

## SECTION 3

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## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

### **The Executive Committee consists of the:**

- Officers of the PTA/PTSA elected by the general membership;
- Parliamentarian, appointed by the President; and
- Principal of the school or a representative appointed by the Principal to represent him or her.

### **The duties of the Executive Committee:**

- Appoint chairpersons and members of Standing Committees.
- Approve the Plans of Work of the Standing Committees.
- Schedule Board of Directors and association meetings.
- Approve routine bills within the limits of the budget.
- Conduct the business of the PTA between board meetings.
- Develop goals for the association for presentation to the Board of Directors and general membership for approval.
- Make a report of the Executive Committee action items at each Board of Directors meeting.
- Keep minutes for Executive Committee meetings. The Executive Committee minutes are not read at general meetings or Board of Directors meetings, but committee actions are reported.

### **Other References**

- Local Unit Bylaws, Article XI, Executive Committee for specific information about the Executive Committee.
- Refer to the *Basic PTA Information and Management* section of this resource for information about Parliamentarians and their duties.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### **The Board of Directors consists of the:**

- Officers of the PTA/PTSA elected by the general membership;
- Chairpersons of Standing Committees (appointed by Executive Committee);
- Parliamentarian, appointed by the President; and
- Principal of the school or a representative appointed by the Principal to represent him or her. (In other words, the Executive Committee plus chairpersons of Standing Committees)

### **The duties of the Board of Directors:**

- Transact necessary business in the intervals between association meetings and other business that may be referred to it by the association.
- Create or dissolve standing or special committees.
- Present a report at the regular meetings of the association.
- Select an auditor or an auditing committee to audit the treasurer's accounts.
- Prepare and submit a budget for the fiscal year to the association for adoption.
- Approve routine bills within the limits of the budget.
- Fill all vacancies in office.
- Conduct hearings for removal from office.
- Keep minutes for Board of Directors meetings. The Board of Directors minutes are not read at general meetings, but committee actions are reported.

The Board of Directors does not have the authority to make or authorize expenditures that are not in the budget. All money spent must be voted on by the membership.

### **Other Resources**

- Local Unit Bylaws, Article X, Board of Directors for more specific information on the Board of Directors.

## PRESIDENT

The President (or Co-Presidents) is elected by the Local Unit members to direct the affairs of the association in cooperation with the other members of the Executive Committee and to represent its members.

Please note that most local units do *not* have a President-Elect. This office is helpful at the National and State PTA level; however, the office of President-Elect is not considered a practical or advisable position for Local Unit and Council PTAs. Traditional duties of the President-Elect (i.e., perform duties of the President in his/her absence, work in cooperation with the President to fulfill other duties as may be assigned) are handled by the Vice President at Local and Council PTAs.

### Resources

- PTA Back to School Kit – <http://www.ptakit.org/PTA-President/index.aspx>
- Local Unit Bylaws, Article VII, Duties of Officers, Section 1 for specific information about the President's duties.

### The President Shall:

- Serve for a term of office specified in the local unit bylaws.
- Know and follow the bylaws of the association.
- Cooperate with the other members of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors.
- Appoint, in conjunction with Executive Committee, chairpersons and members of Standing Committees.
- Develop and/or update a procedure book.
- Consult with the school Principal on all matters relating to the school.
- Invite teachers to participate as active members and chairpersons.
- Preside at all meetings of the general membership, Board of Directors and Executive Committee.
- Expedite meetings by preparing an agenda, opening and closing meetings on time and by working with the board before the meeting to learn who has reports or additions to the agenda.
- Attend or send a representative to Council and District meetings, workshops, PTA conventions, Leadership Conferences and other related meetings.
- Ensure that all required reports and forms are completed and returned to the state office by the designated deadline dates.
- Instruct secretary to copy and distribute bylaws to all members of the board of directors.
- Serve as an ex-officio member of all committees except the nominating and audit committees.
- Complete and approve a State Board Member Field Service Request Form, if one is requested to attend a local unit activity or program.

### As Administrative Officer, the President:

- Studies information and materials received from Georgia and National PTAs and distributes materials promptly to officers and committee chairpersons.
- Studies bylaws and materials passed on from predecessor.
- Holds meetings of the Executive Committee and Board of Directors to discuss the plans and business of the association.
- Consults with officers and committee chairpersons before each meeting to see that all details of the meeting are planned and ready.

- Calls upon each chairperson to prepare a plan of work. These plans should be approved by the Executive Committee before the first regular association meeting.
- Signs all contracts on behalf of the association.
- Delegates certain administrative duties to the Vice President(s).
- Attends training offered by Council, District and State PTA.
- Attends all meetings called by the Council or sends a duly appointed alternate.
- Keeps a procedure book for his or her successor.

### **As Presiding Officer, the President:**

- Calls the meeting to order at the designated time and if a quorum is present, proceeds with the business.
- Maintains a fair and impartial position at all times and encourages members to participate.
- Takes no part in any discussion while presiding, refrains from expressing a personal opinion on questions before the membership and avoids personal bias when giving information to the association.
- Carries out the will of the association.
- Stands to preside and follows the agenda or accepted order of business.
- Refers to self impersonally as “the chairperson” or “the chair.”
- Decides all parliamentary questions. The President’s decisions are subject to an appeal by any two members; a majority or tie vote sustains the decision of the chairperson. The presiding officer may seek the opinion of the parliamentarian on any question of procedure, but it is the chairperson who rules.
- States each motion clearly after it has been seconded before allowing discussion.
- Declares the result of every vote taken.
- Calls upon the Vice President to preside and vacates the chair when wishing to speak to a motion or for other reasons. The President then has all of the privileges of a member addressing the temporarily presiding officer in the same manner as any other member. The President returns to chair to preside only after the vote has been announced.
- May vote when voting is by ballot; in other cases, may cast a vote to create or break a tie if the result is in the best interest of the association;
- Recognizes a member who has not previously spoken to the question in preference to one who already has spoken.
- Rules out of order a motion to close nominations if it seems that the motion is made to defeat democratic procedures.
- Always expresses appreciation for work well done and for program participation.

### **How to prepare for the Presidency:**

- Attend Georgia PTA Convention Leadership Training. Attend schools of information and workshops offered by Council and District. At each of these events, include as many officers, chairpersons and members as possible.
- Be sure the names and addresses of all officers have been submitted online, through MemberHub, by May 1, even if officers are serving a second term.
- Be familiar with PTA Mission and Purposes, policies, principles and duties.
- Read the Local Unit’s bylaws and learn parliamentary procedure.
- Obtain and read last year’s reports, materials, publications, and procedure book.

- Talk with former officers and committee chairs to learn from their successes or failures.
- Meet with Principal and other school personnel to discuss goals, focus area for schools.
- Network with other PTA Presidents in Council and District.
- Make a concerted effort to understand legislative issues affecting children.

### **The President's Procedure Book should include: EVERYTHING**

- President's name, address, telephone number, email address and period served
- This Leadership Resource Guide, including the President's Checklist
- Local Unit bylaws; Council bylaws (if unit is a member of one)
- Contact information for Executive Committee, Board of Directors and school personnel
- Contact information for Council (if applicable), District, State and National PTA board
- Plans of Work and PTA calendar, school calendar, school system calendar (including testing),
- Copy of unit's budget and treasurer's reports
- Communications received from state office and board members
- Copies of newsletters and communications sent out by President or local unit
- Pertinent communications received by the President relating to programs, procedures, etc.
- Copy of last year's annual audit report
- Copies of last year's minutes
- Month-by month-record of activities, programs, projects, etc., with comments and evaluation, to help with end-of-year report and next year's work
- Copy of reports of outstanding accomplishments
- Evaluation of year's work with specific suggestions for improvements
- Any other resource material found to be helpful (from Council, District, Georgia PTA, National PTA or other sources)

## PRESIDENT'S CHECKLIST

### AFTER ELECTION: GET ORGANIZED AND BEGIN PLANNING

#### Resources

- National PTA's *President's Quick Reference Guide* ([www.ptakit.org](http://www.ptakit.org))
- Local PTA Bylaws

#### MARCH / APRIL / MAY

- **Schedule a transition meeting of outgoing officers and chairpersons and newly elected officers and chairpersons; discuss year's activities, programs, projects and goals. This may take more than 1 meeting.**
- Call a meeting of newly elected officers to inform Executive Committee of appointment of Parliamentarian and to appoint Standing Committee chairpersons.
- Be sure names of incoming officers have been submitted online to Georgia PTA **by May 1** (or as soon as election occurs). Send to your Council President and District Director by May 1.
- Schedule a meeting with your Principal to discuss the goals of the school, the administration's vision, the role of PTA and your PTA's goals, projects, programs, parent education courses and budget.
- Attend Council School of Information or contact your District Director for training if your unit is not in a Council or is unable to attend School of Information.
- Attend and promote attendance at District Spring Conference with your officers and chairpersons.
- Review procedure books/records of previous officers and chairpersons and distribute to the new leaders.
- Encourage all officers and chairpersons to bookmark Georgia PTA ([www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org)) and National PTA websites ([www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)).
- Distribute all Georgia and National PTA materials, including copies from this resource.
- Assess needs and set goals, objectives and dates for the school year with your board and Principal.
- Verify that an audit of the PTA's books has been scheduled, signature cards at the bank will be changed when officers take office (end of school year), IRS 990 forms have been completed or are in process and that you know your PTA's Employer Identification Number (EIN) and local unit number.

#### JUNE / JULY / AUGUST

- Attend National PTA Convention in June (recommended, but CLT is priority).
- Attend Georgia PTA Convention Leadership Training (CLT). Encourage all officers and committee chairpersons to take advantage of this training opportunity.
- Review bylaws; prepare for amendment if necessary.
- Submit names of new chairpersons online to Georgia PTA by the last business day in August. Send to your Council President and District Director upon request.
- Have officers and chairpersons develop plans of work (action steps to achieve goals) for approval.
- Work with the Budget Committee to prepare the budget for approval by Board of Directors and adoption by the general body; include funds for training, bank fees, and "carry over" funds for the summer (i.e., until next budget is approved.)
- Work with the Membership Chairperson and committee to plan membership enrollment. Membership Chair will need to determine 100% Membership number.

(100% Membership is defined as one paid PTA member for student enrollment plus the number of certified teachers on staff as of the end of the first full week of school. Most school secretaries are able to provide this information.)

- Work with committee chairs to calendar the year's programs, working with school master calendar (Fall Festival, winter carnivals, literacy/math nights, reading programs, Bingo for Books, movie nights, Reflections deadlines, Take Your Family to Week, teacher appreciation, fundraisers, etc. Use input to guide development of budget.
- Collaborate with the Family Engagement Chairperson and committee to plan the year's parenting courses/workshops.
- Develop a communications plan with committee chair.
- Schedule general membership meetings with input and agreement from administration.
- Approve budget at the first board meeting.

### **ONGOING FOR THE ENTIRE YEAR:**

- Prepare agendas for executive committee, board and general meetings.
- Review communications plan and assign articles, posts, etc.
- Work with treasurer and board to amend budget as necessary for approval by general membership.
- Submit PTA membership dues to the state PTA office on a *monthly* basis.
  - Submit PTA membership dues for 400 members to the state PTA office no later than the last business day in August to qualify for **The Visionary Pin and Certificate**.
  - Submit PTA membership dues for 300 members to the state PTA office no later than the last business day in August to qualify for **The Pacesetter's Certificate**.
  - Submit PTA membership dues for 200 members to the state PTA office no later than the last business day in September to qualify for **The Early Bird Certificate**.
  - Submit PTA membership dues and report 100% membership by the last business day in September to qualify for **The Platinum Membership Award**.
  - Submit PTA membership dues and report 100% membership by the last business day in October to qualify for **The Gold Membership Certificate**.
  - Submit the list of appropriate members by the last business day in October for **The Oak Tree Certificate** and **The Community Partnership Certificate**.
  - Submit PTA membership dues and report 100% membership by the last business day in November to qualify for **The Silver Membership Certificate**.
  - Submit PTA membership dues and report 100% membership by the last business day in February to qualify for **The Bronze Membership Certificate**.

### **AUGUST / SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER**

- Adopt the audit report and budget at the first general meeting to include all planned activities for the budget year.
- Submit names of new chairpersons online to Georgia PTA on MemberHub by the last business day in August.
- Send copy of *PTA Audit/Financial Review* to Georgia PTA by the last business day of September.
- Begin fall membership enrollment campaign. Print and distribute membership cards as members join.
- Train/instruct room representatives, council delegates and volunteers.
- Attend and promote attendance at District Fall Conference.



- Promote and attend the District Advocacy Workshop in the fall.
- Conduct National PTA's Reflections Program; forward winning entries to council judging if in a council. Check with your Council President for due dates.

### **NOVEMBER / DECEMBER / JANUARY / FEBRUARY**

- Ensure that the applicable IRS forms is completed, filed with IRS with the Verification Cover Form sent to the state office. Due by the fifteenth day of the fifth month after the end of your school's Fiscal Year. See your Local Unit Bylaws for date. (Many are due November 15!)
- Celebrate National PTA Founders' Day (February 17, 1897).
- Ensure your PTA elects the nominating committee in accordance to the bylaws. The committee must be elected by the general membership at least 30 days prior to the election meeting.
- Appoint committee to review bylaws and recommend amendments if needed.
- Promote and attend Georgia PTA Day at the Capitol in February/March.
- Submit annual Incorporation Renewal fee of \$30 to the state office. (Renewal fees must be paid by March 1.) Invoices are mailed in early winter.
- Submit Reflections entries (through your Council if part of one, and if not) directly to the state office by the established State deadline.

### **MARCH / APRIL**

- Submit Georgia PTA Scholarship applications, Outstanding Principal Nominations, Outstanding School Nurse Nominations, Outstanding Local Unit Reports, Georgia PTA Hearst Family-School Partnership Award, Model PTA, Birney Butler Educator's Award and Visionary Award to the state office postmarked on or before the second Friday in March. Submit to Council and District if requested.
- Post slate of officers at least 10 days prior to election meeting. (15 days for Councils)
- Elect the incoming officers for the following year.
- Work with newly elected President to schedule transition meeting. Facilitate other transition meetings
- Board of Directors selects an auditor or an auditing committee to audit the treasurer's accounts.
- Attend and promote attendance by local delegates to District Spring Conference.

### **YEAR-END / MAY**

- Prepare and present at the annual (last) meeting a year-end summary report of the year's activities. (funds raised and how those funds were expended to benefit the students, the school and the PTA; volunteer hours recorded and in what areas, etc.) Share this information on website, social media, etc.
- Coordinate installation of new officers; thank this year's PTA workers and school volunteers.
- Submit names of incoming officers to Georgia PTA online on MemberHub by May 1.
- Update President's procedure book.
- Remind outgoing officers and chairpersons to turn over their procedure books/materials and all PTA assets to their successors.
- Officers' terms end the last day of the school year, and they may no longer conduct PTA business.
- Schedule transition meetings of outgoing & incoming officers and committee chairs.

## RESOURCES

- National PTA *Back to School Kit: Quick Reference Guides* (President, Finance, Programs, Membership) [www.ptakit.org](http://www.ptakit.org)
- Georgia PTA *Leadership Resource Guide*
- Georgia PTA *Principals and PTA Guide*
- Georgia PTA *Nominating Committee and Elections Guide*
- National PTA website: [www.pta.org](http://www.pta.org)
- Georgia PTA website: [www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org)
- Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised
- Local Unit Bylaws
- Georgia PTA State office

## Terminology

- **Bylaws** – The basic rules by which the organization is governed. In matters not covered in the bylaws, Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised is the accepted authority to which we refer.
- **Chair** – The presiding officer.
- **Motion** – A formal proposal made to bring a subject before an assembly for consideration and action.
- **Majority vote** – More than one-half (1/2) of votes cast.
- **Quorum** – The number of members required to be present at a meeting as set forth in the bylaws, in order that business may be transacted.

## CONDUCTING A PTA MEETING

PTA meetings should be managed so that the business of the association and a meaningful program are completed in a maximum of one hour. An agenda should be prepared so the meeting will proceed smoothly. Participants need to know how much time they will be allotted. Printed minutes from the prior meeting and treasurer’s report save time and provide members with a permanent copy of this information.

The President should start at the announced time and end the meeting at the planned time. However, it is very important that the chairperson recognize the concerns of the members. Appointing a committee and assuring the members that their concerns will be included in the agenda of the next meeting gives such recognition. It allows members to obtain facts regarding issues rather than engage in discussions based on hearsay, impressions, and emotions. When subjects are controversial, be sure to include members representing various views on the subject. This also ensures that members are informed of all business of PTA.

Chairing a meeting requires skill in relating to people with various backgrounds and different points of view. To work more effectively with others, you should:

- Encourage all members to enter into the discussion. Listen respectfully and ask clarifying questions.
- Point out areas of agreement between speakers. Help the group to see issues in terms of what is best for children and what will help accomplish the goals of the PTA.
- Encourage positive action. Urge members to learn the facts and participate in activities.
- Recognize that no one can please everyone all of the time. Keep a sense of humor and friendly, non-judgmental attitude.

## SAMPLE AGENDA

### GEORGIA PTA SUGGESTS THE FOLLOWING MODEL AGENDA:

#### Call to Order

The president or presiding officer, as Chair, stands, raps the gavel once and calls the meeting to order.  
*"The meeting will please come to order."*

#### Opening Ceremonies

An invocation, the Pledge of Allegiance, or a poem, song or inspirational message may be conducted. Remember, PTA is a nonsectarian association by nature of its 501(c)(3) status. For this reason, these opening ceremonies must be of a nonreligious, nondenominational nature.

#### Reading and Approval of Minutes

The presiding officer says: *"The secretary will read the minutes of the previous meeting."* Secretary stands, addresses the chair and reads the minutes, unless they have been distributed. The presiding officer says: *"Are there any corrections? The minutes stand approved as read or distributed."* **OR:** *"The minutes stand approved as corrected."*

#### Report of Treasurer

No motion is needed for adoption of report unless report is audited. The presiding officer says: *"We will have the treasurer's report."* The treasurer reads the report. The presiding officer says: *"Are there any questions? The report will be filed for audit."*

#### Communications

The presiding officer asks the secretary: *"Are there any communications?"* Communications are read by the secretary and are acted upon as read, if action is required.

#### Report of Executive Committee or Board of Directors

A summary report (not the minutes) is read to update the members. Recommendations should be voted upon one at a time; the secretary moving the adoption of each. In a general meeting, the report will instead be given from the Board of Directors. The presiding officer says: *"We will hear the report of the Executive Committee (or Board of Directors) by the secretary."* The secretary reads the appropriate report. The presiding officer says: *"You have heard the recommendation. Is there discussion?"* (Follow steps of a motion.)

#### Reports of Standing Committees

The chair calls for the report of the committee. The person making the report moves the adoption of any recommendation. If no recommendation is made, no motion is needed. The committee chair need not be recognized if there is no report. The presiding officer says: *"We will hear the report of the Committee given by Mr./Mrs.\_\_\_\_, Chair. Are there any questions regarding the report? If not, the report will be filed." OR "By direction of the \_\_\_\_\_ Committee, I move the adoption of the recommendation to \_\_\_\_."* (Follow steps of a motion.)

#### Special Committee Reports

##### Unfinished Business

Minutes of the previous meeting will indicate any unfinished business. If there is no unfinished business, the presiding officer says: *"The Chair knows of no unfinished business, therefore we will move to new business."*

##### New Business

The chair or members may bring new business before the association. A motion is necessary before discussion and vote. The presiding officer says: *"Is there any new business to come before this association?"*

##### Program

The chair introduces program chair who presents the program. The meeting is not "turned over" to the program chair, nor does the program chair "turn the meeting back to the chair." The president says: *"The program will be presented by Mr./Mrs.\_\_\_\_, Program Chair."* The chair at the end of the program will state: *"Mr./Mrs. President, this concludes the program."* (Note: if the program is a student performance, the PTA meeting may be adjourned before the performance.)

##### Announcements

Date of the next meeting and important activities should be announced. If there is a social time following the meeting, this should be announced. *"Are there any announcements?"*

##### Adjournment

No motion is necessary to adjourn. The presiding officer says: *"If there is no objection, the meeting will now adjourn. (Pause). Since there is no objection, the meeting is adjourned."*

# STATE BOARD MEMBER FIELD SERVICE REQUEST FORM



**Purpose:**

Use this form to request a member of the Georgia PTA Board of Directors to speak at your PTA meeting or conduct a workshop/training for your PTA. All requests are subject to the approval of the Georgia PTA President.

**Instructions:**

- Make copies of this form as needed. Fill in the information requested below. Please print.
- When possible, please send request at least 30 days prior to the requested event.
- Please include a cell phone number for a contact person who will be available prior to the event. Many times board members need to speak with someone immediately prior to the event (for directions, emergencies, etc.).
- The contact person listed below will be called or emailed once the event arrangements are confirmed with the state board member(s).
- Direct all questions to the state PTA office, 404-659-0214 or 800-PTA-Today.
- Mail to **Georgia PTA, 114 Baker Street, NE, Atlanta, GA 30308-3366**. Forms may also be faxed to 404-525- 0210 or Emailed to [gapta@georgiapta.org](mailto:gapta@georgiapta.org)

Date		PTA Local Unit ID#	
District	Council	PTA Name (No abbreviations)	
Contact Person		PTA Position	
Address			
City		State	Zip
Cell Phone		Email	
Home Phone		Name and Cell Phone of a contact person who will be available prior to the event	

Date of Event \_\_\_\_\_ Time of Event \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Event \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose/Goal of Event \_\_\_\_\_

Topic(s) Requested \_\_\_\_\_

Board Member(s) Requested \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Attendance \_\_\_\_\_ Requested Duration of Presentation \_\_\_\_\_

Types of Audio Visual Equipment Available: \_\_\_\_\_ Overhead \_\_\_\_\_ DVD/Monitor \_\_\_\_\_ LCD Projector/Screen

Address and Phone Number Where Event Will Take Place \_\_\_\_\_

President's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

***You must include directions to the event on a separate page.***

## VICE PRESIDENT

The Vice President may be called upon at any time to assume temporarily the place of the President. The Vice President should make a thorough study of the President's duties and responsibilities and be familiar with the work of the association. A strong Vice President can and should be the President's "right hand," acting as an aide and assuming assigned responsibilities.

### The Vice President:

- Presides at meetings in the absence of the President/President-Elect or upon their inability to serve.
- Performs the duties of the President in the absence of the President and the President-Elect or upon their inability to act.
- Acts as an assistant to the President and assumes responsibility for duties assigned by the President.
- Performs any other specific duties that may be provided for in the bylaws.
- Represents the President upon request.
- Attends training opportunities offered by the Council, District and Georgia PTA.

When Local Units have more than one Vice President, they often designate specific duties for each Vice President, such as Vice President of Priority Committees or Vice President of Communications. Vice Presidents can serve as a program chairperson, coordinator for major projects that involve several committees, or as a liaison to outside groups that may desire a connection with a local unit. In the case of multiple Vice Presidents, it is helpful if each Vice President is responsible for overseeing specific committees that have connecting areas of responsibility. Vice Presidents can be helpful in strengthening communication within the Board of Directors as well as within the general membership and other entities in the school community and system.

**Reference:** Local Unit Bylaws, Article VII, Duties of Officers, Section 2 for more specific information about the Vice President's duties.

## SECRETARY

The Secretary is responsible for keeping accurate records of all the proceedings of the association. These include minutes for general, board, and Executive Committee meetings. Minutes represent the history of the association and are vital for the ongoing business of PTA. Valued qualities in a Secretary are: promptness, accuracy and knowledge of PTA purposes, bylaws, policies and procedures, as well as an understanding of parliamentary law.

**Reference:** The Secretary's Section of this *Leadership Resource Guide*.

## TREASURER

The Treasurer is the legally responsible, authorized custodian of the PTA funds and is responsible for the financial management of the PTA. The Treasurer receives and disburses all monies in accordance with the Local Unit bylaws, the policies and procedures contained in this document and the approved budget. **Georgia PTA strongly recommends that employees of the school not serve as treasurer, as the handling of association funds may prove to be a conflict of interest with school system requirements.**

**Reference:** The Treasurer's section of this *Leadership Resource Guide*, the Georgia PTA website ([www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org)) and in the National PTA *Back to School Kit: Finance*

**Under no circumstances should your unit have more than one treasurer since Georgia PTA does not approve co-treasurers. Individuals authorized to sign checks should never be related to each other by marriage and/or other relationship.**