

ELEMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

All meetings share certain common elements. Some meetings may be more formal than others, but to be productive all must be organized and well-run. An agenda establishes the order of business. Be sure to follow the agenda, discussing and completing each item before going on to the next. It is much less confusing to stick to one topic at a time. The use of parliamentary procedure protects the rights of the members, while allowing the group to discuss the business at hand.

Meeting Dates

Set regularly scheduled meeting dates at convenient times for General Membership and Board of Director meetings to allow people to plan. Perhaps schedule meetings at two different dates or times to allow more people to attend. Check with other PTAs, feeder schools, and others in your community to coordinate dates.



Tips for Presiding Officers

Arrive early. Know the Bylaws. Study parliamentary procedure. Keep calm. Be tactful, appreciative, courteous, charitable, and well-groomed.

Presiding Officer

The President, or the Vice-President in the President's absence, is the presiding officer. The presiding officer calls the meeting to order at the specified time and, if a quorum is present, proceeds with business. The President refers to self impersonally as "the chair." In formal meetings of the General Membership, the President takes no part in business and should not express an opinion while presiding. The President facilitates the business before the group. In meetings with fewer participants, such as the Executive Committee, the President may participate, and parliamentary procedure may be less formal.

Preparing the Agenda

Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised states that the Secretary may prepare the agenda. However, many Presidents prefer to prepare it themselves. Read the previous minutes to find any business left unfinished at the last meeting. Confer with officers and committee chairs to see if they have a report. Have names of those who will speak written on the agenda. Do not call on anyone who does not have a report.

Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure is a consistent set of rules that governs associations. The rules protect the rights of all attendees, require courtesy to all, and show partiality to none. It is not necessary to know all the rules, but a good basic knowledge is helpful in conducting a productive meeting. Have a copy of the Bylaws and Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised available at meetings for reference. It is helpful to have a Board member with some knowledge of parliamentary procedure. Most PTAs do not need a registered parliamentarian at every meeting.

Quorum

According to Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised, a quorum is the number of voting members who must be present to conduct business legally. The quorum refers to the number of such members, which is established in the Bylaws. For Board meetings, it is 50% of the Board roster plus one. Do not count a person more than once even if they serve in more than one position. Every meeting shall have the membership roster available and use a sign-in sheet. This is the best method to use when establishing a quorum. *A sample Roster sign-in sheet is in the LAPTA Toolkit: Secretary.*

