

Running Your PTA During These Unusual Times

FAQs & Answers from New Mexico PTA

Summer 2020

Dear PTA Leaders,

The New Mexico PTA Board of Directors wants to thank you, in advance, for your efforts regarding the continuation of the work of your PTA and your advocacy for your students in these real and ever-changing circumstances. We appreciate your flexibility, creativity, and positive attitudes as we all face new hurdles daily. Please don't hesitate to contact us with questions as they arise. We understand that you will do the best job you can to advocate for your students, school, and community through these difficult and stressful times. We're with you and available via email at nmpta@newmexicopta.org. Check our web site, www.newmexicopta.org, to see previous issues of COVID FAQs.

Stay well, stay strong, and stay in touch!

Question: Do officers of our PTA have to have children enrolled at our school during the current school year?

- Many families are opting for alternative forms of education for the 2020-2021 school year to fit their family's needs. This may affect some of your PTA's officers and volunteers.
- First, check your bylaws. Some PTAs have added a clause in Article VI, Section 4 regarding this circumstance.
- If your bylaws do not require student enrollment, then no, your PTA officers do not need to have a student enrolled at your school for the current school year. They DO need to be dues paying members of your PTA.

Question: Without physical access to our school building, how can we "post" required documents like bylaws and budgets?

- The purpose of posting a document is to give PTA members an opportunity to review the document before voting to approve it. Do what you can to accomplish that same purpose. How can you make sure that PTA members have access to documents for review prior to voting? Email the document, post on your PTA's web page, use social media, and post a physical copy in the window of your school for parents to see while they're standing outside.
- While most of your PTA members won't have access to the inside of your school building, don't forget your teacher members! Still post important documents in the building to reach those who will see it there. (or ask a school secretary to post it for you).

Question: How should an audit of our 2019-2020 books be conducted during this time of social distancing?

- Being limited to a group of 5 people is perfect for your audit! You need three non-check signers to audit the books and your treasurer available to answer questions. That leaves one more spot in case your president or principal would like to sit in also. Meeting outdoors and sitting at separate tables will help with social distancing. Wear your masks and be safe!

- If an in-person audit isn't an option for your PTA, an audit could be done virtually. This gets trickier because each person performing the audit needs access to the treasurer's books. You can share screens, scan & share documents, or 'show' them to each other via video.

Question: I'm a principal at a school with a PTA. Where can I get more information about how our PTA should be running?

- Thank you for your support of PTA! If you would like to know what resources are available to your PTA from New Mexico PTA and National PTA, please feel free to contact our office at 505-881-0712 or nmpta@newmexicopta.org. Our president, MaryBeth Weeks, would also be happy to talk to you about your questions and to help you support your parent community – president@newmexicopta.org.

Question: Can our PTA take a break for a year?

- The short answer is no. Your PTA could complete your 2019-2020 audit and 990 to be 'okay' with the IRS, but you would not be in compliance with NMPTA, and therefore, not eligible for your 501(c)3 status.
- Times are hard, things change constantly, and nobody knows what to expect. Don't give up! Let us help you PTA virtually! Your voice matters now more than ever. Administrators and State Education Leaders need to hear your voice and hear how today's learning environment is working for your students. Remember that there is power in numbers and your membership in your school's PTA, New Mexico PTA, and National PTA is a powerful testament that family voice matters and things change when collectively we speak for our student's health and well-being.

Question: How can I get more help and answers regarding the challenges we may face this year?

- Register for convention! The NMPTA 2020 Leadership Convention will be held *virtually* August 20-22. Attendees will receive position training, motivation to face our 'new normal,' and more. You can hear from National PTA leaders and participate in live chats with state leaders. Prices have been lowered due to the virtual format.
- <https://www.newmexicopta.org/convention/>