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Website: www.ptachc.org

Free State PTA Website: www.fspta.org

National PTA Website: www.pta.org

Howard County Public School System Website: www.hcpss.org

Purpose and Values of the PTA

The overall purpose of PTA is to make every child's potential a reality by engaging and empowering families and communities to advocate for all children.

PTA Values:

- **Collaboration:** We work in partnership with a wide array of individuals and organizations to accomplish our agreed-upon goals.
- **Commitment:** We are dedicated to promoting children's health, well-being, and educational success through strong parent, family, and community involvement.
- **Accountability:** We acknowledge our obligations. We deliver on our promises.
- **Respect:** We value our colleagues and ourselves. We expect the same high quality of effort and thought from ourselves as we do from others.
- **Inclusivity:** We invite the stranger and welcome the newcomer. We value and seek input from as wide a spectrum of viewpoints and experiences as possible.
- **Integrity:** We act consistently with our beliefs. When we err, we acknowledge the mistake and seek to make amends.

PTACHC Delegate: The Voice of PTA in Howard County

Congratulations on being elected to serve your local PTA as a PTA Council of Howard County (PTACHC) delegate. Participating in both PTACHC meetings and your local PTA's meetings allows you to serve as a link between PTACHC and your local PTA. You will have access to information about what is happening across the school system to share with the members of your local PTA, and you will also bring the perspective of your local PTA to the discussions at the county level.

PTACHC serves 75 local PTAs that cover over 25,000 members. The growth of PTACHC reflects the vital role of PTA – individually and as a council – in meeting the needs of our children and families.

PTACHC General Meetings are normally held on the first Monday of the month during the school year at 7:30 pm at the Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) Homewood School, 10914 Clarksville Pike (Route 108), Ellicott City, and are open to all PTA members. Sometimes Council will host training and workshop before the general meeting at 6:30. An email notice will be sent for all workshop/sharing sessions.

The privileges of introducing motions, debating, and voting are limited to the voting body, which consists of the president of each local PTA or their alternate, two delegates or their alternates from each local PTA, and the members of the PTACHC Board of Directors (the officers and standing committee chairs)¹. The local PTA's bylaws determine how their 2 delegates are selected. The monthly General Meetings provide an opportunity for delegates to present ideas, debate issues, become better informed, make personal contacts with other PTA leaders, and vote on PTACHC business. General Meeting dates are listed on the PTACHC website: www.ptachc.org.

¹ PTACHC General Membership (voting body) is defined in the PTACHC Council Bylaws, Article XI – General Membership

What Does a PTACHC Delegate Do?

Delegates are the most important communication link between your local PTA and PTACHC. As a delegate you are expected to vote as directed by your local PTA unless authorized by the local PTA to use your own judgment. It is preferable for delegates to ascertain local opinion prior to voting. However, when time does not permit for consultation, a delegate must vote their conscience utilizing their own experience and good judgment. Each delegate is entitled to one vote, even though they may be serving in more than one position.

Responsibilities of a PTACHC Delegate

1. Attend every meeting of your local PTA and PTACHC General Meeting (or send an alternate if you are unable to attend).
2. Give a summary report of PTACHC General Meetings at local PTA board of directors' meetings and to general membership meetings, in newsletter articles and on school list serves – particularly any item that requires a position or a vote by the local PTA. (Delegate Reporting Forms are available at each PTACHC General Meeting.)
3. Bring any concerns or action items from your local PTA to PTACHC.
4. Initiate discussion, gather information, and encourage local PTA action regarding PTACHC agenda items when necessary.
5. Bring to the attention of PTACHC any projects and programs your local PTA is involved in and wishes to share with other PTAs.
6. Use PTACHC meetings to become acquainted with delegates of other PTAs.
7. Join a PTACHC Committee, represent PTACHC on an HCPSS Policy/Advisory Committee, and/or act as a liaison to a community group that has requested PTACHC representation.
8. Help to find qualified and willing PTA members for PTACHC officer and chair positions.
9. Join the PTACHC Officers Facebook Group to stay on top of current information, network with other delegates and discuss issues.
10. Keep a binder, procedure book, or electronic files containing:
 - Your local PTA bylaws
 - List of PTACHC officers and committee chairs
 - Calendar of PTACHC and local PTA events/meetings
 - Agenda and information distributed at General Meetings
 - Minutes of PTACHC General Meetings

PTACHC General Meeting Procedures

General Information

1. The agenda shall constitute the meeting order for the evening.
2. The current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* shall be the authority governing the meeting whenever it is applicable and not inconsistent with the laws of the state, the Articles of Incorporation, or the Bylaws of PTACHC.
3. Only materials approved by the PTACHC President (or designee) may be distributed at meetings.

Participation

In order to participate in the business of the General Meetings, an individual must be a member of the voting body of PTACHC² and their local PTA must have paid PTACHC membership dues³.

Protocol

1. Delegates are asked to sign in on designated sign-in sheets available at the entrance to the meeting room.
2. Conducting PTACHC business requires a quorum to be present. The only means of verification of a quorum is by the sign-in sheets.
3. Name tags are available for delegates and presidents. *Please remember to turn in your name tags when you leave so that we will have them for the next meeting.*
4. Every attempt will be made to conduct business in an orderly fashion and get everyone home at a reasonable time for a school night. Please stay until the conclusion of the business.

Speaking and Voting

1. During the business meeting, only the voting body is able to introduce motions, debate, or vote.
2. When recognized by the presiding chair, delegates are to state their name and name of the PTA they represent.
3. Motions may be in writing or presented orally. The Secretary will have forms available at the meeting if needed.
4. Speakers must conform to the ruling of the timekeeper, practice courtesy and be considerate of others at all times.
5. Proxy voting is prohibited.
6. When a COUNTED vote is being taken, no one may leave or be admitted to the meeting room.

Tips for Keeping Your PTA Informed and Representing Your PTA

Get on the Agenda

- Many PTACHC delegates have a standing place on the agenda to speak at their local PTA meetings; some only ask to be on the agenda when hot issues arise; and others have trouble getting any time at meetings because their PTA is very caught up in local issues and/or has a jam-packed agenda. If your PTA has not always included a delegate's report on the agenda, have a conversation with your local president and encourage him/her to regularly give you time on the agenda. If the agenda is jam packed, keep your time at the meetings brief but meaningful.

² PTACHC General Membership (voting body) is defined in the PTACHC Council Bylaws, Article XI – General Membership

³ PTACHC Council Bylaws, Article XIII – Council Membership

Provide Written Summaries

- PTACHC makes prior meeting's minutes and slide show presentations given at meetings available on its website. Delegates can write brief summaries of each General Meeting and send this out via their list serves or PTA newsletter. Having a regular format with categories may make it easier for members to follow. For example: actions taken; informational items; resolutions and motions introduced for action next month.

Input on Resolutions/Motions

- When time allows, resolutions and motions are introduced at least a month before the vote takes place at a General Meeting. This procedure gives you time to put the resolution before your local PTA. Many times, resolutions are a starting place, and there will be amendments from the floor that you will be asked to vote on. You likely will not have the particulars of specific amendments when you talk with your local PTA membership. Some delegates bring up potential amendments at their local meetings to get direction as to how their membership would feel given certain changes. It can be difficult to anticipate everything, and you will at times have to go on your best judgment to represent your local PTA.
- Work with your PTA president to make sure that there is an opportunity for the membership to vote on resolutions at your meetings. It is best to discuss and vote on resolutions at a meeting of the local PTA. This process has a greater chance of generating substantive dialogue and a fuller understanding of nuanced viewpoints to assist you in relaying the community's concerns/voting. While not preferred as the sole mechanism for soliciting input, you can also bring up issues and resolutions at the local PTA meeting and ask members to follow up via e-mail or telephone with their thoughts. Distilling and communicating what you heard back to the community is important in either case.