

Delegate Council Meeting Overview

Delegate Council Meeting – Spring 2025

March 19, 2025, from 6:30-8:30 p.m.

~ in-person @ Shelly Ridge and virtual over Zoom ~

Invited: GSEP Board of Directors, Girl Advisors to the Board, Board Development Committee Members, Girl Delegates, Service Unit Delegates & Alternates, 2023 NCS Delegation, and Interested Members

Meeting Opening

Board Chair Nicole LeVine opened the meeting at 6:34 p.m. by welcoming the attendees to the Spring Delegate Council Meeting. Girl Advisors to the Board, Girl Delegates, and Service Unit Delegates who are girls conducted the opening flag ceremony. Charlotte H., a Girl Delegate, shared a Mission Moment in which she announced she is now officially trained in the ropes course for GSEP and invited everyone to Family Camp at Mosey Wood over Memorial Day weekend to see her in action. Another Mission Moment was shared by a girl who is a Service Unit Delegate from Philadelphia; Jasmine W. said that she recently got to experience a Shadow Day with an honoree for this year's Take the Lead event, and she encouraged all girls to participate in future Take the Leads.

Introductions

Nicole LeVine then recognized the respective cohorts in attendance (Board, Girl Advisors, Board Development Committee, SU Delegates and Alternates, Girl Delegates, National Council Session Delegates, and Interested Members). She reported that we had more than 155 people register for tonight's meeting.

Board Development Committee (BDC) Report

Joann Gonzalez-Generals, member of the BDC, shared that this committee is working on six slates this year for the Annual Meeting, all of which will be shared on April 3. The group is currently working to finalize the slates for Board Officers, Board Members at-Large, and the BDC itself.

Joann then reviewed the selection process and profile of the 2026 National Council Delegation from GSEP. She explained that GSEP will be represented by 27 adults and girls at the NCS in July 2026. The Selection Subcommittee consisted of a Board member, three BDC members, and three volunteers who have had National Council experience. They spent more than 50 hours collectively reviewing, scoring, discussing, and creating the slate, which was in addition to their planning work and hosting two virtual Help Sessions. She then shared various data points, including:

- 51 people applied for the 17 open Delegate positions, and she offered a sincere thank you to all the applicants.
- Geographically, the Delegation nominees closely reflect our girl membership.
- The Delegation members range in age from 15-68 years old.

- This triennium, GSEP has 10 girl members and 6 young adults (aged 18-29 years old), which is the highest in our history.
- More than half of the Delegation will experience their first NCS.

Joann then explained the work of the Girl Governance Subcommittee, which reviewed 61 applications from girls interested in being either Girl Advisors or Girl Delegates during the 2025=2026 Governance Year. The six members of that Subcommittee spent more than 60 hours working to create the slate of 3 Girl Advisors and 30 Girl Delegates. The Girl Advisor nominees live in Bucks, Lehigh, and Montgomery counties; this is the first time in seven years we will have a Girl Advisor from Lehigh County. Girl Delegate nominees live in eight of our nine counties (Carbon being the exception, since no one applied from that county). The racial diversity of the nominees is slightly higher than either the applicant pool or our girl membership. All four high school grades are reflected in the 30 nominees. In addition to geographic, racial/ethnic, and age diversity, other aspects were also taken into consideration, including whether a girl had applied before as well as facets of their lives shared in their short essays.

Finally, Joann emphasized that all of the three confirmed slates are complex puzzles, because the BDC wants to ensure that the nominees reflect our membership in terms of geographic and racial/ethnic diversity as well as balancing between having experienced members and new people participating.

National Governance News

Nicole Levine shared a brief synopsis of information and data that GSUSA presented to National Council Delegates during their 2025 State of the Movement webinar. The first slide outlined the respective responsibilities of GSUSA and the local 111 Councils. She reminded the attendees that GSUSA has been operating under a budget deficit for the past few years, but that FY24 ended slightly better (while still resulting in a shortfall).

Nicole then spoke on how GSUSA's FY24 objectives were met. Membership, for example, increased by 1.1% nationally, which was lower than the 5% growth goal. More than half the Councils grew by an average of 3.9%; however, the other Councils lost members. Overall, the girl retention rate was an average of 65%, slightly less than the previous year. GSUSA is focused on retaining older girls, with an emphasis on supporting troop leaders working with Cadettes, Seniors, and Ambassadors. Nicole also announced that the Gold Award Scholarship application is now open through April 15; GSUSA awards a \$5,000 scholarship to one Gold Award Girl Scout in each Council. She also shared that GSUSA established a new Volunteer Advisory Committee, made up of 18 adults chosen from almost 2,000 applicants. GSUSA has continued its efforts to make volunteering easier, by streamlining trainings, guidelines, and procedures. Nicole also provided examples of how GSUSA has strengthened its technology, including improving Volunteer Systems and Digital Cookie platforms. They also focused on intensive customer support, especially during recruitment season. In addition, they are promoting the use of Rallyhood, a communications tool for troops, families, and other groups.

Nicole reported that GSUSA launched two "accelerator" initiatives in FY24: 1) piloting four alternative cookie program models and 2) expanding the Girl Scout Experience Box to first-year Brownies. Finally, she talked about GSUSA's Movement Strategic Objectives for FY26-FY28. The overarching objective is "more girls choose Girl Scouts as THE place to learn, grow, and connect." The supporting objectives are to a) increase diversity, b) expand ways to

participate, c) create and share a compelling and easily understood value statement about the benefits of Girl Scouting, and d) strengthen the Movement financially.

Strategy Café Discussions

Board member and NC Delegate Ellen Iobst first reviewed the timeline for the 2026 National Council Session, including when Delegates should be elected as well as when proposals and discussion topics should be submitted to GSUSA for the National Board to consider including in the official NCS agenda. She further explained that there is a lot more transparency and proactive communication about this process, due to feedback from the 2023 National Council Delegates. Proposals and discussion topics can originate from either the National Board or local Councils and can be reviewed by the NCS Advisory Team; however, the National Board has the “sole authority” to set the agenda (per the Blue Book). Ellen then offered definitions and guidelines of aspects that make a strong proposal or discussion topic. These include having Movement-wide impact, being forward-looking, and having the benefits outweigh the cost.

Nicole LeVine explained that all attendees would have small group discussions at their tables or in Zoom rooms (with dedicated girls-only spaces) for 30 minutes.

During the Large Group Report-Outs, these suggestions and thoughts regarding governance-related proposals and discussion topics were shared:

- Adding DEI language supporting the LGBTQ community to the Blue Book
- Changing the fiscal year to September 1 - August 31 (or, even August 1-July 31)
- Changing the verbiage on how NCS locations are chosen
- Updating the Blue Book to allow NC Delegates more authority/power in choosing the NCS agenda
- Changing the wording in the GS Constitution under the “Beliefs and Principles” section from “united by a belief in God” to “united by a belief in community” (or some other alternative)
- Changing the Credentials section in the Blue Book by updating the GS Membership levels so that Daisies would now be the only three-year group (K-2), while the other levels would stay in two-year groups
- Update the Policies (p. 20 in the Blue Book), under the “Solicitation of Contributions” section to allow Cadettes “to solicit philanthropic donations... for Girl Scout [Silver] Award projects”
- Asking GSUSA about how to change the Congressional Charter to allow National Council Delegates to be non-citizens (Section 80303 a.1. on p. 31 of the Blue Book)

Other thoughts shared by attendees involved operational issues such as adding more money-earning opportunities, inquiring about more national girl programs, offering more in-person volunteer trainings, engaging parents more fully, and learning more about how GSUSA operates.

Closing

Board Chair Nicole LeVine thanked everyone for their thoughtful suggestions and concern about Girl Scouting’s future. She reminded the Delegate Council members that they would be receiving the “Official Notice of the Annual Meeting” on April 3. She also informed the attendees that we will not be providing lunch or hosting the After Party this year, due to

budget constraints. She also asked the Service Unit Delegates and Alternates to encourage their Service Unit teams to hold SU Delegate elections this spring and summer (between April 4-August 31) so that new Delegates/Alternates can attend training and be prepared for the Delegate Council meeting in the fall.

Finally, she asked that the 2023 National Council Delegation stand and be recognized. She and Kim thanked the 21 members of the Delegation for their service this triennium, especially in light of their participation in both the in-person NCS in 2023 and the first ever Special NCS in 2024.

Nicole adjourned the Spring Delegate Council Meeting at 8:23 p.m.

Please email any questions, concerns, or thoughts to governance@gsep.org