

Running Your PTA Virtually
FAQs that might come up during 2020-2021 and beyond!

Spring 2021

Dear PTA Leaders,

Thank you for your continued energy, creativity, and flexibility while we are all inventing a new normal. Your efforts are not unnoticed and you are not alone! PTAs across the nation are dealing with similar situations and doing their best to support the students and teachers in their communities. As we continue to work together things WILL get better and we'll all be stronger for it!

Please continue to reach out to us with questions, concerns, and to share your successes.

nmpta@newmexicopta.org www.newmexicopta.org

Question: What if we can't find volunteers to serve as next year's officers?

- You are not alone! The New Mexico PTA Board of Directors is also feeling the difficulties of recruiting new leaders. We have worked with a registered parliamentarian to come up with a possible solution. Consider using this resolution at your PTA also: <https://www.newmexicopta.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/NMPTA-Extension-of-Officer-Term-and-Special-Election-Resolution.docx>. This resolution will be put before the membership for a vote at our Annual Convention in April.
- If your membership votes to approve this resolution then current officers who would normally be at term limit would be allowed to serve for one more year. This does not exclude the possibility of new officers that would like to volunteer.
- If you do not have a full slate of prospective volunteers yet – don't worry! Make personal contacts. Use all methods of communication to let your community know about the need. If you don't have all officers by the time you hold your election, just elect those that you do have, and then keep looking. Officers can be elected at any time; the sooner they are identified and elected, the sooner they can begin training, but don't stop looking!

Question: How do we hold elections of new officers for the next school year?

- Your officer elections should take place at a general membership meeting. If you have more than one person running for any officer position, you can hold a meeting for candidates to give speeches and then send out a Survey Monkey or something similar that

allows members to vote. Results of the election can be published via email, web page, or newsletter. Remember that only paid PTA members can vote.

- Candidates running for an elected position in your PTA need to be a paid member of your PTA. Check your Bylaws, ARTICLE V: MEMBERSHIP AND DUES, to see how many days need to pass from when dues are paid before full voting privileges are in effect. Prospective candidates will need to join your PTA through the online MemberHub store prior to your meeting/elections.

Question: How do we go about training new PTA leaders?

- Any PTA member who is interested in joining your PTA leadership team or just has general questions about leadership roles in PTA should be encouraged to take any number of e-learning courses offered on the National PTA website www.pta.org/elearning. This is a great time to look into those 20- to 40-minute courses and learn more about the role of PTA's leadership and advocacy efforts across the country.
- Incoming PTA leaders should register for convention! "New Mexico PTA's 106th Annual Convention – A Virtual Event" will be held virtually April 29 – May 1, 2021. 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/events/convention/>

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

- Register for convention! "New Mexico PTA's 106th Annual Convention – A Virtual Event" will be held virtually April 29 – May 1, 2021. 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.
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Question: Can our PTA take a break for a year?

- The short answer is no. Your PTA could complete your 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 do we hold PTA meetings?

- Due to the current extraordinary circumstances, all efforts to follow your bylaws should be made but understand that some exceptions may arise.
- General membership meetings of your PTA should still be held even if school buildings have been closed. Important votes regarding new officers and next year's budget usually happen at the end of the school year. Meetings can be held electronically – either using a video conferencing platform or conference call. There are free video conferencing platforms that allow limited time meetings. Please be aware of privacy and security policies. Conference calls can also be held using a service such as www.freeconferencecall.com.
- Whether a video conference or conference call remember to record in your meeting minutes the list of attendees.
- If you need to change the date or time of a regularly scheduled PTA meeting, check your bylaws, ARTICLE XI: GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS, to find out how many days' written notice needs to be given to your members of that change. In that same article you can find how many days' written notice needs to be given to call a special meeting of your membership (a meeting that was not previously scheduled). Remember, that quorum rules still apply in an electronic meeting.
- Do your best to publicize your meeting and let members know the important topics to be addressed.
- If you need further guidance, please email vp.membership@newmexicopta.org. New Mexico PTA has been consulting with a Registered Parliamentarian to better understand available options covered by bylaws.

Question: Should we continue to ask new people to join our PTA?

- Yes, your PTA membership year continues through June 30. You will want to try and recruit new members this spring, especially those new to your school that will look to your PTA for guidance about all things school related. You'll need to "think outside the box" as to how to contact incoming members of your community and let them know the benefits of joining your PTA.
- Please continue to report monthly membership through MemberHub. Your MemberHub account allows you to accept online memberships from community members.

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.
- Principals are also welcome to register for convention! “New Mexico PTA’s 106th Annual Convention – A Virtual Event” will be held virtually April 29 – May 1, 2021. 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.
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