GSA NETWORK RESOURCE PACKET

This annual resource was created by GSA Network

For more info please visit www.gsanetwork.org
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GENDERS & SEXUALITIES TERMS

All terms should be evaluated by your local community to determine what best fits. As with all language, the communities that utilize these and other words may have different meanings and reasons for using different terminology within different groups.

Agender: a person who does not identify with a gender identity or gender expression; some agender-identifying people consider themselves gender neutral, genderless, and/or non-binary, while some consider "agender" to be their gender identity.

Ally/Accomplice: a person who recognizes their privilege and is actively engaged in a community of resistance to dismantle the systems of oppression. They do not show up to "help" or participate as a way to make themselves feel less guilty about privilege but are able to lean into discomfort and have hard conversations about being held accountable and the ways they must use their privilege and/or social capital for the true liberation of oppressed communities.

Androgynous: a person who expresses or presents merged socially-defined masculine and feminine characteristics, or mainly neutral characteristics.

Asexual: having a lack of (or low level of) sexual attraction to others and/or a lack of interest or desire for sex or sexual partners. Asexuality exists on a spectrum from people who experience no sexual attraction nor have any desire for sex, to those who experience low levels of sexual attraction and only after significant amounts of time. Many of these different places on the spectrum have their own identity labels. Another term used within the asexual community is "ace," meaning someone who is asexual.

Bigender: a person who identifies with having two genders, which aren't necessarily man and womxn.

Biphobia: the prejudice, marginalization, and hatred of people who are perceived to be bisexual, also experienced by other identities (pansexual, omnisexual, etc.).

Bisexual: a person who may be sexually and/or romantically attracted to people of more than one gender.

Boi: a person who may identify as masculine-of-center and chooses to use this term as a reference to masculinity outside of cis-hood; a term originating in the black community.

Butch: someone who identifies themselves as masculine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally.

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Cisgender/Cis: a person whose gender identity matches the sex they were assigned at birth (eg, man and male-assigned).

Cisnormativity: the societal and structural assumption that all people identify with the gender they were assigned at birth.

Drag Queen/King: a person who performs masculine or feminine gender theatrically. While some drag queens and kings also are transgender, the terms are not used interchangeably.

Dyke: a slur historically used against queer womxn, particularly masculine-of-center womxn, which now is reclaimed by some to affirm their identities.

Fag: a slur historically used against queer men, which now is reclaimed by some to affirm their identities.

Female-To-Male (FTM), Male-To-Female (MTF): used to describe a person who has gone through a gender transition, sometimes used to refer to someone who has had gender reassignment surgery.

Femme: someone who identifies themselves as feminine, whether it be physically, mentally or emotionally.

Gay: a person who is attracted exclusively to people of the same gender; misused as an umbrella term for the entire LGBTQ+ community.

Gender: gender covers a wide range of concepts related to identities that apply to everyone.

- **Gender Characteristics:** characteristics that are used to attribute gender to an individual, such as facial hair or vocal pitch.

- **Gender Confirmation/Affirming Surgery:** a variety of medical procedures that trans people may choose to feel more at home in their bodies; wanting these procedures is not a requrement for being transgender.

- **Gender Expression/Gender Presentation:** the way a person expresses their gender through gestures, movement, dress, and grooming.

- **Gender Identity:** a person's understanding, definition, or experience of their own gender, regardless of sex assigned at birth.

- **Gender Nonconformity:** not expressing gender or not having gender characteristics or gender identity that conform to the expectations of society and culture.

- **Gender Roles:** culturally imposed and expected behaviors associated with gender identities.

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- **Gender Binary System:** a social system that requires individuals to adopt a male or female idenity according to the sex assigned at birth. This system imposes limitations for how you are educated, what jobs you can do (or are expected to do), how you are expected to behave, what you are expected to wear, what your gender & gender presentation should be, and who you should be attracted to/love/marry, etc.

- **Gender Dysphoria:** strong, persistent feelings of discomfort with one's own assigned sex that results in significant distress or impairment.

- **Gender Euphoria:** strong, persistent feelings of contentedness with one's gender identity, expression and/or presentation.

- **Genderfluid:** describes a gender identity that may change or shift over time between or within the mix of the options available.

- **Genderqueer:** a gender identity label often used by people who do not identify with the binary of man/woman; or as an umbrella term for many gender non-conforming or non-binary identities (eg, agender, bigender, genderfluid).

Gender Pronouns: How people want to be referred to when they are addressed or talked about in third person. Some examples of gender-neutral pronouns are They/them/theirs and Ze/hir/hirs.

Heteronormativity: the assumption, in individuals or in institutions, that everyone is heterosexual, and that heterosexuality is superior to all other sexualities.

Heterosexism: The societal and structural assumption that all people identify as heterosexual.

Homophobia: The hatred, prejudice, and violence onto someone because they are or perceive to be gay, lesbian, or queer.

Intersex: an umbrella term that describes someone with a combination of sex characteristics that puts you somewhere outside the binary "male" and "female" boxes.

Visit interactadvocates.org for more information about intersex issues.

Lesbian: a womxn who is attracted exclusively to people of the same gender.

Masculine: concept of what is considered traditionally male in terms of appearance, behavior, and personality.

Mx: a gender-neutral honorific meant to affirm individuals who do not fit in the Mr/Mrs binary.

Pansexual/Omnisexual: a person who may experience sexual, romantic, physical or spiritual attraction for members of all gender identities and expressions

Passing: being perceived as a particular privileged identity/gender, regardless of how the person identifies (straight passing, cis passing, etc.).

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Polyamory: a romantic orientation and practice of having multiple partners, who are consenting to relationships with varying structures; not inherently queer.

Queer: Term originally used as a slur that has been reclaimed; used as an umbrella term to describe someone who does not identify as straight (when used for sexual orientation) or someone who does not identify as cisgender (when used for gender, i.e. genderqueer) or someone who does not conform to sexual or gender expectations or norms. Queer has different meanings to different people.

QTPOC: Refers to queer and trans people of color, often used when differentiating the experiences of people of color and white people within the LGBTQ community.

Sex: Determined by a combination of anatomy, hormones, and chromosomes. Assigned at birth based on genitals.

Sexual Orientation: Sexual identity of a person in relation to attraction and gender. For example someone might identify as gay or lesbian if they are attracted to a person of the same gender.

Third Gender: A person who identifies with a gender outside of the gender binary imposed by colonization. Fa'afafine of Samoa, Hijra of South Asia, and the Muxe in Oaxaca, Mexico are some examples of third genders.

Transgender/Trans: an umbrella term used to describe people whose gender identity differs from the sex they were assigned at birth. *'Transgendered' has been noted to be an incorrect term.*

Transphobia: The hatred, prejudice, and violence onto someone because they are or are perceived to be transgender.

Transition: Refers to the transitioning process transgender people go through when affirming their gender. This can be both a medical procedure and/or social transition, e.g., gender expression, pronouns, different name, etc.

Two-Spirit: A modern umbrella term by and for LGBTQ Native Americans to describe a non-binary gender system that existed within many Native American communities before colonization. This term should not be used by people who are not Native American.

Womxn: A spelling of "women" that aims to be more inclusive and intersectional, and to show that womxn are not limited to being defined by patriarchy or gender binary.

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GSA MODELS

The three typical functions of a GSA club are to: support students, build community, and create change. We break this down into three types of GSA clubs: Support, Social, and Activist. Most GSAs are combination of all three.

SOCIAL

GSAs are social groups. They provide a sense of community & a space for LGBTQ & their ally peers to build a social network where their identity is respected. GSAs often host cook-outs, movie nights, field trips to a local LGBT prom or a pride parade, and attend conferences. GSAs build community at your school & lessen the isolation that LGBTQ students might otherwise experience.

ACTIVIST

An Activist GSA is a club that focuses mostly on educating a students, teachers, parents and community members to create a safer and more accepting school for LGBTQ students by changing school rules & policies, training staff & students, and helping to stop harassment and discrimination

SUPPORT

GSAs can be a support group to provide safety and confidentiality to students who are struggling with their identities or those who are experiencing harassment at school because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation or gender identity or expression. This type of GSA often provides one of the few safe spaces for students to express themselves.

WHERE WILL YOUR GSA FIT ON THIS DIAGRAM?

TIP: Some groups decide they want to be a social or activist GSA but also need a space just for LGBTQ folks to still talk about their issues and get support. You can start another LGBTQ+ only group that meets at another time, or alternate your meetings to meet both purposes.

Remember, if your GSA is at a public school, your GSA has Legal Rights under the Federal Equal Access Act. More legal resources in our Resources Library available at gsanetwork.org/resources.

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HOW TO HAVE AN AWESOME GSA

Establishing Your Club's Purpose

- Decide if your GSA is a **support group, activism club, social group, or a combination.**
- **Mission statement:** What kind of GSA club are you going to be? Address the nature of your club and its goals in an official mission statement. Check out our sample mission statements to get started! To develop a vision and values statement with your mission statement, check out our Visions for Justice and Values for Justice workshops that you can do in your GSA!

Preparing for Meetings

- **Set the agenda:** make a list of issues/topics to discuss at each meeting.
- **Publicize** the meetings
  - Figure out the best ways to reach as many people as possible at school (e.g. daily announcements, flyers, social media)

Running a Good Meeting

- **Set ground rules:** To make sure the group members feel safe, establish ground rules.
- **Decision-making:** Figure out how your group will make decisions like majority vote or consensus.
- **Facilitator**
  - Designate someone to keep the group focused on the meeting agenda
  - For more on facilitation, see pg 14.
- **Notes**
  - Take minutes at each meeting for members who couldn't attend
  - Use Facebook groups, google docs or email to share notes. Figure out what works best for your club.

Creating an Action Plan

- Have a **brainstorming session**
  - Only think of projects ONCE at a brainstorming meeting
  - Set your ideas into a list of priorities and concentrate on the top three
- Set up **committees**
  - Make each project a committee and appoint a leader to organize the specific project
  - Commitees help spread leadership
- Set **tentative dates**
  - Put deadlines, dates of meetings, or anything else into official school calendars
  - Follow a schedule and take your deadlines seriously
- **Subcommittee meetings**

  - Committees working on projects should meet separately from the regular GSA meeting and report back to the GSA. This ensures that GSA members not interested in the project still have a place in meetings, while allowing committees to get more specific work completed.

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GSA TREE CHECKLIST

A strong and well-run GSA, like a tree, is dependent on how well it is maintained. This checklist is meant to help you build your GSA by focusing on the three parts of a strong GSA:

THE ROOTS > THE TRUNK > THE BRANCHES

The Roots: What Grounds Your GSA

Establishing Your Club's Purpose

O **Pick your GSA's mission:** Decide if your GSA is a **support group, activism club, social group or a combination.**

O **Mission statement:** Address the nature of your club and its goals in an official mission statement

O **Know your GSA's vision & values:** Have conversations with your GSA about what kind of school you want. Having a vision of what the impact your GSA will have is important because it helps keep your GSA focused.

O **GSA Leadership:** Decide how your GSA will be run. You can try having a traditional Officer system with a President, or a Board system with a group of equal leaders.

Preparing for Meetings

O **Leadership meetings:** However your GSA is lead, be sure that the leaders of the club meet regularly (at least twice a month) to plan your GSA meetings, take care of any work that has to be done, and keep the GSA's projects moving forward. Many GSA leaders will meet every week after they've had the regular GSA meeting and work on the ideas that came up in the meeting.

O **Make an agenda:** Make a list of the topics you're going to talk about in your regular meetings. Assign a set time for each topic so that you don't over schedule. At the beginning of each meeting be sure to give your members a chance to add a topic to the agenda. If additional items come up or if you run out of time, start a "parking lot" using chart paper to make a list for future meetings.

O **Make a meeting calendar:** At the beginning of the school year, plan out all of your meetings and make a calendar of for your members.

O **Publicize the meetings:** Figure out the best ways to reach as many people in your school. Use daily announcements, flyers, posters, newspaper/TV ads, social media, etc.

O **Bring Food:** People are happier when they're fed, so you can raise money from your members through a donation jar, ask for in-kind donations from local businesses, or use other strategies from our Fundraising for Your GSA Resource Guide *(see page 12)*.

THE ROOTS

The Trunk: What Keeps Your GSA Strong

Running a Good Meeting

O **Use ground rules:** Set ground rules for your meetings so that all members feel safe and that their voices matter.

O **Decision-making:** Figure out how your GSA is going to make decisions. Will you use majority vote, consensus, secret ballot?

O **Facilitate meetings:** Be sure to have a facilitator to keep your meetings moving and focused on the agenda. It's a good idea to have different members take a turn running meetings so that more members develop their facilitation skills.

O **Take notes:** Assign a person to take notes for each meeting. This can be one of your leaders or a member of the GSA. Make sure you record any actions that the GSA or members need to take for the next meeting. Be sure to post the notes so that people can read them, even if they don't come to meetings.

O **Involve your members:** Your GSA members are what make your GSA possible, so it's super important that they have a chance to have their voices and ideas heard. Be sure you give your members lots of chances to say what they think.

THE TRUNK

Staying Organized

O **Keep good records:** You won't be the GSA leader forever, so be sure to create a GSA binder with good records of everything your GSA does for future leaders. Your binder can have 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.

O **Stay in touch:** Help your members stay in touch with each other by creating a Facebook group page for your GSA. This can help you spread information about events, projects and meetings, as well as let you post the notes from past meetings and agendas for future ones.

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The Branches: Your GSA in Action

Making Ideas Happen

THE BRANCHES

○ **Have a brainstorm session:** When coming up with ideas for GSA activities and events, let all your members and leaders share their ideas in a brainstorm session. Set up blank posters around your meeting room and let everyone write down their ideas. If members see an idea they like, they can put a check mark next to it. Afterwards, organize your ideas into the top three. This will help your GSA decide which they want to do.

○ **Make a plan:** Writing down your plan for making an event or activity happen is the most important part of making your ideas happen! Set dates when things are due, who is responsible for what, what supplies you'll need, and any fundraising you might need to do.

○ **Set up committees:** Make committees to take care of projects (like planning an event) outside of meeting times. Meeting outside of your regular GSA meeting will leave your GSA time for members who don't want to work on the project and will give your committees more time to get their work done.

○ **Ask for help:** Asking for help can be hard, but no one can get things done by themselves! Ask your GSA advisor, fellow GSA leaders, GSA members, friends outside of the GSA and GSA Network staff for help. You can also go to GSA Network's Facebook page, facebook.com/GSANetwork, or website, gsanetwork.org, to ask questions and get tips from other youth.

Notes:

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FUNDRAISING

Your GSA club is making important changes on your school campus, but maybe you need money to keep up the momentum. This resource will help you figure out what works best for your GSA club, its fundraising goals, and the individual strengths of its members.

Before you get started...

Find out your school's fundraising policy for clubs! Talk to the Student Government and invite them to a GSA meeting so they can explain the fundraising policy and process to all GSA members. Fundraising policies are different at every school, so be sure to give yourself enough time to get your idea approved.

Who should be responsible for fundraising in my GSA club?

Every GSA club member should know how fundraising works, not just the club officers. Some of the tools you learn as a fundraiser can be applied to other areas of youth organizing.

We Are Ready to Raise Money!

Step 1: Brainstorm

As a group, brainstorm and decide what you want to raise money for. Is it to host an event or summit, or travel to an event, T-shirts, or something else?
How much will you need? Once you determine the amount that actually needs to be raised, you will be able to choose the right strategy for your goals.

Step 2: Choosing the right strategy for your club

There are so many activities that you can do to raise money, so talk to your club members about what they enjoy doing and/or what they are good at. Your club's fundraising efforts will be most successful if you choose an activity and strategy that your members enjoy.

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All fundraising activities essentially fall into three main strategies:

1) JUST ASK! Most people enjoy making donations to causes that they believe in or supporting local schools and activities. You just need to ask! There are several ways to ask people to make a donation to your cause or project:

- Launch a social media campaign and link to a crowdfunding website (like YouCaring) to create awareness and raise funds. Social media can be a powerful tool that members of your GSA may already be experts in! If people in your networks aren't able to give, ask them to share and spread your message far and wide!

- Create an informational flyer or write a letter that you can send to people, organizations, and businesses in your local community. Tell them why your cause or project is important and explain how their donation will be used as well as the impact it will have on your GSA club or school.

2) SELL! Selling items can be fun and send a fun message about your club too. Choose products that are relatively inexpensive to buy and that can be sold at a higher price. Be sure to only buy as much as you will be able to sell, so you are not stuck with unsold inventory. Some popular items among GSA youth leaders are wristbands, pins, stickers, and baked goods (rainbow cupcakes, anyone?).

3) HOST AN EVENT! Is there a particular activity or sport that your club members enjoy? Tailor your event to your members interests and your audience to ensure success.

Step 3: Thank your supporters!

Be sure to show your appreciation to the people who give to your cause. Remember that all supporters should be thanked, no matter how big or small the size of their donation. Here are some ideas on how you can make your supporters feel appreciated:

- Collect email addresses and send out a Thank You picture or short video of your GSA club members expressing their gratitude. Briefly tell them what you will achieve thanks to their support.

- Share a Thank You picture or short video via social media with everyone who supported your campaign.

- Make Thank You cards with handwritten notes. Have all members or the club officers sign the card.

- If selling a product, tie a ribbon with a small thank you tag to the product.

- Take a group photo holding a poster that says "Thank you" and use the photo to post a social media thank you to your supporters, friends, and allies.

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HOW TO
FACILITATE A MEETING

What is a facilitator?

The facilitator is the person who runs a meeting and moves the meeting along. Facilitators make sure participants can share their opinions and stories, discuss topics, and make decisions.

The Facilitator is Responsible for:
- Making sure members agree on the agenda before and during the meeting.
- Ensuring the group keeps to ground rules/community agreements.
- Guiding the discussion and intervening if problems arise.
- Staying neutral, asking questions and suggesting ways to approach agenda items.
- Keeping the group on track and on schedule, particularly when the group goes on a tangent.
- Making sure the group comes to decisions, and dividing work clearly among members.
- Maintaining awareness of the energy level in the room and helping encourage members.
- Making sure everyone participates and no one dominates.
- Creating a safe, positive, and comfortable environment (protecting people from personal attack).

Strategies for Keeping the Meeting Running and Orderly

Checking in and asking GSA members if there is anything they want to add to each meeting's agenda for the GSA to discuss.
- Ex: Are there any topics that you all would like to add to the agenda? (During the beginning of the meeting, possibly after reviewing the agenda for the meeting.)

If someone puts an item on the agenda, ask them to briefly cover important background information and what they want done.
- Ex: Jordan, could you please share a little background information on this topic and what you'd like the GSA to do about it or how you want us to address it?

Give 5 minute warnings when moving on to another agenda item. Have another member be a timekeeper if necessary. If time runs out, ask the group to agree to spend more time on the issue, postpone it until later in the meeting, or put the discussion off until another meeting.
- Ex: Just a heads up, we have 5 minutes left to talk about this topic.
- Ex: We are out of time for this topic and still have some other topics to talk about. Do folks want to make a decision on this now in the next 10 minutes, or do you all want to talk about it more next meeting?

If a comment, question, or topic is off-topic at the moment, create a list (a "parking lot") for items to be discussed at another time.
- Ex: That's a great point / idea / question. Let's put it in the "parking lot" for now so we can finish this topic. We can revisit the parking lot at the end of this meeting or in our next meeting.

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Strategies for Encouraging Participation

Encourage full participation - make sure everyone gets to speak.

- Ex: I've noticed a few people have been saying a lot on this topic. Is there anyone who hasn't spoken yet who wants to say something?

**Try to notice when someone is holding back. Try different ways of discussing topics if you think it will help,
like a "Go Around" or "Pair Share."**

- Ex: Some people may not want to talk openly about this topic. But it's important that we hear all different points of view, so I encourage everyone to be honest about their feelings.

- Go Around: "I want everyone to have the chance to share their honest thoughts or feelings on this issue. Let's go around the circle / room and have everyone share what they are thinking. You always have the right to pass."

- Pair Share: "To break the ice, everyone turn to the person next to them or find a partner and talk for a few minutes about what you think. Then we'll come back to the big group and some people can share what they talked about."

Keep track of the list of people who want to speak, and share it out loud so everyone knows the speaking order. Feel free to put people who have not yet spoken first in the list.

- Ex: "Okay, let's have Aleja, Travis, Sanjay, Tran, and then Em for the speaking order."

Strategies for Facilitating Discussion and Decision Making

Help people avoid repeating themselves by summarizing discussion and asking only for comments in areas that haven't been mentioned.

- Ex: So far, I've heard the following concerns about moving forward with the gender neutral bathroom campaign. Some arguments in favor are....I've heard different solutions proposed like....

- Ex: Are there any different arguments against or in favor that haven't been mentioned yet?

If the group has been discussing a topic for a while, move the group towards a decision or agreement.

- Ex: It seems like most people agree that we should talk to the Dean about the harassment that is going on.

- Ex: Seems like there's still a few issues we need to come to agreement on, like.... Let's focus on deciding what to do about those.

Know when the group has reached a decision. Also know when a group cannot reach a decision; suggest postponing a decision when the group needs critical information, the group needs to hear from others, or the group is not prepared.

- Ex: I'd like to propose we postpone this discussion because...

Check briefly for agreement before moving on - make sure everyone understands decisions.

- Ex: Can someone briefly summarize the proposal we are voting on for our Trans Day of Action event?

It helps if the facilitator tries to remain neutral if possible, so as not to abuse your power! If you want to participate actively in the discussion, ask someone else to take over facilitating the meeting. If you have a quick personal comment, let them know and do not take advantage of being facilitator -- try and wait to make sure others have spoken first.

- Ex: Speaking as a GSA member, I think...

- Ex: Okay, I want to make a comment as well, after Darren...

TRANSITIONING LEADERSHIP

As the school year comes to an end, many GSA leaders worry about what will happen to the GSA club once they are gone. It is important to create a strategy for passing the torch of leadership so that your GSA stays strong for future years. Your long-term goal is to keep your GSA active in the fight against homophobia and transphobia in schools. An effective student club needs strong leadership every year. So, regardless of your club's leadership structure (such as officers, senators, executive committee, etc.), you will have a short-term goal every year of finding a reliable and passionate group of individuals to lead the club. Then, you will need to develop a strategy that looks at the situation within your GSA club and at your school, and plan how to best train new leaders.

Identify Your Resources

What are your strengths? Your challenges? Who is currently involved? Is there a teacher who will be the club's advisor next year? How many graduating seniors currently lead the GSA? What about younger students in lower grades? Are students generally apathetic at your school about the GSA, or do you have an engaged base?

Identify Your Potential Leaders

Look around your GSA meetings. Think about the participants in your events this year, such as Day of Silence. Are there students who will be at school next year who are interested in a GSA leadership role? Maybe there are students in the GSA who would make great leaders, with some coaching and training, but they feel unsure or unaware of their own leadership potential. Remember that EVERY new member can potentially become a leader of your GSA!

- **Train new members** in the rules, history and projects of your GSA.
- **Spread out responsibility** to all members throughout the school year, not just at the end.
- **Take turns facilitating meetings** so everyone knows what it feels like to be up front and prepare you for a possible leadership role.
- Specifically **ask younger GSA members to facilitate** meetings throughout the year.
- **Network** with other organizations on and off campus.

Select Your New Leaders Early!

Many GSA clubs select their new leadership in the middle of each school year, rather than at the beginning. The advantage of holding elections at the beginning of Spring semester is that your new leaders can be trained and mentored by your outgoing leaders. And when the new school year starts, your new leaders are already trained and practiced at being leaders.

Train Your Leaders

Develop a mechanism for your outgoing leaders to train your incoming leaders. Here are some tips:

- Have summer outings to continue the GSA momentum and build connections.
- Have leadership trainings where all resources will be transferred (club constitution, summary of past events).
- Invite all GSA leaders to participate in events, so that everyone knows what's going on.

GSA NETWORK

INTRO TO CAMPAIGN ORGANIZING

GSAs work to raise awareness, push policies and educate their campuses through workshops, assemblies, days of action and campaigns. When you see student rights are not being implemented, it is our duty to hold our schools and communities accountable and create change. Sometimes you see a little change. Sometimes you see a lot.

But what are the magic steps that turn your activism from small steps into big impact?

This resource and accompanying tactic guides will help you think through a campaign strategy to win the rights you deserve, like gender-neutral restrooms, restorative justice practices, or anti-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation, gender identity, immigration status and race.

Creating a GSA Campaign Strategy

Before you start your campaign, there are a few key things you should identify. It's easiest to figure out your strategy in conversation -- so we've created a sample text message exchange, where we ask you the questions you need to answer with your GSA. Fill out the worksheet on the next page and, if you have trouble, use the example text exchange on the third page for help. You can also contact GSA Network for support to set up a strategy session with a local organizer near you.

1. Identify your S.M.A.R.T.E.R. goal:
Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-bound, Evaluate, and Readjust goals are precise and clear, rather than overly broad or ambiguous.

2. Identify your target.

3. Identify your strengths, opportunities, supporters and allies.

4. Identify your improvements and threats.

5. Identify your tactics. (Use our Campaign Tactic Guides to choose and plan your tactics)

6. Start your campaign & WIN!

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INTRO TO GSA CAMPAIGN ORGANIZING WORKSHEET

First you need to know what you're trying to change. **Do you have a S.M.A.R.T.E.R. goal or outcome in mind for your campaign?**

Think of something you can achieve. If your broad goal is to eliminate transphobia, for example, your campaign goal might be getting a gender-neutral dress code or restroom.

1. IDENTIFY YOUR S.M.A.R.T.E.R. GOAL

Who is the person that has the decision-making power to change the situation? Are they on your side, against you, or in-between?

Some groups choose to use a "Power Map" [see Power Mapping Activity] to determine the best target and landscape of their allies and supporters.

2. IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET

Great, that should be your target! Now, who are your allies? **Who can help support you to get to your outcome?**

Allies and supporters can help you achieve your goal. PEOPLE POWER is a great asset in a campaign: the more people you can get, the more power you have when unified.

3. IDENTIFY YOUR STRENGTHS, OPPORTUNITIES, SUPPORTERS & ALLIES

What are some of your areas of improvements? What is threatening your club from succeeding in your campaign?

Be honest when coming up with your list of improvement and threats. They help you plan to strengthen your club.

4. IDENTIFY YOUR IMPROVEMENTS & THREATS

There are many different ways to pressure your target to achieve your goal, including letter-writing, direct actions, and petitions. **How are you and your allies going to influence your target?**

Learn about specific tactics and how to plan them as part of your campaign with GSA Network's Campaign Tactics Guides.

5. IDENTIFY YOUR TACTICS

GSA NETWORK

TACTIC: #GSASUNITE PETITION

1. Start your petition at unite.gsanetwork.org

Petition title (Campaign Name)

What's your campaign trying to do? Remember, people won't support something they don't understand. Keep the title short and punch. For example: "Let our GSA Meet on Campus" or "Send Lynn & Whitney to Prom!"

Whom are you petitioning? (Who is your target?)

Who has the power to give you what you want? Your principal? School board? Supterinendent? State Legislator? Senator? The more specific, the better! You will deliver your petition or campaign demands to this person or group -- face to face, if possible.

What do you want them to do? (What's your "ask?")

This is what you're asking. Imagine you're writing a letter to your target. For example: "Principal Lewis, please let our GSA meet on campus like all other clubs -- its the law!"

Why is this important?

What would you say to a friend to explain why you care about this issue? Try to use a combination of facts and emotions. If a mentor of your GSA has a personal story and is comfortable sharing it put it here.

GSA
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2. Review Intro to GSA Campaign Organizing to see how the petition fits into a bigger strategy *(see page 17)*

- **Identify your goal:** Does the petition "ask" match your campaign goal? Is it doable?
- **Identify your target:** Make sure your petition addresses the decision-maker you've identified.
- **Identify your supporters & allies:** These are the people who can help you get signatures! See next page for tips for sharing with them.
- **Identify your tactics:** The petition is just ONE tactic in your campaign. Think about other tactics that will make your campaign successful. For example, you might want to hold a big event or demonstration when you deliver the petition.

DEAN WELLIVER
TRANSGENDER MALE STUDENT

CASE STUDY:
SUPPORT TRANS* STUDENTS

Dean Welliver, a transgender high school senior from Bakersfield, CA, attended an online school because his district did not know how to support transgender youth. When California passed the School Success and Opportunity Act, Dean decided to start a campaign to ensure the district implemented the law and all future Bakersfield students would have the opportunity to go to school with their friends and graduate.

"The GSAUnite! petiton tool gave me an easy way to share my story, build support, and follow up with supporters since the tool let me email everyone who signed the petition.
I asked my friends to share it on social media, and met in person with all of the GSA clubs in my district, giving them printed copies of the petition to pass around school for people to sign, and then I typed the written signatures into the tool. In just 3 months, I gathered 248 signatures, which I presented at the district's next board meeting. I gave a speech about my experience at the meeting too, which was cool because there were reporters there. After that, the district met with me, showed me a written policy, and told me they would implement it!"

1. **GOAL:** Have Bakersfield schools put in place clear policies affirming that transgender students can use facilities and participate in sports and activities consistent with their gender identity

2. **TARGET:** Kern High School District Board of Education & Superintendent

3. **SUPPORTERS & ALLIES:** GSA clubs across the district; Bakersfield LGBT group; local educational justice coalitions

4. **TACTICS:** GSAsUnite! petition; direct action (petition delivery); media activism

GSA
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TACTIC: #GSASUNITE PETITION

3. Get started gathering support!

Share on social media

○ **Invite your Friends**

○ **Share on Facebook/Instagram/Twitter**

○ **Share via Email**

Get signature pledges

Ask friends, close supporters, members of your GSA, or other GSAs in your community to pledge a certain number of signatures. People are molikely to support you if they're asked by someone they know. When someone pledges, help them think through who in their life they can ask and the best ways to reach them -- at an afterschool activity? Through Facebook? Email?

Print your petition and gather signatures by hand

COLLECT SIGNATURES

You can grow your campaign by collecting signatures at the school cafeteria, local lunch spot, and other places where people gather. Here are some ideas for offline signature gathering campaigns that you could consider.

Set up a table in your cafeteria or hallway (if you're allowed to!)

Invite friends to a GSA meeting to talk about the issue

Ask other clubs if you can stop by to talk about the petition and get signatures

Use our printable petition form to collect signatures, and then come back to unite.gsanetwork.org site to quickly enter the sigantures that you gather. By adding the offline sigatures you collect to the site you'll be able to reach those people via email, grow your total, and easily deliver the signatures to your target.

GSA
NETWORK

YOUTH ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

Prior to Starting...

- Challenge your stereotypes about youth and/or adults.
- Clearly define roles, responsibilities, and expectations for youth and adults.
- Ensure that one group does not greatly outnumber the other.

Building Effective Youth Adult Partnerships

- Evaluate the structure of the organization: Did youth or adults start the group? Who leads the group? Have both youth and adults always participated?
- Prioritize youth leadership and facilitation and focus on leadership training and skill-building for students.
- Follow a specific process for planning events and projects in your GSA. Make sure responsibilities are clearly designated and expectations are well defined.
- Frequently evaluate group dynamics: Do adult advisors and student leaders both feel supported? Do youth members feel they have the power and control in the group?
- If adults tend to outnumber youth or dominate the GSA, consider forming a separate Genders and Sexualities Teacher's Alliance or faculty group.
- If adult advisors wish to be involved in setting meeting agendas (or are required to by school policy), make sure that a youth leader is also involved in the process.
- If adult advisors have concerns about a particular project, have them voice these by asking questions instead of handing down authoritative decisions.

Youth and Adult Partnership Tips

- **ASK QUESTIONS-** Conflict can easily arise when messages are misconstrued. Communication styles vary from person to person; different communication styles do not imply disrespect or disinterest. Ask questions in order to clarify and keep a common goal in mind to help address conflicts.
- **BE DELIBERATE-** Adults and young people vary widely on content knowledge, development, and willingness to participate. Create a way to hold everyone accountable in the work they do.
- **BE RESPECTFUL-** Everyone comes from different backgrounds and experiences. It is important to respect and recognize what an individual brings to the group.
- **YOUTH TRAINING-** Create learning opportunities for youth to take leadership on important projects. Facilitate growth for young people in a meaningful way such as public speaking, communication, and assertive skills. Build capacities for young people and hold high expectations for youth.
- **BURN OUT-** People have other interests and priorities (friends, families, hobbies, education). Depending heavily on someone can cause them to burn out. Feeling tired, overwhelmed, and overworked is a common reality. Assist youth in recognizing when "no" is an appropriate answer and support their decision.

GSA NETWORK

GSA NETWORK FAQS

1. What is Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network?

Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network is a next-generation LGBTQ racial and gender justice organization that empowers and trains trans, queer, and allied youth leaders to advocate, organize, and mobilize an intersectional movement for safer schools and healthier communities. In California, GSA Network connects over 1,000 GSA clubs through regional summits and youth councils. Nationally, GSA Network leads the National Association of GSA Networks which unites 40 statewide and local networks of GSA clubs. Founded in 1998, Genders & Sexualities Alliance Network (GSA Network) is the only youth driven organization that networks GSA clubs in California, and networks statewide and local organizations serving GSA clubs across the country.

2. What is a Genders & Sexualities Alliance, or GSA?

A Genders & Sexualities Alliance (GSA) is a student-initiated and student-run club in a public or private school or community. The goal of a GSA is to provide a safe, supportive environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning (LGBTQ) and straight allied youth to meet and discuss sexual orientation and gender identity issues, and to work to create a school environment free of discrimination, harassment, and intolerance.

3. Who are the members of GSA Network?

Members of GSA Network are lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, and straight ally youth, school personnel, and supportive community members who value and support trans and queer youth leadership coming together for racial and gender justice. Straight cisgender youth are often members of GSAs because they have lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender (LGBT) family or friends. Since most clubs do not require student members to report information related to their sexual orientation or gender identity, or racial/ethnic information, it is difficult to estimate the exact number of young GSA clubs are also registered as group members of GSA Network.

4. Does GSA Network start or sponsor GSAs in schools?
No. GSAs cannot be banned if other non-curricular student clubs are allowed to exist at the school. The Federal Equal Access Act and the First Amendment of the US Constitution establish the requirement of equal treatment for all non-curriculum related clubs regardless of the content of speech at the club meetings. That means any school that receives government funding and has at least one other non-curricular club must also allow a GSA.

5. What impact do GSAs have on school climate?

Overwhemling evidence indicates that GSAs improve school climate for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, questioning students and their allies. GSAs that conduct student and teacher sensitivity trainings typically see a decrease in slurs, name-calling, and harassment following their advocacy efforts. GSAs also create youth-run spaces for students to meet and socialize. The presence of a GSA club on campus is associated with lower levels of youth's self-reports of school-based victimization.

GSA
N E T W O R K

6. Is homophobia and transphobia a widespread problem in schools?

Harassment and bullying based on actual or perceived sexual orientation are pervasive. According to the Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS) students who identify as gay, lesbian, or bisexual reported are three times more likely to feel unsafe at school or on their way to school. Use the data below to show your administration or members of your community that homophobia and transphobia directly impact the health and achievement outcomes of LGBTQ students.

Centers for Disease Control - Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance (YRBS), 2015

Some key findings from 2015 are available at https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/disparities/smy.htm and include:

- LGB students are three times more likely to not go to school because they feel unsafe.
- Students who identified as LGB also reported that they were twice as likely to have experienced harassment both online and at school.
- LGB students were twice as likely to report feeling sad or hopeless. And LGB students also were nearly three times more likely to report having considered attempting, made a plan, and attempted suicide.

GLSEN National School Climate Survey, 2015

Some key findings from 2015 are available at https://www.glsen.org/article/2015-national-school-climate-survey and include:

- LGBTQ students who experienced high levels of anti-LGBTQ victimization were twice as likely to report they do not plan to pursue post-secondary education.
- LGBTQ students who experienced high levels of anti-LGBTQ victimization and discrimination had lower GPAs, lower self-esteem and higher levels of depression.
- School-based supports, often still lacking but generally growing in availability, have a positive effect on school climate. LGBTQ students in schools with a GSA or a comprehensive anti-bullying policy experienced lower levels of anti-LGBTQ victimization. Also, LGBTQ students with an LGBT-inclusive curriculum were more likely to report that their classmates were somewhat or very accepting of LGBTQ students (76 percent vs. 42 percent).

7. Are there GSAs in middle schools?

Throughout the country there has been a steady increase of the number of GSAs in middle schools that register with local GSA Networks. Harassment and discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity is also pervasive in middle schools and junior highs and data from the California Healthy Kids Survey shows that it is even more pervasive.

8. Where is GSA Network based?

GSA Network is headquartered in Oakland, and has California regional offices in the Central Valley and in Los Angeles serving Southern California. To meet the needs of Southern and Midwestern-based youth, GSA Network opened a Southeastern regional office in New Orleans, Louisiana in 2014 and opened an office in Chicago, Illinois in 2017.

GSA
NETWORK

YOUR NEXT STEPS

FIND US ONLINE
@gsanetwork

Student organizations need to register at gsanetwork.org
every school year to receive the most up-to-date resources and tools