



TEAMBUILDER IDEAS

In a best-case scenario, they will work together like a machine and become so close they can finish each other's sentences. When the entire staff buys in to the theme/concept and shared goals for the book, magical things happen. Then, when one staffer or section has trouble, there are others there to help — and they're glad to do so.

But at the start of the year, it's likely the staff room is filled with students of all grade levels who have different experience levels and interests. Depending on the size of the staff, there may be more than one section of yearbook in the schedule so they might not even all meet during the same class period. When they don't know each other at all, it's hard to be a cohesive staff.

These suggestions detail some of the many ways advisers from across the country help their staffs bond so they can work more effectively as teams.

YEARBOOK CAMPOUT

It's imperative that the kids feel comfortable with one another from the start and that good communication is fostered right away, so I've tried all kinds of activities to help my staff bond and get to know one another in my six years as an adviser. In the past, we have held a campout at my home.

I had staffers volunteer tents and then all the kids brought sleeping bags and pillows, one pack of hot dogs, chips and drinks. I made chili and supplied the buns. We played games and sat around the campfire talking and laughing most of the night. Needless to say, we didn't sleep much. We have also met for pizza and then headed over to the bowling alley for a night of bowling. We put all the staffer names in a hat and drew for bowling teams. Each team made up a name for themselves and wore the same-colored t-shirts. We have also played games in the classroom. The two best "get to know each other" games are: Who Knew? and Imagine If. We have also stopped in the height of a tense moment and played Twister! And, I implement a buddy system so that a new staffer can get to know a more experienced one and learn from him/her.

Patricia Mills, yearbook adviser

Alexander High School, Douglasville, GA

THIS IS PUZZLING

Items needed:

Four different 100-piece puzzles (depending on the number of students, you may need more or fewer puzzles)

Goody bag for the winning team (I always buy the small 10-packs of candy bars and gum-- they love it!)

Before class: Take four puzzle pieces from each puzzle. Place one piece of a puzzle in the other three puzzle boxes and one piece stays with the teacher. Shake the boxes up well so that the puzzle pieces blend in.

yearbooks.biz

yearbookdiscoveries.com





Divide the class up evenly into four groups (may need more or fewer groups depending on the number of students — ideally you want no more than 3-4 students in a group). Tell them that the team that completes the puzzle first gets the goody bag. Each team will soon realize that they do not have all of the pieces to their puzzle and that they have parts that don't belong to their puzzle. The idea is that they will soon start to look at the other puzzles and realize that they have to ask the others for their extra pieces and work out a solution to obtaining the right pieces. They will still find that they are missing one piece and no one has any extra pieces. They will then start to ask the teacher for the extra piece.

Lesson Learned: The objective of this activity is that students may have work or jobs to do, but that sometimes they will have to ask the help of other students/groups and also the teacher.

Sandy Wier, yearbook adviser

Buckingham Vocational Center, Buckingham, VA

KEEP IN TOUCH

One thing I do is to get the staffers' e-mail addresses at the end of the school year and e-mail them during the summer. This makes yearbook seem more personal and to get an e-mail from a "teacher" makes us not so "geeky".

Renee S. Jordan, yearbook adviser

Alfred M. Barbe High School, Lake Charles, LA

WORK TOGETHER, STAY TOGETHER

Take your staff to an overnight "Yearbook Camp" such as the Gettysburg Yearbook Experience. Not only will your staff get instruction from an outstanding faculty, but your staff will have the opportunity to work together on the yearbook for the following school year, get to know one another, and come away with a lot of memories. It won't happen just on its own. Give them specific goals to come away with such as having a theme/concept, design ideas, and a complete ladder for the next book. Advisers should let them put it all together and "show it off" to you.

Charles Stevens, yearbook adviser

Lee-Davis High School, Mechanicsville, VA

GIVE EACH OTHER A HAND

Have staff members trace their hand on a piece of paper and then tape it to their back, hand facing out. Have everyone walk around the room and write positive comments on the hands of everyone else. Comments can be something about a person's personality, skill, or simply a physical observation. When finished, have staff members read their own comments. This is a great way for a staff to get to know each other. It can also be a great pick-me-up during stressful times when everyone needs to hear some positive thoughts.

Take this one step further. Try this activity with your staff the first week of school. After staff members read their comments, have staff write their name on their papers, collect the papers and save them. At the end of the year, do the same activity. This time, return the original papers to staff members so they can compare comments from the beginning to the end of the year. You'll see how much your staff has grown as a team and staff members will be rewarded with positive thoughts from their peers.

yearbooks.biz

yearbookdiscoveries.com





ADOPT A ROCK

I have a small bag full of rocks that I take with me from school to school. The first meeting of the year the students and I all take a rock from the bag without looking and then I explain that each student will take the next 5-10 minutes and quietly interview the rock they drew. The students need to get the rock's name, DOB, hometown, favorite things to do, etc. After about 10 minutes of giggling and confusing looks I start by introducing my rock to the rest of the class. The students all laugh to hear that my rock enjoys rock concerts, eats at the hard rock cafe, and wants to be a geologist. During the rest of the classtime each student gets to introduce his rock and it is always fun and ALWAYS interesting.

The benefits of this activity are that you find creative students and you get ideas flowing. The simple message I always finish with is that in one hour we have "made-up" some great stories about inanimate objects and now the students have the whole semester to get the "real story" on their fellow classmates. They have a unique opportunity to immortalize and document this school year and finding interesting stories to tell and record is all the fun!

Yearbook Discoveries