



# Parent Teacher Council of Stamford Handbook Part I

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Thank you so much for your commitment to the Stamford Public Schools. The Parent Teacher Council Executive Board looks forward to exciting year in an ongoing partnership that we hope is beneficial to each and every school in the district.

This is your school's copy of the PTC Handbook Part I. We think you'll find it a helpful resource for your PTO to use throughout the year. Make as many copies as you'd like for your PTO board or any general member who might want the information. Please use the PTC Handbook Part II for information specific to this school year.

## **Parent Teacher Council of Stamford Mission Statement and Function**

Parent Teacher Council of Stamford and its member schools share the common goals of:

- I. Promoting the welfare of children and youth in their schools and communities.
- II. Bringing the home and the school into closer cooperation in the education of children.
- III. Providing opportunities for faculty and parents to exchange information that will enhance the educational environment for all children.
- IV. Enhancing the school's curricular and after school programming to enrich the student's education.

This Mission Statement and your by-laws should guide all of your work and decisions. The Mission Statement was created when applying for the tax-exempt status and it is important that your PTO follow this mission.

The Parent-Teacher Council has three primary functions:

***We act as the umbrella group for all of the Parent-Teacher Organizations in the Stamford Public Schools.*** This allows us to purchase a group liability insurance policy that covers each member PTO. The PTC also has a 501(c)3 tax status that covers all of the member organizations. (Please see the Handbook Part II for details of the insurance policy this year.)

***We distribute information about Stamford's public education system.*** We organize events such as the annual Board of Education Candidate's Forum. The Forum, scheduled for October, allows parents in our community the opportunity to hear directly from Board of Education hopefuls. Also, members of PTC regularly attend Board of Education meetings and many Board of Ed committee meetings. We share the information we've gathered at the general PTC meetings and through e-mail blasts to the PTC reps and PTO presidents.

***We are a support network for your PTO.*** We disseminate information about educational issues and student-related activities so the parents, students and teachers can be involved in the community to the full extent possible. We also hold an annual PTO Treasurer's meeting and facilitate meetings of PTO Presidents in which the presidents can discuss ideas and share successful PTO strategies.

Check the Handbook Part II for a schedule of PTC meetings. ***Please make sure that there is a representative from your school at each general PTC meeting to keep current on what is going on in the Stamford Public Schools.*** The Superintendent and the Board of Education President will be invited to meetings as appropriate to talk about the BOE's plans for the schools, covering such topics as the administrative changes, curriculum changes and other updates. Meetings also include guest speakers from various organizations who are involved with youth.

The PTC is everyone's organization – by working together our impact is that much stronger. Please let us know if your PTO has questions or suggestions on how we can be better partners. Thank you for your continued support and cooperation.

# **The Parent Teacher Council of Stamford ByLaws (“ByLaws”)**

Amended as of November 16, 2010

## **ARTICLE I –NAME**

The Name of this organization is The Parent Teacher Council of Stamford, also known as PT Council.

## **ARTICLE II – ARTICLES OF ORGANIZATION**

The organization exists as an unincorporated organization of its members. Its “Articles of Organization” comprise these by-laws, which may be amended or revised as described in Article XIII. In the absence of separate articles of association, the by-laws shall be deemed to be the articles of association.

## **ARTICLE III – GOALS/OBJECTIVES**

- a. To serve as the umbrella organization for Parent-Teacher Organizations (“PTO’s”) of the Stamford Public Schools.
- b. To promote the welfare of children and youth in school and community.
- c. To pursue measures for the care and protection of children and youth.
- d. To bring into closer relation home and school so that parents and teachers may cooperate in the education of children and youth.
- e. To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for all children and youth the highest advantages in physical, mental and social education.
- f. To assist in the formation of PTO’s.
- g. To promote programs favorable to the interests of children.
- h. To be a vehicle for exchange of information and ideas among all member schools and between those organizations and city boards that impact on the public school system.

## **ARTICLE IV – BASIC POLICIES**

- a. PT Council shall be noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan.
- b. The name of PT Council, or the names of any Executive Board members (as defined in Article VII(a) below) in their official capacities, shall not be used in any connection with a commercial concern, or with any partisan interest, or for any purpose not appropriately related to promotion of the objectives of PT Council.
- c. PT Council shall not, directly or indirectly, participate or intervene (in any way, including the publishing or distribution of statements) in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office.
- d. PT Council shall cooperate with schools to support the improvement of education in ways that will not interfere with the administration of the schools.
- e. PT Council may cooperate with other organizations and agencies concerned with child welfare, but persons representing PT Council in such matters shall make no commitments that bind PT Council without the consent of the Executive Board.

## **ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP AND DUES**

- (1) Member PTO
  - a. To be a PTO member of PT Council, a PTO must pay membership dues, submit updated by-laws and agree to PT Council policies.

- b. Member PTO's shall be represented by their president(s), treasurer and PT Council Representative.
- c. Membership dues shall be all inclusive and set annually by the Executive Board. They shall be payable on or before November 1.
- d. Additional PTO's may be accepted at any time that they fulfill the membership obligations.
- e. PT Council provides insurance coverage for all dues paying Member PTO's under a group policy.
- f. Member PTO's whose dues to the PT Council are in arrears shall not be eligible for insurance and bonding, and shall not have voting rights at PT Council meetings or via email vote.
- g. PT Council will maintain tax-exempt status for those Member PTO's who requested inclusion in same and are qualified to be included. Member PTO's covered by this group determination letter are required to furnish PT Council with a copy of their completed tax return no later than December 15.

(2) Submember PTO's

- a. PT Council may also allow for submemberships to be available to a club or organization of any Member PTO school, which shall be referred to as "Submembers".
- b. Such Submembers shall be included in the group tax-exempt status, but they shall have sole responsibility for their own recordkeeping and administration. If necessary, Submembers shall also be responsible for their own tax filings, and shall furnish PT Council with a copy of their completed tax return no later than December 15<sup>th</sup>.
- c. Submembers shall have no voting rights in the affairs of PT Council and, so long as their Member PTO dues are not in arrears, they shall not be required to pay any membership dues.

**ARTICLE VI – VOTING BODY**

- a. The voting body of PT Council shall consist only of Member PTO's of the Stamford public schools and the members of the Executive Board.
- b. Each member PTO in good standing and each Executive Board office is entitled to one (1) vote.
- c. As an alternative to a "raised hand" vote, any Executive Board member may make a motion for a "blind" vote. If the motion is seconded, then votes will be recorded on paper and tallied by the Recording Secretary.
- d. Member PTO's may have any number of delegates attend PT Council meetings, but are governed by one vote. Each Member PTO shall designate a person from its membership as the voting delegate to PT Council.
- e. A majority of Member PTO's present at a PT Council meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business by the PT Council at such meeting and the majority vote shall constitute the act of PT Council.
- f. For the transaction of business of the Executive Board, a majority of offices represented at a meeting shall constitute a quorum. A majority vote of those Executive Board officers present shall be considered an act of the Executive Board and an Executive Board voting member may issue a proxy if he/she cannot be present for the vote during an Executive Board meeting. An email may be utilized as the proxy vote.
- g. The Executive Board may conduct an email vote in order to carry out business of both PT Council and the Executive Board. The corresponding secretary will send out voting details and tally the votes received. No less than twenty four (24)

hours notice will be given to respond to the email vote and if a majority of Member PTO's or Executive Board offices, as the case may be, is reached within the given time before all members have responded, that majority shall determine the vote.

#### **ARTICLE VII – EXECUTIVE BOARD/OFFICERS AND THEIR ELECTIONS**

- a. The officers of PT Council shall consist of Sr. Co-President, Jr. Co-President, 1<sup>st</sup> vice-president, 2<sup>nd</sup> vice-president, recording secretary, corresponding secretary, and treasurer and shall constitute the Executive Board. Each office, other than those of the Sr. and Jr. Co-President, may be shared by two people who will share the responsibilities of the office and the vote. No two officers serving concurrently on the Executive Board may be related
- b. The superintendent of the Stamford Public Schools will act as honorary vice-president. This is not a voting position.
- c. An officer, other than co-President, may not be eligible to serve more than two consecutive years in the same office except as provided for in (m) believe. Co-Presidents may stay in the Jr. role for one year only and the Sr. role for one year only.
- d. The out-going president shall serve as advisor to, but not as a member of the Executive Board. This is not a voting position.
- e. Terms are one year with the exception of the Jr. Co-President who is expected to serve as Sr. Co-President the following year. Co-Presidents will complete their terms in alternate years.
- f. In order to be eligible for nomination as an Executive Board officer, a person must have attended at least 3 PT Council meetings during the course of the current year.
- g. No person seeking election to or serving on the Stamford Board of Education may concurrently serve as an Executive Board officer.
- h. Only individuals from Member PTO's shall be eligible to serve on the Executive Board of PT Council. These members must have served in PT Council for a minimum of one year.
- i. Nomination for the Executive Board shall be made by nominating committee consisting of a minimum of three members of the voting body of the PT Council, no two of whom shall be from the same Member PTO ("Nominating Committee"). In addition, members of the Nominating Committee must have served a minimum of one year in PT Council.
- j. The Nominating Committee shall consist of volunteers appointed by the Executive Board at a PT Council meeting in March.
- k. The Nominating Committee shall present the slate of officers at the PT Council meeting in May. The consent of each candidate must be obtained before her/his name is placed in nomination.
- l. At the PT Council meeting in June, the officers will be elected as set forth in Article VI(e).
- m. In the event that the Nominating Committee is unable to find a candidate for any officer position, the Executive Board may, upon a vote by the majority of the offices represented at a meeting to discuss the nominations shall allow the current officer in the position to remain for an additional one year term, provided, however, that in no event shall such officer serve in the same position for more than three (3) consecutive years.

## ARTICLE VIII – DUTIES OF OFFICERS

**a. Sr. Co-President:**

Shall serve a one year term previously having served as Jr. Co-President  
Shall have a vote at Executive Board and general PT Council meetings  
Shall preside at all meetings of PT Council and Executive Board meetings, or will delegate such responsibility to the Jr. Co-President.  
Shall sign with the treasurer all orders on the treasury of the PT Council  
Shall act as liaison with the Board of Education (“BOE”), the Administration of the Stamford Public Schools, and the Stamford Education Association.  
Shall coordinate the work of other committees in order that the Goals/ Objectives of PT Council may be promoted.  
Shall coordinate all communication with the Member PTO’s to keep member schools informed.  
Will prepare, in coordination with Jr. Co-President and Treasurer, the budget for the following fiscal year at the summer meeting.

**b. Jr. Co-President**

Shall serve a one year term serving as Sr. Co-President the following year  
Shall have a vote at Executive Board and general PT Council meetings.  
Shall preside at meetings of the PT Council and Executive Board in the absence of the Sr. Co-President  
Shall coordinate PT Council representation at BOE committee meetings and other city meetings as necessary  
Will prepare, in coordination with Sr. Co-President and Treasurer, the budget for following fiscal year at the summer meeting.

**c. 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President**

Shall serve a one year term, can serve 2 consecutive years  
Shall have a vote at Executive Board and general PT Council meetings  
May be shared by 2 people, sharing the responsibilities and the vote  
Shall schedule speakers, chair, or delegate chairmanship of the Candidates Forum in October, assemble and coordinate information to be shared among Member PTO’s regarding BOE elections.

**d. 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President**

Shall serve a one year term, can serve 2 consecutive years  
Shall have a vote at Executive Board and general PT Council meetings  
May be shared by 2 people, sharing the responsibilities and the vote  
Shall coordinate communication between Member PTO presidents to share information.

**e. Recording Secretary**

Shall serve a one year term, can serve 2 consecutive years  
Shall have a vote at Executive Board and general PT Council meetings  
May be shared by 2 people, sharing the responsibilities and the vote  
Shall record minutes of all meetings, Executive Board and general, and the results of all roll call votes.  
Shall distribute minutes to the Executive Board

- f. Corresponding Secretary**  
 Shall serve a one year term, can serve 2 consecutive years  
 Shall have a vote at Executive Board and general PT Council meetings  
 May be shared by 2 people, sharing the responsibilities and the vote  
 Shall keep an accurate roster (names, phone numbers, addresses, emails) of the president, treasurer and PT Council representative of the Member PTO's.  
 Shall distribute email announcements of monthly meetings at least 10 days in advance of such meeting.  
 Shall conduct any additional correspondence as delegated by the Executive Board.
- g. Treasurer**  
 Shall serve a two year term, can serve an additional third year.  
 Shall have a vote at Executive Board and general PT Council meetings  
 May be shared by 2 people, sharing the responsibilities and the vote  
 Shall draft an operating budget for the upcoming school year with the Sr. and Jr. Co-Presidents which budget shall be presented for approval to the Executive Board at their summer meeting and to the Member PTO's at the first general meeting of the school year.  
 Maintain custody of all funds of the PT Council.  
 Keep a full and accurate account of receipts and expenditures.  
 Make disbursements in accordance with the approved budget, as authorized by PT Council, upon presentation of a written request from the Sr. Co-President or appropriate committee chairperson.  
 The Treasurer and Sr. and Jr. Co-President(s) shall have the authority to sign checks for PT Council.  
 Present a financial statement at every meeting of PT Council and at other times at the request of the Executive Board.  
 Prepare a full report at the close of the fiscal year. This report will be presented to the Member PTO's at the first meeting of the school year immediately following the close of the fiscal year.  
 Maintain books of accounts and records as shall be sufficient to establish the items of gross income, receipts, and disbursements of PT Council.  
 Oversee the preparation and filing of the annual tax return of the PT Council, if required, due November 15 of each year following the close of the PT Council's fiscal year.  
 Send the annual documentation to the IRS regarding our group exemption and subordinates no later than March 30.  
 Collect copies of tax returns of Member PTO's for tax compliance  
 Act as liaison with insurance agency
- h. All officers**  
 Shall perform the duties prescribed in the parliamentary authority in addition to those outlined in these Bylaws and those assigned from time to time.  
 Shall deliver to their successors all official material by June 30.  
 Shall represent PT Council at Stamford BOE meetings.
- i.** An inability to fulfill the responsibilities of any Executive Board position shall empower the Executive Board, upon majority vote, to move to request that Executive Board Member's resignation. If the Executive Board Member refuses to resign, the Executive Board shall be entitled, upon majority vote, to remove

that Executive Board Member from office. In the event of a vacancy occurring in any officer position, the position shall be filled for the unexpired term by a person selected by a majority of the Executive Board, notice of such election having been given to the Member PTO's. In case a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the President-Elect, where applicable, shall automatically assume the responsibility of President for the remainder of the unexpired term and shall thereafter remain eligible for a full term as Co-President.

#### **ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS**

- a. Regular meetings of this PT Council shall be held at such times as determined by the Executive Board, but in no event shall there be less than five regular meetings per school year.
- b. The regular meeting held in June shall be known as the Annual Meeting and shall be for the purpose of electing officers.
- c. Special meetings of the PT Council may be called by the Sr. and Jr. Co-President(s). At least five days notice of such a special meeting shall be given.
- d. Meetings of PT Council shall be open to the public, but the privilege of introducing motions and voting shall be limited to the voting body as outlined in Article VI.

#### **ARTICLE X – COMMITTEES**

- a. Standing committees shall be created by the Executive Board as may be deemed necessary to promote the Goals/Objectives and carry on the work of PT Council.
- b. New committees will file a committee description and goal for approval by the Executive Board before undertaking any committee work.
- c. No committee work shall be undertaken without the consent of the Executive Board.
- d. The Chair of all standing committees shall be members in good standing of Member PTO's.
- e. Special committees may be appointed by the Executive Board when such committees are deemed necessary by PT Council.
- f. The quorum of any committee shall be a majority of its committee members present at any meeting. The Sr. Co-President or its designee shall be a member ex officio of all committees, with the exception of the Nominating Committee.

#### **ARTICLE XI – FISCAL YEAR**

The fiscal year of the PT Council shall begin July 1 and end June 30.

#### **ARTICLE XII – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY**

“Robert’s Rules of Order, Newly Revised” shall govern this PT Council in all cases in which they are applicable.

#### **ARTICLE XIII – AMENDMENTS/REVISIONS**

- a. A committee may be established to submit a revised set of Bylaws as a substitute for the existing Bylaws. The revised set of Bylaws may be adopted at a regular meeting of PT Council by a vote by the majority of the offices represented at a meeting provided written notice of the proposed revisions shall have been given to each member PTO at least fifteen (15) days prior to the date of the meeting at which action is taken.



## PT COUNCIL OF STAMFORD INSURANCE COVERAGE OVERVIEW AND PERMITS

### Current Coverage

It is important to know that the insurance policy contracted by the PT Council of Stamford is updated to provide each school with the appropriate coverage. Please check Handbook Part II for information specific to this school year.

In order for your group to have coverage, please note the following requirements:

- 1) All schools must pay an annual due, payable to PT Council of Stamford. **Check with the PTC Treasurer to find out this year's dues. Dues and must be paid by November 1st.** All dues will be applied to insurance coverage and other anticipated PT Council-related expenses for the current school year.
- 2) All flyers and posters announcing PTO sponsored events are required to contain the words: **"Sponsored by (your school's name) PTO, member of PT Council of Stamford."** Failure to do so could invalidate your insurance coverage for that event.
- 3) A school's parent-teacher organization must be a member in good standing of PTC, meeting all requirements of membership.
- 4) Where necessary and appropriate, you must complete and submit the Special Event Supplemental Application form found on the PTC website.

To file a claim, or if you have any further questions, please feel free to contact the PTC Treasurer.

### Permits

Every PTO event held at school requires a Stamford Public Schools permit. This includes general and executive meetings, and events. Download an in-house permit from the PT Council website (also found in Handbook Part II), fill out the information and get a signature from your principal. Then, send a copy of the signed permit to SPS Facilities c/o Michele O'Brien (fax #: 203-977-5547) and give a copy to your head custodian. It is up to the PTO president and school administration to decide who will take care of permitting; at some schools, the PTO president is in charge and at others, the principal or assistant principal does permitting. If a police officer is needed at an event, a building use form in triplicate must be used. These can be obtained from SPS Facilities. The process is longer for these forms, because they require police, Risk Manager and other signatures, so be sure to allow enough time.

**Example of PTO Bylaws**  
**YOUR SCHOOL ORGANIZATION**  
**BY-LAWS**

Article I – Name

The name of this organization shall be the **YOUR SCHOOL ORGANIZATION** Stamford, Connecticut.

Article II – Articles of Organization

The organization exists as an unincorporated organization of its members. Its “Articles of Organization” comprise these by-laws, which may be amended or revised as described in Article XIII. In the absence of separate articles of association, the by-laws shall be deemed to be the articles of association.

Article III – Objectives

The objectives of this Organization are:

To promote the welfare of children and youth in the home, school and community.

To bring together the home and school, that parents and teachers may cooperate in the education of the child.

To develop between educators and the general public such united efforts as will secure for every child the highest advantages in physical, mental, and social education.

Article IV – Basic Policies

-The basic policies of the Organization are:

-The Organization shall be noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan.

-The name of the Organization, or the names of any members in their official capacities, shall not be used in any connection with a commercial concern, or with any partisan interest, or for any purpose not appropriately related to promotion of the objectives of the Organization.

-The Organization shall not, directly or indirectly, participate or intervene (in any way, including the publishing or distribution of statements) in any political campaign on behalf of, or in opposition to, any candidate for public office. The Organization may make time available at its meeting for candidates for -Board of Education positions to present their views to the membership. Appearance of a candidate before the membership shall not be construed as endorsement of that candidate by the Organization.

-The Organization shall not devote a substantial part of its activities in an attempt to influence legislation by propaganda or otherwise.

-The Organization shall cooperate with schools to support the improvement of education in ways that will not interfere with the administration of the schools.

-The Organization may cooperate with other organizations and agencies concerned with child welfare; but persons representing the Organization in such matters shall make no commitments that bind the -Organization without the consent of the Executive Board.

-In the event of the dissolution of the Organization, its assets shall be given to **YOUR SCHOOL**. In the event that said school is closed, monies shall be distributed proportionately to those schools designated to receive **YOUR SCHOOL** students.

Article V – Membership

Any parent/guardian of a student at **YOUR SCHOOL** shall be a member of the Organization.

Any faculty member (teacher or teaching assistant) at **YOUR SCHOOL** shall be a member of the Organization.

## Article VI – Executive Board Structure

The Executive Board shall consist of:

- The officers of the Organization
- The school principal
- The school assistant principal
- Four (4) committee chairpersons serving as Board Members at Large (one year terms).

The Executive Board shall meet a minimum of five times in the fiscal year.

The officers of the Organization and their terms of office are as follows:

- Co-Presidents, two individuals, each serving a two-year term, completing office in alternate years.
- President-Elect, one year term
- Immediate Past-President, one year term
- Vice-President, Fund-Raising, two year term
- Vice-President, Volunteers, two year term
- Secretary, two year term
- Treasurer, two year term
- PT Council Representative, two year term
- Board of Education Representative, two year term

### Duties of Executive Board

- To transact necessary business in the intervals between general meetings and such other business as may be referred to it by the Organization.
- To approve the work plans of the committee chairpersons.
- To approve expenditures beyond the limits of the accepted budget, not to exceed two thousand dollars (\$2,000) per expenditure. All expenditures outside the accepted budget require a vote of the Executive Board of the Organization prior to purchase or reimbursement will be denied. A vote at a General Meeting of the Organization is required to approve expenditures greater than \$2,000 per expenditure.
- Plan representation of the Organization at meetings of the Board of Education and outside organizations whose actions impact *YOUR SCHOOL* (e.g. Planning Board, Board of Representatives)

### Terms of Office

- Officers will be elected for the terms specified above. In the event that the position of Treasurer cannot be filled, the Treasurer may stay in the position one additional year.
- In order to become an Officer or Board Member At Large of the Organization, members will have had to serve as a committee chair at a time preceding their election.
- In order to become President-Elect of the Organization, a member must have served at least one year as a member of the Executive Board at some time prior.
- In order to become Co-President of the Organization, the candidate must have served as President-Elect in the year proceeding the presidential term.
- The Treasurer and Co-President may not be related.
- Executive Board members shall be elected by a simple majority vote of members present at the last General Meeting of the school year. Ballots will be counted by the members of the Nominating Committee. If there is but one nominee for any office, it shall be in order to move that the Secretary cast the elective ballot of the Organization for the nominee.
- Officers shall assume their official duties on June 30 of the year in which they were elected and shall serve for the terms listed above, resigning their positions on June 30 of the year in which their term concludes.

## Nominations

- There shall be a nominating committee comprised of five members. Three of the members shall be elected from the Executive Board from its members, one of those individuals being a school administrator. Two members of the Nominating Committee shall be elected by the Organization at the first meeting of the school year.
- All five members of the Nominating Committee shall meet in the spring, in closed session, at which time they shall select a slate of officers. The slate shall be presented to the Executive Board in writing, signed and dated, at a meeting one month prior to the Organization's final meeting of the school year. At that time, additional nominations shall be accepted from the Executive Board. The slate of officers submitted by the Nominating Committee, along with any further nominations from the Executive Board, must be approved by a majority of the Executive Board.
- Only those persons who have signified their consent to serve if elected shall be nominated for such office.

## Vacancies

- A vacancy occurring in any Executive Board position shall be filled for the unexpired term by a person selected by the Nominating Committee and elected by a majority of the Executive Board, notice of such election having been given. In case a vacancy occurs in the office of President, the President-Elect shall automatically assume the responsibility of President for the remainder of the unexpired term, and shall thereafter remain eligible for a full term as Co-President. A vacancy in the position of Past-President may remain unfilled.

## Removal from Office

- An inability to fulfill the responsibilities of any Executive Board position shall empower the Board, upon a two-thirds majority vote, to move to request that Board Member's resignation. If the Board Member refuses to resign, the Board shall be entitled, upon two-thirds majority, to remove that Board Member from office.

## Article VII – Duties of Executive Board Members

### Co-Presidents

- Preside at all General Meetings of the Organization.
- Preside at all meetings of the Executive Board.
- Coordinate the work of the officers and committees of the Organization. Delegates position as ex-officio member of all committees among officers. Distributes list of officer assignments to Committee Chairs by October of the school year.
- Perform duties that may be assigned by the Organization or the Executive Council.
- Prepare an agenda for meetings over which they preside.
- The Treasurer and Co-Presidents shall have the authority to sign checks for the Organization. Signatories shall not be related.

### President-Elect

- Assigns representation at Board of Education meetings among Executive Board members.
- Coordinates speakers at General Meetings of the Membership.
- Coordinates publication and distribution of the newsletter.
- Assumes position of Co-President upon completion of term.

### Immediate Past-President

- Serves in an advisory capacity to the Executive Board for one year after concluding the office of President.
- Orients new Board members to by-laws and structure as they assume their positions.
- This position will be a voting member of the Executive Board.

#### Vice-President, Fund-Raising

- Evaluates effectiveness of fundraising activities throughout the year.
- Reviews new programs for introduction to the Organization's activities.
- Recommends to the Executive Board fundraising activities for the following year.
- Organizes end of year meeting (along with Vice-President Volunteers) of committee chairpersons to evaluate activities and make recommendations to the Executive Board for the following year.

#### Vice-President, Volunteers

- Distributes volunteer sign-up to membership at beginning of the school year.
- Creates lists of volunteers for distribution to appropriate committee chairpersons.
- Distributes committee chairperson information packet and ensures that committee summary sheet is returned by committee chairperson.
- Organizes end of year meeting (with Vice-President Fundraising) of committee chairpersons to evaluate activities and make recommendations to the Executive Board for the following year.

#### Secretary

- Records and distributes, prior to the next meeting, minutes of all meetings for the Organization and the Executive Board.
- Keeps an accurate record of attendance at all meetings.
- Sends correspondence as directed by the Executive Board.

#### Treasurer

- Drafts an operating budget for the upcoming school year with the assistance of the Budget Planning Committee. This budget shall be presented for approval to the Executive Board at their summer meeting and to the Organization at the first general meeting of the school year.
- Maintains custody of all funds of the Organization.
- Keeps a full and accurate account of receipts and expenditures.
- Makes disbursements in accordance with the approved budget, as authorized by the Organization, upon presentation of a written request from the President or appropriate committee chairperson.
- The Treasurer and Co-Presidents shall have the authority to sign checks for the Organization. Signatories shall not be related.
- Presents a financial statement at every meeting of the Organization and at other times at the request of the Executive Board.
- Makes a full report at the close of the fiscal year. This will be presented to the membership at the first meeting of the school year immediately following the close of the fiscal year.
- Maintains books of accounts and records as shall be sufficient to establish the items of gross income, receipts, and disbursements of the Organization.
- Prepares the annual tax return of the Organization due November 15 of each year following the close of the Organization's fiscal year.
- The Treasurer's records are open for review upon request.

#### Board Members at Large

- Serve as a committee chair the year they fill the Member at Large position.
- Attend a minimum of two Board of Education meetings per year as the representative of the Organization.

#### All Executive Board Members Shall:

- Perform the duties in these by-laws and those assigned by the Executive Board.

- Deliver to their successors all official material by June 30.
- Represent the Organization at Board of Education meetings and at meetings of outside organizations whose actions impact *YOUR SCHOOL* (e.g. Planning Board, Board of Representatives), as delegated by the Co-Presidents.

#### Article VIII – General Membership Meetings

- Regular meetings of this Organization shall be held at such times as determined by the Board, but in no event shall there be less than five regular meetings per school year. General meetings will have either a business or educational focus, as indicated by the agenda.
- Special meetings may be called by the Board or by a petition filed with the President and Secretary and signed by at least ten members.
- Adequate notice of time, place and agenda shall be given to all members as to all meetings.
- The annual meeting shall be the last meeting of the school year.
- The privilege of holding office, introducing motions, debating, and voting shall be limited to members of this Organization.
- Unless otherwise specified herein, a simple majority of members present at a meeting shall be required to carry any motion or resolution.

#### Article IX – Standing and Special Committees

- The Executive Board may create such standing committees, excluding Nominating Committee, before the start of the school year, as it may deem necessary to promote the objectives and carry on the work of the Organization.
- The chairperson of each committee shall present a plan of work to the Executive Board. No committee work shall be undertaken without the consent of the officer designated as the Board representative to the committee.
- As delegated by the Co-Presidents, an officer shall be a member, ex-officio, of all committees of the Organization. This officer is empowered to grant Executive Board approval for committee work. The committee chairperson shall be informed of the designated officer prior to beginning work.
- The Budget Planning Committee shall consist of the Treasurer and Co-Presidents, and any other members of the Executive Board deemed appropriate by the group. This committee is directed to meet with grade level leaders twice yearly; once in the spring to seek feedback about the year's budget and request input into planning prior to the summer meeting of the Executive Board. They are further directed to meet with grade level leaders prior to the first general meeting of the Organization to discuss grade level allocations as proposed for the coming year.

#### Article X – Council Membership

- The Organization shall be represented in meetings of the Parent-Teacher Council by the Co-Presidents and/or the elected PT Council delegate.
- The organization shall pay annual dues and insurance to the PT Council, as provided in PT Council's by-laws.
- The Organization maintains its tax-exempt status through the group determination letter of PT Council.
- The Organization accepts and supports the goals of PT Council as stated in their Mission Statement.
- The Organization will furnish a copy of the annual tax return to PT Council no later than December 15.

Article XI – Fiscal Year

- The fiscal year of the Organization shall be July 1 through June 30.

Article XII – Parliamentary Authority

- Robert's Rules of Order, Revised shall govern the Organization in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not in conflict with these by-laws.

Article XIII – Amendments

- These by-laws may be amended at any general meeting of the Organization, by a two-thirds vote of the members present, provided that written notice of the proposed amendment shall have been given at least ten days in advance.
- A committee may be appointed to submit a revised set of by-laws as a substitute for the existing by-laws only by a majority vote at a general meeting of the Organization or by a two-thirds vote of the Executive Board. The requirements for adoption of a revised set of by-laws shall be the same as in the case of an amendment.

Adopted *DATE*

**FOR MORE SAMPLE BYLAWS, PLEASE CONTACT THE PTC CO-PRESIDENTS.**

# Financial Guidelines

## Your school's tax-exempt status

Your PTO, as well as PT Council, is a 501(c)3 organization. 501(c)3 is a section of the tax code that denotes tax-exempt organizations. An organization can become classified as a tax-exempt organization after they have applied to the IRS.

If Parent Teacher Organizations (PTOs) do not follow these guidelines, they are at risk of losing their tax-exempt status for non-compliance.

To maintain your tax-exempt status, you must make sure that the money you raise is used to support your mission. (The mission statement for PT Council and all its member schools can be found at the front of this handbook.) Money should not be supplanting funds from the Stamford Public Schools but should be used for enhancement of programs and extracurricular activities. All your expenses should fall within the tax-exempt purpose of your PTO. Detailed functional expenses must support your description of program services

The way your organization is listed with the IRS is your official name. Be sure your bank account and By-Laws conform.

## Donations

Contributions made to 501(c)3 organizations are tax-exempt. This is an incentive to encourage potential donors to give to these organizations, so tax-exempt status must be well-guarded. Compliance to 501(c)3 guidelines is required to maintain tax-exempt status.

Any contribution to your PTO of \$250 or more must be acknowledged by a letter from your PTO to the donor. The donor will use the letter to prove that his contribution is tax-deductible.

For "quid pro quo" contributions (contributions where the donor is getting something in return for his money) your PTO must specify how much of the money is deductible. For instance, if tickets to a PTO dinner are \$75 and of that \$75 the value of the dinner is \$30, but the rest of the money goes to the PTO, the ticket buyer is eligible to claim a deduction of \$45. (Please note that this policy is only for donations \$75 and over). This information must be disclosed and can be printed on the ticket to the event, or in the brochure/flyer for the event.

Contributions to your PTO of a service (tax preparer, attorney services, etc.) may not be deducted by the contributor as a donation. Contributions of goods (gift certificates, prizes for an auction, etc.) can be deducted by the contributor. It is up to the contributor to determine the value of the item or service donated.

## Tax filing guidelines

Each PTO prepares an individual return. Your PTO gets a group exemption from PT Council # 4229. These guidelines require the filing of 990EZ, 990 or 990-N (e-postcard) tax forms by the 15<sup>th</sup> day of the 5<sup>th</sup> month after the close of the fiscal year. For PTOs, that's 11/15, since the fiscal year ends on 6/30. PTOs with gross receipts equal to or below \$50,000 should fill out 990-N. "Gross receipts" means money that flows through your organization at any time—even if you don't keep all that money. So, if your school's biggest fundraiser grosses \$50,000, even though you only net \$25,500 because you send the rest of the money to the fundraiser company, you



must file 990-N. PTOs with gross receipts less than \$200,000 must file form 990-EZ. PTOs with gross receipts of more than \$200,000 must file the 990 form.

It is very important for your organization to file the 990-N card, or the 990/990EZ form, every year. Copies of tax returns are submitted to Parent Teacher Council treasurer by Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>. PTC must have current tax returns for each parent teacher organization for that organization to remain a member in good standing.

In filling out your form, all your expenses should fall within the tax-exempt purpose of your PTO. The tax-exempt purpose of your organization is spelled out in the mission statement which you will find at the front of this handbook. This is the mission statement that was used when applying for our tax exemption and it is important we abide by it. Detailed functional expenses must support your description of program services.

Grant money is to be listed on the tax return if PTOs are handling the grant.

If the IRS determines that you are collecting money and not filing returns, your 501(c)3 tax status will be invalidated and contributions to your organization will no longer be tax-deductible. This can be retroactive.

Since any school that does not conform to 501(c)3 rules could jeopardize the non-profit status of all the schools listed in the group tax exemption, PT Council can exclude an uncooperative school from its organization. Because PT Council holds the group exemption (# 4229) for all of the PTOs in Stamford, it is PT Council's responsibility to make sure that your taxes have been filed. If they haven't, the 501(c)3 status of all of the schools might be in jeopardy.

The IRS Website ([www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov)) has information about filling out tax forms as well as forms you can download and print.

If you won't be able to prepare your taxes on time, you may get an extension form (# 8868) from the IRS website. This will give you a "no-questions-asked" 3 month extension. You may file for another extension when those 3 months are up, but that extension will have to be approved by the IRS.

### **Fundraising**

Each school has its own tax id number (EIN number). Each PTO has its own tax id number as well. Any fundraising for the school done by the principal should be done through the school's tax id number, with the Board of Ed's approval on how the money is to be used. Please send a copy of your IRS Determination Letter with your EIN to the PTC Treasurer.

Any money raised by the school becomes district money. Any money raised by the school must be recorded and reported properly. Fundraising by the PTO should be done through the PTO's tax id number, with the PTO's approval on how the money is to be used. The money should be used to support the budget and the mission of the PTO.

On your 990 form, you must include direct expenses—what it cost you to run each event listed. If you run many events, each must be detailed.

Each fundraiser should have a stated goal—either specific (a new playground) or general (for the general stated mission of the organization/enrichment/operating budget). The anticipated fundraising income should be included when planning the yearly operating budget.

### **Teacher/Principal funds**

There should be no “discretionary account” for principals out of PTO funds without PTO controls. A PTO can, however, set aside a small amount of money (\$300-\$1000) for a principal to use without getting approval first. Receipts would still have to be collected for all of these expenses. Any additional PTO money spent by principals must be approved by the PTO and documented with receipts that are handed in.

Classroom supply money given to teachers should be modest and teachers must submit receipts.

### **Dues**

All membership dues are listed as donations to maintain our 501(c)3 status.

### **Payments for buses/field trips**

In order to minimize PTO liability, all buses for field trips should be ordered and paid for through the school purchasing and accounts payable system. All arrangements should be coordinated with the building principal (or designee such as the school secretary) and all orders encumbered through the district’s purchasing system (H.T.E.) via a purchase order. If the PTO is paying for the trip, a check in the same amount should be sent to the SPS Finance Department , attention: Dave Hollywood, with the proper account number. The number starts with 019-39-2701-511-XX, ending with the last two digits where XX represents the two digit building code. The trip account will then receive the proper credit.

Booking trips with First Student is fine. They have an insurance certificate on file that protects the BOE and volunteers from liability.

You can make payments to other bus companies (i.e. DATTCO) and/or field trips (i.e. Nature’s Classroom), but the teacher or principal must get a copy of the bus company’s or field trip destination’s insurance coverage showing the same protection (naming the city of Stamford and SPS as additional insureds). Hugh Murphy, the Executive Director of Finance, is sending the principals a reminder of this procedure. If the PTO is handling the bus or trip arrangements, then the PTO needs to get this insurance information in the form of an insurance certificate.

### **Do’s and Don’ts**

501(c)3 organizations cannot engage in any political campaign and cannot contribute to any candidate’s campaign for office. This includes supporting a BOE candidate. If you give time to one candidate you must give time to all. Political lobbying is allowed as long as the lobbying is not a substantial part of the PTO’s activities. Substantial is defined under the expenditure test and each PTO should have filed Form 5768 in order to make this election.

A PTO should be careful when making charitable contributions. Donations to a charity must be in furtherance of the mission. A contribution to another school’s PTO is allowed. A PTO can solicit contributions for any charity as long as it’s disclosed that the money raised is going to go to a charity. If students/teachers raise money for a charity and the PTO writes the check, the PTO must list it as a “special event” on their tax form and detail the amount raised, from whom, and confirm that all of it donated.

Do not raise money for specific individuals (i.e. sick children). Instead, a scholarship might be given to an individual. Families in your school community who fall on hard times (such as a

house fire) can be given a gift certificate for something that relates to education, not clothing, toys, etc.

PTOs should not pay Stamford Public School teacher salaries under any circumstances. The payment check should come from the BOE, although the PTO provides the actual funding. This eliminates the need for PTOs to fill out 1099 forms for SPS teachers and limits the PTO's liability. This includes special classes or event during the day and after school, as well as after-school programs not covered by grants or the BOE. SPS should be liable for workmen's compensation should a teacher be injured while working at an after school program. If the PTO pays the teacher, the PTO is liable.

Because teacher payments for services rendered is considered taxable income to the teacher, all payments to the teachers should be done through the district's payroll system so that wages, deductions, and net pay are properly calculated and W-2's will be issued at year end. The PTO will then need to reimburse BOE for the cost of the payment. To arrange for the teacher payment, the PTO point person should contact, John Castellana, grants account analyst to establish an account for your school or program, (contact information in Part II of this handbook). Additionally, a check should be sent to John who will create a PTO account and notify the contact person of the account number. On a prompt basis, after the work is completed, a payment form should be completed and sent to the BOE HR department with the total of hours worked and the account code, and a check will be issued from Central Office. As a note, at some point the district may be using the automated Kronos system to record and pay the teachers which will eliminate the need to send the hours manually.

If an after school program is using school facilities, it must be clarified as to who is responsible for the program for liability reasons.

PTOs are not employers and should not be preparing 1099 forms. The PTO can pay "independent contractors," or one-time-only cultural performers who come to the school. If a PTO is directly paying a non-Stamford Public School teacher for services, and if the teacher earns more than \$600 in a calendar year, the PTO must file a 1099. It is better to hire independent contractors who pay their own workman's comp. and taxes to avoid this situation.

Any grant moneys not used/left over technically must be returned.

### **Budgets**

Your operating budget should allocate money to support your mission. The mission statement of PTC and its member schools can be found at the front of this handbook. The budget of the PTO should reflect the mission of the PTO and list expenses that support the school's programs, enhance the school's programs and support the teachers. The PTO should not be paying for curricular programs or supplies that are a part of the Stamford Public Schools' budget.

A good budget includes income and expenses from the previous year as well as the budgeted amount and actual amount spent this year. See sample budget in this handbook.

The PTO budget should be approved at a general PTO meeting in the spring or early fall. The current budget should be presented at each general PTO meeting.

If an unforeseen expense comes up during the school year which is outside the approved budget, the PTO must vote on approval of funds and decide from which account to move the money or decide how to raise the additional money.

Keep track of expenses as they come up.

Do not spend money in anticipation of a new fundraiser. The fundraiser might not perform as expected and then you'll be left owing money.

No school in Stamford should have a credit card. It is a bad practice. It is also not advised to open a credit line with a vendor or merchant.

If the PTO can afford it, consider purchasing software such as QuickBooks or Quicken to make bookkeeping easier.

### **Record Keeping**

For any checks that are written, it is good practice to fill out a check request form detailing the date, purpose, recipient and budget line of the payment. (Sample form in handbook) This will also act as an additional receipt for payment. Actual receipts (or copies thereof) should be kept with the check request.

Checks should not be written to cash, always to a specific person, company or organization.

PTO 990 forms must be available for inspection by anyone at any time. They should be kept in a file cabinet at the school, not in someone's home. A PTO file cabinet should be set up to house PTO files at the school. The only thing that may be kept confidential on the 990 form is the schedule of contributors. You do not have to disclose that information unless it is a contributor making over \$5,000.00 donation. Contributions over \$5,000.00 must be disclosed.

Make sure your PTO has some carryover money to spend at the beginning of the following year. Do not end the year at a deficit. Either cut programs or add fundraisers to make up any difference in the actual budget.

There is no real definition of how much money a 501(c)3 organization can carry over from year to year, however our purpose is not to accumulate funds. Money carried over should be earmarked for a purpose.

Financial records must be kept for seven years. Tax returns must be kept at the school indefinitely. PTO's must show adequate records (receipts, assets, current and past budgets) to show they are using the funds that are being raised. They should be available at the school for inspection at any time.

### **Sponsorship**

PTO's should not become sponsors of any other non-school organization such as scouts, neighborhood organizations or athletic leagues. You must refrain from being a sponsor or signing any documentation, for liability reasons, for any organization over which you do not have direct oversight.

## Example of PTO Budget

	2013-14	2014-15	Over/Under	2014-15
	Actual	Budget	Budget	Actual
<b>INCOME</b>				
ABC Clubs	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Auction	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Book Fair	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Box Tops for Education	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Burger King	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
California Pizza Kitchen	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Cookie Dough	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Lord & Taylor	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Movie Day (1/2 day)	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Original Art	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Photos - Davis Studio	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Plant Sale	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
School Spirit	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Store Fundraising - Target, Stop & Shop, One Cause	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Wrapping Paper	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>
<b>EXPENSES</b>				
Art/Museum Enrichment	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Enrichment-Schoolwide Performances	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Field Trips-GR1	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Field Trips-GR2	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Field Trips-GR3	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Field Trips-GR4	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Field Trips-GR5	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Field Trips-K	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Exec. Account/Academic Initiative	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grade 5 Year Book	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grade 5 Year End Ceremonies	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Grade 5 Social/T-Shirts	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Hospitality	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Jazz Band Competition	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Musical Production	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Outdoors/Grounds	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PT Council	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Roxbury Faculty Fund	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Scholarship High School	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Social	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Special Capital Project	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Staff Appreciation & Luncheon	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Student Council	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Supplies/Communications:	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Taxi	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>	<b>0.00</b>

**BUDGET OVER/(UNDER)  
CHECKING ACCOUNT BALANCE AS OF ...  
PLEASE CONTACT PT COUNCIL FOR ADDITIONAL SAMPLE BUDGETS**

# Sample Event Approval Form

You should use this for each PTO sponsored event. Our Directors and Officers Insurance covers the co-Presidents and one Treasurer at each member school. This form is back-up information to show that an event was organized with approval from the co-presidents of your PTO.

You can put this form on your school letterhead

Event \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) \_\_\_\_\_

This event is for \_\_\_\_\_ (students/parents)

Approximate number of attendees \_\_\_\_\_

List outside suppliers or vendors used:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson(s) of event \_\_\_\_\_

This event is being organized and held on behalf of the \_\_\_\_\_,  
a member of the Parent Teacher Council of Stamford.

This event is approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-President  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Co-President  
Date

A check request form should be kept on file for all checks written to reimburse parents/teachers for expenses and for payments for visiting artists, bookfairs, performers and other support programs the PTO undertakes. The expenses should be part of the approved PTO budget. This form should also be used for payments for field trip expenses and other checks where the PTO just acts as the holding agency. In addition to this form, receipts should be collected for all expenses.

Your School Letterhead

**Sample Check Request Form**

Date of Request \_\_\_\_\_ Date needed by \_\_\_\_\_

Amount requested \_\_\_\_\_

Requestor's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Requestor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Payable to \_\_\_\_\_

Address/Phone number \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Description/Purpose \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Co-president Approval \_\_\_\_\_



Check # \_\_\_\_\_ Date paid \_\_\_\_\_

Budget category \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

**Please attach all receipts here**

A deposit form should be used for every event where money is collected. The chairperson of the event is responsible for the money until the deposit form and deposit are given to the treasurer. At that time the treasurer should recount the money to make sure the total is correct before signing. You can also use a similar form for teachers who collect money.

### Sample Deposit Form

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

Event (and/or grade): \_\_\_\_\_

Contact the Treasurer **before** the event to arrange for the deposit. All moneys must be deposited as soon as possible after the event. Fill out the appropriate areas of the form and sign.

**CASH:**

	X	100	
	X	50	
	X	20	
	X	10	
	X	5	
	X	1	
		<b>TOTAL:</b>	

Total Currency: \_\_\_\_\_

**COIN:**

	X	\$10		Quarters
	X	\$5		Dimes
	X	\$2		Nickels
	X	.50		Pennies
	X			

Total Coin: \_\_\_\_\_

**CHECKS:**

Number of Checks	Total Check Amount

**DEPOSIT TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

Event Chair Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_

Treasurer Signature/Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Fundraising Chair Signature/Date \_\_\_\_\_



## **Parent Teacher Council Maureen Tobin Memorial Scholarship**

This scholarship is awarded yearly to a high achieving Stamford Public School High School senior, or seniors, who plan(s) on attending college.

The Scholarship fund consists of contributions made by the member PTO's. These contributions are usually between \$250 and \$400. The contributions must be made to the PTC by January. Please consider giving generously to this worthwhile fund.

The Student(s) apply through their guidance counselor and are awarded based on academics (40%), financial need (15%), extra-curricular activities (15%), work experience (15%), and community service (15%)

Awards are given in the amount of \$500 to \$2500 directly to the students designated college.

Procedure:

1. Member Schools contribute to the scholarship fund. Average contribution is \$250
2. In January, Scholarship committee of at least 5 members is identified from PTC voting body
3. Scholarship committee updates scholarship applications
4. Scholarship committee delivers applications to each public high school in Stamford and personally speaks to the guidance counselor by March 1st.
5. Applicants must be seniors at a Stamford Public High School attending college in the upcoming year.
6. Scholarship committee reviews applications (due in April) and scores them blindly using a scoring grid.
7. Applications will be weighed according to academics (40%), extra-curricular activities (both within and separate from school) (15%), work experience (15%), community service (15%) and financial need (15%).
8. Scholarship committee will add up the scores of the applicants and use the scores as a guide during discussion.
9. Scholarship committee must award all the money raised in the current year
10. Scholarship committee may award 1-5 scholarships, each one being no less than \$500 and no more than \$2500. Applicants who do not receive a scholarship receive a letter thanking them for applying.
11. Scholarship committee must present its scholarship winners to the PTC at its June (annual) meeting and also at the BOE June meeting with certificates.
12. Scholarship committee must notify public affairs office of the winners.
13. Scholarship committee must collect winners' home addresses and college information for the public affairs office and the PTC treasurer.

# Guidelines for Working with the Press

## When you are called for an interview by the media:

1. If a reporter calls for an interview, call back quickly. Reporters are almost always in a hurry and need a quick response.
2. Ask the reporter some questions so that you can give their readers/viewers accurate answers:
  - a. What is the issue on which you are reporting? (not the topic, the issue)
  - b. What's your deadline?
3. Then hang up. Cite the need to finish what you are doing at the moment. Give the reporter your direct phone number. Promise to call back in 15 minutes. During this time, PREPARE.
4. When talking to the reporter stay focused on the message, no matter what the questioning. Take time to listen to the reporter, link the question to your message, and then respond. Answer in terms of impact on audience. Keep it short and avoid the temptation to educate the reporter on anything other than your core message. The more information you provide, the less likely your message will be reflected accurately in the article or broadcast.
5. Short answers and short interviews are best. Each interview should be focused on one issue. If a reporter wants to tie together unrelated issues, offer to set up a time to discuss them separately.
6. TIP: Never go "off the record" with a reporter. Avoid jokes and don't say anything off-the-cuff, unless you want to see them in print. Anything you say to a reporter at any time is fair game for publication!
7. TIP: Be mindful of visuals. If a broadcast reporter wants an interview, discuss good spots in your school. Dress in appropriate attire.

## To issue a press release informing local news outlets of your organization's event:

1. Issue a press release, preferably several weeks in advance
2. Make a follow up phone call to offer additional information
3. You can use the sample template below
4. You can also issue a press release after an event with a photograph

## Template for a Press Release

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT: For immediate release

ATTN: PSA editors; also News, Health, Features, Calendar Editors

MEDIA CONTACT: (list name, phone number and email of contact person)

- Who: Specify who the event is for
- What: Specify what activities, presentations, etc. will be a part of the event
- When: Date of event
- Where: Location of event
- Why: Specify what the event's goal is

Local residents can join the students and parents of Your School at the Name of Event on (time of day) on (day of week, month, date) at (location of event). The event lasts (length of event, i.e. 90 minutes or two hours). The purpose of the event is to (describe the event's purpose, Examples: raise money for the media center or raise awareness of early literacy).

Include a quote or two from the principal or PTO Executive Board member about the importance of the event and the issue being addressed. For example: Dr. Education, the Principal of Your School, says "The key to having a successful reader by the third grade is to surround a child from birth with many varieties of reading material." Your School is encouraging early literacy by providing supplementary materials to each primary student so that he/she can read or explore reading materials at home. "Giving every child at Your School a book to take home over the weekend is a very simple way that we can encourage the love of reading," says Ms. Volunteer, president of the Your School PTO.

(If appropriate) Register by calling (insert phone number of contact person who will take registrations).

## **Guidelines for Working with the Board of Education**

Maintain a year round dialogue with Board of Education (BOE) members. Because we are a 501c3 organization, do not show favor to any one BOE candidate or member. Always extend invitations to all candidates or to all BOE members.

Invite Board Members to your PTO meetings (executive board and general) to meet parents and learn about strengths and concerns at your school.

Pair up your executive board members with members of the BOE.

These executive board members should maintain a running dialogue with their assigned BOE member throughout the year, personally invite them to events/meetings at the school, and share concerns.

It is important, if you use this model, to make sure that all of your executive board members are sharing the same message with their assigned BOE member. One way to do this is to have the BOE rep from your executive board (or your PTO co-pres if you don't have a BOE rep) put together a 'script' every time contact is to be made with the BOE.

If this method does not work for your PTO, then it is up to the president or BOE rep to be the primary contact person.

In this case, when you are contacting the BOE, make sure to send them all an email on the same topic; this allows them all the opportunity to be aware of your situation and to get involved.

You can follow up with phone calls to those BOE members who are most likely to be of help to you.

If necessary, share BOE phone/email contact information and a script for the parent population of your school if there is a particular issue that needs to be resolved.

Generally, meetings are held at 7pm in the Board Room on the 5<sup>th</sup> floor at Government Center. Sign up for news with [www.stamfordpublicschools.org](http://www.stamfordpublicschools.org) to get automated notice of meetings.

At the BOE regular meetings there is a "Time for the Public to be Heard." During this time you may introduce yourself and speak on an issue for 3 minutes. BOE members will not respond to your comments, but if you wait until the end of the BOE meeting you can chat with them further about your comments, or you can follow up the next day via email/phone.