

**Highland School Parent Teacher Organization, Inc.**  
**BYLAWS, adopted March 25, 2015, effective July 1, 2015**

**ARTICLE I: Name & Address**

The name of the organization is Highland School Parent Teacher Organization, Inc., commonly known as *the PTO*. Highland Elementary School, a Cheshire Public School is located at: 490 Highland Avenue Cheshire, CT 06410.

**ARTICLE II: Purpose**

Section 1. The **Intentions** of the PTO shall be:

- a. To provide educational enrichment programs for Highland students.
- b. To support the faculty in their mission to teach our children.
- c. To provide a forum to discuss and develop programs, activities, clubs and other extra curricular activities that will benefit the Highland School Community<sup>1</sup>.
- d. To promote unity within Highland School, by working toward common goals and sponsoring community activities to involve parents, faculty and students.
- e. To create a community of invested members to implement the PTO's principle objectives, intentions and other consistent goals.
- f. To provide financial assistance in support of the PTO's objectives, intentions and other consistent goals.

Section 2. The Principle **Objectives**:

- a. The Highland School Parent & Teacher Organization is open and inclusive to all of Highland's Families.
- b. Members will foster pride in the Highland School Community by demonstrating altruism.
- c. Members will support and promote the PTO's purpose by donating their time or resources.

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<sup>1</sup> "Highland School Community" - The students, faculty and families.

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**ARTICLE III: Policies**

Section 1. The PTO shall comply with the laws of the United States, Connecticut State statutes, the ordinances of the Town of Cheshire and the policies of the Cheshire Public Schools, the Board of Education and the Highland School Administration.

Section 2. Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the PTO shall not carry on any other activities not permitted to be carried on,

a. by a corporation exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code, or

b. by a corporation, contributions to which are deductible under section 170(c)(2) of the Internal Revenue Code, or the corresponding section of any future federal tax code.

Section 3. The programs, activities, fundraisers, clubs and events of the PTO shall be in accordance with the PTO's purpose, objectives, intentions and other consistent goals.

Section 4. The PTO is noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan.

a. No part of the net earnings of the organization shall inure to the benefit of, or be distributable to, its members, committee chairs, officers or other private persons except that the organization shall be authorized and empowered to pay reasonable compensation for services rendered and to make payments and distributions in furtherance of the purposes set forth in Article II and its Principle Objectives.

b. The PTO shall utilize its resource for the benefit of the organization's objectives, intentions and other consistent goals in accordance with standard business practices for nonprofit organizations.

c. The PTO is a secular entity.

d. The PTO may neither endorse nor renounce political parties, candidates, elected officials, legislative bodies, legislation, propositions or proposals.

Section 5. The fiscal year of the PTO shall correspond with that of the Cheshire Public Schools.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Presently the Cheshire Public Schools fiscal year begins July 1st and ends on June 30th of the following calendar year.

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**ARTICLE IV: Membership**

Section 1. **Eligibility.**

- a. Any parent, guardian, or other adult standing *in loco parentis* for a Highland Elementary School student, or
- b. Any current or former Cheshire Public School employee,
- c. In good standing<sup>3</sup> with the United States, the State of Connecticut, the Town of Cheshire, Cheshire Public Schools, the Board of Education and Highland School Administration,
- d. Shall be eligible for Membership in the PTO.

Section 2. **Good standing** is presumed, unless:

- a. There is evidence to the contrary.
- b. There is a delinquent outstanding balance for dues, fees or merchandise.

Section 3. **Voting Rights:** Members in good standing must be present during a vote to exercise their voting rights.

Section 4. **Authority** to conduct business. Members present at a Membership meeting shall vote on:

- a. The election of officers,
- b. The cost of dues and fees, if any,
- c. The annual operating budget,
- d. The previous meetings minutes,
- e. Expenses in excess of \$5,000,
- f. Amendments to the the bylaws and
- g. Dissolution of the organization.

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<sup>3</sup> Good standing is presumed in absence of evidence to the contrary.

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**ARTICLE V: Officers and Elections**

Section 1. **Elected Officers:**

- a. The elected Offices of the PTO shall include a President and Treasurer.
- b. The elected Offices of the PTO may include a Vice President and a Secretary.
- c. Collectively, all elected Officers and the Principal *ex officio* comprise the Executive Officers.
- d. Each Officer is a voting member of said body, commonly referred to as the Executive Officers.<sup>4</sup>

Section 2. **Eligibility.**

- a. The PTO will use a self-nominating process.
- b. The privilege of serving as an Officer shall be limited to members in good standing.
- c. Nominees shall make or provide a declaration of their candidacy at a Membership meeting.

Section 3. **Dates.**

- a. Officers shall be elected no later than the month of June for the following school year.
- b. Officers-elect shall assume their official duties on or before the close of the fiscal year.<sup>5</sup>
- c. Officers-elect may attend Officers and Directors meetings during any transition period.

Section 4. **Terms of Office.**

- a. Officers may be elected for a term of up to two (2) years.
- b. Officers may serve two (2) consecutive terms in the same office.
- c. If no other member self nominates to serve, a two-term officer may serve subsequent one-year terms in a previously held position.
- d. Officer service is voluntary and non-compensatory, regardless of title.
- e. Officers shall not simultaneously hold more than one Executive Office.
- f. A current Officer, who becomes the Treasurer-elect, shall not take custody of the PTO funds until his or her current office has been vacated.
- g. Officers may volunteer with other organizations.
- h. Candidates, Officers and Officers-elect who hold Office with another 501(c)(3) entity must make such status known to the Membership prior to their election or upon a change in dual entity officer status.

Section 5. **Removal.** If any Executive Officer ceases to:

- a. Meet the qualifications or

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<sup>4</sup> As provided in Article VI, the Offices of the President, Vice President and Secretary may be jointly held. If an Office is held jointly, each Officer has the right to vote.

<sup>5</sup> Presently the fiscal year end is June 30.

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- b. Fulfill the duties of the office,  
then that Officer may be removed from their Office by:
- a. A resolution adopted by a majority of the Executive Officers,
  - b. That is ratified by the Board of Directors, then
  - c. Submitted to Members present at the next scheduled Membership meeting and
  - d. To seek a vote of confidence with the Board of Directors action<sup>6</sup>.

Section 6. **Vacated Office.**

- a. A vacancy in an Office of the President shall be filled by the Vice President.
- b. A vacancy in the Office of the Treasurer shall be filled on an interim basis by appointment of the President and approval of a majority of the Executive Officers. The interim Treasurer shall perform the duties of the Treasurer, but shall not be eligible to vote as an Executive Officer until the appointment is ratified by a special election held at a Membership meeting.
- c. Vacancies, but for the exceptions provided, may be filled by a special election held during a previously scheduled Membership meeting.

Section 7. **Records.** Upon the end of each Officer's service, all documents, records, receipts, books and other materials pertaining to each Office, including all electronic copies and archives, shall be turned over to the President or Principal and all funds pertaining to the position shall be returned to the Treasurer promptly.

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<sup>6</sup> Refer to Robert's Rules of Order if further guidance is needed.

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**ARTICLE VI: Executive Officers' Duties**

Section 1. **President.** The Office of the President may be held by one President or two Co-Presidents. In either situation, the Office will hereafter be referred to as the President.

- a. The President shall, in collaboration with the Principal,
  - i.) Set meeting dates,
  - ii.) Draft a calendar of PTO events for the school year and
  - iii.) Review PTO methods and procedures for consistency with the Board of Education (BOE), Cheshire Public Schools (CPS) and Highland Elementary School policies.
- b. The President shall direct the Secretary to notice members of meetings accordingly.
- c. Subject to any required approvals, the President shall appoint Directors and committee chairpersons (Chairs).
- d. The President shall be an ex-officio member of all committees.
- e. The President shall review all PTO publications, mass communications and contracts.
- f. The President may create new committees as needed.
- g. The President may direct the work of Officers, Directors and committees to serve the PTO's Article II, objectives and intentions.
- h. The President shall preside at all meetings of the PTO.
- i. The President may prepare and present an agenda for meetings of the Executive Officers, Board of Directors and Membership.
- j. The President may appoint a member to serve as Parliamentarian who will become familiar with Robert's Rules of Order and these bylaws to advise the President on procedure.
- k. The President may rescind any appointments by the same means as the appointment was made.
- l. The President may take actions consistent with the PTO's Article II Purpose, Intentions and Objectives.
- m. The President shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed in these bylaws.

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Section 2. **Vice President.** The Office of the Vice President may be held by one (1) or two (2) Vice Presidents. In either situation, the Office will hereafter be referred to as the Vice President.

- a. The Vice President shall act as an aide to the President.
- b. The Vice President shall perform the duties of the President in the President's absence or inability to serve.
- c. The Vice President shall, recruit candidates for appointments to fill vacant Director and committee chair positions.
- d. The Vice President may be advised of new student enrollment to welcome new members into the PTO and inviting them to participate in PTO activities.
- e. The Vice President may coordinate PTO communications and publications.
- f. The Vice President shall perform such other duties as may be prescribed in these bylaws, directed by the President, the Executive Officers or the Board of Directors.

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Section 3. **Secretary.** The Office of the Secretary may be held by one (1) or two (2) Secretaries. In either situation, the Office will hereafter be referred to as the Secretary.

- a. The Secretary shall maintain a system of records, including
  - i.) Paper and electronic correspondence as necessary,
  - ii.) Committee Notebooks or Committee Reports,
  - iii.) A Policy and Operations manual and
  - iv.) Permanent records for retention.
- b. The Secretary shall keep a record of candidates that nominate themselves for an elected position.
- c. The Secretary, or their named assignee, shall record the minutes and attendance at membership meetings.
- e. The Secretary, or their named assignee, shall prepare the meeting minutes for distribution.
- f. The Secretary, or their named assignee, shall be prepared to read the records of previous PTO meetings.
- g. The Secretary, or their named assignee, shall maintain a roster of members, including the members:
  - i.) Standing,
  - ii.) Contact information and
  - iii.) Any committee affiliations.
- h. The Secretary, or their named assignee, shall notice members of upcoming meetings as necessary.
- i. The Secretary shall perform such other duties as may be provided for in the bylaws, directed by the President, the Executive Officers or Board of Directors.



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Section 4. **Treasurer.** The Office of the Treasurer shall be held by one (1) Treasurer.

- a. The Treasurer shall have fiduciary custody of the funds of this PTO.
- b. The Treasurer shall maintain a system of accounting and record retention in accordance with general business practices.
- c. The Treasurer shall pay authorized disbursements up to \$1,000.
- d. The Treasurer will present authorized payments in excess of \$1,000 to an Executive Officer for confirmation of authority. Confirmation may be evidenced by a second signature on a check<sup>7</sup> or a similarly restrictive electronic banking method.
- e. The Treasurer shall provide a balance sheet to the President monthly or more frequently upon request.
- f. The Treasurer shall present an annual report of the PTO's finances to the Membership.
- g. The Treasurer shall annually review the banking records with the Executive Officers.
- h. The Treasurer shall prepare<sup>8</sup> and submit any tax returns required by the Internal Revenue Service or the State of Connecticut.
- i. The Treasurer may perform such other duties as may be provided for by these bylaws or directed by the President.

**Article VII: Executive Officers**

Section 1. The Executive Officers shall serve as **counsel** to the President and assist with:

- a. Preparing the proposed budget for the next school year,
- b. Filling vacancies in the organization,
- c. Developing, scheduling and implementing the PTO calendar for the current and upcoming school year and
- d. Reviewing contracts with third party entities as needed.

Section 2. **Meetings.** A majority of Officers<sup>9</sup> shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority is necessary to conduct PTO business.

Section 3. The Executive Officers may approve non-budgeted expenses up to \$2,000.

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<sup>7</sup> Dual authorization of checks over \$1,000 is an internal requirement. There is no burden on banking or commerce to verify payor signatures.

<sup>8</sup> Preparation to file may include hiring a licensed tax or accounting professional.

<sup>9</sup> As provided in Article VI, the Offices of the President, Vice President and Secretary may be jointly held. If an Office is held jointly, each Officer has the right to vote.

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**ARTICLE VIII: Board of Directors**

Section 1. The Board of Directors of the PTO shall consist of the Elected Officers, the Principal, the Appointed Directors, and may include a number of Teacher Representatives equal to the number of Appointed Directors.

Section 2. The Board of Directors shall meet monthly or more frequently if needed.

Section 3. Meetings of the Board are intended to be brief, teacher friendly and allow the business of the PTO to be conducted in a more timely manner.

**ARTICLE IX: Appointed Directors and Teacher Representatives**

Section 1. **Directors.** The goal of the Director is to increase continuity and efficiency among similarly purposed committees.

- a. Directors may oversee multiple committees with common objectives in the following categories:
  - i.) Fundraising,
  - ii.) Events,
  - iii.) Enrichment,
  - iv.) Communications and
  - v.) Operations.
- b. Directors will mentor their assigned Committees' Chairpersons.
- c. Directors will assist with communications between the Chairs, the Highland Office and Executive Officers.
- d. The President will appoint Directors, subject to approval by the Executive Officers.

Section 2. **Teacher Representatives.** The objective of Teacher Representatives is to allow teacher members a means to conveniently and routinely participate in the decision making process of the PTO.

- a. Teachers who are PTO members in good standing may volunteer to represent their grade level at a Board of Directors meeting.
- b. Whenever possible, Board of Directors meetings will be brief and scheduled to begin at 4:00 pm.

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**ARTICLE X: Meetings of the Membership**

Section 1. **Minimum.** The PTO shall hold a minimum of one Membership meeting during the school year open to all members for the purposes of conducting business the business of the PTO, and

- a. Electing officers and
- b. Approving the operating budget.

Section 2. **Membership meetings** of the PTO, commonly referred to as the "PTO meeting", are open to all members and interested persons. PTO meetings will regularly be held on 4th Thursday of each month during the school year.<sup>10</sup>

- a. The PTO meeting schedule will be published at the beginning of the school year. Reminders may be issued throughout the year.
- b. A minimum of two (2) days' notice<sup>11</sup> shall be given to the members<sup>12</sup> of any change of a Membership meeting date or time, except for weather-related emergency cancellations.
- c. In the event a scheduling conflict arises with the BOE or CPS for a previously noticed Membership meeting date, deference will be given to scheduled PTO Membership meeting date unless the rescheduled date for the Membership meeting is announced at a previous month's Membership meeting and documented in the minutes of said meeting.

Section 3. **Special meetings** of the PTO may be called by the President or by a majority of the Executive Officers upon at least five (5) days' notice the Membership of the special meeting and its purpose.

Section 4. **Quorum.** A majority of the Board of Directors shall constitute a quorum for PTO Membership meetings.

Section 5. **Good Standing.** The privilege of introducing a motion, debating and voting shall be limited to members in good standing.

**ARTICLE XI: Meetings of the Board of Directors**

Section 1. The Board of Directors shall meet monthly or more frequently if needed.

Section 2. Meetings of the Board will be brief and accommodating to the Teachers' schedules when possible.

Section 3. A majority of Directors shall constitute a quorum. A simple majority is necessary to conduct PTO business.

Section 4. The Board of Directors is authorized to,

- a. Set Prices for ticketed events and merchandise,
- b. Sponsor or coordinate extracurricular clubs and
- c. Vote on budget exceptions up to \$5,000.

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<sup>10</sup> Assigned date determined by the Board of Education to coordinate meeting schedules across the district.

<sup>11</sup> Notice to members may be made by email, website post, social media, school calendar, signage or flyers.

<sup>12</sup> All current members regardless of status.

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**ARTICLE XII: Methods and Procedures**

Section 1. The Methods and Procedures (**MAPs**) are a collection of documents that will assist the Executive Officers, Board of Directors and Chairpersons in fulfilling the PTO's Purpose as defined here in Article II.

Section 2. The documents conform PTO methods and procedures with the Board of Education (BOE), Cheshire Public Schools (CPS) and Highland Elementary School policies.

Section 3. Each Officer, Director and active committee chair will be tendered a MAP binder specific to the respective position at the beginning of their term or school year. The binder for each position will include information related to the policies and procedures governing the roles and responsibilities of each position, and may provide additional information from prior holders regarding the functional roles and responsibilities of the position.

Section 4. The binder and its contents are the property of the PTO and shall be returned along with any other PTO records or property at the end of the Officer, Director or active Committee Chair's term to the Secretary for retention.

**ARTICLE XIII: Committees**

Section 1. **Themes.** Committees will be divided in the areas of fundraising, events, communication, enrichment and operations.

Section 2. **Active Committees.**

- a. Committees necessary to accomplish the objective of the PTO as determined by the Executive Officers will be deemed active.
- b. Chairpersons will serve by appointment of the President.
- c. Chairpersons may be appointed to serve multiple consecutive terms.
- d. Committees must have a minimum of one chairperson to be deemed active.

Section 3. **Dormant Committees.**

- a. Committees without a chairperson.
- b. Committees whose purpose is not consistent with the goals for the school year.

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**ARTICLE XIV: Committee Chairpersons**

Section 1. **Eligibility.** Each committee Chair must be a PTO member in good standing.

Section 2. **Term.**

- a. Chairpersons will be appointed for a term of one school year.
- b. Chairpersons may serve multiple consecutive terms.

Section 3. **Multiple Chairpersons.**

- a. Each committee may have more than one chairperson.
- b. Only one Chairperson will be deemed to have custody of the MAP Binder for their committee.

Section 4. **Responsibilities.** Chairpersons shall:

- a. Review their Committee's MAP binder,
- b. Seek assistance and counsel from Directors or Elected Officers prior to asking the Highland Office Staff or faculty for help,
- c. Keep detailed records in the MAP binder and
- d. Comply with the current year MAP documents.

**ARTICLE XV: Parliamentary Authority**

The rules contained in the current edition of *Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised* shall govern the Highland PTO on all matters not covered by these bylaws.

**ARTICLE XVI: Amendments**

Section 1. These bylaws may be amended by a majority vote of those present at any Membership meeting or special meeting provided the Membership of the PTO has been noticed<sup>13</sup>.

Section 2. Every four (4) years, but more frequently if deemed necessary, the President shall appoint a Bylaws Revision committee which shall review these bylaws with a view to keeping them in accord with the continuing and changing activities of the PTO.

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<sup>13</sup>Notice to members may be made by email, website post, social media, school calendar, signage or flyers.

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**ARTICLE XVII: Dissolution**

Section 1. In the event that the PTO disbands at some future date, all outstanding bills shall be paid and any remaining funds shall be donated to the Highland School Activity Fund C/O Highland School, Cheshire, CT 06410.

Section 2. In the event the Highland School Activity fund does not exist, the residue of the PTO assets will be disbursed for a purpose similar to that which once was known as the Highland Activity Fund.

Section 3. Assets must be distributed per IRS guidelines for an organization exempt from federal income tax under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.