

How Things Work

How Things Work outlines all the important things to know in order to have a successful experience at WSPTA Legislative Assembly. Many of the “rules” are requirements of the law (noted as Revised Code of Washington (RCW)), *WSPTA Uniform Bylaws* (bylaws), *WSPTA Policy* (policy), or our parliamentary authority, Robert’s Rules of Order Newly Revised (RR). The information in the debate and voting section is contained in the proposed 2026 WSPTA Legislative Assembly Standing Rules (SRs).

Important Deadlines (RCW, policy, SRs)

- **Online delegate [registration](#)** deadline is **Tuesday, October 13 at noon**.
- **On-site registration**, space permitting, is available for audience members and delegates. Registration opens on **October 16 at 11:30 AM**. In order to be a voting delegate, you must be a paid member of the PTA you wish to represent and your PTA must be in good standing. If you have a question about membership or your PTA’s standing, email TVasbinder@wastatepta.org to check.

Voting Delegate vs. Audience Member (bylaws)

- **Audience member** – Any invited guests, member of a local PTA, or supporting member of WSPTA may register to attend the WSPTA Legislative Assembly. Audience members have access to all classes and materials, educational opportunities, networking, and general sessions, but do not have voice or vote, and may not submit motions or amendments.
- **Voting Delegate** – A voting delegate must be a member of a local PTA and authorized by their local or council PTA to represent them. In addition to having access to all the same opportunities as audience members, they also have voice and vote and may submit motions and amendments during debate.
- For questions about the voting delegate authorization process, contact support@wastatepta.org.

Voting delegate information (RCW, bylaws, policy)

- Voting credentials are issued to voting delegates who have registered for Legislative Assembly. A list of voting delegates will be maintained by the WSPTA office and is available upon request by emailing support@wastatepta.org. Presidents with questions about their voting delegates may also check with the WSPTA office by email.
- Local PTA voting delegates must be a member of the local PTA they represent. Council voting delegates must be a member of a local PTA in the council they represent.
- Delegates may only represent and vote on behalf of one local PTA or council – the local PTA or council under which they have registered.
- Voting credentials are non-transferable and cannot be replaced.
- The method for selecting voting delegates and alternates should be specified in a local PTA or council’s standing rules.
- Local PTAs in good standing have voting delegates determined by the number of paid members at the end of the previous fiscal year. PTAs with up to 200 members are entitled to four voting delegates; one additional delegate may be added for each additional 100 members.

- Each council in good standing is entitled to have four voting delegates.
- New local PTAs and councils chartered after June 30, 2026, are allowed delegates based on the membership number recorded in the WSPTA office 15 days prior to the opening of the Legislative Assembly (October 1).

Expectations for all attendees (RR, policy)

- To provide a safe and welcoming event free of harassment, all attendees are expected to follow all health and safety protocols in effect and behave with decorum and civility. Incivility, harassment, discrimination of any kind or failure to follow safety protocols will not be tolerated. The WSPTA President can take any necessary disciplinary measures to ensure a safe environment for all.
- All attendees must wear an official current-year Legislative Assembly badge at all activities.
- All cell phones or other noise-producing devices must be put on vibrate or silent mode during all general sessions, workshops, panels, and classes.
- All audio or video recording, AI notetaking, transcribing, and/or live streaming during general sessions are prohibited unless pre-approved by the chair.
- All materials in support of or opposition to the issues and resolutions under consideration by the voting delegates must have the approval of the chair prior to distribution.
- Any item supporting or opposing a candidate or a ballot measure in a general election, or the issues, principles, or resolutions under consideration by the voting delegates, must not be visible during general sessions.
- **Photo Release:** By attending the WSPTA Legislative Assembly, you grant Washington State PTA the right to record, film, photograph, or capture your likeness in any media and to distribute, broadcast, use, or otherwise disseminate, in perpetuity, such media without any further approval from or any payment to you. **Note:** Parental consent is required to publish photographs that feature attendees under the age of 18.

What will be voted on? (RR, bylaws)

- Delegates will vote on the adoption of the agenda and the proposed [standing rules](#).
- Delegates will consider the issues, principles, and resolutions shown in the [Voters' Guide](#) on October 16-17.
- Delegates must be present to vote.
- Voting to determine the top five issues shall be by electronic survey.
- **Emergency or Substitute Legislative Positions or Resolutions** - Delegates shall not consider emergency or substitute legislative positions or resolutions, other than those originally presented to the delegates, without prior approval of the WSPTA board of directors.

Proposed Legislative Issues, Principles, and Resolutions Issue, Principle, and Resolution Education and Motion Writing 101 (bylaws, SRs)

- Attendees can educate themselves on the proposed issues, principles, and resolutions by reviewing the Voters' Guide and viewing the education videos on Whova. Whova communities will be set up for each issue, principle, and resolution to provide opportunities for delegates to learn and ask questions about the proposals, so they can fully participate in the debate and voting process.

- There will be a recorded “How to Legislative Assembly” class that includes details on motion writing available in Whova. Only voting delegates (including student voting delegates) have the right to propose motions, speak in debate, ask questions, and vote at the Legislative Assembly.

Motions: Proposing Action/Introducing Business (policy, RR, SRs)

- Motions must be submitted on the motion forms available at the microphone tables and may only be made during debate.
- Both primary amendments (changes directly to the main motion) and secondary amendments (changes to a primary amendment) are allowed during debate.
- **Proper form:** Motions to make amendments (primary and secondary amendments) must clearly state what change(s) you want to happen. **Use the following language (add/insert and strike/delete) and format:**

“I move to amend resolved clause #2, bullet #1, by striking the word “parent” after the word “authentic” and inserting the words “family and community.”

- Only the parts of the issues, principles, and resolutions that are in the **shaded boxes** in the Voters’ Guide are open for amendment and debate.
- All motions must be seconded by another voting delegate before they can be discussed.
- Once a motion has been made and seconded, it will be restated by the chair, who will then ask for discussion and recognize the maker of the motion for their speech in favor.
- Resolutions may not contain more than four resolved clauses.
- Resolution *whereas* clauses may be updated by the resolutions committee as needed.
- Amendments solely for grammar, spelling, punctuation, style, and cross-references are not in order. These technical changes will be handled by WSPTA after adoption.
- See [Parliamentary Procedure Simplified](#) for more information about motions that delegates can make and their priority order (precedence).

Debate and Voting during General Sessions (policy, RR, SRs)

- See also [Flow Diagram of the Debate and Voting Process](#)
- Voting delegates are encouraged to participate in the debate process.
- There are 4 microphones in the general session room, each with a different purpose:
 - **The “pro” microphone** is for delivering speeches in favor of the motion being considered.
 - **The “motions” microphone** is where delegates make all motions.
 - **The “info” microphone** is where delegates can ask questions about the motion being debated, the rules, or certain other actions.
 - **The “con” microphone** is for delivering speeches in opposition to the motion being considered.
 - See [Parliamentary Procedure Simplified](#) for more information.
- After the introduction of a proposed issue, principle, or resolution, one voting delegate may speak in favor, followed by one voting delegate in opposition, before any motions may be proposed.
- To speak, voting delegates must first be recognized by the chair. After the recognition by the chair, the voting delegate must first **state their name and local PTA or council name and number or WSPTA position held**.
- Each speech in debate is limited to 90 seconds.

- No voting delegate may speak more than twice on the pending motion, and no one may speak a second time until everyone who wants to speak has spoken once.
- After the first speech in favor, if there are no delegates wishing to speak against and no motions to amend, the vote will be taken without further debate.
- During debate, the chair will alternate recognizing speakers at the “pro” and “con” microphone, if possible, until there are no further speakers or until the total time of debate has expired.
- The total time of debate for each main motion (proposed legislative issue, principle, or resolution) is 12 minutes.
- The total time of debate clock will stop for all questions and other matters from the “info” microphone, or by the chair as needed.
- If an amendment is proposed, the chair will recognize the motion maker to speak in favor, and one voting delegate to speak against, before a secondary amendment may be proposed.
- At the conclusion of the first speech in favor of the motion to amend, if no voting delegate has approached the “con” microphone and there are no secondary amendments or other motions, the vote on the motion to amend will be taken without further debate.
- This process is repeated for each motion to amend until all the motions to amend have been processed, or the total debate time for the main motion has expired. If time remains after all amendments have been processed, debate on the main motion (as amended) will resume until the total debate time expires. When there are no further voting delegates wishing to speak, or total debate time has expired, the vote on the main motion, as amended, will be taken.
- Delegates will vote by raising their voting credentials card when directed by the chair.
- If needed, a rising vote or counted vote may be used, at the request of the chair or a voting delegate. No one may enter the general session room during a counted vote.
- Adoption of issues, principles, and resolutions requires a majority vote in the affirmative.

Example Debate and Voting Scenarios

Example 1 - No amendments, no con speakers:

- Begin debate of the proposal
- Proponent opening statement (90 seconds max)
- Seeing no con speakers and no motions
- Vote taken without further debate

Example 2 - No amendments, with con speakers:

- Begin debate of the proposal
- Proponent opening statement (90 seconds max)
- Speaker in opposition
- Alternate between the "pro" and "con" speakers when possible
- Vote when there are no further speakers or the total debate time expires

Example 3 – Debate with amendments:

- Begin debate of the proposal
- Proponent opening statement (90 seconds max)
- Speaker in opposition (if there is one)
- Consider motions to amend
- Alternate speakers between the "pro" and "con" speeches when possible
- Vote on the amendment when there are no further speakers or the total debate time expires.
- If the amendment passes, debate continues on the amended motion. If the amendment fails, debate continues on the original motion.

Requests for Information, Parliamentary Inquiries, and Points of Order (RR)

- A voting delegate who has a question (request for information), a parliamentary inquiry, or wishes to raise a point of order or a question of privilege should proceed to the "info" microphone and let the microphone attendant know why they are there. The attendant will signal the chair about the nature of the request.
- If the question is not relevant to the motion currently under consideration (germane), the chair will rule the comments out of order at the current time.
- **Request for Information/Parliamentary Inquiry:**
 - If a voting delegate does not understand what is happening during debate or voting, they may ask a question:
 - Sometimes the debate gets confusing, and you do not know which motion is being discussed.
 - You may have a question on the effect of a vote under consideration.
 - The chair will take this up before recognizing the next speaker.
 - The inquiry must be a specific question to ask for factual information or to ask a procedural question.
 - An inquiry may not be used to make a point in rebuttal or to clarify a point made in debate.
 - Rhetorical questions are considered debate and not requests for information.
 - The chair will respond to your question or ask someone to answer, and there is no discussion.
- **Points of Order:**
 - If a voting delegate believes a procedural rule is being violated or ignored, they may raise a point of order.
 - Points of order will be ruled on by the chair, and the ruling may be appealed by the delegates.