

Leadership in PTA provides members a unique training ground for public office. Regularly, members decide to take the leap and run for their local board of education, city council, state legislature, and even for Congress. We are very proud of our PTA leaders who continue to serve our communities in this way.

In addition to the pitfalls and complexities of being in the public eye, running for office as a current or former PTA leader presents unique challenges. While leadership in PTA can provide members with the skills and training to be successful, it cannot serve as a platform for a candidate's campaign. There are very strict laws and regulations governing how campaigns are conducted.

PTA cannot, in any way, endorse a political candidate. Doing so jeopardizes the PTA's nonprofit status. As a 501(c)3 charitable, nonprofit organization, a PTA can lobby and advocate on issues at a variety of levels, from local to federal. However, PTAs are strictly forbidden from getting involved in any political campaign.

What does this mean from a practical perspective for someone running for a public office? It means:

- Candidates must not use any PTA membership list to promote themselves or any campaign event or activity. Instead, use your list of friends you have made over the years, many of whom may also be in the PTA.
- Do not send any campaign invitations or messages to anyone with an @wastatepta.org email address or other PTA designated email address (e.g. PTApresident@gmail.com). This muddies the water and it is important to keep this water clear.
- Candidates must not give the impression that PTA endorses their candidacy. While it is fine to communicate the skills and experience you gleaned as a PTA leader or member, it is best to make this part of your greater resume and qualifications as a candidate.
- Consider the perception that may be created based on your subject line or salutation in an email.
- In general, do not use the term "PTA" to brand yourself or identify a group. For example, do not use terms such as "Join me as a PTA leader for my campaign launch" when sending invitations or branding your picture on a campaign poster as "PTA Mom/Dad".
- Become very well versed in all the rules and regulations of the Washington Public Disclosure Commission, <https://www.pdc.wa.gov/>. They have great resources available to guide you through your candidacy.

While the rules restrict our involvement in any political campaign, the PTA membership and leadership are with you in spirit. Running for public office is a major challenge and the ultimate civic commitment.