: (President's Name), President

Pledge of Allegiance: (Reciter's Name)

PTA Purposes: (Reciter's Name)

Changes to the Agenda

Minutes: (Secretary's Name), Secretary

Treasurer's Report: (Treasurer's Name), Treasurer

Officer's Reports:

    President:

    Vice President:

    Secretary:

    Treasurer:

Reports from Committees

Reports from Representatives

    Teacher Representative

    Principal Representative

Unfinished Business (business carried over or not finished at the last meeting)

New Business

Adjournment