

3RD EDITION

GSA GUIDEBOOK

NEED-TO-KNOW SERIES



End-of-year Checklist

A common hurdle for GSAs can be the transition from one school year to the next.

Use this chapter to end the school year with intention and set the group up for success for the Fall.

Contents:

- **Celebrate your hard work**
- **Elect new leadership**
- **Leadership hand-off guide**

End of year checklist:

- Conduct elections and train new leadership team
- Plan for the group to stay connected over the Summer
- Thank the group's advisor for their contributions
- Celebrate the group's seniors
- Focus the last group meeting on celebrating the GSA's accomplishments from the school year



Pro tip!

Check out Iowa Safe Schools' transition manual!

Advisor Appreciation

The faculty advisor of a GSA can be an incredible ally. They volunteer their time and resources to ensure that students have a place to meet, and help students follow school guidelines for the group to exist. Here are some ideas to show your appreciation for your advisor:

- A small gift and card signed by all group members
- Surprise celebration at the last GSA meeting
- "Thank-You" video essay collection from group members



Senior Send-off

Good-byes aren't easy. Still, it's important to recognize the accomplishments and contributions of group members. Consider these ideas to end the year right:

- ★ Take turns sharing good memories and stories about each senior
- ★ Allowing seniors to share a few words of wisdom
- ★ Giving seniors a small gift - graduation cords or stoles if allowable!
- ★ Honoring seniors with a social media spotlight - make sure members are comfortable with this!
- ★ Create your own unique traditions! Even something silly could become an important rite of passage for your GSA

Leadership Elections



Vote collection

Before the actual election, you will want to prepare to collect votes from your group members. Regardless of your format, you will want to ensure the votes are 100% confidential, with only the advisor tallying the final vote count. You might consider using 1. an online form (Google forms), 2. Paper ballots 3. colored marbles and a bag.



The 2-2-2 Method:

Each person running for a leadership position should be given:

- 2** minutes for each candidate to give their pitch about why they should be on the group's leadership team
- 2** minutes for group members to ask each candidate questions about their pitch and ability to lead.
- 2** minutes for all candidates to leave the room and for the group to respectfully discuss each candidate's responses.










Pro tip!

Ask each candidate how they engage in self-care!

Election Do's and Don'ts

Discuss these expectations with the group before the process begins!

- | | |
|--|---|
|  Keep all discussions respectful and confidential |  Don't use discussion to tear other people down |
|  Talk about candidates one at a time
ex: "Sophie has good time management" |  Don't compare candidates
ex: "Sophie's time management is MUCH better than Andrew's" |
|  Process your feelings of rejection and/or disappointment |  Don't become discouraged. General members of the group can still be leaders |
|  Provide each candidate with a detailed description of their desired leadership role | |

Welcome:

Congratulations! You've been elected as a leadership officer of your GSA. Remember that you were elected to this position for a reason. **You are capable, intelligent, and a worthy member of your group.** Move forward with confidence and compassion, you'll make a great leader. Don't hesitate to reach out to your fellow leaders, group members, advisor(s), and the Iowa Safe Schools staff.

Contact Information:

Keep these contacts updated and use the blank cards for community contacts, other allies within your school, or other student leaders!

Previous person in this role: Name: Email: Phone #:	GSA Advisor: Name: Email: Phone #:	2nd GSA Advisor: Name: Email: Phone #:
School Counselor: Name: Email: Phone #:	GSA Coordinator (Iowa Safe Schools): Name: Hannah Mitchell Email: hannah@iowasafeschools.org	 Name: Email: Phone #:
 	 	

Relevant Emergency Services Near You

Fill out this section with any local hotlines, crisis centers, victim services, or mental/physical health centers:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.



Getting Started:



Before your tenure:

- Take a deep breath! A stressed out leader doesn't help anyone
- Read this transition manual and any notes from the previous person in your role
- Read over any school rules and policies that apply to student groups
- Check-in with other officer's transitions, don't assume everything will go smoothly!
- Familiarize yourself with the group's finances and budget.
Consider any yearly purchases like T-Shirts or senior gifts
- Starting creating a school year calendar, (include important Pride dates found on page ##)



Journal Prompt!

Reflect on the qualities and skills that got you elected? What qualities might you need to strengthen?

Early on:

- Get organized - keep a calendar or use a Reminders app!
- Starting planning a few meeting activities with other leaders & your advisor
- Work together to plan how you will promote the group to new members - create some promotional materials!
- Create a sign-up/contact sheet for your first meeting
- Schedule consistent times to have leadership/advisor meetings for the school year

Reflect & Write!

After your first month or so serving in your leadership roles, think over the following questions and journal your thoughts:

- ★ Has the beginning of the school year gone the way you envisioned?
- ★ Have you succeeded in staying on top of your responsibilities? Any changes you would make?
- ★ Is communication healthy and effective within the GSA?
- ★ Which group members seem enthusiastic about the group and its goals? How can they lead in planning events and/or group efforts?
- ★ How has your stress been? How have you been practicing self care?

Being the best leader you can be



General Advice:

1. Try to delegate your work. Think about how younger members can build up their leadership skills to step into your role one day.
2. Sometimes being a leader of an organization can feel alienating! Your group members may see you in a new light as a group leader. While this is normal, communicate with other group leaders and your advisor to process these feelings as they arise.
3. You might find that not every group member understands or shows appreciation of your work. Don't forget that you became a leader to better the group and your work is important whether or not it is praised!
4. Leader burnout can be a real and serious thing if you aren't taking care of yourself. Make efforts to address your feelings head-on by assessing your own feelings, reflecting on what you need, and taking steps to do those things.
5. Establish good relationships with your peers. In general, you should trust your fellow group members and maintain consistent communication with them.
6. Add other group-specific advice here! Consider adding advice about specific people in your community or advice about your school's culture

Roles & Responsibilities

Copy the position description for the leadership role here:

Wrapping up:



Dear _____ letters:

After spending an entire school year in your leadership role, you've learned a lot. An important part of GSAs growing and expanding year by year is not letting the next leadership officer start from scratch. Writing your successor a letter about your experience and the wisdom you've accrued is a great way to keep the group's momentum.

In writing your letter, you might consider these questions:

- What went well during your tenure?
- What didn't go so well? What do you wish was different?
- What did you learn about your fellow group members?
- What did you learn about the school's environment or administration?
- What qualities and skills does your successor possess make them an excellent fit for this leadership position? (Boost their confidence!)

Use this space to collect any letters:

24/7 Hotlines

If you need to speak with someone immediately, the following resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If this is an emergency, please call 911:

The Iowa Victim Service Call Center
1-800-770-1650 or text 'iowahelp' to 20121

The Trevor Project
1-866-488-7386

CommUnity Crisis Services
1-855-325-4296 or Chat at www.IowaCrisisChat.org

The National Sexual Assault Hotline
1-800-656-4673

Trans Lifeline
1-877-565-8860

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline
1-800-273-8255



