

# SECRETARY

Washington State

**PTA**<sup>®</sup>

*everychild.onevoice.*



## LEADERSHIP PACKET 3

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[www.wastatepta.org](http://www.wastatepta.org)  
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WASHINGTON STATE PTA

**VISION:** “Making every child’s potential a reality.”

**MISSION:**

**PTA is:**

- A powerful voice for all children,
- A relevant resource for families and communities, and
- A strong advocate for the education and well-being of every child.

**The Washington State PTA accomplishes the mission of PTA by**

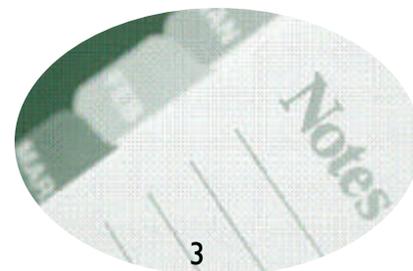
- Speaking on behalf of children and youth in the schools, in the community, and before governmental bodies and other organizations that make decisions affecting children;
- Supporting parents\* in developing skills to raise, protect and advocate for their children; and
- Encouraging parent\* and community involvement.

*\* Parent may include adults who play an important role in a child’s family life since other adults (grandparents, aunts, uncles, or guardians) may carry the primary responsibility for a child’s health, welfare, education and safety.*



## Table of Contents

Sample Job Description	3
General Responsibilities	3
Minutes	4
Records Retention Timetable	6
Legal Documents Notebook	7
Best Practices Checklist	back



WSPTA Leadership Resources webpage:

**[www.wastatepta.org/leaders/leaders.htm](http://www.wastatepta.org/leaders/leaders.htm)**

In the "Members Only" section of the Washington State PTA website you will find resources available exclusively to PTA members. This page contains PTA & the Law Resources, Leadership Packet materials, Money Matters, and a variety of resources for PTA officers and members. To access the members only site, your log-on is

**PTA**member and password is **leader**. Call the State PTA office at 1-800-562-3804 if you have any questions.

# Secretary

**The Secretary** shall take minutes and record all business transacted at each meeting (board and general meetings) of the unit/council, and of the executive committee, making sure all minutes are complete. The secretary must prepare the minutes for approval at the next meeting.



Together with the president, the secretary should plan the meeting agenda and inform the president of any unfinished business at the meetings. The secretary also issues all “calls” or notices of meetings and conducts such correspondence as the board of directors or executive committee may designate.

At meetings the secretary also determines if a quorum is present, handles attendance, and in the event both the president and the vice president are absent, calls the meeting to order and asks for nominations for a chair pro-tem.

The secretary should work with the treasurer and the membership chair to keep an up-to-date roster of members and keep an up-to-date record of all committees, **making sure the names, addresses, email addresses and phone numbers of new officers and any changes in this data are entered via WSPTA’s online membership enrollment program**, and serve in other ways as directed by the standing rules or by the president.

It is important that the secretary also attend a

State PTA “secretary’s” workshop to learn in greater detail how to better perform this job.

At the end of the year (June 30) the secretary should be sure all copies of the



**Your PTA’s Meeting Minutes are required as part of the application for WSPTA Awards such as Standards of Excellence and Honor Unit.**

legal documents notebooks and permanent record files are in order and ready to transfer to new officers.

## General Responsibilities

### Correspondence

The handling of incoming and outgoing correspondence varies from organization to organization. The secretary will usually help compose and type outgoing correspondence at the president’s request. The secretary should read important correspondence (received by the unit/council) to the members at the president’s request.

### Filing

Hard copies of all minutes, correspondence, committee reports, newsletters, meeting notices, etc., should be maintained, by the secretary, in the official files of the unit/council.

### Newsletters

The secretary should provide meeting highlights (both general membership meetings and board meetings) and other important information to the unit/council newsletter editor for inclusion in the newsletter.

### Meetings to be attended by the Secretary

The secretary must attend and keep minutes at all: (a) general membership meetings; (b) board of directors meetings; and, (c) executive committee meetings.

Other meetings which the secretary should attend include: (a) State PTA (including region) workshops and conferences; (b) “PTA and the Law” class; (c) council meetings (if the unit is a member of a council); (d) the programs, activities and events of the PTA.

### Transition

The outgoing and incoming secretaries should meet, prior to July 1st, and transfer all records and discuss the record keeping system and the secretary’s role and responsibilities. The term of office is one year (July 1st-June 30th).

### Supplies

To assist the president, and to be prepared to



answer any questions which may occur, the secretary should have the following material available at **every** meeting:

- I. Document Notebook  
(a 3-ring binder, tabbed as follows)
  - WSPTA Bylaws
  - Standing Rules
  - Budget

- Board of Directors' roster (current and previous year)
  - Membership list (current and previous year)
  - Parliamentary procedure information
2. Minutes Notebook  
(a 3-ring binder, tabbed as follows)  
This notebook should contain 2 years of minutes. Minutes older than 2 years can be kept in a separate binder. Please note: Minutes are a permanent record and are **never** discarded. They must be kept in a safe location.
    - General membership meeting minutes
    - Board of directors' meeting minutes
    - Executive committee meeting minutes

**Minutes are  
permanent records.  
They are kept in a safe place for as  
long as the PTA unit/council exists.**

## Minutes

**The minutes** of a PTA meeting are a permanent record of what occurred at the meeting, and provide an account of the meeting for members who could not attend. PTA meeting minutes are more than a convenient record. **Minutes are a necessary legal document.** If a PTA unit/council is a nonprofit corporation, **the law requires that minutes be kept** of board of directors, general membership and other meetings. Courts and agencies have in past instances carefully studied the texts of meeting minutes when the organization's policies, programs or actions were challenged for tax or other legal reasons.

Secretaries should draft minutes with the realization that the minutes might one day be examined in an audit or investigation of the PTA or used in litigation involving the unit/council. It is essential that the minutes accurately reflect what has occurred at a meeting. **Minutes should be a record of what was considered and accomplished at a meeting, not a record of each statement that was made by those attending.** Minutes should

never include personal opinions, interpretations, or comments.

Minutes are written in third

person. Descriptive phrases do not belong in the factual report of the business conducted.



### Essential Components Of Minutes

- Minutes should indicate the place, date, and time of the meeting. Minutes should contain the statement that notice of the meeting was given to those entitled to receive notice.
- Minutes should state whether the required quorum was present.
- Minutes should contain a statement that the minutes of the previous meeting had been distributed (or read) and were approved either as written or as changed; all changes to the minutes

# Minutes (continued)

- of the previous meeting should be noted.
- The names of those attending should be listed in the minutes. If a sign-in sheet is used, this can be attached to the minutes instead of listing attendees.



- Minutes should follow a standard format.
  - Minutes should describe each motion, report, or communication made at the meeting, as well as naming the person making the motion, report, or communication.
  - Minutes should note any action taken in response to each motion, report, or communication.
- If a counted vote is taken, the number of votes “for” and “against” a motion should be recorded in the minutes.
  - Election results should be recorded in the minutes.
  - Copies of written contracts, leases, insurance policies, and other agreements approved at a meeting should be attached to the minutes.

## Procedure For Taking Minutes

In the first paragraph:

1. Kind of meeting—general membership, board of directors, executive committee
2. Name of association
3. Date, time, and location
4. Proper notice was given to all members
5. List of those in attendance (A sign-in sheet may be attached to the minutes instead.)
6. The presence of a quorum

## Pledge Of Allegiance:

Statement about this activity and who led it.

## Inspiration:

Statement about this activity and who presented it.

## Approval Of Minutes:

Minutes of the previous meeting must be approved. They can be distributed and approved as printed: Or, they can be read and approved as read.

## Correction Of Minutes:

Corrections to the minutes should be placed in the margin of the minutes with a line drawn carefully

around the portion corrected. The corrections should be dated and initialed.

## Treasurer’s Report:

The financial report should be attached to the minutes, but is not voted on or approved.

## Reports:

Record all reports (whether from an individual or a committee) and who made them. A brief summary may be included or the report, if written, can be attached to the minutes.

## Correspondence/Communication:

Note any correspondence that is read.

## Motions:

- Record all motions — except those that are withdrawn — exactly in the order made and using the exact language of the motion.
- Record the name of the maker of the motion, but not the seconder.
- Record all action on each motion, in the order it took place.
- If a counted vote is taken, record the votes “for” and “against” the motion.

## Discussion:

Discussion is generally not included in the minutes unless a summary is essential to understand the action taken. If this is necessary, names are never included and the summary should be in general terms and as brief as possible.

## Program:

Record the names or participants, the topic, and the method of presentation. Do not include details.

## Adjournment:

Record the time of adjournment and the date of the next meeting.

## Signing the Minutes:

The minutes are signed by the secretary. The words “Respectfully Submitted” are not used.



# Minutes (continued)

## Meeting Information:

The secretary, together with the president, should plan the meeting agenda. This includes reminding the president of any unfinished business to be considered. Once the agenda is set, the secretary should issue the “call” or notice of the meeting. In developing the agenda for the meeting, these items need to be discussed and considered:



- **Do NOT have a meeting just to have a meeting.** If one is scheduled, but there is no business to be done – CANCEL it. In that case the secretary would issue cancellation notices. Likewise, if something critical arises and needs to be addressed by the membership – CALL a meeting.
- **Identify why the meeting is being held.** Some possible reasons include meeting legal requirements, budget approval, election of officers, decision on a fund raiser, decision on levy support, and to provide information to members on a community issue.
- **The agenda should be:**
  - Relevant:** The agenda should be coordinated with the purpose of the meeting and the meeting items should be related to one another.
  - Organized:** The agenda should be prepared in advance with thought and organized by interest and/or importance.
  - Flexible:** If time limits are set for individual agenda items, additional time should be allowed if the discussion is good or if the input being received is good.
  - Published:** The agenda should be distributed IN ADVANCE, if at all possible, and additional copies should be available at the meeting.
- **Put ACTION items** (items that require a decision by the members) **at the beginning of the meeting** when interest and participation are high. Action items are usually important and the meeting should be organized with the important items first.
- **Do NOT read anything aloud that members have had an opportunity to read ahead of time, including minutes.** Minutes should be distributed in advance.

- **Start at the appointed time.** If someone is late, do NOT back up.
- **The meeting notice should contain the planned adjournment time.** Action items should be finished by the planned adjournment time. Discussion can continue after the planned adjournment time if the members agree.

## Records Retention Timetable

### Permanent

Articles of Incorporation/Amendments  
 Contracts (still in effect)  
 Legal correspondence  
 Documentation of equipment currently owned by the PTA (asset list showing depreciation of 20% per year)  
 Minutes (board and general membership meetings)  
 PTA Charter  
 WSPTA Bylaws  
 Current Standing Rules  
 Application for tax-exemption  
 Letter of determination of tax-exempt status from IRS  
 Letter assigning Employer Identification Number (EIN)  
 Correspondence with IRS  
 Forms 990/990-N/990EZ and 990-T filed with IRS  
 Golden Acorn and other award recipients  
 Membership/Board Rosters

### Ten Years

Annual reports to Secretary of State  
 Annual registration for Charitable Solicitations  
 Annual financial review reports  
 Annual treasurer’s reports  
 Employer’s reports and records (if PTA is an employer)  
 1096 Annual Summary and Transmittal (if filed)

### Seven Years

Accounts payable records  
 Budgets  
 Canceled checks  
 Check register  
 Monthly financial reports  
 Income records  
 Receipts/invoices

### Three Years

Correspondence (general)  
 Insurance certificates

Your PTA must protect and preserve the documents and records that relate to its legal existence and operation. Many of these documents are subject to public inspection. Even if not subject to public inspection, these records are essential to the operation of your organization and, if you are audited, will be subject to production. To truly safeguard your PTA's organizational records, you should keep them in a safe deposit box at a bank. If that is for some reason not possible, the records should be maintained in a fireproof safe. Most organizations maintain their corporate records in a three-ring binder (or several binders) with tabs for different categories of documents.

## RECORDS YOU MUST MAINTAIN: LEGAL DOCUMENTS NOTEBOOK

The following documents need to be maintained by your PTA. Those items in ***bold and italics*** are subject to public inspection.

### Evidence of Corporate Status

- ***Conformed Articles of Incorporation***
- ***Amendments to and restatements of Articles of Incorporation***
- ***Certificate of Incorporation***
- ***Annual Corporate Reports***

### Evidence of Charitable Solicitations Act Compliance

- Copy of Registration Form
- Copy of the Letter from the Secretary of State's office acknowledging registration.

### Evidence of Tax-Exempt Status

- ***Completed Form 1023 or 1024 (application for tax exempt status)***
- ***All Documents submitted in support of application***
- ***Correspondence with IRS regarding Application***
- ***IRS Determination Letter***

### Other Federal Tax Matters

- Letter assigning Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- ***Form 990 or 990 EZ or 990-N (e-postcard) (exempt for public inspection is schedule B of 990)***
- Form 990-T
- All correspondence with the IRS

### Internal Governance Documents

- ***WSPTA Uniform Bylaws***
- Standing Rules, policies or written procedures
- Special Meeting Notices
- Membership Meeting Minutes
- Board Meeting Minutes
- Membership Lists

### Financial and Insurance Matters

- Certificates of Insurance
- Policies of Insurance
- Hold Harmless Agreements (if any)
- Bank Signature Cards and authorized signers
- List of banks and bank account numbers
- Restricted Donation Agreements (Grant Agreements)

### Other Documents

- List of equipment and furniture owned by PTA (asset list showing depreciation)
- A current copy of PTA AND THE LAW
- A current copy of WSPTA MONEY MATTERS
- Any other material or information the PTA feels is important to its legal status.

It is very important that every PTA maintain a **LEGAL DOCUMENTS NOTEBOOK**. This is a notebook into which the PTA places all documents relating to the legal status of the unit. The notebook should always be kept up to date. The PTA's standing rules should state who has the notebook and who is responsible for updating it. For example, the secretary may be responsible for maintaining the original notebook and making copies for the president and treasurer.

**☐ OUR PTA IS CHILD-FOCUSED AND RESPONSIVE TO OUR MEMBERS.**

- Clearly defined goals have been established by our PTA and approved by the Board of Directors and/or membership.
- Programs and activities were developed to address those goals.
- Regular communication was provided to members concerning PTA issues and activities.
- Our PTA determined our members' needs.
- Our membership campaign is ongoing and welcomes all who seek to join and participate.
- Meetings are held to address the needs of the membership and conduct the business of the association.
- Our volunteers are recognized.
- Our PTA annually identifies an outstanding volunteer in our community and honors him/her with a Golden Acorn Award.
- Our PTA annually identifies an outstanding staff member in our community and honors him/her with an Outstanding Educator Award.
- Our PTA annually identifies an outstanding child advocate in our community and honors him/her with an Outstanding Advocate Award.

**☐ OUR PTA PRACTICES FISCAL AND FIDUCIARY RESPONSIBILITY.**

- Our PTA's budget was approved by the membership.
- A financial review was conducted of last year's books and records.
- Regular financial reports were made to the board of directors and general membership.
- Our PTA's standing rules were updated and approved by the membership.
- The Nominating Committee was elected by the membership.
- Our PTA's officers were elected by the membership.
- Our PTA purchased insurance.
- Our PTA's board of directors held regular meetings.

**☐ OUR PTA LEADERS ARE KNOWLEDGEABLE, INVOLVED AND WELL TRAINED.**

- Our PTA leaders attended a Region Conference or received person-to-person training from a service delivery team member.
- Our PTA leaders attended PTA and the Law.
- Our PTA leaders attended Legislative Assembly.
- Our PTA leaders attended the last State PTA Convention.
- Our PTA leaders will attend the next State PTA Convention.
- Our PTA has a process to evaluate the current year's goals, programs and activities.
- Our PTA shares information received from State and National PTA with our members.
- Our PTA has a process to pass on materials and records to next year's officers and committee chairs.
- Our PTA participates in council meetings (if PTA is a member of a council).