

Leadership Basics and Conflict Resolution Strategies in PTA

Principles of parliamentary law are

- Justice and courtesy to all;
- Rights of the minority protected;
- Rule of the majority reflected;
- Partiality to none; and
- Consideration of one subject at a time.

Ground Rules for Meetings

- Use icebreakers or an inspiration to put attendees at ease
- Respect everyone's comments
- Speak one at a time
- Discuss ISSUES, NOT PEOPLE
- Try not to repeat
- Stay on task
- Don't take anything personally
- Agree to disagree
- Put electronic devices on silent

Qualities of an effective PTA leader

- **Listens – carefully.** Successful leaders spend much of their time listening and gathering information.
- **Makes a decision now.** Not tomorrow or next week. Using information on hand today, a successful leader makes the best possible decision.
- **Shares responsibility and blame** with his or her coworkers for mistakes and learns from them.
- **Recognizes talent** and brings it forward realizing that excellent board members will be a credit to the organization.
- **Knows how to nurture and develop** the strengths of each board member.
- **Can be counted on** to follow through: when he says he will do something, he does it, and does it well.
- **Gives constructive and tactful criticism** that supports a board member while teaching her.
- **Provides comfort and understanding** – personally and professionally – to board members who need it.
- **Is mannerly and timely** in all communications ~ verbal, written and electronic.
- **Adheres to ethical behavior** at all times.
- **Keeps the perspective** of all children and families in mind.
- **Models** for the board, the children, the staff and the community the behavior of a good PTA leader.
- **Always says thank you** and shows appreciation for the efforts of others.

Strategies to mitigate and resolve conflict within your PTA:

RECOGNIZE the conflict. Assumptions and perceptions are often at the center of a conflict.

Possible causes:

- Strong differences of opinion
- Misunderstanding about goals
- Disagreement as to what has taken place
- A feeling that members have not been respected
- Personality differences

MANAGE conflict. Do not fear: Conflict can be healthy. How you deal with it makes the difference.

Conflict resolution is a process that often results in positive change and growth for individuals and the association. ***The key to successful conflict resolution is keeping the focus on the process and desired outcomes, not the personalities.***

- Handle conflict calmly
- Set goals
- Agree to ground rules
- Agree to respect differences of opinion
- Focus on the solution, not the problem

To manage conflict, protect your neutrality so that you will be seen as a fair and credible facilitator for resolution.

Steps to resolution of conflict

- **Identify the problem.** Have each party describe what he or she thinks the problem is and what the desired resolution would be.
- **Brainstorm for solutions.** You're looking for ways people can change so they can work together.
- **Select three to five** of the most promising alternatives
- **Set priorities.** The parties in conflict develop the solution and set a timeline for implementation.
- **Carry out** the action plan without delay.
- **Set criteria** to evaluate the action plan which will help bring closure to each party.
- **Resolving conflict is a process.** If the process breaks down at any point, stop and go through it again.

From Toolkit p. 58 Section 2.4.4a:

REMEMBER, no one expects the president to be perfect...only poised and prepared to carry through. Executive board members should know parliamentary authority – and how to apply it – to help the president handle the uncomfortable situations.

<http://www.capta.org/assets/downloads/LeadershipMadeEasy.pdf>