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GSA Leadership

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Choosing an Effective Leadership Model

How will your club's leadership be organized?

What will be expected of club leaders and who will they report to?

- First, be sure to check whether your school policies require a particular leadership arrangement.

- **Hierarchy-based leadership**--President (or Co-Presidents), Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, etc. This format can be useful for getting things done because it has well-defined roles and designates a clear chain of responsibility.

- **Board-based leadership**--Your club has a "board" of people who lead the GSA. Each board member has a defined leadership role which covers a major areas of responsibility (examples: Facilitator or Chair, Outreach/Publicity Coordinator, Program Coordinator, Funding Coordinator, Grade Representatives, etc.). This model tends to be more egalitarian than the hierarchy-based structure; while leadership positions are well-defined, board members make decisions collectively and report/answer to the whole group instead of a President or Co-President.

- **Committee-based leadership**--specific committees are formed to address particular GSA objectives or needs and are led by committee "chairs" which give individual reports at large-group meetings. Example committees include: fundraising committee, events committee, publicity committee, visibility and education committee, etc. Usually, this structure works best for larger clubs. To combine this leadership model with the one above, consider having committee chairs also meet as a leadership board.

- Remember that these leadership structures can be adapted or combined to fit your club. Or, you can develop your own model. If your club uses another leadership structure that works well, let us know about it!

Establishing a Meeting Structure

How often will your club leaders meet?

Will leadership/committee and large-group meetings be combined or separate?

- Some GSAs have club leaders meet weekly or bi-weekly outside of the large group, and then give a report and present items for vote, etc. Others combine leadership and large group meetings, where officers or board members give reports to the whole club and everyone is involved in discussing important items.

- GSAs that have a committee-based leadership structure sometimes design meetings to include both time for separate committees to meet and large-group

Suggestions and Guidelines for Transitioning GSA Leadership Smoothly:

- Set up a mentoring system. Have future leaders work with current leaders to gradually become more comfortable with leadership positions.

- Transfer leadership during the year. Some schools transfer leadership at the end of first semester. This way, new leaders can be assisted by old leaders.

- Get trained! Send GSA members and leaders/potential leaders to the Leadership Trainings co-sponsored by the GSA Network in your area. Encourage the next year?s leaders to apply to the GSA Activist Camp (held in August).

- Plan a mini-retreat for the beginning of the school year or over the summer to develop relationships among your club?s current and incoming leaders, build momentum for the next year, and give older leaders a chance to debrief and offer advice.

- Have current leaders keep clear and organized files, notes, and paperwork that they can pass along to new leaders.

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