Style Guide

2019-2020

Washington State PTA
every **child.** *one* **voice.**®

This guide is intended to aid users with consistency in written communications, as it pertains to capitalization, number use, punctuation, spelling, terminology, and visual identity for PTA publications.

About This Guide

Style is very important in writing. Clarity and consistency in writing builds trust in a brand. That trust is critically important to membership-based associations such as National PTA, and as its affiliate, Washington State PTA.

This guide is intended to assist you in being a reliable and uniform resource. WSPTA follows the Associated Press Stylebook, with few exceptions. This updated version of the WSPTA Style Guide highlights some of the most important areas from the AP Stylebook, as well as those items/exceptions that relate specifically to our brand.

The following resources were used:

- *National PTA Visual Identity Standards, 2012*
- *National PTA Stylebook, 2017*
- *California PTA Style Guide*, 2013
- *Communications Resource Guide: Public Relations, Branding and Technology*, Texas PTA, no date
- *Guide to New York State PTA Terms, Punctuation and Abbreviations*, 2010
- *Associated Press Stylebook, 2019*

About Washington State PTA

Washington State PTA has been a leading voice for children in Washington for more than 113 years. It is the oldest and largest child advocacy association in the state. It is a vibrant, active asssociation of people from all walks of life and backgrounds. Devoted, passionate, and dedicated volunteers work together toward a set of shared values reflected in our vision, mission and core values.

WSPTA Vision
Our vision is that every child's potential becomes a reality.

WSPTA Mission
Our mission is for PTA to be:
- A powerful voice for children,
- A relevant resource for families, schools, and communities, and
- A strong advocate for the well-being and education of all children.

Brand, Branding and Brand Identity

Brand, branding, and brand identity all have different roles, that together, form a perceived image for a business, service or product. Therefore, they all can be put in a bucket called *business design,* but they have different meanings.

A **brand** is the idea or image of a specific product or service that consumers connect with, by identifying the name, logo, slogan, or design of the company who owns the idea or image.

Branding is when that idea or image is marketed so that it is recognizable by more and more people, and identified with a certain service or product when there are many other companies offering the same service or product.

The **brand identity** of a company is a set of visual attributes that create the look and feel of a business. This includes typography, colors, logo usage, patterns, and other graphic elements.

In simpler terms:

> **The brand** is a **relationship** between customers and the business.
> **Branding** is a **process** of building awareness and loyalty.
> **Brand identity** is *what we can see*, it's the **design** of a brand.

Think about what your business has to offer, what differentiates it, and use brand identity (the visuals) to match your core values, mission, and vision in every point of contact with your members/audience.

See *National PTA Visual Identity Standards,* revised 2012, for most recent specifications. Below are highlights only.

PTA corporate visual:
Use only the logo and tagline available on the Washington State PTA website, www.wastatepta.org.

Acceptable fonts for internal state PTA communications/publications created with Microsoft Office:
- Calibri, Calibri Bold, Calibri Italic
- Garamond, Garamond Bold, Garamond Italic

Acceptable fonts for online content using web browsers such as Chrome, Firefox, or Internet Explorer:
- Arial or Helvetica (Regular, Bold, Italic)
- Lucida Sans Unicode or Lucida Grande (Regular, Bold, Italic)
- Verdana or Geneva (Regular, Bold, Italic)
- Georgia (Regular, Bold, Italic)

Why strive for consistency? From Texas PTA Communications Resource Guide:

Using the PTA name and logo:
Our PTA name is important – only by insisting that all PTAs use the same logo, in the same way, can we guarantee our name recognition will continue to grow and be protected under the trademark law.

— As a licensee of the National PTA, you are entitled to use the PTA® or PTSA® name. While the name PTA is recognized widely and many people still think it is a generic term that can be used to describe any parent group or school association, the name "PTA" and "PTSA" are registered service marks of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers. A service mark has the same legal status as a trademark. The distinction is that a service mark is used for services and trademarks are used for commercial products.   The symbol ® designates that the PTA name has been registered with the federal government and may not be used by organizations not affiliated with the National PTA.

— Not only is the name "PTA" a registered service mark, but the design treatment of the logo (slanted PTA) also has been registered as an official service mark of the association.   In addition, the tagline "*every***child**.*one***voice**." is a registered service mark of the National PTA ["*cada***niño**.*una***voz**."® is also a registered service mark].

— Always publish, print or speak the name of your PTA in a consistent manner – be consistent in the typeface or font you use, how your logo appears and the color you use.   The PTA logo should appear the same at all times on all correspondence, whether it is a memo, email, press release, newsletter, poster or brochure. You need to be consistent in order to build an identity for your PTA – one that is recognizable and continues to build awareness of your PTA.

— The PTA logo and tagline should always be shown the same color. The official color of the PTA is a dark, slate blue. The PTA name, logo and tagline should always appear together in the same color – either in the official blue, all black or white. Never print your PTA name in a different color than the logo or tagline. For professional printing purposes, the ink color is Pantone Matching System® (PMS) color 541.

Correct use of PTA name:
The following names are all registered service marks of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers:
- National Congress of Parents and Teachers®
- Parent Teacher Association®
- National PTA®
- PTA®
- PTSA®
- Washington Congress of Parents and Teachers® (our formal name)
- Washington State PTA® - Introduce our association with this title, after which it is okay to use acronym
- WSPTA® - Because our name is fairly long, using this acronym is okay.

Note: Do not use WAPTA or WAPTA State PTA. Likewise, do not use the abbreviation NPTA, always use National PTA.

WSPTA Visual Identity Standards
These guidelines will aid Washington State PTA in maintaining a unified public presence by communicating with consistency, clarity, and effectiveness, when used to direct and measure all messages, publications, correspondence, speeches, and presentations, both internally and externally.

Approved Logo Usage

File formats:
- .tif or .eps: for professionally printed materials
- .jpeg: Microsoft programs
- .gif or .png: online usage

Style:
The logo may also be etched, engraved, embossed, or foil-stamped (Pantone® 541 equivalent, black or white).

Incorrect Logo Usage
- Do not scale the logo disproportionately so it is wider, taller, thinner, or thicker than the approved proportions.
- Do not change the color of the logo. The logo is only approved to be represented in Pantone® 541, black or white.
- Do not recreate the logo in any way or add a drop shadow to the logo.
- Do not obstruct the logo with highly decorative/busy backgrounds. Any background behind the logo should remain free of text and image.

Primary Color

The official color representing the Washington State PTA logo is Pantone® 541 (blue), 100% black, or white (knock out). The Pantone® 541 blue should be used whenever color is available. The PTA blue may also be used as a primary or secondary color with any degree of shade between 100% and 10%.
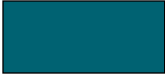
| *PTA Blue | 100% Black | White (knock out) |

Please see color specifications shown below.

Expanded Color Palette

The expanded color palette offers flexibility in design application, especially where product distinction warrants use of a visual color brand. In such an instance, only one color from this palette is allowed to be more dominant than the primary colors.

PTA COLOR	PANTONE® MATCH	CMYK	RGB	HTML
	PANTONE® 541 C	C=100 M=58 Y=9 K=46	R=0 G=60 B=113	HEX#003C71
	PANTONE® 3155 C	C=100 M=9 Y=29 K=47	R=0 G=98 B=114	HEX#006272
	PANTONE® 159 C	C=1 M=72 Y=100 K=7	R=203 G=96 B=21	HEX#CB6015
	PANTONE® 369 C	C=68 M=0 Y=100 K=0	R=100 G=167 B=11	HEX#64A70B
	PANTONE® 110 C	C=2 M=22 Y=100 K=8	R=218 G=170 B=0	HEX#DAAA00
	PANTONE® 7515 C	C=5 M=43 Y=49 K=11	R=197 G=139 B=104	HEX#C58B68
	PANTONE® 7526 C	C=9 M=83 Y=100 K=46	R=138 G=57 B=27	HEX#8A391B
	PANTONE® 7650 C	C=34 M=98 Y=0 K=41	R=114 G=34 B=87	HEX#722257
	PANTONE® 7650 C	C=0 M=97 Y=89 K=45	R=147 G=39 B=44	HEX#93272C

Washington State
PTA®
every child. one voice.®

STYLE GUIDE

"And" symbol (Ampersand)

Do not use the ampersand (&) in place of the word "and" unless it is part of a company name or publication title (e.g. Barnes & Noble). Exception: Use an ampersand with National PTA Convention & Expo; Q&A.

Abbreviations

- May use abbreviations for some PTA terms once the name is spelled out, either at the beginning of a document or beginning of a section (e.g., ED, RD, RAC, SDT, etc.).
- United States as a noun: United States (e.g., The woman left for the United States this morning); as an adjective: U.S. (e.g., A U.S. soldier was injured in combat).

Academic Degrees

- Use an apostrophe in bachelor's degree, master's degree, etc.
- Use the abbreviations only after a full name and set the abbreviations off with commas (e.g., Michael Brown, Ph.D., lectured yesterday on biology).

Bulleted Lists

- All list items should be styled the same way - either all sentence fragments or all complete sentences, not a mixture of both.
- If the list of items form complete sentences on their own, they should each end in a period. Otherwise, no periods are necessary at the ends of list items.

Capitalization

Grammatically, capital letters are used to:

- Indicate beginnings of sentences
- Distinguish proper names and titles
- Show respect

According to The Associated Press Stylebook and Briefing in Media Law (AP Stylebook), "In general, avoid unnecessary capitals. Lowercase the common noun elements of names in all plural uses: the Democratic and Republican parties, Main and State streets, lakes Erie and Ontario."

- Also, "…use lowercase for internal elements of an organization that have widely used generic terms: the board of directors of General Motors, the board of trustees of Columbia University…".
- But: "Capitalize internal elements of an organization when they have names that are not widely-used generic terms: the General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, the House of Delegates of the American Medical Association…".

Capitalization Suggestions

- Titles such as Governor and Senator are capitalized ONLY when preceding a name.
- Legislature and Senate capitalized when referring to the Washington bodies.
- Use Washington state and state of Washington
- Position titles and committee names: Capitalize titles when they precede a proper name. Positions aren't capitalized unless they are at the beginning of a sentence.

"The Washington State PTA board of directors met yesterday. The board heard from Leadership Director Sally Spunky about the leadership committee's recent conference call. The board commended the leadership director for her diligence."

Further examples
- President T. Regal vs. T. Regal, president
- Principal Sara Stone vs. Sara Stone, principal
- Executive Director Sunny Days vs. Sunny Days, executive director

Affiliated PTAs
When referring to a specific PTA at the local or council level, capitalize the nouns and/or adjectives forming part of the association's proper name: Northgate Elementary PTA; Riverview PTSA Council. When referring generically to local PTAs or councils, only capitalize PTA or PTSA.

Do not capitalize:
- Titles after the word "the" or after a name
- Association, council, university when used alone
- Organizational terms such as bylaws, chair, committee, director, parent education, policy, scholarship, grant, vice president, workshop
- Seasons of the year, directions (north, southeast), state, nation, federal, flag

Dates
- When writing dates, do not use st, nd, rd, or th (e.g., Registration ends Jan. 15).
- When a month is used with a specific date, abbreviate Jan., Feb., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov. and Dec.
- If the month, day, and year are given, commas are used before and after the year.
  (e.g., The Feb. 17, 2006, event was a success).

Ellipses
An ellipsis consists of three periods, with a space before and after (e.g., Hey, guys … what are you talking about?).

Email
- Email is acceptable in all references for electronic mail.
- Use a hyphen with other e-terms (e.g., e-blast, e-book, e-newsletter, e-learning).
-

Fractions
- Spell out amounts less than one, using hyphens between the words (e.g., two-thirds).
- Use figures for precise amounts larger than one, converting to decimals when practical.

Monetary Units
- Spell out the word "cents" in lowercase and use numerals for amounts less than a dollar (e.g., 12 cents).
- Use the $ sign except in casual references. In these cases, the word should be spelled in lowercase (e.g., The book cost $4. Dad, give me a dollar.).
- For amounts exceeding $1 million, use the $ sign and numerals up to two decimal places (e.g., It is worth $4.45 million.).

Numbers
Spell out number:
- At the beginning of a sentence, except for years
- One through nine, 10 and above use numerals
- First through ninth, 10th and above use numerals
- First, grade one, first-grader
- 10th grade, grade 10, 10th-grader

Use numerals for:
- Large numbers such as million and billion ($12 million)
- Percentages (15 percent)
- Ages (age 3 to 6; 26-year-old)
- Pages (page 2)
- Ratios (3-to-1; No. 1 killer of teens)

Do not follow spelled numbers with a parenthetical numeral such as "two (2)".

Punctuation

Apostrophes and Plurals - PTA's vs. PTAs

Use apostrophes to form the possessive case of a singular noun: PTA
- Our PTA's office has a large desk.
- Smith Valley PTA's opinion was requested by the local newspaper.

Use apostrophes to form the possessive case of a plural noun: PTAs
- Statewide, local PTAs' collective wisdom is being gathered for a new publication.
- Non-school-based PTAs' activities usually supplement, rather than replace, school-based PTA activities.

Do not use apostrophes when indicating more than one PTA: PTA + PTA + PTA
- PTAs have advocated for arts education for many years.
- Our state's PTAs have vigorous, well-trained leaders.
- PTSAs are great!

Colons
- When a colon introduces a list of things, **do not capitalize** the first word after the colon unless it is after a proper noun.
- When a colon introduces a phrase or an incomplete sentence that is meant to add information to the sentence before it, **do not capitalize** the first word after the colon unless it is a proper noun.
- When a colon introduces a complete sentence, **you may capitalize** the first word after the colon, according to some style guides.

Quotation Marks

Use quotation marks to enclose a direct quotation – a person's exact words. All pertinent punctuation should be included within the quotation marks:
- The executive director said, "PTA nurtures great leaders."
- I heard her say, "Do you know how many are registered for the conference?"
- "Watch out," he cautioned, "your time is almost up."

Semicolons and colons are always placed outside the closing quotation marks:
- Rudy promised, "I'll get to it right away"; however, that was three weeks ago.
- One thing we know for sure about "rush orders": they do arrive, eventually.

Question marks and exclamation points are placed inside the closing quotation marks if they belong with the quotation; otherwise they are placed outside:
- "Who just texted you?" her mother asked.
- Didn't you promise me, "I'll never text again"?
- From far out in the crowd I heard, "I can't believe I ate the whole thing!"

Spaces
There should be only one space after punctuation - including periods and colons. Never put two spaces after a period.

State Names
- Spell out the names of the 50 states when they stand alone in textual material. Any state name may be condensed, however, to fit typographical requirements for tabular material.
- Eight states are not abbreviated: Alaska, Hawaii, Idaho, Iowa, Maine, Ohio, Texas and Utah.

Terms Specific to Washington State PTA and National PTA

Events
According to the AP Stylebook, capital letters are used for the full official name of the event:
- Annual WSPTA Convention
- Region 15 Fall Leadership Conference

Otherwise, use lower case letters: "Registration is now open for the WSPTA Legislative Assembly. Our positions go through a formal process before being placed on our platform: vetting by committee and board; outreach to members via survey; and finally voting by representative delegates at our annual legislative assembly."

Applicable events: board of directors meetings; board meetings; board retreat; leadership conference; outreach summit; fall, winter and spring conferences; legislative assembly; focus day; convention.

WSPTA Awards
Because these are unique to our state, capitalize the official name:

Golden Acorn	Outstanding Communications Strategy
Friend of Children	Outstanding PTA/Council of the Year
Honorary Life Membership	Outstanding Newsletter
Outstanding Educator	Outstanding E-Blast
Outstanding Advocate	Outstanding Website
Outstanding Student Advocate	PTAs Taking Significant Action
Outstanding Service	Local PTA and Council Standards of Excellence
Platinum Level Membership Award	100% Membership Award
Gold Level Membership Award	100% Staff Award
Silver Level Membership Award	100% Council Award
Bronze Level Membership Award	Leadership Academy
Advocacy Award of Excellence	Family and Community Engagement Award of Excellence

Terms specific to National PTA:

National Parent Teacher Association	Mary Lou Anderson ArtsEd Grant
Enhancement Grant Program	National PTA Schools of Excellence Award
National PTA	National PTA Lifetime Achievement Award
National PTA Convention	Jan Harpe Domene Diversity & Inclusion Award
Parent Teacher Association	Phoebe Apperson Hearst Award
Parent Teacher Student Association	Reflections Program
PTA or PTSA (no periods)	

Title Suggestions

Title capitalization

For titles of books, pamphlets, videos, promotional materials: Capitalize the principal words, including prepositions and conjunctions of four or more letters. Capitalize articles – the, a, an - or words of fewer than four letters if it is the first or last word in a title.

Stylistic preferences

Use *italic* or **boldface** for titles of books, periodicals, movies, videos, plays, operas, reports, pamphlets, and kits. Rule of thumb: If you can go out and physically buy a copy of whatever title it is you're trying to punctuate, italicize it. If you can't, put it in quotation marks.

Suggestions for WSPTA

Use *italics* for titles of our hard-copy and on-line publications, as well as workshops and PowerPoint presentations.
Examples:
- *PTA and the Law* (workshop)
- *Leadership News*
- *WSPTA Uniform Bylaws*
- *WSPTA Board of Directors Policy Manual*
- *WSPTA Board of Directors Handbook*
- *Secretary: More Than Just Minutes* (PowerPoint)
- *Standing Rules* (Example of Leadership Guides)

Times

- Use figures except for noon and midnight. Use a colon to separate hours from minutes: *3 a.m., 3:30 p.m.*
- Avoid such redundancies as 10 a.m. this morning, 10 p.m. tonight or 10 p.m. Monday night. Use 10 a.m. today, 10 p.m. today or 10 p.m. Monday, etc.
- Exclude minutes if it is on the hour: *5 p.m.* (NOT 5:00 p.m.)
- For start and end times, reference a.m. or p.m. only once if they are the same: *9-11 a.m.*
- Noon is 12 p.m. The preference is noon, but either form is accepted: *9 a.m.-noon, 9 a.m.-12 p.m.*
- Midnight is 12 a.m. and is part of the day that is ending, not the day that is beginning. (Notable for when you are auto-closing an online survey.)

Years

- Use figures without commas: 1986. Use and "s" without an apostrophe to indicate spans of decades or centuries: the 1890s, the 1800s.
- Years are the lone exception to the general rule in numerals that a figure is not used to start a sentence: 1976 was a very good year.
- *School year 2019-20* (use an en dash.)
- Use commas with a month and day: *On September 7, 2018, she celebrated her birthday.*

ZIP Codes

- Use all caps "ZIP" for Zone Improvement Program, but always lower case the word "code".
- Run the five digits together without a comma, and do not put a comma between the state name and ZIP code: New York, NY 10020.

Frequently Used PTA Words

after-school programs
a.m.
at-risk (adj.)
back-to-school (adj.)
board of directors
bylaws
caregiver
child care (n.) – Good child care was hard to find.
child-care (adj.) – He looked for a new child-care facility.
citywide
cofounder
curricula (plural of curriculum)
database
day care (n.) – She was licensed to provide day care services.
day-care (adj.) – The day-care center was lively and cheerful.
decision maker
decision making (n.) – Decision making should include consensus building.
decision-making (adj.) – The local school board is the decision-making body.
dropout
email
exhibitor
extracurricular
family engagement
Founders Day (no apostrophe)
flyer
fundraiser, fundraising
grassroots (adj.) – basic, fundamental
grass roots (n.) – the basic level of society
handout (n.) - Please distribute the handouts.
hand out (v.) - Please hand out the fliers.
health care (n.) – Try to contain the costs of health care.
health-care (adj.) – More health-care providers are needed.
high-schooler
hotline
HB 1234 - used in state legislature; stands for
House Bill (use a space between letters and numerals)

in-service (adj., n.)
kindergartner
local PTA
low-income (adj.)
National PTA
nationwide
noncommercial
nonpartisan
nonprofit
nonsectarian
not-for-profit
online (adj.)
parent engagement
p.m.
playground
policy makers
preschool (or pre-K)
president-elect
preteen
problem solving (n.)
problem-solving (adj.)
school-based
seat belt
self-discipline (hyphenate all *self*-compounds)
SB 1234 - used in state legislature; stands for
Senate Bill (use a space between letters and numerals)
single parent (n.)
single-parent (adj.)
statewide
stepfamily (close up all *step* compounds)
teenage/teenager
T-shirt
vendor
vice president
website
well-being
year-round

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WSPTA Core Values

The core values of Washington State PTA are the principles that represent the internal conduct of the association, as well as the relationship with external stakeholders. WSPTA's core values are as follows:

- Integrity - To aspire to a personal quality of fairness and equity, being honest and truthful, doing the right thing, at the right time, for the right reason.
- Respect - To ensure that everyone's viewpoint is heard, and to hold in high regard and high esteem, the worth and value of another individual.
- Commitment - To be dedicated to the association's mission and vision, engaging in activities that ensure the sustainability of the association beyond one's own desires.
- Collaboration - To work with one another, to cooperate, and to work and each do their share when on a team, committee, or in working initiatives.
- Accountability - To be responsible, answerable for actions taken, to make informed decisions, and to provide stewardship by managing the data and information in making decisions.
- Pioneering - To be innovative, willing to take informed risks, to provide opportunities and ventures for growth and being open to, and endorsing creative ideas.

Washington State

PTA®

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