

WHY BOARDS SUCCEED . . . A CHECKLIST

The following tips from David Long's "How to Organize and Raise Funds for Small Nonprofit Organizations" were distributed at a recent National PTA Multi-State Conference and may be useful to PTAs at all levels. Boards succeed when . . .

- a) **THERE IS AN EFFECTIVE NOMINATING COMMITTEE.** The strategic importance of this committee often gets overlooked. Some groups fail consistently to realize that decisions made by the nominating committee will largely determine who will lead the group in the years ahead. This committee should be well organized, have a time schedule and planned working procedures.
- b) **MEMBERS HAVE A GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THE ORGANIZATION AND WHAT THEIR ROLE IS.** This happens when the nominating committee accurately interprets to potential board members what their responsibilities will be.
- c) **THEY HAVE PLANNED ROTATION.** If the same people serve year after year, there can be no new blood. Despite dedication on their part, the same old people may make the organization a "closed corporation." Rotation prevents the ingrown possessiveness sometimes found on self-perpetuating boards.
- d) **AN EFFECTIVE WAY OF ELIMINATING NONPRODUCTIVE MEMBERS IS PROVIDED.** When selecting nominees for office, the nominating committee should consider the skills and interests of potential candidates, including but not limited to current board members who are eligible to serve again. Between elections, the organization should develop and use accountability structures.
- e) **THEY ARE THE RIGHT SIZE (NEITHER TOO SMALL OR TOO LARGE).** It is hard to conceive of a board getting the job done if it is simply too small or equally difficult to picture a successful board weighted down with too many members.
- f) **THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED STANDING COMMITTEES.** Standing committees should operate year round.
- g) **THEY HAVE A WELL-PLANNED ORIENTATION FOR NEW AND OLD MEMBERS.** Deliberate thought needs to be given to the matter of integrating new board members. Experienced board members need an annual update on the organization's work and accomplishments. All board members, new and experienced, need a chance to step back and reflect together on future plans in an atmosphere that is free from distractions.
- h) **THEY HAVE A PROCESS FOR SELF-EVALUATION.** Once a year the board should thoroughly evaluate the goals, accomplishments, and problems of each committee as it relates to the program. This annual process should be tied into the long-range planning process as well.

Adapted from National PTA Multi-State Conference