

James Accomando
National PTA President

July 27, 2017

Georgia PTA Board of Directors
Tyler Barr, President

Dear Georgia PTA:

National PTA is deeply concerned about the Georgia PTA nomination and election process which will culminate with elections for Georgia PTA President-Elect, 1st Vice President, 2nd Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer on August 4, 2017 during the Georgia PTA CLT. National PTA strongly recommends that the Georgia PTA Board of Directors does all within its power to allow all qualified individuals who submitted an intent to run from the floor to do so. While Bylaws are under the control of Georgia PTA members, Policy and Procedures are under the control of the board and are, as you know, open to revision and interpretation by the board. Now is the time for flexibility and transparency.

Georgia PTA members communicated the following to National PTA, calling into question Georgia PTA's processes, intent, transparency and credibility. This causes National PTA great concern.

1. National PTA is concerned about nominations process used by Georgia PTA and notes that members and school officials are confused by these messages which were not complete nor transparent:
 - a. Per Georgia PTA Bylaws dated June 24, 2016, Article VIII, Section 8e, "additional nominations may be made from the floor as provided by Appendix J: Policy on Elections." Policy J is not attached to the Bylaws, nor is the Appendix available on the Georgia PTA website. It is not a public document and not accessible by your members or those intending to run from the floor. It was not provided to potential candidates, nor was it directly quoted in nomination materials. When a Georgia PTA member, Shantelle Grace, requested a copy of Appendix J on July 15, the response from Sandra Perrino, Georgia PTA Bylaws Chair, was "Appendix J, Policy on Election has never been an attachment to the Georgia PTA Bylaws. This document is listed in our Georgia PTA Policy and Procedures, which is a board only document that local units and councils do not have a copy."
 - b. The Call for Letters of Intent to Run from the Floor for 2017, dated May 31, 2017, posted on the Georgia PTA website and contained instructions, but did not appear to directly quote Appendix J.
 - c. The call for letters of intent was not easy to find and required clicking through the CLT information.

- d. National PTA is in receipt of one form, *2017-2019 Officer Nomination Form*, which says, “Send the completed Nomination Form, a copy of your resume and signed 2016-2017 PTA Membership card to Becky Lawhon, Georgia PTA Nominating Committee Chair no later than **June 20, 2017** in a sealed envelope to Georgia Nominating Committee, Personal & Confidential, and Attention: Becky Lawhon PO Box 4694 Columbus, Georgia 31914. **NO EXCEPTIONS** for missing information, late submissions or NOT using a sealed envelope.” There is no mention of certified mail.
2. National PTA notes concerns from Georgia PTA members and school officials who question the ethics of having the Nominating Committee Chair—the person responsible for providing information about how to run from the floor, the person receiving the Intent to Run forms, and the person telling individuals that that they are disqualified from running from the floor—as a slated nominee for office for an officer position. Per the minutes of the January, 2017 Georgia PTA Board of Directors meeting, her husband is a member of the Election Committee. Members have noted a conflict of interest and the nepotism inherent in disqualifying challengers and running elections in this manner.
3. National PTA notes that the date of the CLT was moved which caused confusion about when information about running from the floor would be released.
4. National PTA notes the continued concern from members about who can vote at an annual meeting that takes place within days of the start of the school year when the 2017-18 membership campaigns have only just begun.
5. National PTA notes concerns raised by Georgia PTA members and by school officials that a candidate slated as Treasurer is suspected of mishandling funds at the district level and whose investigation has now been turned over to authorities.

Georgia PTA’s reputation and credibility have been under attack for many months and, as a consequence, so has National PTA’s. The latest round of questions concerning the election process and the disqualification of candidates will do nothing to restore trust and credibility. Indeed, National PTA fears the elections will further damage PTA’s name and be repudiated by Georgia PTA members. Any appearance of stifling a Georgia PTA member’s ability to run for officer positions or any perception of a closed or rigged process will further harm PTA at all levels. This is the time for flexibility, transparency, and member-responsiveness by the Georgia PTA board. National PTA strongly encourages Georgia PTA to identify ways to open the election process.

If Georgia PTA disregards our strong recommendation, National PTA expects disarray and parliamentary challenges at your CLT, legal ramifications, and the involvement of the Georgia Attorney General. The National PTA Board of Directors is closely watching Georgia PTA’s actions and the harm being done to the PTA brand. Lack of action by the Georgia PTA board to open the election process and alleviate members’ concerns will be considered an affront to National PTA’s members who reside in Georgia, a demonstrable lack of care by the Georgia PTA for the PTA brand and a willful disregard for the reputation of PTA at all levels. The National PTA Board of Directors cannot allow the brand to be further tarnished and will take appropriate action.

With the expectation of challenges to this election, National PTA requests that Georgia PTA retain in a sealed envelope all ballots, tally sheets, tellers' reports, credential reports, nomination forms and other election and nomination materials.

National PTA will share this letter with members and school district officials who have expressed their concerns about the election.

Sincerely,



James L. Accomando
President, National PTA

Cc: Wayne Bauman, National PTA Support Team
Donald Dunn, National PTA Support Team
Roxanne Rhinehart, National PTA Support Team
Tina Hartman, National PTA Support Team
Nathan Monell, Executive Director, National PTA