



Today's students.  
Tomorrow's business professionals.

[www.texasbpa.com](http://www.texasbpa.com)

## **MEMBER HANDBOOK TEXAS ASSOCIATION**

It is the policy of Texas Business Professionals of America not to discriminate on the basis of age, race, color, national origin, sex or handicap in its career/technical programs, services or activities as required by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended.

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Congratulations, and welcome to Business Professionals of America (BPA). If you are choosing to pursue a business career, then you are preparing yourself for this country's fastest growing and most in-demand occupational category. The business education program at your school will provide you with a solid technical foundation that will give you an important edge over others when you enter the workforce.

## **WHO WE ARE**

### **Mission Statement of Business Professionals of America**

The mission of Business Professionals of America is to contribute to the preparation of a world-class workforce through the advancement of leadership, citizenship, academic, and technological skills.

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### **Vision Statement**

At Business Professionals of America, we are committed to developing the best possible career and technical education organization for students in the United States. The measure of our success will be the perception that alumni of Business Professionals of America are highly competent and skilled workforce professionals who enable business and industry to maintain the economic vitality and high quality of life associated with our celebrated United States of America.

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### **Goals of Business Professionals of America**

The Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) has been adopted as the strategic direction for a certification program, competitive events, leadership, and direction for interaction with business, career/job preparation, and workplace competencies.

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### **Purposes**

The purposes of this organization are:

To provide opportunities for chapter members in leadership and development.

To unite in a common professional bond without regard to race, creed, sex or national origin of students enrolled in classes with business employment as their objective.

To develop leadership abilities through participation in career and technical education, civic, recreational, and social activities.

To assist students in establishing realistic employment objectives.

To create enthusiasm for learning.

To promote high standards in ethics, workmanship, and scholarship.

To develop the ability of students to plan together, organize, and carry out worthy activities and projects through the use of the democratic processes.

To foster an understanding of the functions of labor, entrepreneurial, and management organizations in the American free enterprise system.

To develop competent, assertive leaders in business education.

To develop and strengthen members' confidence in themselves and their work.

To provide satisfactory social and recreational activities.

To foster practical application of business education skills through competition.

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### **Who Can Join?**

BPA is a national student organization for students preparing for careers in the business world. The organization consists of local chapters in middle, secondary and postsecondary schools across North America. It is one of the national career and technical student organizations recognized by the U. S. Department of Education.

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### **The Emblem**

The emblem has profound and significant meaning.

The four points of the shield stand for Ambition, Leadership, Sociability, and Poise. The shield itself stands for honor and dignity and the importance of business in America. The stripes represent direction and the bar represents the service provided by employees in business occupations. The quill and inkwell represent the stability of business occupations through the ages and the torch represents worthy goals.

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## Pledge

"We are met in a spirit of friendship and goodwill as we prepare for productive lives in business and office careers. We work together to develop professionalism and leadership through Business Professionals of America and pledge our loyalty to our nation."

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## Colors

*Navy blue* signifies the success achieved through leadership and professionalism. *Tan* represents the bountiful fields of opportunity in America. *Red* symbolizes the friendship obtained through teamwork in our organization.

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## Meaning of the Name

### ***Business:***

The field for which we prepare our students; emphasizes that we educate our members to work efficiently, not only in an office setting, but also in a wide variety of business situations.

### ***Professionals:***

Our students indicate they join BPA to take advantage of a wide variety of professional development opportunities.

### ***of America:***

Symbolizes pride in our country and its free enterprise business system.

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## Divisions

**College/Post-secondary** - For post-secondary (one-year, two-year, baccalaureate, or post-baccalaureate) students enrolled in initial, refresher, or upgrading business, career technical, business education and career or related education programs.

**Secondary** - For high school students enrolled in initial, refresher, or upgrading business, career technical, and career or related education programs. Associate Member Designation for high school students enrolled in initial, refresher, or upgrading business, career technical, and career or related education programs for special populations.

**Middle Level** - For middle school students enrolled in initial, refresher, or upgrading business, career technical, and career or related education programs.

## Attire

Official dress consists of:

1. Official blazer with the emblem patch on the left breast pocket.
2. Membership pin worn on the left lapel. *There should not be any other accessories on the left lapel.*
3. Items to be worn on the right lapel of the blazer include:
  - The highest officer pin
  - The highest earned torch pin
  - One earned merit scholar pin
  - Name badge

Coordinating with the official blazer, men should wear dress slacks, dress shirt, and tie. Women should wear a dress or skirt with coordinated blouse and/or sweater.

The official dress of the organization is professional and is in keeping with the conservative nature of business attire.

## LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

BPA provides recognition of individual members and chapters for involvement in a variety of programs designed to develop personal, leadership, career and technical skills.

### Competitive Events

The Workplace Skills Assessment Program (WSAP) is an integral part of Business Professionals of America. The goal of the program is to provide all business students with the opportunity to demonstrate workplace skills learned through business education curricula. A member may enter one individual and/or one team event in the Secondary and Associate divisions; in two events (only one of which may be a team event) in the Middle Level division; and three events (only one of which may be a team event) in the Post-secondary division. Events are offered at the regional, state, and national level in the following categories:

- Financial Services
- Administrative Support
- Information Technology
- Management/Marketing/Human Resources

The WSAP Guide contains the guidelines for each event. It can be downloaded at [www.bpanet.org](http://www.bpanet.org). You begin competing at the regional level in Texas. State qualifiers advance to the State Leadership Conference (SLC) in March. At the SLC, those placing as national qualifiers advance to the National Leadership Conference (NLC), held in late April or early May.

## Running for Office

Think about running for an office if you are interested in this leadership avenue. Opportunities abound through running for regional president, state office, or national officer candidate. Contact the State Officer Coordinator or the State Advisor for more information.

## National Intern Program

This program allows students to gain valuable experience as interns at the National Leadership Conference.

## Special Recognition Awards

An active BPA chapter is an involved chapter. There are many Special Recognition Awards designed to provide individual and/or chapter recognition. Recognition is awarded at the Regional, State and National Leadership Conferences. These awards include the following:

- ❖ *Air Force Recruiting Salute Award* – to encourage and recognize chapters for outstanding citizenship, compassionate community service leadership and achievement, and support for American free enterprise.
- ❖ *American Red Cross* – to encourage BPA chapters to provide volunteer services for the American Red Cross.
- ❖ *BPA Marketing and Public Relations* – to encourage chapters to promote the image of Business Professionals of America and its members.
- ❖ *Chapter Activities Award of Excellence* – to recognize local chapters for their outstanding activities and program of work and to promote all local chapters to strive for an outstanding program of activities.
- ❖ *Community Action* – to encourage chapters to become actively involved in community betterment, school improvement, election-year activities, and energy-related activities.
- ❖ *Entrepreneurship Exploration* – to encourage individuals to have a better understanding of the American free enterprise system and to study the role of the entrepreneur and small business management.
- ❖ *Member Recruiter* – to encourage members to recruit new BPA national members.
- ❖ *Merit Scholar* – to recognize members and advisors for their knowledge of Business Professionals of America.
- ❖ *National Center Capital Improvements Campaign* – to conduct a capital improvement campaign for the benefit of the National Center and to provide individual and group recognition to all contributors.
- ❖ *Safety Awareness* – to encourage and recognize chapters for their involvement and development of unique safety programs.

- ❖ *Anti-Violence Awareness Emphasis* – to encourage members to become involved in programs designed to reduce violence as a means of response to conflict and programs.
- ❖ *Drug Awareness Emphasis* – to encourage members to become actively involved in drug awareness programs and share their knowledge with others.
- ❖ *Special Olympics* – to encourage chapters to become actively involved in Special Olympics.
- ❖ *Professional Cup* – awarded to state associations annually for the greatest participation in Special Recognition and Torch awards.
- ❖ **Torch Awards** – a special program offering individual recognition awards to members who participate in a wide variety of personal growth and service activities. There are seven (7) activity areas in the Torch awards program:
  - *Leadership*
  - *Service*
  - *Cooperation*
  - *Knowledge*
  - *Friendship*
  - *Love, Hope, Faith*
  - *Patriotism*

A very special ceremony surrounds an explanation of the nine “torches”. (In the Torch ceremony, Love, Hope and Faith are considered separate “torches”, giving a total of nine torches in the seven activity areas). Members strive to achieve recognition at each of the following four levels by earning specified points in each of the seven divisions:

1. *Executive Award* – given by the local chapters when a member earns 10 points in each of the seven divisions.
2. *Diplomat Award* – given by the regional organization when a member earns 30 points in each of the seven divisions.
3. *Statesman Award* – given by the state association when a member earns 50 points in each of the seven divisions.
4. *Ambassador Award* – given by the national association when a member earns 70 points in each of the seven divisions.

For more information on the Torch Awards program, go to [www.bpanet.org](http://www.bpanet.org).

## BPA HISTORY

**1963 Vocational Education Act was passed.** The need for a student organization for students enrolled in career/technical office/business programs was recognized.

**1964** American Vocational Association conducted a study of 43 states indicating that 67% of the state vocational education supervisors wanted a career/technical youth group for students in office/business programs.

**1965** Another study confirms the '64 study findings; State Supervisors meet to develop guidelines.

**1966** In July, the Vocational Office Education Clubs of America (VOECA) was formed by the states of Iowa, Kansas, and Wisconsin. In August, VOECA convened a meeting of youth group representatives to decide the most effective means to implement the office occupations youth group. After intensive effort, **articles of incorporation were filed for the Office Education Association (OEA)**. The first three states to affiliate were Iowa, Kansas, and Wisconsin.

**1971** A national office was established for the Office Education Association in Columbus, Ohio, and the Board of Trustees approved the Alumni Division.

**1973** The first full-time Executive Director of OEA was employed.

**1982** The present National Center at 5454 Cleveland Avenue, Columbus, Ohio was purchased.

**1983** Dedication ceremonies for the new National Center were conducted in July.

**1984** Board of Trustees commissioned the Market One firm of Columbus, Ohio to do a marketing study of the OEA. The resulting long-range marketing plan recommended reform of the national image of the OEA.

**1988** Image reform recommendations of the marketing study were implemented—the **OEA became Business Professionals of America**.

**1992** The National Center is paid off and the mortgage is burned in a ceremony at the National Leadership Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio.

**1998-2002** Delaware, Florida, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas pilot a new BPA Middle Level program.

**2002** The Middle Level Program was approved by the Board of Trustees.

**2003** The Middle Level Program was approved by BPA Corporate. The BPA Middle Level Division is born.

**2004** Middle Level Division members participate in the National Leadership Conference.

**2006** BPA celebrates its 40th birthday

## **HOW NATIONAL BPA OPERATES**

**Board of Trustees.** The Board of Trustees manages all affairs of BPA and is elected by the Corporate body at the National Leadership Conference. Every sector of the organization, including state supervisors, state advisors, business, local advisors, and divisions, is represented on the Board. The Board meets at least twice annually. Members may serve not more than two consecutive three-year terms.

**State Association Advisory Council (SAAC).** SAAC serves as a liaison between the states associations and the Board of Trustees; its function is to make recommendations regarding new and existing programs that affect the state organizations.

**Classroom Educators Advisory Council (CEAC).** CEAC serves as the liaison between the local advisors and the Board of Trustees. CEAC membership consists of one local advisor from each state (one per division). One official meeting is held annually. Members may serve no more than two consecutive three-year terms.

**National Business Advisory Council (NBAC).** NBAC serves as the liaison between business and industry and the Board of Trustees. Members are selected from supportive corporations and are appointed by the Board of Trustees.

**National Officers.** National officers are elected annually at the NLC. They provide numerous services to the members they represent through field services, leadership training, workshops, and liaisons between members and the Board of Trustees. If you are interested in becoming a national officer, contact your State Advisor or see the “Future National Officer In Your Chapter” document that can be found at [www.bpanet.org](http://www.bpanet.org).

## **LOCAL CHAPTERS AND CEREMONIES**

### **To Form a Local Chapter:**

1. Review the materials included in the Chapter Start-up Kit (found at [www.bpanet.org](http://www.bpanet.org)). Also contact your State Advisor for more information.
2. Meet with a school official to seek approval and support.
3. Organize a student committee of enthusiastic and motivated students to serve as the Organizing Committee.
4. Prepare an agenda for a chapter meeting to include an introduction to Business Professionals of America.
5. Organize a membership campaign and collect dues.
6. Involve all students in organizing the new chapter and in carrying out the membership campaign.
7. Approve a constitution.
8. Elect officers to serve the membership.
9. Submit membership application, constitution and charter application to the National Center.
10. Recognize the new chapter by conducting a chartering and member Initiation Ceremony (remember to invite teachers, administrators, and family members).
11. Train newly elected officers for their roles as leaders (attend Fall Leadership Conference if possible).
12. Plan a program of activities, including school and community service projects. Organize committees with chairpersons to carry out the activities.
13. Establish regular chapter meeting times. In addition to conducting business meetings, use the meetings to provide professional development by inviting guest speakers, conduct additional leadership development, and learn and practice parliamentary procedures in conducting business meetings.

14. Maintain regular contact with the Regional Advisor, State Advisor and National Center to keep abreast of state and national activities.
15. Prepare interested members for regional Workplace Skills Assessment Program competitions.
16. Review the program of activities with the officers monthly and recommend needed changes.

## **Duties of Local Officers**

**President:** A good leader is one who can work with people and in turn get people to work with him/her for the good of the organization. He/she knows the work that has to be done and recognizes that it will take many people to do the job. The leader keeps informed at all times of the efforts and progress of those whom a responsibility has been given and sees that the organization is moving forward.

**Vice-President:** The office of vice president usually carries specific responsibilities for program planning. In most organizations, this is a major task involving many skills and much hard work. In BPA, the vice president has the responsibility of coordinating all Torch Awards Program activities and assisting the president by meeting with all committees, coordinating the program, and assuring that all activities are in keeping with general chapter practices.

**Secretary:** A good secretary contributes much toward the efficiency of a chapter. Some chapters have one or more recording and corresponding secretaries while others have only one secretary. Some duties include keeping a complete and accurate account of proceedings of the chapter's business meetings and the meetings of officers, keeping membership lists including a record of attendance, answer all correspondence promptly, and file the letter and the reply for future reference.

**Treasurer:** A good treasurer should be accurate, prompt and resourceful. Some suggested duties are serve as chairman of the finance committee, help plan the chapter budget for the year, and keep accurate financial records.

**Historian:** Keeping permanent pictorial and factual chapter information is the responsibility of the historian. Some suggested duties include completing a chapter yearbook, file clippings and pictures of chapter activities, prepare news notes and articles of for publication or broadcast, gather and classify chapter news and send news notes to state officers.

**Parliamentarian:** The chapter parliamentarian is responsible for the smooth running of meetings according to proper parliamentary procedures. Suggested duties include being present at each meeting to advise the presiding officer, being familiar with the by-laws of the local chapter, and the state and national organizations; studying parliamentary procedure so as to be familiar with all of its principles.

**Reporter:** The reporter writes articles for the media, including the school newspaper and local paper regarding chapter news and spotlights.

**Sergeant-at-Arms:** This is the officer responsible for maintaining order during chapter meetings.

### **Checklist for a Chapter Meeting**

1. Is conducted according to accepted parliamentary procedures
2. Is carefully planned in advance
3. Starts and closes on time
4. Proceeds according to an established order of business
5. Includes well-prepared committee/officer reports
6. Shows that each officer is familiar with his/her duties and responsibilities
7. Is interesting and participation is fun
8. Provides for maximum member participation
9. Includes both business and entertainment features
10. Moves along with “snap” and doesn’t waste time
11. Allows ample time for discussion and decision-making
12. Proceeds with a minimum of active participation by the chapter advisor

### **Suggested Order of Business & The Agenda**

The **order of business** is the established sequence by which business is taken up at each session of the assembly. An agenda is the list of business items which is to be taken up at a particular meeting or session of the assembly.

After the Call to Order and Opening Ceremonies, a Roll Call or such procedure necessary to establish a quorum of members may be taken. An agenda may be adopted. Following the opening, the order of business may include:

1. Reading and approval of minutes
2. Reports of officers and standing committees
3. Reports of Special (Ad Hoc) committees
4. Special orders
5. Unfinished business
6. New business

At the end of the order of business, a program may be presented. Announcements may be made before adjournment. Closing ceremonies conclude the meeting.

**Use of the Gavel** by the presiding officer at the lectern is viewed as a symbol of self-governance and orderly procedures. In BPA, there is an accepted procedure for using the gavel. **Two taps** of the gavel calls the chapter meeting to order. **Three taps** of the gavel is the signal for all members to stand during the opening and closing ceremonies. **One tap** serves as the signal to be seated, to restore order in a chapter meeting, and adjournment of the meeting.

**Minutes of the meeting** are necessary because they are the legal record of business transacted during meetings and the best source of information pertaining to the organization. Well-written minutes generally outweigh oral testimony about the happenings at a meeting. Minutes serve as the official history of the proposals, reports, and decisions of the members. The selection of an efficient person who is designated

as the secretary or recorder is very important. That person should take accurate notes and transcribe them into minutes as soon as possible after the meeting. Minutes should be recorded in a permanent minutes book and signed by the secretary (or person who took the minutes), and the presiding officer.

## **Ceremonies**

The officers present all ceremonies in a thoughtful and respectful manner. The two most frequently used BPA ceremonies are the Opening and the Closing Ceremonies. Additional ceremonies including Building the Emblem, the Torch Ceremony, and Officer Installation which can be found in the Chapter Management Reference Guide.

### **Opening a Meeting**

The opening ceremony sets the stage for a chapter meeting. The ceremony, done in a proper and professional manner, will demonstrate to the members a well-planned and organized meeting. This will make meetings more orderly and effective.

### **Equipment and Supplies**

American flag

Gavel

Table (if desired)

Officer chairs (if desired)

### **Suggested Procedure**

Officers should be seated at the head table or should stand to one side of the lectern.

## **THE OPENING CEREMONY**

### **President**

(Stands and raps the gavel once for attention.) The meeting will come to order. We are now holding a meeting of the (chapter name), Texas Association of Business Professionals of America. Mr./Madam Vice President, what are the major purposes of our professional organization?

### **Vice President**

We recognize the importance and understand the contributions that have been made to our country by business professionals. We are preparing to take our place in these challenging positions. We work together in Business Professionals of America to develop essential competencies in leadership, scholarship, character, and citizenship so that we may share in the improvement of our economy and the advancement of our nation.

### **President**

May we accomplish these objectives. Mr./Madam Vice President, will you please present the other officers?

**Vice President**

With pleasure, I introduce: *(Introduce in order the President, Historian, Secretary, Treasurer, Parliamentarian, and Vice Presidents. Pronounce the name of each individual and the office held. As each officer is introduced, he or she should stand and remain standing until seated by the President.)* Mr./Madam President, the officers are at their stations.

**President**

Will the members and friends please rise and join me in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag? *(Raps the gavel three times to call the members and guests to stand. The audience should rise on the third rap of the gavel. All members face the flag with their hands over their hearts to repeat the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.)*

**Everyone**

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

**President**

Fellow members and guests, join me in stating why we are here.

**Everyone (pledge)**

We are met in a spirit of friendship and goodwill as we prepare for productive lives in business and office careers. We work together to develop professionalism and leadership through Business Professionals of America and pledge our loyalty to our nation.

**President**

Please be seated.

**CLOSING A MEETING**

The closing ceremony, when properly presented, will bring a dignified closing to a session or meeting. It is an indication to the members or guests present that all business has been transacted. This is the appropriate time to serve refreshments.

**Equipment and Supplies**

Gavel

**The Ceremony****President**

Mr./Madam Secretary, do you know of any further business which should be transacted at this time?

**Secretary**

*(Rises, replies, and sits down.)* I have none, Mr./Madam President.

**President**

We are about to adjourn this meeting of the *(chapter name)*, Texas Association, of Business Professionals of America. As we associate together, let us be supportive of each other as we strive to attain the goals of this organization. *(Pause)* If there is no further business and no objection, the meeting will be adjourned. *(Pause)* I now declare this meeting adjourned *(Rap gavel once)*.

**CHAPTER PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES**

A program of activities is an outline of activities covering a definite period, which includes goals, ways and means of reaching them, and adequate provisions for checking on accomplishments. A well-planned, carefully worded, written program is essential to successful chapter operation. It is the basis for great individual member participation in chapter activities, and it provides a record of chapter accomplishments.

**Typical Chapter Activities Include:**

*Professional* - those that contribute to the professional improvement of the members

- Guest speakers, field trips
- Employer-employee banquet
- Competitive events
- Regional/State/National Leadership conferences
- Chapter meetings

*Financial* – those that involve raising funds to support the financial obligations of the chapter; the use of nationally-approved sales project companies is encouraged

- Recycling drive
- Operating a carnival booth
- Fashion show
- Candy or rummage sales

*Civic* – conducted by chapters to serve the school or community

- Participate in fairs, trade shows and improvement projects
- Safety projects
- “Get out to vote” campaign

*Service* – those that emphasize the need for sharing

- Special Olympics
- Red Cross
- Nursing Home
- Holiday food baskets
- Toys for Tots

*Social* – those that enrich members through entertainment or enhancing other programs

- Dances and picnics
- Sporting events
- Special outings

## **SAMPLE CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES**

### **September**

Get acquainted party  
Organizational meeting  
Membership Drive/Initiation  
Election of officers  
Installation of officers  
Plan calendar and budget  
Welcome new teachers

### **October**

Fund-raising activities  
Fall Leadership Conference  
Submit State and National dues  
Homecoming float  
Halloween Party

### **November**

“Get Out & Vote” project  
Thanksgiving service project

### **December**

Service Projects  
Holiday Party

### **January**

Career Day  
Attend Regional Leadership Conference

### **February**

BPA Week  
Valentine/flower fundraiser  
Prepare for SLC  
News releases for RLC and/or SLC

### **March**

SLC  
Business Fair  
Recruitment for next year

### **April**

Easter project  
Sell Easter lilies  
Spring clean-up project  
NLC

### **May**

Awards Banquet  
Graduation activities  
End-of-year Party  
Planning for next year