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# Middle School GSA Advocacy Agenda

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This sample agenda was created for a GSA that has more of an advocacy focus.

1. **Introductions and icebreaker question (5 minutes)** – It’s important to start out every GSA meeting with introductions, even if the same students are coming to every meeting. Students’ preferred names and pronouns might change, and it’s good to allow space for students to re-introduce themselves.

*“My name is Jordyn, I’m in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and my pronouns are she and her.”*

*“My name is Mr. Johnson, I am one of the advisors, and I use he and him.”*

*“I’m Kai, I’m an 8<sup>th</sup> grader, and for today’s meeting I’d like to use they/them/theirs.”*

**Reminder:** Asking students to share their preferred pronouns is not the same as asking students to share their sexual orientation or gender identity. For more information on pronoun usage, check out the “Pronouns Matter” resource on the GSAFE website.

You may also want to add a quick icebreaker question to the introductions.

*“If you could describe your mood today with a color, what color would you be?”*

*“If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?”*

*“If you had to eat only one food for the rest of your life, what would you eat?”*

2. **Group Agreements (5 minutes)** – All clubs should have group agreements, as they help establish expectations for how the members will be interacting with one another in the space.

Work with the students to create group agreements and revisit them often. If students feel ownership over the group agreements, it is easier to hold them accountable to them.

**Reminder:** When it comes to confidentiality, you should let students know what your responsibility is as a mandatory reporter.

## WE AGREE TO:

*Respect confidentiality*

*Listen when others are talking*

*Be respectful of one another*

*Be open to new ideas*

*Help one another learn*

*Make space for everyone*

*Have fun!*

**3. What Needs to Change? (10 minutes)** – You probably don’t have to do this at every meeting, but if your GSA is going to have an advocacy focus, you might want to build time into the meetings early in the year or at the start of the semester to talk about what the students see as issues at the school.

**Suggestions to help this process move along:**

1. Remind the students that this is just a brainstorm, not a finalized list. Create space for all ideas to be good ideas. You can edit the list later.
2. Make sure that everyone has had a chance to share an issue that they would like to work on as a GSA. You may want to go around in a circle and have everyone share at least one idea before students can share a second or third time.
3. Have a student or two volunteer to write all the suggested issues on a whiteboard or big piece of paper so everyone can see the whole list.

**4. Strategize! (20 minutes)** – As a group, you will likely have to decide on one or two issues to focus on, knowing that the GSA will not realistically be able to take on everything they want to. Once you have identified an issue or two, you can use the following chart to start making a plan:

<b>GOALS</b>	<b>ALLIES</b>	<b>TARGETS</b>	<b>STRATEGIES</b>
What are your short term goals and long terms goals?	Who would be excited about working alongside you to help you reach your goals?	Who is in a position of power and could lend their support in helping you reach your goals?	What tactics, actions, or events are you going to use to help reach your goals?

**5. Delegate! (5-10 minutes)** – In order to effectively make big change at your school, it can’t all fall into the hands of one or two students. Once you have identified your advocacy campaign and built a strategy, the next step would be to assign roles and responsibilities. Attach deadlines to each task, and create a larger timeline so that you can regularly be checking in on the progress.

**6. Check out (5-10 minutes)** – At the end of the meeting, it would be good to have a “check out” with the students about how they’re feeling. You could go around the room and have each student just say one word they describes their feelings about the project.

Working to create change can be slow and difficult work. Help your students set realistic goals, adapt the timeline as needed, and celebrate small victories along the way!