



**PTA Executive Committee Recommendations on TNS PTA Bylaws
To Discuss at the General Meeting on Feb. 13, 2020**

According to the [Chancellor Regulations](#), we must review, and if necessary amend, bylaws every three years. Our bylaws are due for review and the Executive Committee has prepared the following recommended amendments to our bylaws. We welcome additional suggestions, feedback, or questions. The current bylaws are available for review from the [TNS website](#).

Process and Timeline for Changing Bylaws

Bylaws may be amended at any regular meeting of the TNSPTA by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided the amendment has been presented in writing to the membership at the previous meeting and appears in the notice of the meeting at which it is to be amended.

We will discuss the proposed changes below and any other changes people have at the February General meeting (Thursday, February 13, 8:30am). If you have a specific amendment you would like, feel free to email ptasecretary@tnsny.org or bring draft written amendments to the general meeting so we can discuss.

We will entertain additional written amendments (if there are any) at the March meeting and vote in April. If there are no new amendments presented in March, we may vote on the amendments presented at the February meeting in March.

Summary of Changes Recommended

- A. Necessary Changes. For purposes of compliance with Chancellor's Regulations as issued January 17, 2017, we need to make the following changes to these sections of our bylaws:
 - Art. IV, Section 1. General Membership Meetings (change the notice requirement from 7 days to 10 days; add specificity as to the day and time of meetings; name who can chair in the President's absence; and establish a mechanism for calling emergency meetings);

- Art. VII, Section 2. Meetings of the Officers (add a mechanism for scheduling regular meetings of the Executive Board);
 - Art. VIII, Section 1. Election of Officers (change the time by which we must notify the principal of elections from May 1 to April 1).
- B. Helpful Changes. While not required by regulations, we recommend we add specificity to the following sections to reduce the need to reference the regulations separate from the bylaws. We also recommend adding more detail and clarity to the budget and financial accounting sections.
- Art. VII Section 7: Transfer of Records (include here the PTA's file retention responsibilities as described in the Regulations);
 - Art. IX: Budget (rewrite Section 3 in its entirety to provide more detail and clarity on the budget process, and amend Section 4, to add clarity and name a few requirements from regulations.)
- C. Because bylaws are particularly important when something goes wrong, we recommend considering modifications to the disciplinary action section, keeping in mind the [template bylaws](#) on the DOE website.
- Art. VII, Section 8: Disciplinary Action (adding reasons for removal beyond missing meetings).
- D. And, for the sake of clarity and consistency, we recommend making the following changes:
- Change the word “verbal” to “ oral.”
 - Clarify the general voting body is members present in a meeting (as opposed to all eligible members) and, in keeping with regulations, that voting cannot be done by proxy, absentee ballot, email, or conference call.
 - Use gender neutral language throughout (e.g., replacing his/her with a gender neutral pronoun).
 - Consistently use Officers instead of Executive Board or Executive Committee.

Proposed Language of Amendments

Below are recommended changes to the existing bylaws, with new text indicated by underline and deletions of existing text indicated by strike through (except with respect to the changes to the current Art. IX, Section 3, on the budget, which we suggest entirely replacing; for ease of

reading we have not included the current text [here](#), but it is available online). We have also included notes about recommended changes with references to the Chancellor's Regulations.

Art. IV -- Meetings

Section 1. The general membership meetings of the TNSPTA shall be held each month from September through June. General membership meetings are held at 8:30 in the morning of the third Thursday of the month, unless such date falls on a legal or religious holiday, in which case the meeting shall be held on the following or previous Thursday or unless a majority of officers determines that a general meeting should be held another day or time for reasons of participation. At the beginning of every school year, the Officers will survey the parent members to determine whether the day and time of the general membership meeting should be changed. The scheduled times will alternate between morning and evening times each month, unless such day falls on a legal or religious holiday.

Notice should be sent at least ~~seven~~ ten days prior to the scheduled meeting.

All official meetings during the school year, including committee and officers meetings, must be held at The Neighborhood School. The President or Co-President shall chair general membership meetings. In the president's absence, another officer shall chair according to the order of succession identified in Article VIII, section 5, unless an officer has been identified in advance by the President or co-President. The principal and parent coordinator are not allowed to chair any PTA meeting.

All eligible members may attend and participate during general membership meetings and may speak to agenda items subject to restriction in these bylaws. Observers may speak and otherwise participate if acknowledged by the chair.

Insert new Section: A special membership meeting may be called to deal with a matter of importance that cannot be postponed until the next general membership meeting. The president or co-president may call a special membership meeting with a minimum of 48 hours written notice stating precisely what the topic of the meeting will be.

Notes about recommended changes to Art. IV:

- Regarding notice of meetings, see Chancellor's Regulations A-660, Section I.I.2.a:
"Written notice of all PA/PTA meetings must be posted at the school and sent to the membership at least 10 calendar days prior to the meeting by means calculated to reach all parents (e.g., email, backpack, or postal mail). Multiple means of communication (including automated calls) may be necessary to ensure that all parents are notified. For

special meetings as described in Section I.I.1.c above, notice may be shortened to 48 hours.”

- Regarding day and time for general membership meetings, see Chancellor’s Regulations A-660, Section I.I.1.a: “General membership meetings The PA/PTA bylaws must specify the day and time when general membership meetings are to be held (e.g., last Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm) and a mechanism for rescheduling individual meetings if necessary to increase attendance. At the beginning of every school year, the Executive Board must survey the parent members to determine whether the day and time of the general membership meeting should be changed.” We have previously discussed the benefits of holding some meetings before school begins so more teachers and parents can participate. This language would allow for the possibility because the Executive Board could change the meeting for reasons of participation.
- Regarding a mechanism for calling special membership meetings, see Chancellor’s Regulations A-660, Section I.I.1.c: “Special meetings of the membership or the Executive Board may be held to address important matters that cannot be postponed until the next regularly scheduled meeting. Special meetings should follow the same procedures as regularly scheduled meetings, except that they may be convened upon 48 hours’ notice.” (See also Chancellor’s Regulations, Section I.H.1, which lists the items required to be included in bylaws and, among other things, a mechanism for calling special membership meeting.)
- Regarding who chairs meetings, see Chancellor’s Regulations A-660, Section I.I.4: “The PA/PTA president should chair all general membership and Executive Board meetings. PA/PTA bylaws must specify who will chair a meeting in the president’s absence. Under no circumstance may the principal or parent coordinator chair a PA/PTA meeting.”

Art. VII --TNSPTA Leadership

Section 2: Meetings

Regularly scheduled meetings of the Officers shall be held monthly, September through June. ~~Meetings must happen at the discretion of the officers, they must take place on TNS school property, and they must commence before the last Thursday of every month.~~ The officers shall decide or confirm the regular schedule for meetings of the officers at the first officers’ meeting of the year.

All general members of the TNSPTA may attend monthly meetings of the Officers unless the Officers are meeting in Executive session, which shall be called by the presiding officer when necessary to discuss matters which are confidential, sensitive, or otherwise best handled in a closed meeting. Non-members may only speak or otherwise

participate if acknowledged by the presiding officer. Additional meetings of the officers shall be called at the discretion of the officers.

Notes about recommended changes to Art. VII, Section 2

- Chancellor’s Regulations A-660, I.I.1.b, provides “The PA/PTA bylaws must include a mechanism for scheduling monthly meetings of the Executive Board. This may be a specified day and time (e.g., the first Tuesday of the month at 6:00 pm), or a deadline by which the Executive Board must issue a schedule of meetings for the current school year.” The Regulations also suggest we should address the extent to which members may participate in discussions at Executive Board meetings.

Art. VIII — Elections

Section 1: Election of Officers.

Officers shall be elected between the third Wednesday in May and the third Friday in June for a one-year term beginning July 1. Any timeline established by the TNSPTA to complete the nominations and election process must adhere to this timeframe. The principal must be notified in writing of the date of the election by April 1 ~~May 1~~. Employees of the school, including parent coordinators, may not serve as TNSPTA officers.

Section 7: June Transfer of Records

The outgoing Officers shall arrange for the orderly transfer of records and information of the TNSPTA, which shall include an overview of all TNSPTA transactions for the school year, to the incoming Officers. At least one meeting will be scheduled during the month of June for this purpose. Any Officer may request the assistance of the School Leadership Team (SLT) during this process. The Association must maintain the following records for a minimum of 6 years: bylaws and related amendments; meeting notices, agendas and minutes, records of officer elections other than ballots, and financial records.

Section 8. Disciplinary Action

A. Grounds for Removal from Office include:

1. Any officer who fails to fulfill the duties of the office as outlined in these bylaws;
2. Any officer who accrues 3 consecutive unexcused absences from general membership meetings or meetings of the Officers;
3. Any officer who poses a threat to the safety and well order of the Association or larger school community, including through conduct considered harassing, discriminatory, bullying, or physically violent;

4. Any officer who otherwise exercises behavior unbecoming the office as determined by the general membership.

B. Officer Removal: Association officers may be removed by recommendation of the executive board or a motion from a member and two thirds vote of the membership present at a general membership meeting.

~~Any officer who fails to attend three (3) consecutive meetings may be removed from office by recommendation of the Officers or motion from a member and two-thirds vote of the membership present. he Officer shall be given the opportunity to submit a written explanation showing good cause for the conduct in question, for consideration by the Board and temporary review committee, if one is established. The Officer shall be given the opportunity to submit a written explanation showing good cause for the conduct in question, for consideration by the Officers and temporary review committee, if one is established. in writing an explanation showing good cause that explains his/her reason for not attending these meetings for the Board's consideration.~~ Officers may also be removed for unsatisfactory performance by following the procedure outlined below:

- At any meeting, a TNSPTA member may make a motion to begin the process of removing an Officer for unsatisfactory performance.
- If the motion is approved by two-thirds of the assembled members, the TNSPTA must agree to create a temporary review committee by majority vote. The committee shall consist of at least three members, none of whom may be officers. The review committee will disband after the stated action/s is resolved. In the instance of needing another review committee, a new such committee will be formed with the same stipulations stated above.
- The review committee will gather relevant information and present its findings to the TNSPTA to allow the members to make an informed decision about the motion. Findings must be presented in writing at a meeting within 30 school days of the date the motion was presented. The notice and agenda must indicate that a vote will be taken by the TNSPTA regarding the removal of an Officer.
- The result of the motion must be submitted in writing to the principal, which the principal must forward to the appropriate superintendent.

Notes about recommended changes to Art. VIII:

- Regarding the notice of elections, Chancellor's Regulations A-660, Section I.D.4.b, requires that "the executive board must notify the principal of the date and time of the annual elections by April 1. If the principal has not been notified by April 1, he/she must

request the election date and time from the PA/PTA president. If the PA/PTA president fails to respond within 10 calendar days, the principal must notify all parents at the next general membership meeting. If the PA/PTA has not set an election date and time by May 1, the principal must notify the appropriate superintendent.”

- Regarding document retention, the Chancellor Regulations A-660, Section I.J.1, requires that “[t]he following PA/PTA records must be kept for 6 years: bylaws and related amendments; meeting notices, agendas, and minutes; records of officer elections other than ballots; and financial records... Other PA/PTA records should be kept as long as needed. PA/PTA records that are being used in a legal action must be retained for the entire period of the legal action. Special attention must be paid to ensuring that documents created in electronic form remain available and accessible, either in electronic or paper form, for the required period of time.”
- The changes to the section on disciplinary track closely, but not exactly, the template bylaws available on the DOE website [here](#) (see section F). Our proposed language differs from the the template in that it includes a specific reference to harassment, discrimination, bullying, and physical violence as ground for removal; includes that the review committee must consist of a minimum of three people; and allows the officer to submit an explanation for their conduct in writing for review.

Article IX -- Financial Affairs

Section 3. Budget

Delete existing section 3 in its entirety and replace it with:

The Officers shall be responsible for the development and/or review of the budget process, which may include the following steps and should be designed to ensure participation and transparency. The budget process, unless amended by at a general meeting, will proceed as outlined in this Article.

Because the fiscal year for the budget is July to June and often expenditures for the current school year are required before the first General Meeting of the school year, the budget process is the responsibility of both the outgoing Officers and the incoming Officers.

3.1 Process for the Next School Year’s Budget:

No later than the month of May of each school year, the outgoing Officers will provide notice to the general membership about the process to adopt a budget for the next school year and

invite members of the general membership to share written proposals. The Officers will also invite committee chairs to share plans or proposals.

The outgoing Officers will review the current budget, annual financial status, accounting, expenditures and outstanding bills, as well as proposals from the membership. The outgoing Officers will prepare a proposed budget for the next school year. The outgoing Officers will share these materials with the incoming Officers.

As part of the notice for the June meeting or earlier, the outgoing Officers will share its proposed budget. The notice for the June meeting will indicate a discussion of the budget will be on the agenda. The Officers will consider whether the time of the meeting needs to be changed to ensure maximum participation (for example, if starting the meeting at 8:30 prevents teachers from voting), and, if the time is changed, provide adequate notice of that change to the full membership.

At the June meeting, the outgoing Officers will present the budget. Membership will have an opportunity to discuss, amend, and vote on the budget for the following school year. The proposed budget will be submitted to the principal upon approval by the membership.

3.2 Process for Current School Year's Budget

As part of the notice for the September meeting or earlier, the incoming Officers will share the proposed budget as approved in June of the previous school year and share any proposed changes. The September meeting agenda will include discussion of the budget.

At the September meeting, the new Officers will present the budget. Membership will have an opportunity to discuss and amend the budget for the following school year.

A vote on the budget for the current school year may be on the agenda for either the September meeting or the October meeting, and is required to occur prior to November 1. The Officers will consider whether the time of the meeting at which a vote takes place should be changed to ensure maximum participation (for example, if starting the meeting at 8:30 prevents teachers from voting), and, if the time is changed, will provide adequate notice of that change to the full membership.

Until a new budget is approved by a vote of the general members, the budget adopted at the June meeting the prior year is in effect.

3.3 The budget may be amended by vote of the general membership at any membership meeting.

3.4 All expenditures not included in the budget at the time of its adoption must be approved by vote of the general membership.

3.5 The Officers are authorized to make an emergency expenditure not to exceed \$2500. Emergency expenditures are appropriate when failing to approve funds on an emergency basis would harm or interfere with school programming, operations, health or safety. These expenditures shall be reported to the general membership at the next general meeting in writing by the treasurer. The minutes of the meeting must reflect a vote taken by the TNSPTA to vote on whether the emergency expenditure was an appropriate use of the funds. If the membership votes that the use of the spending was appropriate, it will serve as approval of the expense for the purposes of section 3.4 of this Article.

Section 4. Financial Accounting

4.1 The Treasurer shall prepare the interim financial report by January 31st and the annual financial report by the June meeting, including all income, expenditures, and other transactions. These reports shall be presented and reviewed by general membership. Copies of these reports shall be provided to the principal.

4.2 The Treasurer shall be responsible for all funds of the Association and shall keep accurate records in a form consistent with these bylaws and applicable regulations of the chancellor. ~~The Treasurer and at least one other TNSPTA Officer shall transport all funds to the bank, and deposit slips shall identify the source of all deposited funds, unless Treasurer and one other TNSPTA member document and record the amount to be deposited and the Treasurer assumes responsibility for such a deposit. All parties involved in financial transactions shall initial the deposit slips. All records of the Association, including checkbooks, ledgers, cancelled checks, invoices, receipts etc., shall be maintained and secured on school premises.~~

Documentation related to every transaction must be maintained at the school and/or online (e.g., cancelled checks, deposit receipts, purchase orders, Parent Association minutes related to the financial transactions, etc.). If online, this must be in a password-protected area that all Officers have immediate access to and with access granted to any TNSPTA member who asks for access.

4.2 The counting and handling of any cash, checks, or money orders received by the TNSPTA must be completed by at least two members, including one Officer. These TNSPTA members cannot be related by blood or marriage. Funds must be counted in the school on the same day of receipt. The TNSPTA's financial records must display the total amount of funds and the signatures of the TNSPTA's members who participated in counting the funds.

All funds shall be deposited in the bank account by authorized Officers within 24 hours of receipt, whenever possible. Once accounted for by at least two TNSPTA members, one member may assume responsibility and take such a deposit to the bank for deposit.

4.3 The principal's written consent is required when a fundraising activity is held during school hours or on school property.

4.4 The executive board must obtain written acknowledgement from the principal when TNSPTA funds are secured in the school. Under no circumstances may fundraiser proceeds be stored in a member's place of work or residence.

Notes on recommended changes to Article IX, Budget

- We recommend removing, in its entirety, the current section 3 and replacing it with the text above. The Chancellor's Regulations require that bylaws include a description of our budget process and that they meet the minimum requirements set forth in the template bylaws (see A-660, section III.A.1 and template bylaws available [here](#)). The language proposed here meets those requirements (as does the current language in the bylaws). New sections 3.1 and 3.2 actually provide more detail than is required, with an intention to encourage transparency and participation. The regulations also require that the budget is submitted to the principal upon approval (A-660, section III.A.2).
- New sections 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5 are not intended to substantively change the requirements of the existing bylaws but are rewritten to provide more clarity. The one substantive change is that section 3.5 describes the reason for emergency expenditure (when not spending them would harm or interfere with school programming, operations, health or safety).
- Existing section 3.1 includes guidelines about documentation of financial transactions, handling money, and depositing money. We propose including that language in the new sections 4.2 and 4.3. (These sections appear underlined above because we suggest deleting all of section 3, but in fact these sections contain language in our existing bylaws, currently under the "Budget" section instead of, more appropriately, "Financial Accounting" section.)
- We suggest deleting "that the treasurer must make deposits." The current bylaws have slightly inconsistent language on this topic, elsewhere allowing "authorized Officers" make deposits. We recommend adopting the language that allows an authorized Officer to deposit funds after the funds are accounted for by at least two PTA members.
- The Chancellor's Regulations A-660, Section III.C.3, requires that the principal provides written consent when the fundraising activity is held during school hours or on school property. We suggest adding that requirement to the bylaws for ease of reference.

- The Chancellor’s Regulations, A-660, Section III.C.7, also require that the the principal must acknowledge in writing when TNSPTA funds are secured in the school and that funds cannot be stored in a member’s place of work or residence.

Other Changes Recommended:

Change “verbal” to “oral” in the following sentences:

~~Verbal~~ Oral translations may also be available if requested. Art. III, Sec. 4

The Nominating Committee shall solicit candidates from the TNSPTA in writing and orally ~~verbally~~. Art. VIII, Sec 2

Clarify that the voting body is the group of eligible members present in a meeting (as opposed to all eligible members) and, in keeping with regulations, that voting cannot be done by proxy, absentee ballot, email, or conference call.

Each parent of a child currently enrolled at The Neighborhood School shall be entitled to one vote during any meeting. Each teacher currently employed at The Neighborhood School shall be entitled to one vote during any meeting. Voting by proxy, absentee ballot, email, or conference call is prohibited. ~~Proxy voting or absentee balloting is prohibited.~~ The right of a member to vote may be limited by conflicts of interest restrictions as outlined in the Chancellor’s rules.

Change language to gender neutral language in the following sentences:

The President (or ~~his/her~~ the President’s designee) shall be a mandatory member of the School Leadership Team (SLT). Art. V, Sec. 3

Ensuring that all TNSPTA members receive a ballot for voting and that the election is finalized and then certified by the principal or ~~his/her~~ the principal’s designee immediately following the election. Art. VIII, Sec. 2(4).

A TNSPTA member may not sign a check if ~~she/he~~ the member has any direct or indirect interest in the expenditure. Art. IX, Sec. 2.

Consistently use “Officers” instead of “Executive Board” (there is only one place the bylaws refers to the Executive Board, elsewhere it is Officers):

Two Officers ~~members of the executive board~~ shall constitute a quorum, allowing for official business to be transacted. Art. VII, Sec. 4.