



Working with a Board: A President's Tip Sheet

"The boss drives people; the leader coaches them. The boss depends on authority; the leader on good will. The boss inspires fear; the leader inspires enthusiasm. The boss says 'I'; the leader says 'we.' The boss fixes the blame for the breakdown; the leader fixes the breakdown. The boss says 'go'; the leader says 'let's go!'" - H. Gordon Selfridge

Congratulations! You are the chief leader among leaders who make up your board. Your job is to lead your team to achieve PTA's mission and fulfill your board's legal and ethical responsibilities. Your chief board role is to create the environment that leads to effective teamwork. Consider the following tips:

1. **Take it seriously.** Your PTA is part of the rich history and legacy of an association with more than 117 years of achievements. Ensure your board knows its legal and ethical responsibilities and understand how they fit into PTA's legacy.
2. **Embrace change.** Your board will contain change agents. Value what they bring to the table and do not view change as a threat but, instead, as inevitable.
3. Set a professional tone. Avoid petty issues, personality disputes, and rumor. If you stay mission-focused, your board will follow.
4. **Accept that bad things happen.** Words are uttered, people disappoint, and boards have ups and downs. No presidency is without a few bumps in the road. Don't start assuming the bumps are personal attacks or affronts. Don't let others push your buttons. Your board will mirror your behavior and your PTA will lose focus on what really matters. .
5. **Leave a legacy of leadership.** Look around you. Who has talent? Potential? What does your board need to know now and for the future? Leave your board stronger than when you arrived. Make your PTA's nominating committee work hard because many qualified candidates are ready to assume leadership roles. You will create a tighter, more effective team, one that will shine for years to come.
6. **Value individual's strengths.** Everyone has something to offer. Value the good each person brings to the board rather than concentrate on shortfalls. Identify and build on each board member's strengths.
7. **Define success.** Boards that agree on the same definition of success are focused and work well as teams. Help your board set goals together. Where does your PTA team want to go? How will you know when it's time to celebrate success together?
8. **Adjust and flex.** Recognize that everyone communicates and leads in a different manner and, to be an effective leader, you will need to adjust your style to meet the needs of your board's members. This will help create an effective team with minimal misunderstandings.
9. **Share the wealth.** What opportunities can you open to other board members? Cohesive teams share responsibility and opportunities, and grow and learn together.
10. **Keep it real.** Presidents are not royalty, surrounded by minions t their beck and call. They are servant leaders, helping membership achieve PTA mission and facilitating the board's work to serve children and families. Think of yourself as part of team, and build that team into a powerful resource for your community.