NASC:
A Student Council Action Plan

The National Association of Student Councils (NASC) would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your membership and involvement in empowering our future's, and moreover today's, leaders to be all that they have the capacity to be. The role that a student council can play in building leadership capacity and opportunities for meaningful student involvement increases exponentially as people around the world invent and innovate new ways to utilize what they have available to them.

This action plan was developed by NASC and its members to assist advisers in directing student councils towards goals and can serve as a model for their creating an action plan of their own that will guide their efforts to build leadership capacity and develop opportunities for all students to be actively involved in activities, service and leadership at their school.

THE 5 GOALS:

1. <u>To Build Leadership Capacity</u>
   Increase the number of students that your council affects and utilize strategies that create opportunities for students to share lead roles

2. <u>To Create Community and School Service Opportunities</u>
   Open new doors for students to be able to get involved in their schools and communities

3. <u>To Increase Networking & Communication Among Students</u>
   Promote healthy, friendly relationships among students that emphasize effective communication and foster a positive atmosphere throughout the school.

4. <u>To Implement New Student Council Programs & Activities</u>
   Plan and implement new programs, activities, and training that will increase the student council's capacity and effectiveness to address student needs and translate their voiced desires, and ideas into action.

5. <u>To Evaluate for Council Effectiveness</u>
   Evaluate your student council to measure how effective your organization is in meeting goals 1-4, and the levels to which it has worked to empower members of the student body to be active participants and leaders.

1. <u>To Build Leadership Capacity</u>
By maximizing the capacity of building leadership skills within your student council, school, and community, you are capitalizing on the consistently-increasing number of students that are looking for opportunities to utilize their leadership potential. Every student has the potential to be a leader, but they may be in need of a more visible opportunity to be a part of a leadership team. By welcoming new members into your student councils and exercising their leadership skills, you are building leadership capacity.

2. <u>To Create Community and School Service Opportunities</u>
One of the most important aspects of leadership is the ability to help others, and the ability of a student council to open service opportunities for students to get involved in their schools and communities and allow those students to be an active part of a leadership experience unlike any other. Planning and hosting meaningful service activities provide students with experiences that stress responsibility, self-confidence, self-accomplishment, dedication, respect, and integrity.

3. <u>To Increase Networking & Communication Among Students</u>
Increasing communication between student leaders allows for an increase in student council effectiveness because it enables students to guide each other more quickly and efficiently to the goals they set. Moreover, an increase in networking among students is essential to allowing for an environment that strives to raise communication levels.

4. <u>To Implement New Student Council Programs & Activities</u>
Promoting new programs for your student council will increase the effectiveness of your organization in setting, planning, implementing, and achieving goals. Programs that build leadership skills, including leadership capacity and communication, allow for a leadership environment that supplements students with necessary tasks to move swiftly and effectively towards goals.

5. <u>To Self-Evaluate for Council Effectiveness</u>
The most pertinent and essential tool in the leadership process, at any level, is evaluation. Through the self-evaluation process, you and your student leaders will learn which areas and programs of your student council are the most useful, which are in need of improvement, and which may no longer support or accomplish their goals.

Below, we've suggested several activities and actions that your student council can take toward achieving each goal. Challenge your student leaders to identify other activities that will also work to achieve each goal.

1. <u>Building Leadership Capacity</u>
   a. **Run a Leadership Drive** – Run an advertising campaign within your school that will be appealing to students. Create an opportunity for students to get involved in the leadership process by showing them the key to their leadership potential.

   b. **Run Skill-Building Activities for Student Leaders** – New leaders that need a key to their leadership potential may desire an opportunity to learn how to utilize what they have already. Use skill building and leadership building activities that can be found on the www.nasc.us Web site to help students find the leadership in them.

   c. **Attend Leadership Conferences** – Plan to take students to leadership conferences at the local, state, regional, and national levels. Visit www.nasc.us to learn of the exceptional conferences available to your student leaders!

   d. **Student Awards & Recognition** – Recognize the accomplishments of student leaders to show them that they are headed in the right direction and using their leadership potential to the best of their ability. This will allow student leaders to constantly strive to increase their leadership skills.

2. <u>Create Community and School Service Opportunities</u>
   a. **Plan and Organize Volunteer Events** – Implement events throughout the year that promote students to get involved in a cause for their school or community, as well as opportunities for student leaders to capture their abilities through tasks. Some events that you may wish to run include blood drives, Special Olympics, or your own school conference for student leaders within your own school.

   b. **Build New Service Clubs / Committees** – Create committees within your student council, or new clubs outside of student council, that allow students to focus specifically on service to their school and communities needs. The types of things you may wish to focus on include helping out at a local food shelter or visiting a local nursing home. A few service organizations offering school or community charter clubs for youth include Optimist International, Rotary Club, and Builder's Club.

2. <u>Create Community and School Service Opportunities</u> *(Continued)*
   c. **Promote Service Learning** – Promote students to use their leadership skills to involve themselves in service learning activities that will allow them to help create opportunities for other students to lead, learn, or service their school and community. Some activities include creating positive messages for school and communities based on public health, public safety, respect, the environment, or citizenship in the form of posters, web sites, or events, running a school store, or helping to build or maintain a local school or community park.

3. <u>To Increase Networking & Communication Among Students</u>
   a. **School Spirit-Social Gatherings** – Plan and organize afterschool or weekend activities where students, especially student leaders, can network and communicate freely in an open, friendly environment. Such an event could take place at the school, or at an appropriate, local venue such as a bowling alley or park.

   b. **Icebreakers** – Include icebreaker activities during each student council meeting to increase student communication and networking. Try selecting ice breakers that follow the theme of the meeting or support a particular leadership skill being presented.

   c. **Committees and Reports** – Create committees within your student council to help delegate the different tasks that your group is charged to accomplish. Each committee may wish to rotate or share the role of leader for each meeting that facilitates the committee's task. The responsibility of preparing and presenting the committee's reports to the council can also be rotated or shared. This allows for more specific networking in a smaller group setting and stresses effective written and oral communication skills.

4. <u>To Implement New Student Council Programs & Activities</u>
   a. **Raising Student Voice & Participation (RSVP)** –is a phenomenal program sponsored by NASC that is built specifically to assist schools and student councils in implementing a program that increases the effectiveness of their leaders and their ideas, including event setting, planning, implementing, and achievement, as well as the building of essential leadership skills such as communication, motivation, self-confidence, and assertiveness.

   b. **Principal's Cabinet** – Create a cabinet of three to five elected student leaders from student council that have the ability and willingness to work directly with the senior building and district administrations including the principal(s) and superintendent. This group would meet once per month to discuss the ideas of the student council and their positive affects on the learning environment of the school and atmosphere of the community.

   c. **Peer Tutoring** – Open opportunities for students to lend a helping hand to their peers through educational leadership.

5. <u>To Self-Evaluate for Council Effectiveness</u>
   a. **Student Council Evaluation** – Ask student council members to fill out an evaluation, giving them a chance to express how they are doing, their strengths and weaknesses, and their overall effectiveness as a council.

   b. **Student Body Survey** – Create and distribute an annual survey to the student body to discover how others rate the effectiveness of the student council and provide them a way to suggest new activities, project ideas or concerns they would like to see the student council take action on in the future.

GOAL TIMELINES

An important step in building an effective student council is to establish and implement timelines to reach each of the 5 Goals in this Action Plan. Create your timelines by focusing on the purpose of each goal, some of the suggested methods for achieving each one, and other activities or projects your council may want to pursue (to meet the goal). Each timeline should be long enough to allow your student council to successfully complete all of its necessary tasks, but short enough to establish sufficient time for addressing all 5 goals in the Action Plan.