

How can I be a good President?

I. Know Your School by Reading

- A. Constitution and By-laws
- B. History of your Co-op
- C. Materials in Presidents notebook and files
- D. Parents' handbook ... rules regulations and policies
- E. All Job descriptions..., including the Presidents
- F. Contracts and/or agreements... church - teachers - parents
- G. Forms used by the preschool
- H. Budget and financial status fundraising expectation
- L. Presidents check list
- J. Insurance coverage
- K. Newsletters
- L. Minutes, goals and any carry over
- M. Timeline/calendar

II. Know YOUR Responsibilities to the Membership

The Effective President must be organized, delegate and coordinate as well as:

- A. Be welcoming and friendly to both persons and ideas ... attitude is contagious
- B. Be sensitive to group feelings.
- C. Treat people as individuals ... be aware of their interests and altitudes.
- D. Preside at meetings with a well-planned agenda and then:
 - 1. Speak confidently
 - 2. Be positive
 - 3. Provide opportunities for individuals to express their ideas
 - 4. Keep the discussion moving
 - 5. Pull discussion back to original topic
 - 6. Know when and how to call for a vote or when consensus is reached.
 - 7. Stay neutral
 - 8. Delegate
- E. Prepare for a change of leadership. Because continuity provides strength in a school, we need to plan for change of leadership. The training of new members and new leadership is a continual process in me parent co-op. Preparation for change of leadership must start on your first day in office. Among other things, you can:
 - 1. Encourage participation and responsibility through committees
 - 2. Insure that your officers and chairmen keep up-to-date records and can provide realistic job descriptions at the dose of their term
 - 3. Maintain an atmosphere of acceptance and enthusiasm.
 - 4. Ask members to do things ... often they are willing and capable but hesitate to volunteer.
 - 5. Find out if there are tasks which need to be carried over from the previous year.
 - 6. Start and maintain a file for the next president, providing background Information and history. If you research and study and solve a problem, write down what you've learned, so that others can learn from your experience.
 - 7. Publicize board meeting agendas and encourage attendance by the membership.

III. Know your Co-op's Organization

When board members, committee chairmen, teachers and parents know what is expected, understand responsibilities involved, and when and attitude of expectancy prevails, many a struggle and misunderstanding can be avoided.

- A. What are the responsibilities of members as defined by the by-laws or school regulations?
- B. What are the duties and responsibilities of the Board as defined by the by-laws?
- C. Who serves on the board?
- D. What is your plan for transition of boards?
 1. Do you plan a joint meeting to transfer officer notebooks, job descriptions and related materials to new officers and chairman?
 2. When do you evaluate the past year for future planning?
- E. First board meeting:
 1. Outline and explain organizational structure, stressing the importance of individual responsibilities for the "survival of the President."
 2. Identify the role of the board,
 3. Review policies. Are revisions needed?
 4. Discuss ways the board support, the teacher.
 5. Discuss orientation procedures.
 6. Schedule dates for board meetings, parent meetings and other events
 7. Other:

IV. Planning for Good Relations

The key to a successful year is planning for good relations. Be interested and informed about the individuals who comprise your group. Many parents are willing and eager to assume a responsible job, if you, as president, (1) explain what is expected, (2) encourage initiative, (3) give personal satisfaction and recognition. **KEEP THE MEMBERSHIP INFORMED ...** let them know what is happening in the classroom, board meetings or areas of concern. **REMEMBER PARENTS WHO KNOW MINIMUM (ABOUT YOUR CO-OP) USUALLY DO MINIMUM.**

V. If and when trouble comes

Just by listening and observing, we can be aware of possible conflict situations brewing. Often we can take preventive steps to avoid complete turmoil. We need to remember that some groups experience mid-winter doldrums (the February blabs, the March uglies). Then the criticisms, negative feelings and apathy make one feel that everything is falling apart. During this period a "recognition and reassurance" campaign by the board is appropriate. The constructive use of conflict can be a productive experience for all.

- A. Take your time and get the facts about the situation.
- B. Remain objective!
- C. Take action as needed, but be sure to select the proper time and place. Often, you're dealing with feelings!
- D. Check results ... Is further action needed?

Remember ... children need the most love when they are the most unlovable ... PARENTS TOO!!