

**PETER COOPER
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
PARENT-TEACHER ORGANIZATION (PTO)
BYLAWS**

**Property of
Peter Cooper Elementary School
Approved: March 18, 2009**

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be “Peter Cooper Elementary School PTO” of the Ringwood Public School District Inc., a New Jersey nonprofit corporation.

ARTICLE II – ORGANIZATION

This organization exists as a nonprofit corporation under Title 15A: 02-8 New Jersey Domestic Non-Profit Corporation Act. Its “Articles of Organization” comprise these Bylaws, which may be amended from time to time.

ARTICLE III – OBJECTIVES

1. To enrich and complement the educational and social development of the Ringwood students through programs which are supported by the administration, faculty, and parents of Peter Cooper Elementary School. These shall include but not be limited to: assemblies, workshops, and field trips to off-site locations.
2. To promote the educational and physical development experience of all students through beautification and enhancement of the physical school and grounds.
3. To foster the involvement of all students within their community and encourage a sense of good citizenship.
4. To gain (or promote) family and community interest, involvement and investment in Peter Cooper Elementary School.

ARTICLE IV – BASIC POLICIES

1. The organization shall be noncommercial, nonsectarian, and nonpartisan.
2. The name of the organization and the names(s) if any member(s) in an official capacity shall not be used in connection with any commercial concern, partisan interest religious intent, or any purpose not directly related to the objectives of this organization.
3. The organization shall not participate or intervene in any form in the campaign or election of any local or regional school board member, or any candidate of public office.
4. The organization shall cooperate with the school’s administration to support the improvement of education in ways that will not interfere with the goals and operation of these entities.
5. 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.
6. The organization shall not, directly or indirectly, allocate funds for any purpose that might be deemed to directly benefit the political or professional status of any employee of the district or member of the organization.
7. In the event of the dissolution of the Peter Cooper Elementary School PTO its assets will be distributed for one or more of the exempt purposes specified in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 as from time to time amended.

ARTICLE V – MEMBERSHIP AND DONATIONS

1. Membership is open to all parents and/or guardians of the Peter Cooper Elementary School students as well as the faculty and administration.
2. The membership year shall run from September 1st to August 31st (ie, the PTO calendar year).
3. Donations of money and supplies will be accepted by any legitimate source, under the guidelines of the Ringwood Board of Education policy regarding gifts, grants, and donations (reference; 18A20-4, 20-11).

ARTICLE VI – EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS AND ELECTIONS

1. The Peter Cooper Elementary School PTO Executive Board shall be *minimally* comprised of a President, Secretary, and Treasurer.
2. Officers shall be elected by a written vote with a two-thirds quorum of members present at the Annual General Membership Meeting to be held in May or June. An Officer may resign whenever necessary, and will be replaced by the written vote of a two-thirds quorum of members present at the next General Membership Meeting.
3. Officers shall assume official duties at the close of the school year, and shall serve a term of one year, until their successors are elected. At the end of the first-year term the Officers may be nominated and elected to serve one more subsequent term. No individual may serve for more than two consecutive (full, voted-in) terms in the same position. The exception to this would be if at the end of that school term there were no nominations made for the required minimum Officer positions (President, Treasurer, and Secretary); in which case those individuals currently in those positions could by their choice extend their term by one more year. In the event someone has had to assume an Officer's term due to resignation or extenuating circumstances, that person may at the end of that school term be nominated and elected to a full one-year term of office. Outgoing Officers are expected to transfer all organization funds and property to their successors by the end of the school year and assist the new Officers until the beginning of the next school year.
4. A two-thirds quorum of members present may vote that an officer is incapable of performing the duties of his/her office for the balance of his/her term. In this case, an emergency Reorganization Meeting must be called to allow all members to elect a replacement to complete the term to the end of the school year.
5. If the President is unable to fulfill his/her duties, the Vice President (or one or both of the Co-Vice Presidents) will step up to assume the remainder of the term. If the Vice President's position is vacant the position of President will be filled according to the chain of command (Treasurer, Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary). If more than four months remain in the school year and if the Vice President position is vacant as a result of he/she stepping up to the President's position, an election will be held to elect a new Vice President.
6. Communications regarding open Officer positions should begin at least 45 days prior to the next scheduled General Membership Meeting at which the nominating and/or electing of Officers will occur.

7. Nominations for open Officer positions will be taken from the floor. Only those who have consented to serve if elected shall be eligible for nomination. Nominations of an Officer shall be made at a General Membership Meeting and voted on at the next General Membership Meeting. In the case of an emergency Reorganization Meeting, the nomination and vote may take place at the same meeting.

ARTICLE VII – DUTIES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OFFICERS

1. The President shall preside at the General Membership Meetings of the organization and shall have general supervision of all its affairs. In the event that the President is unable to perform this duty, the next available Officer in the following chain of command shall preside: Co-President, Vice President, Co-Vice Presidents, Treasurer, Secretary, and Corresponding Secretary (if applicable).
2. The President shall appoint representatives/liaisons/chairperson to other groups. Only those who have consented to serve in the given position shall be appointed.
3. The President may delegate his/her duties and authority to the next available Officer in the chain of command, when conditions warrant.
4. The Secretary shall keep a record (“the minutes”) of the proceedings of all General Membership Meetings and note the attendance of its members. These minutes will be made available to the members and the school Principal.
5. The Secretary or Corresponding Secretary shall conduct the official correspondence of the organization and maintain a mail log and telephone list.
6. The Secretary will notify the members and school administration of all General Membership Meetings at least seven days in advance, when possible.
7. The Treasurer shall have custody of all the funds of the organization. He/she will maintain a record of all deposits, receipts, and expenditures. Incoming funds will be accepted as check, money order, or cash. Cash must be given to the Treasurer pre- counted with a written log break down of the bills and coins. The Treasurer shall count and immediately notify both the President and person submitting the cash if there is a discrepancy between the written log and the cash turned in.
8. The Treasurer shall pay out funds by check, according to the approved expenses of the organization. If the Treasurer is unavailable, the President or Secretary may pay authorized expenses.
9. The Treasurer shall present a financial statement at each General Membership Meeting. This includes, but is not limited to, the itemization of checks drawn and deposits recorded since the previous meeting.

ARTICLE VIII – EXECUTIVE BOARD

1. The Peter Cooper Elementary School PTO Executive Board consists of the Officers.
2. The duties of the Executive Board shall be to:
 - a. Transact the necessary business between General Membership Meetings;

- b. Create active Committees (with chairperson) and Teams (without chairperson) to promote the objectives and interests of the organization;
- c. Approve the plans of work of the active Committees. No committee/team work shall be undertaken without the approval of the Executive Board;
- d. Present reports at the General Membership Meetings;
- e. Appoint an auditor or auditing committee to audit the accounts of the Treasurer;
- f. Prepare and submit for approval a budget for the year; and
- g. Approve routine bills within the limits of the budget.

ARTICLE IX – MEETINGS

1. The Peter Cooper Elementary School PTO will hold a minimum of four General Membership Meetings per year, the exact dates to be determined by the Executive Board.
2. Committee or team meetings can be held whenever needed, as long as the Officers are notified in advance of the purpose of the meeting. This is to coordinate or combine meetings and avoid unnecessary schedule changes.
3. In May or June there shall be an Annual General Membership Meeting held for the purpose of nominating and/or electing Officers, presenting budgets, and other business.

ARTICLE X – STANDING AND SPECIAL COMMITTEES

1. Standing Committees shall be created by the Executive Board, as required, to promote the objectives and interests of the organization.
2. The Chairperson of each Standing Committee shall present plans of work to the Executive Board for approval. Standing Committee Chairpersons must make every effort to attend the first meeting of the school year as well as the meeting before and after their event to discuss plans, answer questions, and report upon the completed event.
3. When ever possible, each Standing Committee shall have at least two Chairpersons per event.
4. The power to form Special Committees rests with Executive Board.

ARTICLE XI – PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised shall govern this organization in all cases in which they are applicable and in which they are not in conflict with these bylaws.

ARTICLE XII – BUDGET

1. The Officers of the Peter Cooper Elementary School PTO shall submit a budget for approval to the general membership. Review by members shall be permitted before a vote is taken to accept it.
2. The Treasurer shall pay routine bills within the limits of the budget. Expenses \$20.00 over the budgeted amount shall be brought to the Executive Board for approval. Any expense of over \$100.00, and not previously budgeted, shall be reported to the general membership.

ARTICLE XIII – AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS

1. These Bylaws may be amended at any Peter Cooper Elementary School PTO General Membership Meeting by a two-thirds vote of the members present, if 10 days notice of the proposed amendment is given.
2. A committee may be appointed by the Officers to submit a revised set of Bylaws to replace these if voted by a two-thirds quorum of the members present. The requirements for the adoption of a revised set of Bylaws shall be the same as with an amendment.

ARTICLE XIV – DISSOLUTION

The organization may be dissolved with previous notice (14 calendar days) and a vote of two-thirds of the quorum of members present.

ARTICLE XV – CODE OF CONDUCT

1. Members are expected to adhere to the policies, goals, and principles of the organization.
2. Members in attendance at meetings of the organization must defer to the authority of the presiding officer.
3. Members will not bully/intimidate/harass other members. "Harassment, intimidation or bullying" means any intentional gesture, or any intentional written, verbal, or physical act or threat that:
 - a. a reasonable person under the circumstances should know will have the effect of:
 - i. harming a member;
 - ii. damaging a member's property;
 - iii. placing a member in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person; or
 - iv. placing a member in reasonable fear of damage to his/her property.
 - b. is sufficiently severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment for a member.
4. Members hold the right to motion for the removal from a meeting of another member who they feel is in violation of the code of conduct. This motion must be seconded by another member, and a voice vote must be taken prior to the member being removed from the meeting.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Participation at School Events: It is appropriate, but not required, for the PTO to be a presence at the following school functions by hosting an information or refreshment table, with the approval of the school principal: Back to School Night; Exhibit Night; and Visitation Day.

Holiday Gifts: The PTO shall not purchase individual holiday gifts for administration or staff members. Instead, it is suggested that in the spirit of the holiday, a gift that can be shared by the staff be given if appropriate.

Other Gifts: It's appropriate for the PTO Sunshine Committee to acknowledge Secretaries' Day, Nurse Appreciation Day, as well as major milestones in a staff member's life (marriage, birth of a child, or death of a family member) with a card and/or small gift of a monetary value no greater than \$75 (unless otherwise voted on by the Executive Board). It is also appropriate to thank the custodial staff at the end of the school year.

Teachers' Appreciation Event: The PTO may host one staff breakfast, brunch, or luncheon per year, usually during Teacher Appreciation Week. This can be done by coordinating parents to prepare and serve foods, or if it is not feasible to get enough parent volunteers, this can be a *modest* catered event, similar to what the volunteer parents would provide.

FUNDRAISING PROCEDURES

Solicitation/Sales Fundraisers: From time to time the organization *may* deem it necessary to raise funds by solicitation or by the sale of merchandise. There should be absolutely NO encouraged or permitted door-to-door solicitation/sales by children. There should also be absolutely NO individual incentives offered to students for solicitation/sales, as this encourages door-to-door solicitation/sales. This policy should be reiterated to the general population at the introduction of each solicitation/sales fundraiser. If a fundraising company offers an incentive package, perhaps a higher profit percentage or a school-wide incentive could be substituted.

Raffle Licenses: Tricky Trays, Bingo, Raffles, and 50/50s all require *Raffle Licenses* from our Borough. This category of fundraising includes any game of chance, no matter how small, which includes the exchange of money for an opportunity to win a prize. To reduce the costs associated with applying for Raffle Licenses, all events from a given calendar year may be combined on one license (rather than applying for each individual event). Early schedule planning therefore could significantly reduce this cost by combining raffles from one school year to the next (within the same calendar year). A copy of the Raffle License must be forwarded to the Ringwood Board of Education office.

Use of Facility Rooms: The Ringwood Board of Education requires the completion and submission of a *Use of Facility* form for each use of a school building not during regular school hours. Early submission of these forms will help assuage scheduling conflicts with other organizations that use the building (scouts, Ringwood Recreation, etc.). Regularly planned PTO meetings are to be scheduled and cleared with the school principal in June/July of the previous school year and therefore do not require completion of this form.

Alcoholic Beverages: There is absolutely NO alcohol (opened or unopened) permitted on school property. There is also NO alcohol permitted at any off premises event if children are present. This includes “Baskets of Cheer” or other use of alcohol as prizes, even if offered only to adults.

CLASS PARENT PROCEDURES

Class Parent Coordinator: Coordinator duties are described below, and include class parent selection and notification, hosting the Class Parent Tea and providing guidance to class parents, and initiating and presiding over the Phone Chain. Performing the duties of this position does not assure the volunteer a position as class parent in his/her child's classroom.

Class Parent Selection: Parents should be provided an opportunity to volunteer to serve as class parents. No parent may serve for the same child more than one year consecutively, unless there are insufficient volunteers. If more volunteers are received than are needed for a given classroom, the class parents will be selected from the pool of volunteers by lottery. The class parent selection and establishment of the Phone Chain should be implemented as early in the school year as possible.

If at any time during the school year it is felt that a class parent is not fulfilling their duties, the Class Parent Coordinator and Executive Board, via consultation with the Principal, will together determine if the parent should be removed as class parent. If necessary they will also determine who should be selected as a replacement, the first being the alternate class parent assigned to that class.

Class Parent Tea: Soon after the class parent selection, a Class Parent Tea should be held for the purpose of informing class parents of their duties and distributing class lists.

Class List Coordination: The class list should be divided evenly among the class parents for each class. The list should be kept current to account for changes in contact information, or to add or delete students due to changes in enrollment. Class lists are confidential and should be handled with due discretion. Any parent request to be excluded from the Phone Chain must be honored.

Emergency Information: Each class parent must keep a copy of the class list containing emergency information for each child in the class. This information must be kept readily available to be used in the event the Phone Chain is activated.

Phone Chain: The Phone Chain may not be activated without the approval of school administration. Calls will be made for Emergency Closings (non-weather related closings) and Early Dismissals only.

The Class Parent Coordinator will call one class parent from each class. That class parent will call the remaining class parents, and each will call their assigned parents on the class list.

CONTACT MUST BE MADE WITH A LIVE PERSON to give the following information: (1) School is closing; (2) Approximate time of dismissal; and (3) Emergency bus stops will be used (if applicable). If a parent cannot be contacted, a neighbor who has been designated on the Emergency Form must be contacted. If a live person is not reached after all avenues are exhausted, the school administrator must be informed.

The Phone Chain may also be activated, with the prior consent of the school administration, for the dissemination of PTO or class information.

Field Trips: Class parents attend field trips to assist the teacher. If unable to attend, the class parent should inform the teacher as soon as possible so that a replacement may be found. No siblings may attend class trips (with the exception of siblings in the same grade). Neither class parents nor students are permitted to purchase souvenirs. Class parents must pay their own costs associated with attending a field trip.

Class Parties: Early in the school year, class parents may request a \$5.00 donation from each student's family to help offset the costs associated with class parties. Families may also be solicited to provide paper goods, baked goods, beverages, games, crafts, etc. for class parties. Parents who offer donations should receive reminder calls prior to the party. The school administration and classroom teacher will advise what parties are to be held, and will schedule the dates and times.

Class parties may include food, simple crafts, games, or music. The school administration and classroom teacher will provide any restrictions or guidance on the types of food, beverages, activities, and favors that are permitted. Parties are not to be associated with particular religious tenets. Food allergies must be considered. Food allergy information should be obtained from the classroom teacher or the school nurse.

Halloween Hoopla: It has become an accepted practice for each class in the Peter Cooper School to provide appropriate representation and donation of their time toward the fall Halloween Hoopla. All class parents must make every effort to actively participate in the Halloween Hoopla.

The event coordinator will assign each class to a particular Hoopla event. Class parents should then coordinate the coverage of these activities by soliciting volunteers from their class to donate a reasonable amount of time and ensure that coverage for set up, during the event, and/or for clean up is adequate.

The event coordinator (or designee) should directly oversee the event and help out where needed to make the event run smoothly. Coordinator duties include: communicating with class parents and providing guidance throughout the event.

Teacher Gifts: Class parents (or a designated parent) are permitted to solicit money from parents to purchase holiday or end-of-year gifts for teachers.

Other Duties: If, for a given PTO event, after a reasonable effort has been made to solicit volunteers from the general parent population volunteers are still need, class parents may be asked to volunteer.

MEETINGS

Frequency: As outlined in the Bylaws, there is a minimum requirement of four General Membership Meetings during the course of the school year. Schedule coordination among the organizations should take place as early as possible to prevent conflicts, and to establish the most workable schedule for all of the Officers.

Meeting Format: Meetings will begin as per the posted meeting time and will adjourn after all agenda items have been addressed. In the event of any irreconcilable issues, any board member may terminate the meeting at any time without notice. Any agenda items not addressed in the terminated meeting will be addressed first at the next scheduled General Membership Meeting, prior to any new agenda items.

Basic Meeting Agenda: Meeting agendas will be prepared and made publicly available at least three days prior to the meeting (when possible). The following is the intended format for the basic meeting agenda:

1. Call to Order
2. Reading and Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
3. Treasurer's Statement
4. Principal's Report
5. Reading of Communications
6. Reports and their Disposal:
 - a. Executive Board
 - b. Standing Committees
 - c. Special Committees
7. Unfinished Business
8. New Business
9. Announcements
10. Discussion
11. Adjournment

Voting Procedures:

1. Motion
2. Discussion
3. Vote (by majority [two-thirds of quorum of the members present])

END OF YEAR PROCEDURES

Surplus of Funds: In the event that the Peter Cooper Elementary School PTO enjoys a surplus of funds at the close of the school year, a vote should be taken at the General Membership Meeting held in January or February and the Annual General Membership Meeting, held in May or June, to determine whether to rollover the entire sum of money to offset costs in the following school year or to put part of the surplus towards a PTO all school project.

Budget: Before the last scheduled PTO meeting of the current school year, the current Treasurer should prepare (with the support and assistance of the other Officers) a budget for the upcoming school year. The budget should be submitted for approval at the last scheduled General Membership Meeting of the current school year or earlier if possible. As outlined in the Bylaws, budgets should be reviewed by each of the PTO Officers before being submitted for a vote approval from the organizational members.

PTO Gift to School: It is a generally accepted procedure for the outgoing PTO to leave as their legacy a gift to the school. Ideally, this gift should support the objectives of the organization: to foster the best academic, artistic, social, and physical education for all children and to promote the welfare of each child in the home, school, and community. It is appropriate for the PTO to work in conjunction with the Site-based committee, the faculty, and the administration to determine a list of goals and/or priorities from which the PTO may vote at the General Annual Meeting held in January and May or June.

Calendar: Before the close of the current PTO calendar year, PTO Officers should meet with the school principal to set up the PTO calendar for the following year, using the current year calendar as a guideline. This provides the committee chairpersons, the incoming Officers, and the administration with a viable framework in which to plan their year.

Filling Standing Committee Chair Positions: Before the last scheduled PTO meeting of the current school year, the PTO Board should make every effort to equip committees with chairpersons for the following school year.

If more than one person volunteers for a particular position, the outgoing Officers should use their discretion in choosing from the following options to resolve the situation:

1. Attempt to influence one or more of the volunteers to assume a different vacant position that would require a similar effort.
2. Allow the parties to co—chair or team—chair the position.
3. Use a random lottery to determine who will hold the committee position.

Filling Board Vacancies: As a courtesy to their successors, the outgoing Officers should make a reasonable effort to solicit potential nominees for election to all vacant Executive Board positions. Executive Board Officers for the next school year should be established between the months of March and June of the active school year. All open positions should be advertised to the general population to solicit nominations.

If more than one person is nominated for a particular position, the outgoing Officers should use their discretion in choosing from the following options to resolve the situation:

1. Attempt to influence one or more of the nominees to assume a different vacant position that would require a similar effort.
2. Allow the parties to co—chair the position (with the exception of the Treasurer).
3. Use an election to determine who will hold an Executive Board position.