

FUTURE BUSINESS LEADERS OF AMERICA

Officer Resource Guide



REPORTER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

All About FBLA	2
Leadership	6
Qualities of Leadership	7
Activities Which Provide Leadership Training	9
Characteristics of Effective Leaders	10
The Good Leader Versus the Bad Leader	11
Characteristics of a Good Member	12
Ten-Step Guide for Leadership	12
Duties of the Reporter	13
Taking Good Photographs	14
Selecting and Handling Photographs	15
Writing Hints	16
News Releases	17



ALL ABOUT FBLA

As an officer of the Future Business Leaders of America, it is important that you understand the organization—its structure, goals, benefits, and operation. As an officer, you must be able to describe the organization to others—members, other students, faculty, school administration, businesspersons, and community leaders. When people hear the term “FBLA” and say “What’s that?” you should be able to explain it to them.

FBLA Purposes and Goals

One of the best ways to describe FBLA is through use of the goals of the organization. No chapter can operate at full effectiveness unless all officers and members are familiar with the goals. This does not mean just reading the goals, but totally understanding them. The chapter should exist to fulfill those goals. The officers must be able to understand and explain the goals to others.

The goals of FBLA are to:

Develop competent, aggressive leadership

Strengthen the confidence of students in themselves and their work

Create more interest in and understanding of American business enterprise

Encourage members in the development of individual projects which contribute to the improvement of home, business, and community

Develop character, prepare for useful citizenship, and foster patriotism

Encourage and practice efficient money management

Encourage scholarship and promote school loyalty

Assist students in the establishment of occupational goals

Facilitate the transition from school to work.

Revise the goals and put them into your own words. Think about activities and programs your chapter might initiate in order to accomplish the FBLA goals.

FBLA Creed and Pledge

Another important tool for promoting and interpreting FBLA is the FBLA Creed. The Creed identifies what the FBLA member believes in and will strive to achieve. Have you read each stanza of the creed and thought about its meaning? Or, do you just recite the words? If the officers and members of your chapter believe in the Creed and operate the chapter according to those beliefs, your chapter should be an important integral part of your business program, school, and community.

The FBLA Creed is as follows:

I believe education is the right of every person.

I believe the future depends on mutual understanding and cooperation among business, industry, labor, religious, family and educational institutions, as well as people around the world. I agree to do my utmost to bring about understanding and cooperation among all of these groups.

I believe every person should prepare for a useful occupation and carry on that occupation in a manner that brings the greatest good to the greatest number.

I believe every person should actively work toward improving social, political, community and family life.

I believe every person has the right to earn a living at a useful occupation.

I believe every person should take responsibility for carrying out assigned tasks in a manner that brings credit to self, associates, school and community.

I believe I have the responsibility to work efficiently and to think clearly. I promise to use my abilities to make the world a better place for everyone.

The FBLA Pledge is as follows:

I solemnly promise to uphold the aims and responsibilities of the Future Business Leaders of America and, as an active member, I shall strive to develop the qualities necessary in becoming a responsible business leader.

Emphasize the significance of each part of the creed and pledge to your members. Share the creed and pledge with business and community leaders when seeking their support.

FBLA Code of Ethics

While the FBLA Creed and Pledge are often used as a part of chapter meetings, the FBLA Code of Ethics is often neglected. The Code of Ethics sets high standards for which FBLA members should strive. Be sure your chapter members are aware of this code and are encouraged to use it as a standard to live by. These personal qualities are important assets for any successful, happy person--and particularly important for FBLA members.

The FBLA Code of Ethics is as follows:

I will be honest and sincere in all my business dealings.

I will approach each task with confidence in my ability to perform my work at a high standard.

I will willingly accept responsibilities and duties assigned to me.

I will respect my employer and fellow workers and be considerate of them.

I will seek to profit by my mistakes and take suggestions and criticisms directed toward the improvement of my work and myself.

I will, to the best of my ability, abide by the rules and regulations of my employer.

I will exercise initiative and responsibility and will cooperate with my employer and fellow workers.

I will dress and act in a manner that will bring respect to me and to my employer.

I will use my time to the best advantage of my employer.

I will seek to improve my community by contributing my efforts and my resources to its worthwhile projects.

Organizational Structure

In explaining FBLA to others, you must understand the scope of the organization. Many members think they are just part of a local business club. They do not realize that the local chapter is part of a much larger organization which consists of districts, state, regional, and national levels of organization. It is important that members, the school administration and faculty, and the business community be aware of the larger scope of your activities.

To gain a broader understanding of the national organization, study the FBLA Chapter Management Handbook and each issue of Tomorrow's Business Leader. Inform your members of the size and activities of FBLA at the national level.

Benefits of FBLA

In recruiting members, talking with school officials, and soliciting assistance from businesses and the community, you will be asked to explain how FBLA benefits you and others. Complete knowledge of the organization is, of course, essential in describing FBLA.

FBLA is supposed to be an integral part of the business education curriculum; that is, activities of the organization should relate to classroom instruction. With interested and involved teachers, many classroom activities can be adapted to relate to FBLA projects, goals, and activities. When this occurs, FBLA members will be receiving additional benefits as a result of their FBLA membership. These activities will also enhance the classroom instruction.

Terminology

In discussing FBLA with others, it is important to use correct terminology to describe its activities. Many people are not familiar with the organization and would not know what the initials stand for; therefore, it is important to frequently use the full name of the organization, Future Business Leaders of America—instead of the initials FBLA.

Listed below are some of the terms to use and avoid using in discussing FBLA:

Say CHAPTER—not CLUB

Say STUDENT ORGANIZATION—not YOUTH ORGANIZATION

Say COMPETITIVE EVENTS—not CONTESTS

Say ADVISER—not SPONSOR

Say CONFERENCE—not CONVENTION

Say CO-CURRICULAR—not EXTRA-CURRICULAR

LEADERSHIP

By Sherian Lyles Eckenrod

Leadership is the ability and readiness to inspire, direct, or influence the actions of others. It is also the position or office of a leader. To lead means to guide the decision or actions of others. There are two rather distinct kinds of leadership—formal and informal.

Formal leadership is the position occupied by the action taken by persons designated to perform certain leadership functions in formal groups. It is the position and function of elected or appointed offices in FBLA Chapters.

The duties, responsibilities, and authority of formal leadership are usually stated in the constitution and bylaws of the organization.

Informal leadership is the position of a leader bestowed upon a person by others because of the respect they have for the person's ability and readiness to lead. This kind of leadership functions in all groups that have freedom of action. It is the driving force of nearly all group action that comes from the membership in democratic groups; it is the force that largely determines whether effective action will be taken. Informal leadership may be of any degree of strength and forcefulness. Persons possessing strong qualities of informal leadership are persons of influence; their views and actions carry much weight in determining the action of others.

In a democratic group, the group decides what actions to take and how these actions are to be carried out. To do this, the group chooses the persons to perform functions for the group. In a sense, these persons become agents of the group to carry out the will of the group. In order for these designated persons to properly act as agents for the group, they must be able to carry out the functions of their offices. It is the duty of the group to inform its agents of specific wants, and it is the duty of the leaders to learn what the group wants.

Informal leadership plays a significant role in helping the group decide what actions to take and how these actions are to be carried out and in evaluation the outcomes of the actions taken. When group action is carried on by the members, the informal leaders provide the driving force within the group. Any member of the group who helps guide the group in deciding on the actions to take or how these actions are to be carried out, or any member who helped direct the efforts of the group in carrying out its actions, performs functions of leadership.

Sherian Lyles Eckenrod, Fresno City College, Fresno, California.

QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP

A good FBLA leader has many of the qualities of leadership listed below. These qualities can be learned by anyone who is determined to make them work. FBLA members should begin to develop these qualities while in high school and should continue to improve them through adulthood. Such qualities, so desirable in business leaders, are also highly desirable for persons in all walks of life.

1. Respect for the worth and rights of others.

Good leaders have great respect for the infinite worth and dignity of human beings. They realize that most people have certain talents that should permit them to make worthy contributions to society. Leaders believe that other people should have the same right to live fully and have the opportunity to develop the capacities desired by all individuals.

2. Belief in democracy

Good leaders are strong believers in democratic principles. They believe that the group has both the right and the ability to make its own decisions. Leaders believe that the decisions reached by an informed group are usually sounder, better understood, and more likely to be carried out than the decisions imposed upon a group. They believe that the group has the right and the capacity to choose appropriate leaders and to determine their functions.

3. Ability and readiness to shoulder responsibility

To be a leader, one must be willing and able to shoulder responsibility for one's own actions and a fair share (or more) of the responsibilities of the group. A leader is obligated to the position and does not make excuses for shortcomings. A leader is capable of doing things needed by the group.

4. Initiative

To lead means to show the way. A leader must have the ability to originate or start an action; the leader must be willing to "start out" before others do. The good leader plans carefully what is to be undertaken and proceeds with courage of conviction rather than with reckless abandon. People admire leaders who are willing to "get their feet wet first"—to step out and make the first try.

5. Optimism and enthusiasm

There must be something to do before leadership can be exercised. The good leader believes that this something is important and that the task can be done—that a way can be found, that obstacles can be removed, and that the problem can be solved. A leader is

able to enlist the services of others, goes about the task with zest and enjoyment, and helps others to have enthusiasm for the job to be done.

6. Ability to work with others in a friendly and peaceful manner.

Leadership is concerned with people. Good leaders get along well with others. Other people are glad to associate with leaders. They are straight forward, industrious, and agreeable. They give credit where credit is due and do not seek credit for themselves. Leaders are team players rather than individuals who play to the grandstand. They have the ability to get others to assist in an understanding.

7. Open mindedness

Good leaders are open-minded. They do not claim to have all the answers. They seek the thoughts and views of others and support those ideas that are better than their own. Leaders realize that other people have convictions just as they do. They are willing to hear all sides before guiding the group to decide which way seem best. They are willing to compromise for the purpose of doing a good job.

8. Strength of conviction

Good leaders have convictions. Others know that they will take a stand. Leaders are willing to stand up and be counted. They will take their positions and defend them.

9. Ability to communicate

In order to lead, one must be able to tell or show others the way to go. One must be able to communicate thoughts and actions so that they may be clearly understood. One does not lead by being ambivalent.

10. Public-spirited—spirit of service

The good leader must be willing to work for the common good. People should not be expected to help someone achieve a selfish end. To be public spirited, a leader must desire things that benefit all the people. A leader is willing to make some personal sacrifices for the common good. In the community the good leader is known as a good community member, a good neighbor, and a person others are glad to have in their presence.

11. Confidence and respect of one's peers

Good leaders have the confidence and trust of their peers. People believe in a leader's willingness and ability to perform. Leaders can be counted on to follow through. Leaders are trustworthy, loyal to their friends and the group, and have high personal integrity. Their word is as good as their bond.

ACTIVITIES WHICH PROVIDE LEADERSHIP TRAINING

- Being proficient in the use of parliamentary procedure
- Giving officer reports and committee reports to the Executive Council
- Giving talks before groups outside of FBLA
- Studying the history, goals, and purposes of FBLA
- Learning the constitution and bylaws of FBLA
- Becoming acquainted with the responsibilities of each officer
- Assisting in developing the FBLA program of work
- Participating in other organizations
- Thinking clearly and acting in good taste
- Getting the facts and analyzing them before drawing conclusions
- Getting in the habit of cleanliness and orderliness
- Establishing reasonable goals
- Taking advice, but doing your own thinking
- Encouraging others
- Being careful not to admit to yourself that you are permanently beaten
- Making friends and keeping them
- Dreaming on what you would like to accomplish
- Being proud of what you do
- Taking pride in being an officer, but earning it

CHARACTERISTICS OF EFFECTIVE LEADERS

1. Leaders maintain respect

The leader must create the proper relationship with subordinates and earn their respect in order to maintain their willingness to accept authority.

2. Leaders work effectively with people

- a. Become genuinely interested in others.
- b. Encourage others to talk about themselves.

3. Leaders are responsive to the needs and desires of others

- a. Be sincere
- b. Be a good listener

4. Leaders are knowledgeable

The leader is expected to understand the total situation

5. Leaders should possess superior motivation

A leader must have an intense desire to get things done and involve others. Unless a leader is highly motivated, he or she cannot motivate others.

6. Leaders are inspired and enthusiastic

Enthusiasm is contagious!

7. Leaders tap and use every source

A good leader will realize that every member has something to contribute and will tap that resource.

8. Leaders capitalize on the organizational environment and the leadership of others

The effective leader utilizes the potential of other leaders. He learns from them, profits from their mistakes, and enlarges on their successes.

THE GOOD LEADER VERSUS THE BAD LEADER

The Good Leader

Has faith in people and wants to work with them.

Has poise and confidence. Speaks in a clear voice and enunciates words clearly.

Carefully preplans the program so the meeting moves smoothly.

Shows interest and alertness by attitude, mind, body, and countenance.

Is democratic in dealing with other members.

Is fair and impartial—doesn't take sides when presiding.

Is patient, optimistic, and gives credit for work done.

Is sensitive to the individual and recognizes individual differences.

Acts as a helper, umpire, and moderator so that all are encouraged to share in the work.

Shows a sense of humor to relieve the tension of a serious meeting.

The Poor Leader

Takes the job for the "honor" that can be received.

Fails to understand that the leader is an example for the other members.

Lets everything go until the last minute, then just hopes everything will work out.

Seems bored, is not alert, whispers to other members, and appears disinterested.

Dominates, imposes opinions, and forces others to depend upon personal preferences.

Shows what side to take before getting the facts into the open.

Is impatient, sarcastic, pessimistic, critical, and takes the work of others for granted.

Does not notice a loss of interest and fails to watch the group to detect boredom and weariness.

Cares about the business in general and does not consider individual differences.

Has no humor in a meeting. The business is the most important thing, not the people.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD MEMBER

- Is always prompt
- Is proud of the FBLA Chapter
- Accepts a share of responsibility for the business at hand
- Is anxious to hear ideas and opinions of others
- Gives constant attention to the FBLA activities
- Knows the purpose of each meeting and activity and works for its accomplishment
- Carries out all assignments to the best of his/her ability
- Is constantly thinking and acting for the benefit of FBLA
- Acts in the school and the community in a manner that reflects favorably on FBLA

TEN-STEP GUIDE FOR LEADERSHIP

1. Establish goals
2. Communicate understanding of goals to the people involved
3. Justify the effort and response requested
4. Provide a roadmap to achieve the goals
5. Set resources into motion
6. Maintain the focus on the goal
7. Provide enthusiasm, answers, and lead position
8. Evaluate and improve
9. Recognize and commend progress
10. Reward goal achievement

DUTIES OF THE REPORTER

1. Act as public relations officer for the chapter.
2. Gather and classify all news.
3. Prepare articles for publication in local, state, and national media.
4. Develop a working relationship with local media personnel and supply them with chapter, district, state, and/or national organizational news that might be of interest to them.
5. Send news items concerning the local, state or national newspapers on a regular basis. (Include photographs whenever possible.)
6. Send news articles (with photographs) to the national office for possible use in Tomorrow's Business Leader. Send a file as an attachment to an email to: communications@fbla.org. Image files must be in jpg, tiff, or eps format. Photos will be placed on the national website and/or the FBLA publications.
7. Send or collect news articles for the state chapter for publication in Communicator. Send a file as an attachment to an email to: fblarep@floridafbla-pbl.com. Copy your submission to your District Director and jodyajones@juno.com. Image files must be in jpg format. Photos will be placed on the state website and/or the state newsletter.
8. Send or collect news articles for publication in the state newsletter.
9. Post or send out schedules and deadlines for submitting news articles.
10. Engage a photographer to make pictures of all newsworthy events—if you are not in a position to make the pictures.
11. Provide articles, photos, or other materials for business education department bulletin boards.
12. Cooperate with the president in promoting FBLA activities on the local, district, state, regional, and national levels.
13. Perform further duties as directed by the president.

TAKING GOOD PHOTOGRAPHS

The chapter reporter should provide photographs of all newsworthy events. No specific type of camera is recommended. However, the camera should be one that will take "good" pictures inside and outside. An important point in making pictures is to KNOW YOUR CAMERA.

To make good pictures, follow these suggestions:

1. Follow camera recommendations regarding distance, etc.
2. Be sure that there is a good background for the picture.
3. Eliminate foreign objects in the foreground.
4. Pose the subjects when necessary. Normally use no more than three or four people in one picture. Keep them close together and have them looking at something.
5. Once you have the pictures developed, put a caption on the back of each one, identifying the people in the picture, a brief explanation of what they are doing, and the date.
6. If using a disposable 35 mm camera, file all negatives for future use, labeling each group. If using a digital camera, create folders on your computer (or the adviser's computer) using names to represent the activity. Examples for folder names: SFLR (for state fall leadership rally), NFLC (for National Fall Leadership Conference,) MOD (for March of Dimes activities), etc.
7. Plan pictures in advance. Decide the kinds of pictures that are needed for historical reference early in the year and take them under good conditions.
8. Remember that a good, sharp well-posed picture tells a better story than a long written article.
9. Don't guess! Learn to make good pictures.
10. Visit these websites to get digital camera photo tips: <http://www.kodak.com> and <http://www.hp.com>.

Good pictures will help you do a better job as chapter reporter. There are people in your school and organization who need to be included in your pictures. Do not take photos of the same members over and over. Try to get photos of ALL chapter members.

The office of reporter is an important one. Remember that the results of your office will be no better than the efforts you put into the job. Your work will leave a permanent record of the chapter's activities.

SELECTING AND HANDLING PHOTOGRAPHS

Take pictures that tell a story. A picture with action has a better chance of telling a complete story.

1. Photographs must have contrast and sharpness to reproduce well and should run the full tonal scale.
2. Avoid pictures that are too "busy" with people and objects. A photograph of one or two individuals can be more effective than a crowded group shot.
3. Select photographs that tell a story, identify a person, or illustrate a point. Try to include all of these in a photograph.
4. Select photographs that tell the story without long wordy captions, but always supply an identifying caption.
5. Look for natural situations. Subjects should not be staring into the camera or posing stiffly.
6. Avoid using paper clips, unless small pieces of cardboard are used on both sides of the photograph. Always attach clips to parts of the photograph that are not likely to be used, preferably the margin.
7. Write instructions or captions on a post-it note and stick it to the back of the photograph with a small piece of scotch tape. Never staple identification to a photograph.
8. If the photograph is to be mailed, send it in a photo mailer or mounted between firm cardboard and enclosed in an envelope.
9. Do not mail or handle prints face to face. Dirt particles between the prints will scratch and damage surfaces.
10. Fingerprints can damage a print, particularly one that has just been printed on an inkjet or laserjet printer. The oil from the fingers will remain on the surface and show up on the photo.
11. Identification should include the date and place where the photo was made.

WRITING HINTS

1. A good writer uses:
 - a. an approach calculated to arouse the reader's interest.
 - b. an appeal that stirs the reader's imagination and encourages continued reading.
 - c. a style that makes the readers on an individual basis.
 - d. believable claims and correct information.
 - e. specifies; avoiding generalizations.
2. Make a list of the topics you will cover.
3. Arrange the topics in a logical sequence, such as chronological or step-by-step order.
4. Under each main heading, list secondary points relating to it. Include everything that comes within this framework and reject everything that does not.
5. Select with care everything you have to say, and say it with care.
6. Do not allow anything irrelevant to intrude.
7. Do not present unfamiliar ideas without adequate explanation.
8. Do not elaborate the obvious.
9. Write for easy reading:
 - a. Be conversational.
 - b. Use short, easy-to-understand words.
 - c. Use personal words.
 - d. Use short varied sentences—average 17 words or less.
 - e. Use short paragraphs—3 to 5 sentences each.
 - f. Put the thoughts in logical order.

NEWS RELEASES

What should be included in a news release? Remember to include the facts of your story:

Who	Names of the organizations and people involved, such as committee chairpersons, elected officers, and speakers
What	Business meeting, social, speaker or other activity
When	Date and time of the meeting or activity
Where	Location of the event
Why	Purpose of the activity or meeting
How	Details of how the activity was carried out

The lead (the first couple sentences) should answer these questions. The lead is designed to give the reader information quickly and in such a manner that he or she will want to read the rest of the story.

After the lead, the details should be written in declining order of importance. This permits the editor to cut from the bottom, if necessary, without having to rewrite the story.

Never editorialize. Stick to the facts. If opinions are stated, be sure to give the name of the person who is being quoted.

News releases must be typed when submitted. Double space the article on one-sided, white, letter-sized paper.

Put your name, title, address, phone number, other identifying information, and date at the beginning. Leave about one-third of the first page blank at the top of the editor's use. If more than one page is needed, conclude each page at the end of a paragraph and write "more" at the bottom. At the end of the news release type three pound signs (###).

Indicate by means of a release date just above the first line of the story when the story can be published. If a specific release date is not necessary, write "for immediate release" and be sure you have typed the date on which it was sent. Keep in mind the release date so that the use of "today" and "yesterday" makes sense in the story. Allow sufficient time for the release to reach the publishing office. Delivery by hand is the best guarantee.

Also note that it is now very common for news releases to be submitted via the web or e-mail.

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