

School board elections and the PTA

School board members are either elected or appointed to serve a specified number of years. It is important for PTAs to be involved in the process. PTAs may:

- Alert community members to the coming election (or appointment) of school board members. Encourage them to be informed and to vote.
- Sponsor community meetings where all school board candidates are invited to speak. This may be done in cooperation with other nonpartisan organizations.

PTAs do not support or oppose individual candidates for public office. PTAs support issues and principles.

PTA members, including local, state, and national PTA officers, may serve on school boards as long as they do not seek PTA endorsement or use their PTA office to promote their candidacy.

Referenda and the PTA

The Illinois PTA Statement of Policy on School Tax Referenda makes it clear that it is appropriate for a PTA to "enthusiastically support and actively work for a school tax referendum" authorizing a local real estate tax rate increase when it is necessary.

The Illinois PTA would certainly direct any PTA that is considering supporting a referendum to be sure **that the decision is made by the vote of the membership at a meeting open to all members of the PTA.**

When a PTA decides to join in any group, which works or is formed to get a referendum passed, state laws govern this activity.

Legislative activity must be limited to an "insubstantial" level, commonly defined to be NO MORE THAN five percent of the PTA's total gross income, for ALL legislative activity for the entire fiscal year.

About the Illinois PTA

The Illinois PTA, with over 140,000 members state-wide, is a volunteer organization dedicated solely to the welfare of children in their schools and communities. Illinois PTA was organized on May 30, 1900, and has since worked diligently to support public schools and to ensure that all children have equal opportunities and access to education. The Illinois PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Illinois
PTA[®]

everychild.one voice.[®]

PO Box 907
Springfield, IL 62705-0907
800-877-9617
Fax: 217-528-9090
www.illinoispta.org

Illinois
PTA[®]

And The
School
Board



Working Together
For All Children!

Teamwork in Education

Partnership, teamwork and cooperation. These are the building blocks of education leadership today. Nowhere is partnership more urgently needed than between school boards and parents.

School boards are responsible for taking the lead in identifying the community's education needs and meeting those needs through local school board policy. When parents and teachers join together in PTA, they can become better informed, better organized, and more effective partners in working with school boards to achieve quality public education.

The school board's role in education

Illinois PTA recognizes that the role of the School Board is to be legally responsible for policies that govern the operation of the school district. The school board's main functions generally are:

- Policy-making in all areas of school programs and functions.
- Choosing and evaluating the superintendent, and approving selection procedures for other personnel.
- Overseeing the educational programs and business operations of the district. The school board has the ultimate responsibility for the activities and services of the schools, according to the laws of various states.
- Exercising fiscal authority (the right to tax and the right to adopt the budget) in some states. In others, school boards send their adopted budgets to their local governing bodies that have final authority,
- Long-range planning and goal setting for educational programs of the district.
- Approving curriculum in accordance with state law and state department of education regulations and local goals.

- Representing the public as the employer of school personnel in any collective bargaining process.

How the PTA cooperates with the school board

School boards do a better job when they are challenged and supported by an informed and involved community. PTA bylaws encourage participation in the decision-making process to develop school policy.

In learning to work with your local school board, understand the difference between administration (superintendent and staff) and policy-making (school board).

The PTA can be a valuable partner to the school board in the following areas:

Communication

- Establish regular two-way communication with the school board.
- Appoint a PTA liaison to attend school board meetings and collect copies of agendas and reports.
- Keep the PTA membership informed of school board actions and policies through reports in newsletters, meetings, and special programs.
- Decide who speaks for the PTA to your school board. **To avoid confusion, it is important that the PTA spokesperson voice the consensus of the PTA, not personal views or opinions.**
- Present PTA positions on issues such as tax increases.
- When appropriate (and following official procedures), report PTA concerns, parents' reactions to school policies and community problems to school officials (principal, school board, or superintendent).

Participation

- Encourage the school board to develop and implement a formal written parent involvement policy.
- Make sure PTA representatives sit on special school board advisory committees and task forces.
- Ask a school board member to help plan and/or attend PTA conferences, workshops, and open forums.
- Invite school board members to participate on PTA committees and attend PTA programs.
- Encourage parents to attend school board meetings. Let them know the scheduled date, time, place, and agenda items.
- Call public attention to important school issues being decided by the school board.
- The PTA helps the school board to be informed about the community and the needs of children. This partnership improves the quality of education in communities throughout America.

How the school board cooperates with the PTA

The school board can work with the PTA by:

- Appointing a PTA member to advisory committees.
- Sending notices of all school board meetings to local PTA units.
- Attending PTA council, district and/or local meetings whenever possible.
- Asking for PTA input on issues of importance to the local school district (e.g., decisions on school boundaries, budgetary matters, etc.)

Get Connected with PTA!