

TIPS FOR RECOGNIZING ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

An advisory board must be nurtured and developed if it is going to last and continue to be successful. You need to encourage advisory board members to continue the good things they already do while expanding their efforts to incorporate new initiatives. Here are some approaches to consider:

- **Give awards.** Present advisory board members with plaques, certificates, or pins thanking them for their involvement. You may wish to give a certificate for each year of board membership, with a special acknowledgement or pin after three years. Alternatively, you could give special awards recognizing the most successful fundraiser or the member who supported the most internships.
- **Show off.** Advisory board members want the academy to succeed, so what better way to celebrate a success than by “showing off” to your advisory board members? Give board members an opportunity to appreciate your students, your program, your school, your facilities, your materials, your administration’s support, your parental support. You might have students give a tour of your facilities or provide examples of student work for them. You could invite administrators or parents to speak to the advisory board directly to share their views.
- **Share how board members are impacting student’s lives.** You probably hear a lot of stories about how the involvement of advisory board members is making a difference for your students and in your academy. Maybe it’s the student whose internship helped him find a career direction, or the previously unmotivated student whose interest was finally sparked by a guest speaker visit. Take every opportunity to let your partners know what a difference they are making. Ask students to write thank you notes, or simply make a point of telling these stories at every board meeting.
- **Find ways to keep advisory board members engaged with students.** Whether it’s a worksite tour, a guest speaker visit, or a special event, giving board members the chance to spend time with students can remind them what the true value of their involvement is.
- **Publicize advisory board companies through media attention.** Seek out media coverage of academy events to generate positive publicity for companies whose employees sit on the advisory board. Your advisory board members are more likely to stay engaged with the academy if their company sees a public relationship benefit as a result.
- **Encourage board members to invite students to the worksite and/or participate in a job shadow.** Advisory board members can arrange for students to attend an orientation, take a tour, have lunch in the cafeteria, or otherwise explore company premises. This can be a great learning experience for the students and a rewarding experience for the member at the same time.
- **Ask for what you need.** The simplest solution of all. Sometimes an advisory board member would love to provide support but isn’t sure of what is needed. Tell board members what you need; they will feel reassured that their contribution is of value—and nothing keeps board members more engaged than knowing that their support makes a difference in the lives of students.
- **Post on social media.** Many academies now have their own social media channels, don’t forget to post events and tag NAF. NAF can repost what you share to amplify to the national network. @NAFCareerAcads. Check the Marketing Library in the Academy Support Hub for more information.