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Keep the Good Times Rollin? : Transitioning Leadership in Your GSA

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Hey GSA leaders! If you?re anything like us, you?re shocked that the school year is almost up. This has been a jam-packed year for GSA activism, and spring is a great time to pause and reflect on these victories and prepare for next school year.

When visiting GSAs, we often ask the leaders what steps they?ve taken to ensure new students are ready to take over the club once older members graduate. This process is called transitioning leadership or passing the torch. Think about it: *Wouldn?t you be disappointed if you visited your school for a 5 year high school reunion and found out the GSA had been defunct since you graduated?*

We want our GSA victories to keep rolling for years to come so that we can continue making our schools safe for all. Lucky for you, transitioning leadership is not a daunting task and can be done with some simple and strategic planning!

We?ve got some proven tips for you as you prepare new leaders to run your GSA:

- Rotate meeting facilitation. Invite other officers and regular members to run meetings. This not only helps them, but also strengthens your club as more people can help decide what the club is doing. See our resource on how to facilitate a meeting for guidance: http://gsanetwork.org/resources/building-your-gsa/how-facilitate-meeting [1])

- Hold ongoing officer meetings. Meeting with your club officers regularly not only helps your GSA be stronger now, but it also gives you a chance to show the officers how to run the club well. Some GSAs even invite non-officers to attend these meetings so they can see what it's like to be an officer.

- Elect new officers in the spring semester. Many GSA clubs are starting to elect their new leadership in the middle of each school year, instead of the beginning of the year. The advantage of holding elections at the beginning of spring semester is that your new leaders can then be trained and mentored by your outgoing leaders. When the new school year starts in the fall, your new leaders are already trained and practiced at being leaders, so they can hit the ground running.

- Adopt a co-officer system. Some GSAs have two people for each officer position. That way you not only get more people who can help lead your club and get its work done, you have more people who are learning to run a GSA. For example, instead of having just one President, try having two Co-Presidents. You can do the same for every officer position. This is a great idea, especially when at least one of the co-officers is a younger member.

- Require trainings for students who want to be officers. In the spring semester, organize a GSA Training Day for your officers and other interested members where they can learn everything they need to know to run a strong GSA. You can also ask GSA Network to visit your school and help train your officers on key leadership skills.

- Keep a GSA binder. Create a club binder with all your meeting notes, event plans, flyers, group photos, copies of letters/emails to your school administration, etc. Also, include a document that summarizes what the GSA has done for the year. These documents can be almost like letters from one GSA leader to the next leader, letting them know what the GSA did, what goals it accomplished and what things it still needs to work on. Keep at least two copies of this binder, one with your GSA leaders and one with your GSA advisor, in case one gets accidentally lost.
- Educate others on how your school works. Help the officers that come after you learn how your school works and who decides what. Explain to them which offices on campus do what, introduce them to the staff members they'll need to know, and make sure they know the school rules on bringing outside visitors, fundraising, depositing money, holding events, posters, and announcements.

Starting these simple steps now will help your GSA be stronger and ready for the next wave of leadership. Remember that GSA Network is here to help! Use our helpful online resources [2], including this one specifically on Transitioning Leadership [3], and reach out to your regional

program staff member for assistance and training. Good luck and keep the good times rollin?!

Source URL: http://www.gsanetwork.org/news/blog/keep-good-times-rollin%E2%80%99-transitioning-leadership-your-gsa/04/23/12

Links:
[1] http://gsanetwork.org/resources/building-your-gsa/how-facilitate-meeting
[2] http://gsanetwork.org/resources
[3] http://gsanetwork.org/resources/building-your-gsa/transitioning-leadership