

Department Chairs: Maximizing Meetings and Maintaining Morale

Begin and end on time. Honor your colleagues' obligations to family, friends and other commitments.



Serve light refreshments. Folks are hungry at the end of the work day. Keep refreshments simple - something wet and something dry. Rotate who brings refreshments: use sign-up sheet; then keep reminder on your electronic calendar to send a note, so the those who signed up don't forget; and those who come won't begin meeting in a bad mood because they expected a snack 😊.

Send out consent agendas. If it's just a pronouncement and no discussion is required, no need to use meeting time to read during the meeting. Reserve meeting time for topics that require discussion and need input from department members.



Include summary of previous meeting with announcement about upcoming meeting. Summary does not need to be detailed; could list what was discussed and what was voted in or out during last meeting.

For items up for discussion, **reserve your opinion** until after everyone who wishes to speak has done so. When members raise hands, write list of names, and then call on them in order. Then those waiting to speak are more likely to listen to those speaking ahead of them instead of waving their hands waiting to be acknowledged.

Send personalized thank you notes stating something specific you noticed each one is contributing to the success of the department, even if you have to buy the cards yourself. It's worth the investment and is similar to purchasing special things for use in your classroom.



Maintain on-going, inexpensive professional development. You have talented and experienced people in your department who are doing interesting, often innovative, things. Invite department members to sign-up to share one strategy that has worked recently for them. Five-seven minutes per meeting usually will suffice; ask presenters to follow up by posting details or handouts on the department website or office bulletin. Expect everyone to present at least once a school year, even if that means two or three people present at some meetings. Encourage collaboration with pairs or trios who work together.



Encourage department members to visit each other's classes and give them feedback on what is working well.

WHAT HAS WORKED FOR YOU in YOUR DEPARTMENT?

Please post your ideas on the CEL Connected Community Website at this address:

<http://ncte.connectedcommunity.org/cel/home>