

# SECTION 4

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# SECRETARY

The job of secretary is one of the most exciting positions on any board. Every association must have at least two officers, a presiding officer (president) and a recording officer (secretary) in order to function properly. In addition to the position of recording secretary, a corresponding secretary is sometimes an approved position in the bylaws of a local unit. The duties of the secretary are outlined in the bylaws, a copy of which you should keep in your files.

The secretary is essential in conducting the business of the association. If the secretary is absent from the general, board of directors, or executive committee meetings, the presiding officer must appoint someone to take minutes. **Remember, if it is not in the minutes, it did not happen!**

## The Secretary:

1. Records accurately all business transacted at each meeting of the association and presents the minutes for approval at the next meeting of the same body.
2. Submits online the names and addresses of all incoming officers to the state office. Sends this information to district and council PTAs by May 1, and incoming chairpersons by the last business day in August. Submits to the state office any changes in officers or contact information.
3. In the absence of a Membership Chair, maintains membership list.
4. Keeps all committee reports on file.
5. Distributes bylaws to all board members (either hard copies or electronic)
6. Sends correspondence for the PTA and maintains a correspondence file.
7. Calls the meeting to order in the absence of the president and vice president.
8. Sends out notices of meetings.
9. Assists in determining a quorum.
10. Counts a rising vote.
11. Is an emergency signature on the checking account.
12. Prepares in advance of each meeting (in consultation with the president) an agenda showing the order in which business should come before the body.
13. Serves as custodian for all records except for those specifically assigned to other individuals.
14. Attends all training opportunities offered by council, district and Georgia PTA.
15. Has on hand for reference at each meeting:
  - Signed and approved minutes of previous meetings
  - Copies of previous treasurer's reports
  - An agenda (include unfinished business)
  - Current copy of Local Unit Bylaws
  - Copy of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*
  - Current membership list
  - List of committee chairpersons and committee members
  - Materials for note/minute taking
  - Ballots, in case a vote is taken by ballot
  - Motion blanks

## Other References

Local Unit Bylaws, Article VII, Duties of Officers, Section 3 for more specific information about the Secretary's duties and the *Basic PTA Information & Management* section of this resource for specific information about meetings and minutes.

## MINUTES

Have to be written in a timely manner. It is the responsibility of the secretary to record, prepare and preserve the minutes of the association. Every member is responsible for reading the minutes and refers to them as the record or history of the unit.

As secretary, in preparation for taking the minutes of a meeting, you should bring along pens, writing paper, a tape or digital recorder, blank cassettes or digital storage, blank motion forms and ballots. Arrive at the meeting site early to ensure that everything is ready. To take the minutes, you should have plenty of the above-mentioned materials to get through a possible lengthy session. Make sure you have a copy of the agenda, as well as any reports, financial statements or other documents that may be referred to during the meeting.

### What to Record

Minutes are meant to be concise, factual and objective records of what action or voting took place. Never record every word of the meeting verbatim. You must decide what information has to be written down verbatim, what can be paraphrased, and what is nonessential for the official record. You cannot allow personal preferences to influence your note taking, and you cannot give more weight to what certain people say while not recording the pertinent remarks of others. You must be able to interpret statements for what is truly being said, not what you hear by way of the deliverer's voice inflections, intonations or mannerisms.

It can be very difficult to discriminate from among all the opinions and facts just what should be recorded in the minutes. To record the proceedings fairly, it is necessary to take a disinterested position. As a recorder, you must listen carefully and take down information even when more than one person is talking at the same time, making sure that you attribute all statements to their correct sources.

It is necessary to record motions verbatim as well as names of those who made them. You should have blank copies of motion forms to use for this purpose.

Minutes must be complete, concise and accurate. They should be as brief as possible, but include all necessary information.

Action must be recorded in the order in which it took place, even if it is taken out of order from the agenda.

### Minutes Book

Minutes must be recorded to reflect the official business of the association. Any member of the PTA/PTSA has a right to examine the minutes of the general membership meetings; the members of the board of directors have a right to examine the minutes of the board meetings and the members of the executive committee have a right to examine the minutes of the executive committee meetings.

The secretary, using the secretary's given name, signs the minutes. Example: Sue Jones, Secretary.

After the minutes have been read (or distributed) and approved, the secretary writes, "Approved as read (or printed)" or "Approved as corrected," the date of approval and the secretary's initials. If your minutes are approved by a committee (e.g., your last meeting of the school year), a committee is appointed by the president to approve the minutes. Each committee member will sign and date the minutes after reading and making necessary corrections.

The minutes must not be released from the custody of the secretary, except upon written order of the president. If the secretary is not present at a meeting, the president should appoint a secretary pro-tem, who then enters the minutes he/she takes in the official minute record book and signs his/her given name with the words, "Secretary Pro-Tem."

It is permissible to provide printed copies of the minutes for purpose of approval, and after the association has approved them. This should be done by order of the president or general consent of the membership.

For help or questions, please contact your council, district or state PTA secretary. Your local unit president has their names, Email addresses and telephone numbers. Contact the state PTA office for further guidance.

## **Recording Guidelines**

### **To begin your note taking, follow these guidelines:**

- Write down the date, location and time the meeting begins.
- Record the names of those present and absent (usually if the number is 20 or less). Verify that a quorum is achieved at every meeting. If a quorum is not present, immediately advise the president.
- Identify the type of meeting (such as general, board of directors, executive committee, special- called).
- Identify the presiding officer and secretary or their substitutes.
- Record the action. When the meeting begins, key your notes to match items on the agenda. When you type your notes, you simply refer to your agenda to transcribe the key.
- Record the time of the adjournment.
- Since the minutes serve as the official records of your meetings, it is imperative that they be objectively recorded and conscientiously transcribed into a final document.

### **When taking minutes, the Secretary should:**

- Be accurate
- Make minutes as brief as possible
- Record what is done by the groups, not what is said
- Report in the order in which the business was presented in the meeting
- Record the name of the maker of a motion
- Record exact wording of motion as stated by the maker of the motion. The secretary may request the maker of the motion put it in writing
- Record action taken on a motion
- Indicate that minutes are "approved as read" or "approved as corrected"
- Sign the minutes

### **When taking minutes, the Secretary should not:**

- Add personal comments in the minutes
- Let notes on the meeting "get cold"
- List the person who seconded motion (unless requested by the assembly)
- Record any details of debate or discussion by members
- Read board of directors/executive committee minutes at the general meeting of the association
- Sign minutes "Respectfully submitted"

## Contents of Minutes

### **The first paragraph includes:**

- Kind of meeting (general, board of directors, executive committee, special-called)
- Name of association, date, place and time of meeting
- Names of president and secretary or names of their substitutes
- Quorum established
- Name of person giving inspirational message and type of message delivered (i.e., poem, song, special reading, etc.)
- Name of person leading the Pledge of Allegiance
- Details of whether minutes of previous meeting were read (or printed and distributed) and approved (or approved as corrected)
- Name of members present (usually in board or committee meetings with 20 or less members) may be included

### **The second paragraph is the Treasurer's report; copies of report may be attached to minutes. It includes:**

- Beginning balance (ending balance at last meeting)
- Total receipts (since last meeting)
- Total disbursements (since last meeting)
- Ending balance (current meeting date)

### **The third paragraph will describe any communications read.**

### **The next paragraph will describe the reports of executive committee, standing committees and special committees (copies of reports may be attached to minutes).**

- The following will be separate with a paragraph for each subject covered:
- All main motions (except those withdrawn), name of maker of motion, disposition of motion, whether adopted or not adopted
- Announcement of previous notice of motions to be made at a later meeting
- Points of order and appeals, whether sustained or lost
- Number of votes for and against on a vote by ballot or a counted vote

### **The next paragraph will give the program topic, method of presentation and names of participants.**

### **The final paragraph will give the time of adjournment.**

### **The secretary will sign, along with the typed or printed name and title of secretary.**

## Sample Minutes

The regular meeting of ABC PTA was held on September 17, 20\_\_, in the gymnasium of ABC Middle School. The secretary established a quorum was present. The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. The secretary Sue Jones was present. An inspirational reading was given by Mary Jones. This was followed by the Pledge of Allegiance, led by the president. Minutes of the previous meeting were approved as printed and distributed.

The treasurer reported a beginning balance of \$325, receipts of \$75 from dues, current disbursements of \$25, and a balance on hand September 17, 20\_\_, of \$375.

The secretary read a note of thanks from the scholarship recipient Bill Williams.

John Cross, chair of the special committee appointed to investigate the need for a stop sign at Fifth Street and Walker Street, offered a motion as follows: ABC PTA shall petition the City Council to place a four-way stop sign at the intersection of Fifth and Walker streets. Motion carried.

George Johnson moved that the Hospitality Committee provide snacks for the teachers every Friday. Motion failed.

City Traffic Director Sam Wright presented a program on "Getting Home Safely."

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

(Signature) Sue Jones, Secretary

## Correcting the Minutes

Corrections to the minutes are to be made immediately following the reading of the minutes or, if distributed and not read aloud, during the time devoted on the agenda to the minutes.

- Whenever an error is mentioned, it is noted in the minutes of the current meeting. Corrections are suggested without motion or vote.
- Corrections are made in the secretary's minute's book by circling the incorrect words with a red pen and placing the correction in the margin.
- All corrections must be initialed and dated.

Corrections to the minutes can be made years later by means of a motion to amend something previously adopted. This requires a two-thirds vote or a majority vote with prior notice.

With approval of the association, the reading of the minutes of the meeting may be postponed to the next meeting, or a committee may be appointed to read the minutes and report findings at the next meeting. If a committee is appointed, all members must have been present at that meeting. The members of the committee must sign their names at the end of the master copy of those minutes.

Only the group, (executive committee, board of directors, general), which created the minutes can correct them.

## CORRESPONDING SECRETARY

A PTA unit may divide the secretarial responsibilities between two persons: a recording secretary (referred to as “the secretary”) and a corresponding secretary. The duties of the secretary are outlined in the bylaws of the association, under “Article VIII: Duties of Officers, Section 3.” A corresponding secretary does not automatically take the place of the secretary when that officer is absent.

### The Corresponding Secretary:

- Is responsible for the correspondence of the association, as directed by the president.
- Reads communications at meetings. (When reading a communication, always read the name of the writer before the message.)
- Writes thank you notes to those who give presentations to the association (if this responsibility is not assigned to another officer or committee). When thanking a program participant:
  - Be prompt in expressing appreciation.
  - Date your letter. In an informal note of appreciation, it may be written below and to the left of your signature.
  - Quote a worthy comment made by the presenter.
  - Reaffirm the group’s appreciation for the time and thought the speaker gave to the presentation.
  - Sign the PTA’s name followed by your signature. Be sure to identify your relationship to the PTA, i.e., Jane Smith, Corresponding Secretary.

# INCOMING OFFICERS FORM



**Purpose:**

Use this worksheet to record contact information for incoming officers. Submit information online at [www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org) by **May 1 (or as soon as elected)** in order to ensure that new officers will receive Convention Leadership Training registration materials.

**Instructions:**

- Complete worksheet. Submit online at [www.georgiapta.org](http://www.georgiapta.org) and send copies to your council president and district director. (either electronically or via USPS).
- Information for the upcoming school year will only be mailed to newly elected officers.
- Please **do not use the school's address for officers**, as we will mail information during the summer.
- If your unit has co-presidents, please list the person who will receive National PTA mailings as president. List the other person as co-president. Georgia PTA will send communications to both co-presidents.

<b>District</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>PTA Local Unit ID#</b>	
PTA Name		School Name	
Principal		School Phone	
School Address			
City		State	Zip
School District		Superintendent	
School is: <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary, 750 and below <input type="checkbox"/> Elementary, 751 and above <input type="checkbox"/> High School <input type="checkbox"/> Middle/Jr. High <input type="checkbox"/> K-8 School			

President			
Home Address			
City		State	Zip
Cell Phone		Home Phone	
Fax		Email	

Vice President			
Home Address			
City		State	Zip
Cell Phone		Home Phone	
Fax		Email	

Other Vice President (if applicable)			
Home Address			
City		State	Zip
Cell Phone		Home Phone	
Fax		Email	

# INCOMING OFFICERS FORM (PAGE 2)



Other Vice President (if applicable)		
Home Address		
City	State	Zip
Cell Phone	Home Phone	
Fax	Email	

Other Vice President (if applicable)		
Home Address		
City	State	Zip
Cell Phone	Home Phone	
Fax	Email	

Secretary		
Home Address		
City	State	Zip
Cell Phone	Home Phone	
Fax	Email	

Other Secretary (if applicable)		
Home Address		
City	State	Zip
Cell Phone	Home Phone	
Fax	Email	

Treasurer		
Home Address		
City	State	Zip
Cell Phone	Home Phone	
Fax	Email	

# OFFICERS AND ADDRESS CHANGE FORM



**Purpose:**

Use this form to submit any changes in officers or officers' contact information.

**Instructions:**

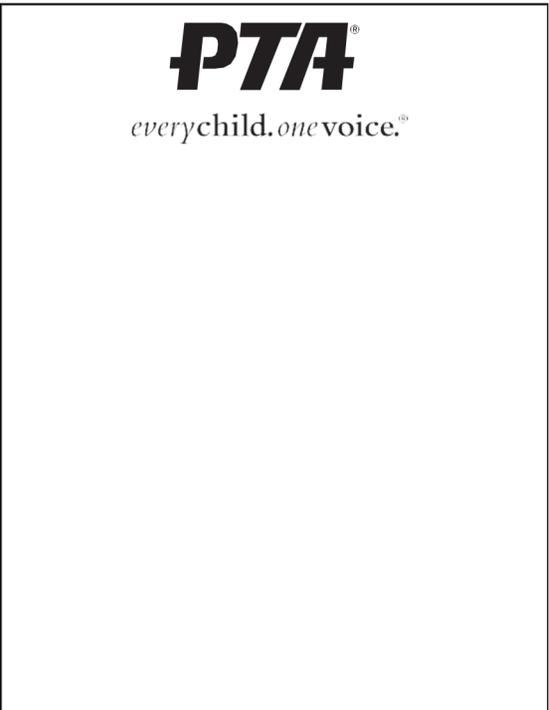
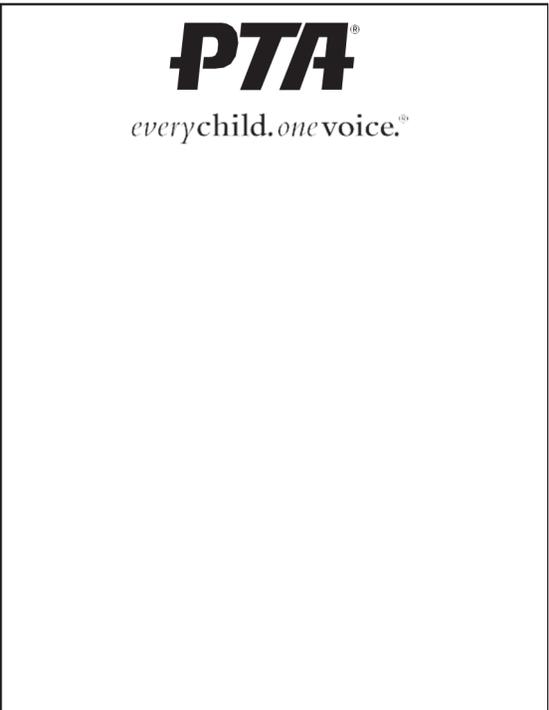
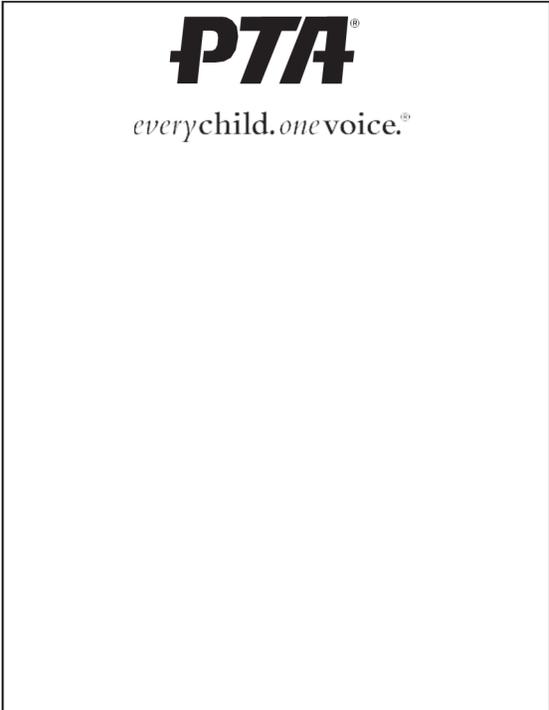
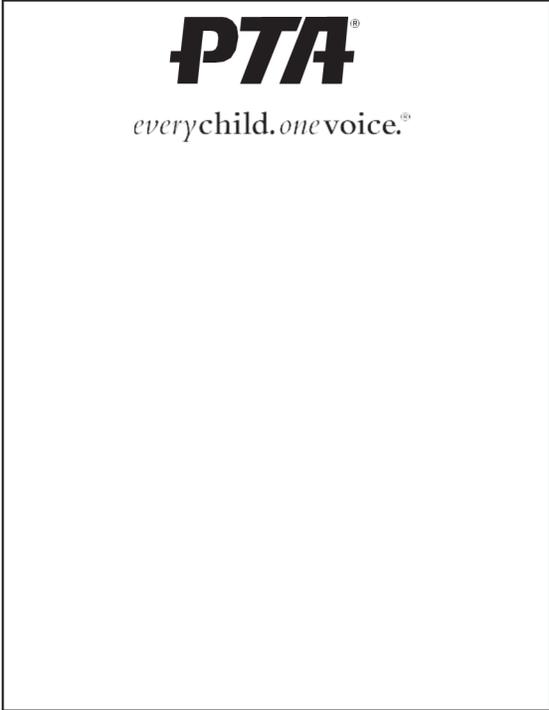
- Complete form. Please print clearly.
- Use additional pages as needed.
- Email to [gapta@georgiapta.org](mailto:gapta@georgiapta.org); fax to 404-525-0210 or mail to Georgia PTA, 114 Baker Street, NE, Atlanta, GA 30308-3366.

<b>District</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>PTA Local Unit ID#</b>
<b>PTA Name</b> (No abbreviations)		

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>This is a change in officer. This person replaces:</b> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> <b>This is a change in contact information only.</b>		
Name		Title
Home Address		
City	State	Zip
Cell Phone	Home Phone	
Fax	Email	

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>This is a change in officer. This person replaces:</b> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> <b>This is a change in contact information only.</b>		
Name		Title
Home Address		
City	State	Zip
Cell Phone	Home Phone	
Fax	Email	

<input type="checkbox"/> <b>This is a change in officer. This person replaces:</b> _____ <input type="checkbox"/> <b>This is a change in contact information only.</b>		
Name		Title
Home Address		
City	State	Zip
Cell Phone	Home Phone	
Fax	Email	



# OFFICIAL MOTION BLANK



Motion No. \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

DELEGATE FROM

I MOVE \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Maker of Motion)

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ACTION TAKEN: ADOPTED DEFEATED AMENDED REFERRED POSTPONED TABLED WITHDRAWN  
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