

PTSA Student Chair

Congratulations on your election to one of the most crucial roles of the PTSA student group. The student chair position is vital to your group's success and requires much dedication to the upcoming tasks. Your primary efforts consist of running meetings, creating group activities and service projects, and maintaining communication between the student committee and the adult PTSA Board. One of your most important tasks is finding what works best for your group. While you are making important committee decisions, ask members for their input. Make sure to work with your committee, as well as your advisor, outside of meetings to ensure your group's success. Best of luck on the opportunity-filled year ahead

Your student PTSA group will be as strong as your officer team, and that team is designed to empower each officer to carry out his or her own duties. When your officers work with one another, the team's success will take precedence over individual success. Below is a list of official duties related to your position, but feel free to add to it based on the needs of your group.

- 1) Establish a climate of enthusiasm, support and open communication within the group.
- 2) Make sure all members feel their voices are heard and their hard work is celebrated.
- 3) Conduct and preside over student group meetings. Ensure all meetings are well planned and executed (use an agenda). Make sure your meetings keep members engaged; have clear organizational structure and follow parliamentary procedure; have up-to-date information from PTSA on local, region and state levels.
- 4) Keep members connected and engaged through well-developed and frequent meetings and events.
- 5) Assist your student officers in completing their assignments (when needed). Assign other students to run activities and projects, and follow up with them as needed. Let them report on status of activities and the effectiveness of their efforts.
- 6) Develop necessary relationships with school administrators, faculty advisors and PTSA Board.
- 7) Meet with your student advisor regularly, and make sure a student officer attends each PTSA Board meeting.
- 8) Create strategies, conduct evaluations and work to set and meet goals.
- 9) Develop membership recruitment goals for the year. Once students join, be sure to help them become actively involved.
- 10) Help manage the student committee election process. Set a date in May for elections and inform students about the process.
- 11) Share information with the next Student Chair to help them hit the ground running for the next school year.
- 12) Help organize and/or participate in inter-club events.

ADVOCATE – DEVELOP – ENGAGE

PTSA's goal for students is to help them advocate for themselves and others, develop their leadership and personal skills, and to engage students who may not feel included in the current school environment. Key areas to focus on will be goal setting and achieving, delegating, meeting management, motivation, and problem solving.

GOALS

Sharing a vision will set the student committee up for success

Being visionary means thinking of goals for the group and agreeing on ways to achieve and evaluate them.

Try to make sure goals are **SMART**:

Specific / Measurable / Achievable / Realistic / Timely

A goal should be **specific**, described as thoroughly and completely as possible.

Each goal should be **measurable**; ideally, progress and success can be identified by a percent or number.

The goal set should be **achievable** — reasonably difficult but not beyond the group's skill set.

Lastly, establish a goal that can be achieved in an established and **reasonable timeline**.

Along the way, you'll want to monitor the group's progress toward the goals. To make sure you get an honest understanding of your progress, be sure to include your student committee and advisors in the process of evaluation.

DELEGATING

Delegating can be a challenging but necessary part of your role. It is important to remember you are only one part of a team and you'll need to trust others on your team to contribute to the success of your student group.

When delegating, keep in mind the following:

- Set clear expectations, responsibilities and limitations. Keep people connected throughout the process to the overall PTSA goals and create individual project goals.
- Include your advisers in the process. They may have ideas about whom to assign tasks and what kind of guidance to give.
- Choose appropriate tasks. Student members have a variety of talents, skills and interests. Give them the chance to work on projects and tasks that fit. Also, give them a voice in decision making. Allow input on how to accomplish a specific task, and use that input whenever possible.
- Be supportive and trustful. When you assign a task, allow people to learn through the experience. Avoid looking over their shoulder or micromanaging. Be sure the expectations and time frames of each task are clear, so check-ins will be productive.

KEY TIPS FOR MAIN DUTIES

MEETINGS

When planning a meeting, the following should provide a good outline.

Before the meeting:

- Set an agenda.
- If a speaker or guest is expected, confirm details with them.
- Invite members of your adult PTSA board.
- Assign someone to greet new members and make them feel welcome and informed.
- Stick to a regular day and time.
- Meet with your adviser(s) to review the agenda and get questions answered.

At the meeting:

- Lead the meeting with support from other officers.
- Remember, your meeting is a representation of your service, so make sure it's organized and engaging.
- Start out with a short icebreaker or quote.
- Host guest speakers.
- Share upcoming service projects and why they need the students' support.
- Participate in a project or activity.
- Evaluate your last project and/or activity.
- Thank everyone for attending.

After the meeting:

- Clean up.
- Send the minutes to all attendees.
- Reach out to members who could not attend.
- Ask members who did attend to let non-attendees know what happened.

PROBLEM SOLVING

As the student chair, you'll be expected to solve problems. Sometimes there will be problems with a project. Sometimes there will be problems among members. Sometimes they'll be your own. Whatever happens, the first thing to remember is to keep your head on straight. Too often when problems arise, people forget to think clearly or get caught up in emotions.

When a problem arises be sure to ask yourself and others to define the problem. Ask yourself and others the what, where, when and with whom the problem might be connected.

If there is a problem between members, be sure to stay neutral and open, and listen to all sides of the story.

After identifying the problem, seek the input of people you trust as to how it might be solved. Problem solving is an area where your advisor may have some key knowledge or advice for you. Once you have made your decision, come up with some clear indicators for correction, and make them clear to those involved.

ADVICE

When people are involved, especially your friends, conflicts and problems can get complicated. One way to begin to understand the conflict is to have each person write out five sentences about what they believe the problem is, why the problem exists and what they believe needs to be done to fix it. If they only have five sentences it sometimes helps people narrow their thoughts more, and helps you understand where things may have gotten personal. With your adviser present, use the writings as a starting point toward a resolution.

RELATIONSHIPS

As the chair, the relationships within your group should always be important to you. One of PTSA's core values is inclusiveness, and it is your duty to encourage that environment among your group. One way you can encourage members to bond is to provide enough opportunities for members to learn about one another. Even if they don't become instant best friends, they'll learn to appreciate each other. Ask your adviser if you can arrange social gatherings for your group to reconnect at the beginning of the year, offer opportunities to meet potential new members and celebrate successes. Once you have established a budget, create a committee of members to plan each event — this is where that whole delegation lesson comes into play. No matter what, your goal should be to help your officers learn to work as a team. One great way to get members off to a great start is to plan to attend the Utah PTA Student Leadership Conference in October. This can be a way for you to learn more about your team and set goals. A great way to encourage this type of teamwork is to include team building activities. Be sure you choose activities with a purpose. Each activity should be aimed at encouraging a topic important to your success, such as communication or working together. You can find lots of activities online, but remember: the most important part is to talk about the activity, what skills you used, and how you can incorporate those skills in your life. Some of the most important relationships you can develop and foster are with the adults who will help you along the way. Meet regularly with your club advisers. You may also consider setting up meetings with school administration to introduce yourself and learn how to work together.

MOTIVATION

At some point this year you might notice a shift. Certain members may stop coming to meetings. Student officers may drop the ball. Maybe you don't always feel as into your own role as you did at the beginning. A loss of motivation is nothing to fear!

Just ask yourself these questions:

Is there a loss of purpose?

Do they/you still believe in the mission?

Are they/you able to connect your actions to impact?

Is there a loss of ownership?

Is there freedom in how tasks/work/goals are completed?

Are individual wishes and ideas valued?

Is it something outside of the organization?

Is there something in your/their work, school or home life that is taking over focus or maybe something you/they need to focus on instead?

After reflecting on these questions, the next course of action is to ask questions, to find out how you can get people back on track. If you want to help people, you'll sometimes need to ask hard questions. Make sure to be sensitive and thoughtful when listening to the feedback and concerns from members.

You can also keep these 5 tips in mind when trying to help others stay motivated:

- Be fair, honest and consistent — show no favoritism.
- Survey your membership to see what group members want or need and provide avenues for recognition.
- Give individual attention and demonstrate your understanding of members and accepting their strengths and weaknesses.
- Provide honest feedback — praise their successes publicly, and privately give constructive criticism to help them learn from their mistakes.
- Involve members in goal setting and decision-making process and clarify your expectations of members and their expectations of you.

*This PTSA Student Guide has been created using the Key Club President Guide as a template. Refer to keyclub.org for more information.