Please read the info below prior to attending National PTA's required board training, then bring this information with you the day of training. You will use this info for activities during the training event.

In this document, the words "board" and "board of directors" refers to your PTA's board of directors as defined by your PTA's bylaws. Typically, boards consist of PTA officers and some committee chairs and other PTA leaders. An executive committee is not the same thing as a board of directors.

PTA Board Leadership

The Basics

Board leadership is a commitment. Board members are stewards of their association and hold a public trust to work together as a *single legal entity*—the board of directors—to conduct PTA's business between general membership meetings. Boards can delegate authority to staff or committees to get work done, but boards are ultimately responsible for the actions of their association.

Why are boards important?

- They are required by law to ensure PTA carries out its mission.
- They hold a position of trust and have "fiduciary" responsibilities to their members.
- They are given power to run the association by the membership via bylaws and elections.
- Boards of directors are ultimately responsible for the viability, credibility, and effectiveness of their PTA.

Boards function as a team. The team succeeds and achieves its goals or the team fails and is ineffective. Conflicts may arise among team members, and it is up to the team as a whole to address the conflict, seek professional assistance if necessary, and create the proper environment for success.

Removal of board members should be used as a last resort, especially removal of individuals elected by membership. Because PTA belongs to its members who run the association through elections and bylaw approval, boards of directors must avoid subverting members' intent. Board members do not have to like each other to be effective as a team; boards simply must learn to work with each other.

Remember: Your PTA is an independent entity: a constituent association of National PTA but a separately-functioning association. Your PTA's board of directors—not National PTA--is responsible for the success or failure of your association. National PTA's involvement is limited by the National PTA Bylaws approved by our members, and by the associated Standards of Affiliation Policy.

Fiduciary Responsibility:

Board fiduciary responsibilities are recognized in state laws. These responsibilities are: care, obedience, and loyalty. Board members are expected to know how these responsibilities apply to them as individuals and as members of the board.

- **Duty of Care,** expectations of board members**:**
    - First and foremost, board members do no harm. They protect PTA assets, the most valuable of which are PTA's name and reputation.
    - Board members follow the "Prudent Person Rule"– what would a prudent person do in this situation? Ask in this situation? Say?
    - Board members advocate for and participate in their PTA's work.
    - Board members act in good faith using their best judgement and basing decisions and actions on what is in the best interest of PTA.
    - Board members attend meetings, participate, educate themselves on issues, research, discuss, and stay informed.

- **Duty of Obedience**, expectations of board members**:**
    - Board members know and obey applicable state and federal laws.
    - Board members follow PTA bylaws as approved by members, and associated standing rules and policies. Board members do not create standing rules and policies that are more restrictive than bylaws.
    - Board members follow the applicable sections of the National PTA Bylaws, and keep their state constituent associations in good standing by abiding by National PTA's Standards of Affiliation Policy.
    - Board members are faithful to PTA's mission, using the mission as the foundation to rule and decision-making.

- **Duty of Loyalty**, expectation of board members**:**
    - When making PTA decisions, board members place their PTA's interests over those of family, personal, and friends.
    - Board members maintain confidentiality about sensitive PTA issues and information, allow a safe atmosphere for boards to make decisions, and avoid sharing information that could harm PTA's assets and reputation.
    - Board members disclose all potential conflicts of interest and do not personally gain from board participation. They ensure their PTA has a Conflict of Interest Policy.

These fiduciary responsibilities correlate to a number of basic responsibilities for a nonprofit board. The following pages lay out the ten basic responsibilities of boards along with questions you may want to consider when assessing your board's actions and effectiveness in fulfilling PTA's mission and your board's fiduciary responsibilities.

Ten Basic Board Responsibilities:

1. **Follow the mission and purposes of PTA**.
    a. Decisions are made based on PTA mission and purposes.
    b. Boards advocate on behalf of PTA's mission.
    c. Boards sets goals in order to achieve the mission.
    d. And boards create plans and job descriptions that align with PTA mission achievement.

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Does mission drive the work my board does?
Is every board member prepared to advocate on for PTA's mission?

2. **Select the chief executive/chief staff member:**
    a. Determine what staffing is necessary for your PTA to thrive.
    b. Develop appropriate job descriptions for staff members.
    c. Determine what skills, expertise, and personal attributes are needed by your chief staff person and research industry standard compensation accordingly.
    d. Conduct an informed staff search and seek all candidates appropriate for the job.
    e. Ensure smooth transition for new staff and for new staffing structures.
    f. Plan for future and assess the level of staffing required to meet PTA's mission now and in the future.

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How will volunteer trends affect the future or my association?
What type of staffing will we need in five years and how do plan to make that happen?

3. **Support and evaluate the chief executive/chief staff member:**
    a. Your PTA clearly delineates the difference between staff work and volunteer work.
    b. Staff and volunteer have complementary responsibilities that do not overlap.
    c. Your board provides a supportive environment for staff, ensures frequent two-way feedback.
    d. Your board ensures a yearly staff evaluation takes place.

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Do we provide a non-interfering work environment for staff?
Do we understand state employment laws? Does every board member know how to work with staff?

4. **Ensure effective planning:**
    a. Set long- and short-term goals, and create a strategic plan.
    b. Your board agrees on outcomes and holds the board accountable to achieve those outcomes.
    c. Your board assesses forward progress, monitors plans, and makes necessary adjustments.
    d. Your board looks at the big picture and plans for future.

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Is at least one of our meetings used for planning each year? Do we all agree on the same definition of success?
What do we measure? Do we consider societal and economic changes as we plan?

5. **Ensure adequate resources**:
    a. Boards ensure adequate "people" resources—professional staff, volunteers with a variety of skills and contacts, board members that ensure diversity of opinion and perspective.
    b. Boards ensure a reliable stream of financial resources by diversifying funding streams and easing reliance on membership dues.
    c. Board ensure influence by growing and diversifying your membership.
    d. Board ensure professional support to assist in governance and organizational compliance.
    e. Boards ensure all resources are used wisely on actions that get results.

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Do we assess expenditures vs. outcomes?
Do we have a sponsorship plan? Does our board donate to PTA?
Who is our professional attorney, parliamentarian and accountant?

6. Monitor and strengthen programs and services:
    a. Boards discuss and brainstorm ways to assess, improve and effectively deliver programming and services
    b. They poll/survey members/volunteers to evaluate needs and effectiveness of services.
    c. They monitor attendance and outcomes of events, and
    d. Evaluate the effectiveness of PTA's current structure to provide service and meet needs.
    e. Boards evaluate programs and services on their impact on children and families and achieving the mission of PTA.

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Do we set aside time to discuss and evaluate the work we do?
Do we ask our members what they want?
When was the last time we did away with or added a new service, program or event?

7. Enhance PTA's public image:
    a. Board are aware of PTA's public image—inside and outside of PTA-- and clearly message success, value and achievement.
    b. All board members are PTA ambassadors, speak positively of PTA, protect PTA's image.
    c. All members know the state constituent association's goals, mission, and successes.
    d. The greater community knows PTA, has a high opinion of PTA, and recognizes PTA as a trusted partner and successful association.

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Do our members know what we do?
Are all board members able to clearly message PTA value?
Do we use all types of media to get the word out?

8. **Ensure legal and ethical integrity:**
    a. Board members are all aware of state and federal compliance requirements and diligently ensure compliance.
    b. Board acts transparently, providing accurate info about revenues, expenses, and function to government agencies and to members.
    c. Board holds itself accountable to mission/purpose, bylaws, and values of association and maintains the trusts of its members.

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Do we have a Code of Ethics? Do we hold each other accountable?
Does the entire board see and understand federal and state filings?
Do we have good financial oversight and written policies?

9. **Build a competent board:**
    a. Board understands board composition matters and creates policy and environment that lead to boards with diverse skills, opinions, and perspectives.
    b. Board has a recruitment policy and practices that seeks and grows new leaders and engages entire board in this process.
    c. Board ensures orientation for new members and continuing education and development for all members.
    d. Board regularly assesses its overall function and the function of individual board members.
    e. Board members hold each other accountable, and clear job descriptions and plans of work exist.

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What skills does our board need to achieve the PTA mission now and in the future? Do we assess our needs?
Do we prioritize board recruitment, orientation and diversity? Do we have a plan?

10. **Protect PTA assets and provide financial oversight:**
    a. Board has sound financial planning, and reviews and approves budget.
    b. Board receives and reviews regular financial reports and monitors budget expenditures.
    c. Board ensures adequate reserves are in place.
    d. Board minimizes unnecessary risk, is aware of potential liability, and properly insures.

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Is everyone on the board able to read a financial report? Are practices and policies in place to protect assets?
Do we have adequate savings? Do we require a professional audit on a regular basis?

Review this document before your board training.
You will use it during board activities and may need to refer to its contents during your training.