

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?

There are different models for organizing your GSA and spreading leadership. First, you should check if your school policies require a specific type of club and leadership structure. Information can often be found at your school activities office or counseling office. Remember that these leadership structures can be adapted or combined to fit your club or you can develop your own model! In establishing your model, it is very important to think about the longevity of the club. Think through the some best practices of having continuous leadership that does not end with a graduating leader.

Hierarchy-based leadership: President (or Co-Presidents), Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Senior Advisor, 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 that 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 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" who give individual reports at large-group meetings. Sample 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.

Establishing a Meeting Structure:

- How often will your club meet?
- Will leadership meetings 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. Others combine leadership and large group meetings, where officers 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 time both for separate committees to meet and large-group presentations.

Fostering Leadership for Smooth Transitions

- **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 or between semesters, so new leaders can be assisted by old leaders.
- **Get trained!** Send GSA members and leaders to trainings with your local GSA Network.
- **Plan a mini-retreat** over the summer or at school's start 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.

