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2011-2012 COMMITTEE CHAIR GUIDELINES

Thank you for sharing your most precious asset – your time – with our PTSA community. We hope this will be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for you. If you ever have any questions please do not hesitate to ask any one of the Executive Committee members. Remember what we tell our kids, “there are no dumb questions”!

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

MISSION STATEMENT - The mission of the PTSA is to support and encourage the academic, creative, artistic achievement and social well-being of Somerset Students. The Board of Directors and Committee Chairs are a vital part of meeting the mission by acting as follows:

- **To support and encourage the academic, creative, and artistic achievement of Somerset students.**
- **To encourage communication among PTSA members, Somerset teachers and staff.**
- **To promote diversity in PTSA membership and leadership.**
- **To encourage school spirit and pride.**

The emphasis for 2011-2012 is on the 3 C's: Building Community, Enhancing Communication, and Promoting Collaboration.

COMMITTEE CHAIR RESPONSIBILITIES - All committee chairs shall be current PTSA members in good standing, including completion of a satisfactory background check as required of school volunteers. The duties of committee chairs shall include the following: (1) regular communication with the appropriate Vice-President; (2) preparation of written reports to the BOD including at the beginning and end of the year, one month prior to an event and after an event, and at BOD meetings as appropriate or requested; (3) Following budget request guidelines; (4) serving as an advisory council to the BOD; (5) providing volunteer support for PTSA activities; (6) assisting in disseminating information to the general membership; and (7) keeping or updating a notebook of activities and recommendations pertaining to the committee. This notebook and / or digital record shall be turned over to the successor or to the President at the end of the term. Additional information on specific committee chair responsibilities can be found at somersetptsa.org.

CONTACTS - Each committee has a designated Vice President (Communications, Programs, or Ways & Means). The President is also an ex-officio member of all committees except Nominations. Keep your VP up to date on your committee progress and submit reports as detailed above. Remember to copy your VP and the President on all communications. All email addresses can be found on the somersetptsa.org website under the leadership tab.

MEETINGS - Executive Committee meetings are held once per month and the Board of Directors' meetings are held once per month. Check somersetptsa.org calendar for updated meeting times. For 2011-2012, most EC meetings will be the first Friday of the month and the BOD will be the third Friday of the month, at 9:15am in school. Major changes in your committee plans or budget should be presented to your VP ahead of time for discussion at the EC meeting. The EC meetings are closed. However, the BOD meetings are open and we welcome committee chair participation. Committee reports/updates will be asked for a week prior to the BOD meeting by the Secretary or VPs to be circulated via e-mail before the meeting.

If you have items to discuss at a meeting, please let the Secretary, President, and your VP know by Noon on Monday so these may be included on the agenda. Where it is necessary to discuss a Committee report, in order to keep the meetings short, please try to limit the discussion to 5 minutes.

COMMITTEE BINDERS - All committees maintain binders or digital archives, which include information such as actions taken, contacts, timeline of events, costs, contracts, recommendations and other related information that would help future chairs. Please contact the current chair of the committee to arrange a transfer of information. Please let your VP know if you need any help with this task.

COMMITTEE PLANS AND BUDGETING - One of the your first activities as a Committee Chair is to submit a Committee Action Plan, which is a statement of what you want to accomplish with your committee in the coming year. The budget for your committee, if applicable, is contained in the 2011/2012 budget. This was approved by the PTSA General Membership on May 28th, 2011. Even if the budget has allotted expenses for your committee, the BOD, by vote at the monthly meetings, must approve all expenditures over \$500, in advance of the expenditure. This means that the request for payment must be placed on the BOD meeting agenda and approved prior to spending money and requesting checks or reimbursement. Any **unbudgeted** expenditures over \$300 must also be approved by the BOD in advance of the expenditure.

PTSA FORMS - All Somerset PTSA forms are available for download on the PTSA website <http://somesetptsa.org/documents.html> or in the PTSA office in the file drawer underneath the mail folders to the right of the sink. Please email the Secretary if you cannot locate a form.

PTSA MOTION FORM - If you would like to make a motion, please use the PTSA Motion Form. Examples of situations requiring a motion include a check request over \$500, a check request over amount in budget, a budget increase request, or a request to create a new committee, among others. The Secretary must receive a completed Motion Form prior to the meeting's start. All motions received after the agenda is issued, including on the meeting day, will be added to the end of the agenda and covered only if time permits. If no time is available, the motion will be added to next meeting's agenda.

PTSA ROOM - The PTSA has a room at school past the office and behind the kindergarten. Please visit the office and become familiar with what is there – it is yours to use. Each committee has a file folder in the PTSA room (below the sink to the right). PTSA mail comes into the office in the PTSA drop-box (a little painted chest) and the Executive Committee members distribute the mail into the committee folders. Please check your folder regularly.

USING THE PTSA ROOM - We have some supplies (napkins, plastic forks, spoons, office supplies, etc.) in the closet. Committees are welcome and encouraged to use them; please let your VP know what you plan to take/use (to verify that these are not needed by another committee) and what supplies are running low. PLEASE CHECK the closet, prior to your purchase of supplies for your committee/event! When you are purchasing items (such as ribbon, t-shirts, water bottles, etc.), please be mindful about potential use in the future. We recommend not putting specific dates on the items. Please check with one of the EC members

prior to storing items in the PTSA room. We are required to keep all of the PTSA minutes and seven years of financial documents, therefore we have limited space in the PTSA room.

CANTEEN - The PTSA has purchased water and sodas for use by the committees during events. They are stored in the PTSA room. Please confirm with your VP what you plan to use for your committee event or fundraising function. You will need to let the Treasurer know how many bottles/cans are used so that the cost can be taken out of your committee budget. Water is \$0.12/bottle and soda is \$0.35/can. If the supplies are low, please contact a VP of Programs for restocking

2. COMMUNICATION

GENERAL - Keep your VP in the loop! In addition to reports for BOD meetings, cc your VP and President on major meetings and communications.

COMMUNICATION WITH PRINCIPAL AND STAFF - If you need to contact the Principal, please contact the President first. The President has regular Principal meetings and can bring up most business there, facilitate short inquiries, or determine the best way to handle an urgent request. Similarly for contacts that need to go to all Staff, please check with the President first. It is important that the President be aware of all communications with the Principal and Staff to maintain a unified PTSA message.

OUTSIDE COMMUNICATION - Letters and other communication on behalf of the PTSA must go through the President and Executive Committee. For projects with regular correspondence needs (e.g., corporate sponsorship, auction donations, etc.) a procedure will be discussed with the chair to determine how to handle ongoing correspondence for a designated time period.

E-MAIL COMMUNICATION - Because our primary mode of communication for PTSA business is by email, please make sure our Secretary has your correct and current e-mail address. If you are not receiving PTSA emails please let the Secretary know and check to ensure they are not blocked by your e-mail provider's spam filter. When you email PTSA business, please copy your designated VP and the President.

eNEWS - The Somerset eNews is Somerset's weekly newsletter distributed via email. Articles may be submitted electronically via email to enews@somersetptsa.org by Friday 5pm for inclusion in the Sunday eve/Monday morning edition. Committees are encouraged to create a "marketing plan". Two to three weeks before your deadline, meeting or event, start submitting eNews information. This can be done in one email with specific instructions for each date/issue of eNews in the upcoming weeks. Do not forget to include a thank you/recap article immediately following your event. Occasionally an eBlast will go out on Wed/Thurs with a highlighted piece of information. This is not intended for last minute requests but can be part of your 'marketing strategy' with approval from the VP of Communications.

WEBSITE - To add information to the PTSA website, please contact the Webmaster at webmaster@somersetptsa.org. Each committee has space for a description and an additional webpage. This is an important resource for volunteers and people looking to contribute, so please make sure your committee information is up-to-date. Also, if your committee is in charge of a major event, there is also an Events page that needs to have information provided as soon as possible, or at least two months prior to the event.

ROOM PARENT COORDINATOR - If you would like to distribute information through the room parents, please send the information to the Room Parent Coordinator, and copy the VP of Communications and the President. This is not a channel for last minute communications; it may be part of your overall "marketing strategy" by

request and as such the request needs to be planned in advance and then approved by the Room Parent coordinator.

SIGNAGE - Prior to making signs please check to see if there is already a sign made for that event. Also, please reuse the corrugated plastic boards by just attaching new signs to them. Using the plastic boards with peel away letters (or signage) will help save the PTSA money also. When you are finished using the plastic boards, please return them to the PTSA room as promptly as possible, since other committees might want to use them. When returning the signs to the sign bin please remove all tape from the signs. Similarly the wooden billboard signs are a great advertising tool if you can work with your committee to coordinate putting them in and out each day at the entrances to the school.

When making signage for different events please do not include the date and the time on the main sign. First please make the sign and laminate it. After that you can add a small label with the correct time and date. That way the sign can be used in subsequent years instead of making signs over and over.

FLYERS - If you need to distribute a flyer to students, please order enough copies for each family (distributed to the "oldest child") or for each child as appropriate. Ask the office staff for the correct number as it changes throughout the year. Please do not ask teachers to make copies of your flyer for their students. Copy procedures are noted below. If a flyer is put in the teachers' mailboxes it may not go home until Friday, as some teachers do not distribute mail until that day. Substitute teachers may not pick up mail in all cases.

3. FINANCIAL

FINANCIAL REIMBURSEMENT (See Sample Form) - If you need to be reimbursed for PTSA expenses, please use the Check Request form. To comply with State PTSA financial rules, we must have original receipts attached to the request for reimbursement. (It would be a good idea for you to keep the copy of original receipt & copy of request for your records.) You may put the completed Check Request form in the Treasurer's file folder. Please turn in the request within 2 months of purchase so that we can keep track of PTSA budget accurately. The financial year end is June 30th. All the requests from current year must to be turned in before the last BOD meeting. The deadline this year is JUNE 11th or you will not be reimbursed. Please allow one-week turnaround for reimbursement checks to be issued. If you need to be reimbursed sooner, please contact the Treasurer to make special arrangements.

CHECK REQUEST TO A VENDOR - To request a check to a vendor, please use the Check Request form. If the check request is less than \$500 and within the budget, please use the Check Request form and turn it in to the Treasurer. If the check request is more than \$500, or less than \$500 but not within the budget, it will have to be approved by the BOD. Therefore, you will need to submit the request at least one month ahead of time.

CASH RECEIPTS FORM (See Sample Form) - The State PTSA has special rules regarding cash receipts. Whenever possible, please give cash receipts to the Treasurer on the same day the cash is collected and use the "Cash Receipts Form" to reflect the amount of cash received. Two PTSA members should be present when counting the money and both people will need to sign the form. Until you are able to transfer cash to the Treasurer, maintain possession of the cash. **DO NOT leave cash in the PTSA room or in any other area of the school, including the school's safe. PTSA cash left in a school safe or other school area will technically become the property of the school.**

SIGNING CONTRACTS - Under State PTSA rules, TWO members of the Executive Committee, one of whom should be the President, must sign contracts, to ensure that liability insurance is valid. Any service with outside vendors (including speakers, entertainers, drinks, food, etc.), the committee chair

should obtain the letter or contract with the vendor. and be the contact person. Committees should keep the copy of contract but give the original to the Treasurer and a copy to the President.

INSURANCE REQUIREMENTS - The PTSA has very specific requirements in order for insurance coverage to be in effect. Any event put on by the PTSA must have a large majority of the volunteers being members of a PTSA. It is important to be aware that PTA's are not immune from liability.

4. BUILDING/EQUIPMENT USE

SCHEDULING EVENTS - Please schedule all of your committee events through your VP and copy the PTSA Secretary (because the PTSA Secretary maintains the PTSA Master Calendar). You will then need to contact the school office to schedule your event and fill out building use forms, etc. (make sure that your event is on the school calendar.) Also notify the webmaster and eNews of your event, after final approval from the school office and the Secretary.

BUILDING USE - You will need to complete a Building Use Form from the school office for any meeting or event that is held at the school. Please turn the form in to the Front Office; it will also need to be co-signed by the President.

If you are using the building for an event, contact the custodian in advance and discuss table needs, set up, staffing, and clean-up plans. If your event is on a school day and before 8pm, the school district will not charge the PTSA for building use. However, if you would like to reserve the building during the weekend or after 8pm, the school district will charge PTSA. This cost will be taken out of your committee budget. If you need to use the kitchen, refrigerator, or freezer for any reason you must also contact the District Nutrition Services offices to arrange for a paid staff member to be present because of County Health Department rules. This will come out of your committee budget. PLEASE make sure that the room you use is returned to its original condition. If you are using a classroom, please let the classroom teacher know ahead of time. Lastly, PLEASE BE NICE to the custodians! They help us a lot. Nice gestures to them will go a long way!

MICROPHONE - Please attend the committee chair training to learn how to use the microphone and other AV equipment.

SCHOOL COPIER - The copier in the school office work area can be used to print up to 25 copies, but remember that teachers and staff have first priority. Be sensitive to the busy times in the office. You will need to punch in our code for the copier, which is 1827.

COPY CENTER PRINTING - You can use the Bellevue School District Copy Center located at the District offices in downtown Bellevue for large copy orders. You will find work order forms in the school office workroom. The procedures are as follows:

- Our PTSA billing # is 9401248991
- Include your name, Somerset PTSA, committee name, your phone number and form title
- Allow 3 days for turnaround, otherwise you can be charged for rush fee.
- Place completed form in the Copy Center folder in the school office workroom and it will be delivered via interschool mail and your copies will be returned the same way although you may also take the form to the Center and pick up your order if you choose to do so.
- After you receive your order, place the pink copy in the Treasurer's folder

Everything sent to the Copy Center must be "copy ready" (no tape, staples, etc.). Copies cost 2-3 cents each when printed on 8.5" x 11" bond. A folder of paper/color choices is in the file folder with the Copy Center forms. Heavier paper, stapling, collating and cutting are available at additional cost.

TIME IN CLASSROOM - The PTSA is dedicated to supporting and enhancing student learning at Somerset. Consequently, we make every effort not to interrupt teaching time during the school day. If you need to go into classes to share information, please make sure you obtain the teachers' approval in advance.

5. VOLUNTEERS

VOLUNTEER COMPENSATION - To avoid any conflict of interest, PTSA members should avoid receiving any type of compensation or gratuities for their volunteer activities. Such items may include tuition, merchandise, gift certificates and/or monetary compensation. If you receive such items they should be used to promote or enhance the PTSA activity (e.g. as raffle items or door prizes) or be donated to the PTSA to benefit all students.

VOLUNTEER BACKGROUND CHECKS - All Committee Chairs must have background checks completed and be approved by the school/district as volunteers. It may also be a requirement of the school for background checks to be done for your volunteers. Please see the school office for more information.

HIGH SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS - There are several high school and middle school volunteers who may be willing to help with your event for community hours. Contact your VP for help recruiting volunteers at least one month prior to your event. If you know of students who may be interested in adding their names to the list, please have them email the President directly.

THANK YOUR VOLUNTEERS - Please thank your volunteers!! Personal notes of thanks, recognition in eNews, and nominations for awards are all important ways to recognize the time and effort of each of our volunteers. Someone who has helped in a small way and feels appreciated may be willing to step-up for a larger task next time. We want to make sure that every volunteer knows that we really appreciate his or her help. And this includes you! A heartfelt thank you for leading a committee and making this commitment to our children!