



## Online Tools for Activity Advisers

Advising a student activity group is usually an extra duty an educator takes on in addition to other full-time responsibilities. With lesson plans and standardized test results to worry about, and a list of things to do that never seems to get any shorter, many advisers find themselves frazzled with all that needs to be done in their “normal” job, let alone the added responsibilities of working with student leaders in an organization. By its very nature, student activity advising demands a great deal of time, energy, and enthusiasm.

So what’s a dedicated adviser to do? Find some tools and resources that will help make the job easier and less time consuming. The Internet is a mind-boggling collection of resources on any topic imaginable, and student activities is no exception. Intrepid searchers can find a wealth of resources, ideas, and supplies for their student leadership activities. Here are a few noteworthy sites:



### Parliamentary Procedure

Parliamentary procedure is the foundation of smooth, democratic meetings. Some good resources for parliamentary procedure include:

[www.parliamentarians.org](http://www.parliamentarians.org)

[www.parlipro.org](http://www.parlipro.org)

[www.parliamentaryprocedure.org/](http://www.parliamentaryprocedure.org/)

[www.jimslaughter.com/robertsrules.htm](http://www.jimslaughter.com/robertsrules.htm) (source of a parli pro cheat sheet).

Find a simplified version of Roberts Rules of Order that reviews the essentials of points, motions, and other meeting guidelines at <http://roberts-rules.inarp.com/parli.htm> and [http://roberts-rules.inarp.com/rules\\_of\\_order.pdf](http://roberts-rules.inarp.com/rules_of_order.pdf).

### DifferenceMakers

This site of motivational speaker Mike Smith features a swap shop of activity ideas, leadership development lessons, faculty and

staff recognition, and more.

[www.differencemakers.com](http://www.differencemakers.com)

### Election Software

■ **FrontRunner.** Designed by a high school student council adviser in Idaho specifically for school elections, Front Runner Software makes it possible to conduct elections on school computers, either on a network or on separately installed computers. Front Runner has a variety of balloting options that make it useful for various types of elections. The standard ballot has space for up to seven candidates for each office with room for a comment or slogan for each and a photo. The list ballot makes it possible to import a text file list with up to several hundred candidates’ names, useful for such things as nominating students from among an entire class or the student body.

[www.frontrunnersoftware.com](http://www.frontrunnersoftware.com)

■ **Ballotbin.** An online election and survey solution, Ballotbin

sends each of your voters an e-mail with a registration code that can only be used once. It can also be set up to send all the codes to a registrar to distribute to voters as they check in to vote. There is no limit to the number of voters who may participate. The service is free for schools.

[www.ballotbin.com](http://www.ballotbin.com)

■ **Worldvotingbooth.** This online survey, polling, and voting service handles a variety of different formats. Elections can be set up using students’ names and student ID numbers, and can include write-in votes, candidate biographical details, additional voter instructions, and other vote-specific details. Votes are protected by passwords, voter list confirmation, and other measures. A free feature allows people to set up a sample vote with up to five voters to try the system to see if it is right for them. Sponsoring votes with more than five voters requires payment of an annual fee of \$14.95. For this charge, an

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unlimited number of votes with up to 5,000 voters each can be sponsored over a one-year period.  
<http://worldvotingbooth.com>

## Youthleadership

A youth leadership development information clearinghouse, this site provides ideas and a forum to discuss current issues related to youth leadership development. The public pages include information on noteworthy events (workshops, calls for presenters, position announcements, etc.) from organizations and programs all over; links or information on youth leadership resources and organizations; and an open discussion forum. Member-only pages include reviews and discussion outlines of books and films, lesson plans, articles that delve into leadership topics, and more.  
[www.youthleadership.com](http://www.youthleadership.com)

## Start Something

Developed by Target Corporation along with the Tiger Woods Foundation, Start Something is a program for youth ages 8 to 17 that keys on three national education priorities: character education, service learning, and career exploration. Curriculum materials, lesson plans, and online tools are available absolutely free to teachers.  
<http://startsomething.target.com>

## Nicenet

Nicenet is a nonprofit organization whose primary offering, the Internet Classroom Assistant (ICA) is designed “for post-secondary and secondary classrooms, distance learning, and collaborative academic projects, though anyone who finds it useful is free and welcome to use it,”

according to their site. Although the free online templates are designed to set up a class Web site where you can post schedules, assignments, and discussions, with minimal tweaking it can be adapted for student activity use.

One nice feature is the conferencing area, where advisers can establish discussion areas for committees or current topics of interest. For example, conduct an online brainstorming session in preparation for an upcoming meeting, then take the top ideas from the online discussion to discuss at the meeting, cutting down on the time it takes to reach a decision.

The documents section on ICA is ideal for posting samples of project planning and committee report forms and the class schedule section can be used for posting dates of events.  
[www.nicenet.org](http://www.nicenet.org)

## Teach Me Teamwork

This multi-media training resource, featuring instructional videos as well as detailed descriptions of activities, is a wealth of ideas for team building activities. Sign up for a free team building games e-newsletter and receive a free download of a team building games e-Book.  
[www.teachmeteamwork.com](http://www.teachmeteamwork.com)

## National Youth Development Information Center

This one-stop Web site for youth workers with interest in funding, programming, research, policy, job, and training opportunities has a searchable database with more than 1,100 abstracts of youth development reports, journal

articles, and other documents. Also provides current news to the youth development field. NYDIC is an initiative of the National Collaboration for Youth.  
[www.nydic.org](http://www.nydic.org)

## National Association of Student Councils

In addition to information about NASC programs, this site features a good resource section listing contact information for a wide variety of organizations and agencies, an extensive project idea section, and archived articles from *Leadership for Student Activities*.  
[www.nasc.us](http://www.nasc.us)

## CASAA

The Canadian Association of Student Activity Advisers has an excellent “share shop” section of ideas and lots of good resources.  
[www.casaa-resources.net](http://www.casaa-resources.net)

## YouthNOISE

YouthNOISE, an initiative of Save the Children Federation, is on a mission to inspire, connect, and empower youth to help young people everywhere by speaking out, volunteering, and fundraising.  
[www.youthnoise.com](http://www.youthnoise.com)

## Herff Jones

Don't forget to check out the Herff Jones Web site. In addition to the products and services offered—including the *Adviser's Guide to Student Activities*—you'll find the current issues of the FOCUS newsletter for advisers and the CHALLENGE newsletter for student leaders each month. These free newsletters are available in PDF as a service to advisers.  
[www.herffjones.com](http://www.herffjones.com)