

OPERATING GUIDANCE

Support for Louisiana PTA Local Units



PTA Members as Candidates for Public Office

The Louisiana Parent Teacher Association recognizes the fact that the experiences and interest gained by its members through participation in PTA activities make them particularly qualified to serve the community as elected officials such as members of the local school boards of education.

PTAs are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and must remain neutral and nonpartisan during elections. PTA members running for office may not seek PTA endorsement to support their election. If a PTA member runs for an elected office, no endorsement by the PTA should be given or implied. The inclusion of a reference to PTA service or honors on a list of the candidate's qualifications for office is permitted.

PTA members who are likely to be recognized locally as being active PTA spokesmen or leaders, and who choose to enter the political or legislative arenas in their private, non-PTA capacities are strongly urged to avoid even the appearance that their private activities have, in any way, the endorsement, approval, or support of the PTA.

PTA members who consider public office while they serve as PTA spokesmen are urged to weigh the impact their candidacy, appointment, or election could have on PTA's tax-exempt status.

Neither government regulations nor PTA policy prohibit local unit or state PTA officers and other leaders from serving on commissions or other boards active in areas of concern to the PTA, provided that such membership is not designed to support partisan interests such as those of any political party or candidate.

During the course of a campaign, candidates for public office do not discuss political or legislative matters at PTA meetings unless appearing at a candidates' forum where all candidates for designated offices have been invited to speak.

Individual candidates cannot be invited to address PTA meetings, even if they are PTA members, unless all other candidates are invited. This avoids the reality or appearance of bias or support of an individual candidate.

There is no restriction on a member who is running for office from performing his or her regular PTA duties. In addition, there are general basic responsibilities of nonprofit boards that should be strongly considered by members seeking office:

1. Avoid even the appearance of a partisan political activity that might embarrass the board or the association and disclose any possible conflicts to the board in a timely fashion.
2. Maintain independence and objectivity and do what a sense of fairness, ethics, and personal integrity dictate, even though not necessarily obliged to do so by law, regulation, or custom.
3. Be mindful to keep PTA and campaign activities separate.

Released September 6, 2022