

Preparing to Launch

Before your First Meeting

Strong Student Unions and Alliances begin long before the first student meeting. Successful advisors take time to understand their school's people, culture, strengths, existing organizations, and opportunities. Thoughtful preparation creates the conditions where student leadership can take root and thrive.



START BY UNDERSTANDING YOUR SCHOOL

1



Does administration understand the purpose?

Administrative support is essential. Help leaders understand that this work develops students and strengthens the school community.

- How will you describe the purpose of the organization?
- How does this work support school improvement?
- What questions might administrators ask?
- How can you communicate that this is a leadership community rather than simply another student club?

2



Who already supports this work?

Thriving organizations are rarely built by one adult working alone. Identify the many people and partners who can help create the conditions for success.

- Who in your school believes in student leadership?
- Which roles or departments could become partners?
- How can families and community organizations support this work?
- Who could help open doors, share resources, or advise students?

3



What already exists?

Understand the existing landscape before creating something new. Build upon what is working and honor what came before.

- Which student organizations already exist?
- How could this organization complement rather than compete with them?
- What traditions could be honored or carried forward?
- What strengths already exist that students can build upon?

4



Which students are missing?

Leadership grows when a wide range of students feel invited, valued, and empowered to lead. Think broadly and creatively about who should be at the table.

- Which students are not currently connected to leadership opportunities?
- Who is rarely invited to participate?
- Which voices, identities, or perspectives are missing from the table?
- Who might become a leader if someone simply invited them?
- How will you ensure students from different backgrounds, identities, experiences, and grade levels help shape the organization from the start?



OPEN DECK INSIGHT



The first leadership decision is not who to invite.

It is understanding the community students are being invited to build.

Strong Student Unions and Alliances grow from careful listening long before the first meeting ever begins.



BEFORE MOVING FORWARD...

What strengths already exist in your school that students could build upon together?

