

ADVISORY BOARD

Membership & Operations



OPERATE AN EFFECTIVE ADVISORY BOARD

From NAF experience, the most effective advisory board meetings tend to be agenda and action-driven, and are facilitated by an elected Chair or Co-Chairs using Robert's Rules of Order or similarly formal meeting protocols.

Establish By-Laws

By-laws outline the purpose, objectives, structure, operating procedures, and membership requirements of a NAF advisory board. By-laws also establish and define the duties of officers. Therefore, collaboratively establishing by-laws is an important team building exercise for NAF advisory boards.

Ask a business partner "champion" to facilitate the review of these sample by-laws at an upcoming advisory board meeting. Have the group edit and agree upon the by-laws so that the document reflects the advisory board that the group hopes to become. This process will increase ownership, and therefore adherence, to the by-laws themselves.

NAF recommends that the full advisory board reviews by-laws annually, and orient new advisory board members to the by-laws as part of the onboarding process.

Meet Frequently and Efficiently

NAF finds that advisory boards that meet monthly maintain energy and impact throughout the year, are more likely to develop and work from a strategic plan and tend to be more engaged than those that meet less frequently. NAF recommends that advisory boards less than four years old meet monthly, while established advisory boards more than four years old meet at least quarterly, holding more frequent committee meetings. NAF strongly recommends that the advisory board determine the annual calendar of meetings at the strategic planning meeting.

Schedule meetings virtually or at a convenient location and time to encourage attendance, and schedule occasional meetings at a school location to provide regular connection to and awareness of the academy space.

Communication and updates are expected between meetings, especially within defined committees. Meetings should be times to update the entire board and plan for the future.

Tip: Use the Advisory Board Meeting Agenda as a template!

Elect Officers

Finding the right people to lead the advisory board can eliminate a lot of start-up hurdles and begin to grow a healthy, engaged advisory board right from the start. Since it often takes time before a group of advisory board members feel comfortable holding formal elections, you might ask a "champion" to facilitate advisory board meetings, serving as a de facto Chair, in lieu of an elected chair.

Eventually, your advisory board will want to elect officers (Chairperson or Co-Chairs, Secretary, Treasurer, etc.) at which point, review the Advisory Board Roles & Responsibilities. Consider hiring Advisory Board Interns to assist the Secretary with administrative duties, as well as increasing student voice and interest in the advisory board.

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Establish Committees

Developing an annual strategic plan that outlines roles, responsibilities, and clear tasks is important to the effective functioning of the advisory board. Forming committees is a great way to engage all members in the important work of the advisory board.

Encourage Engagement with Students

Academies are ultimately about making an impact on students, it's important to provide advisory board members plenty of opportunities to interact with students both during and outside board meetings.

- Advisory Board members help implement the academy work-based learning plan or calendar.
- Hire an Advisory Board Intern.
- Invite brief updates from students at the start of board meetings. NAF suggests a five-minute presentation about a recent work-based learning activity or how the academy experience is impacting their future aspirations, followed by about 10-minutes questions from board members.

Recognize Advisory Board Members for their Achievements

When people are appreciated for their efforts, they are more likely to continue their service. Make sure that every advisory board member receives individual recognition for their efforts each year. Here are some ideas:

- Review Tips for Recognizing Advisory Board Members
- Plan a "Partner Appreciation" event for advisory board members and potential new members
- Ask students to write personal thank-you notes to partners or short briefings following work-based learning experiences.
- Send an Advisory Board Thank You Letter from NAF to advisory board members' supervisor or company leadership
- Invite advisory board members to national NAF conferences
- Publicly recognize the individuals and firms that support your program in media publications, in press releases, and verbally during official school events