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How to Have a Kick-Ass GSA

Establishing Your Club's Purpose

1. Decide if your GSA is a support group, activism club, or social group
2. Mission statement & By-laws:

- Address the nature of your organization and its goals in an official mission statement (see sample mission statements below)
- Your school may require your club to write By-Laws rather than a mission statement. Read sample GSA By-Laws

Preparing for Meetings

1. Set the Agenda: make a list of issues and topics to be discussed at each meeting
2. Publicize the Meetings
    1. Figure out the best ways to reach as many people as possible in your school and make announcements (e.g. daily announcements, flyers, posters)
    2. Designate a "publicity queen" to be in charge of all publicity each week
3. Bring Food:
    1. Buy food if your club has money already or create a club donation jar that says "$ for snacks"

Running a Good Meeting

1. Ground Rules:
    1. To make sure the group members feel safe, establish ground rules such as respect and confidentiality
2. Decision Making
    1. Figure out how your group will make decisions: majority vote, consensus, dictatorship?
    2. Facilitator:
        1. Designate someone to keep the group focused on the meeting agenda
        2. Make sure people are not feeling ignored and that the group remains respectful

3. Notes:
    1. Take minutes at each meeting for members who couldn't attend
        1. Post the notes on a GSA bulletin board or web page so students can read them anonymously
4. Create a question box for suggestions or comments

Creating an Action Plan

1. Brainstorming sessions
    1. Only think of projects ONCE at a brainstorming meetings
    2. Set your ideas into a list of priorities and concentrate on the top three
2. Heads of committees
    1. Make each project a committee and apoint a leader to organize the specific project
    2. Spread the leadership
3. Set tentative dates
    1. Put deadlines, dates of meetings, or anything else into official school calendars
    2. Follow a schedule and take your deadlines seriously
4. Sub-Committee Meetings
    1. Committees working on projects should meet seperately from the regular GSA meeting and report back to the GSA. This ensures that gsa members no interested in the project still have a place in meetings, while allowing committees to get more specifc work completed

Sample Mission Statements

There are many different reasons to have a GSA at your school. Some students want a safe place to hang out and feel free to be who they are. Others need a supportive place to talk about what's going on in their lives. Then there's groups who want to create a school free of homophobia by implementing LGBTQ issues in their education. Many schools require a club to write a constitution or a document stating their purpose. Your GSA should decide what type of group they want to be. Does your club want to be an Activist, Social or Support GSA? Maybe you want to use parts of the different types of GSAs and create your own unique group. These are a few sample mission statements to help your GSA get started. This is an opportunity to create your GSA's identity.

- Activist Mission Statement (Organize...Creating Change...Action!!):
  The Bayard Rustin GSA brings together queer youth and straight allies to fight homophobia on campus and in the community. By raising awareness of different sexual and gender identities, linking homophobia with other oppressions, and advocating for equal treatment for youth of all sexual orientations, our GSA will create a school environment free of homophobic sexual, verbal and physical harassment.
- Social Mission Statement (Fun...Hang Out...A Place To Be Free!!):
  The Fiesta High School GSA brings students of different sexual and gender identities together to meet new people, hang out, eat food, and have fun. We will coordinate outings, dances, movie nights, and other activities. Through acceptance at all our activities we will

reduce isolation and depression.

- Support Mission Statement (What's on your mind...Let's Talk!!):
  The Rainbow Connection welcomes all lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning and straight youth to come and talk about any issues concerning them. Listening is our main objective and members can bring up personal issues they are facing. By using one on one or group discussion, we hope to create a safe place to offer support.

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