

COMMUNICATING WITH ADMINISTRATIVE AND FACILITIES DEPARTMENTS

The key to a student group's ability to create policy change within their school is communicating effectively with administrative and facilities departments. After all, many of your ideas and proposed changes will affect the work of your school staff and administration. They should be involved in the process as much as possible and as early as possible. Your team will only succeed in making lasting policy changes if it is prepared, organized, and respectful of the ideas of school staff and administration. Here are some tips your team can use to help with the communication process.

Set Goals

The best way for your team to prepare for a meeting with school staff departments is to establish clear goals within the team. Having specific goals will allow administrative and facilities departments to understand exactly what your team is trying to accomplish.

Be Prepared!

If your team expects to be taken seriously, it must be prepared. Here are some tips to follow to prepare for meetings with administrative and facilities departments.

- Clearly define the role that you want the administrative and facilities departments to play to help your team reach its goals.
- Be aware of how your team's demands will affect those involved. For example, is your team asking the facilities department to do more work?
- Use the goals your team has set to form a series

of questions to pose to administrative and/or facilities department members. Brainstorm possible roadblocks that your team may encounter, and work with administrative and facilities departments to work around them.

- Be prepared to answer follow-up questions from department members.
- Consider forming an environmental committee of Green Flag Team members, administrative and facilities departments, and teachers to meet several times a year.

Schedule and Conduct a Meeting

After your team has established its goals and formulated a list of questions for the administrative and facilities departments, it is time to schedule a meeting. Here are some guidelines to follow to make your meetings go smoothly.

- Establish who needs to be at the meeting. Try to include a minimum number of knowledgeable team members, and only essential department members in the meeting. Reducing the number of people in the meeting will allow for maximum productivity.
- Delegate team member roles (e.g. note taker, communicator, Green Flag Program knowledge expert, etc.).
- After setting up the meeting date and time, send a letter to administrative and/or facilities departments detailing the meeting's agenda (you may need advice from your Team Advisor on the best way to schedule a meeting with staff

departments.) Stick to the agenda in the meeting!

- Be respectful. Establishing an atmosphere of mutual respect will make the program easy and enjoyable for everyone. Start off your first meeting by thanking the department members for their time. Then, introduce each team member. You may want to have everyone share some personal background information, or explain why the Green Flag Program interests them. Allow everyone at the table time to introduce themselves.
- End the meeting by recapping what was

discussed. This reinforces what was accomplished during the meeting. Also, conclude by scheduling another team meeting (if necessary), and confirming what your team has offered to do and what the departments have offered to do.

- Send a "Thank You" letter to all those involved in the meeting. Thanking department members for their time and interest will establish a good working relationship and paves the way for subsequent meetings.

