

DISTRICT ROLE:

The District's purpose is to function as an administrative division of Optimist International in furtherance of the purposes of Optimist International, its Bylaws, and Policies as established by the International Board of Directors. The District shall provide service and support to Clubs for the purpose of enhancing growth, participation, administration and youth service. (Bylaws Article VII, Section 2)

SUCCESSFUL DISTRICT BEST PRACTICES:

1. Dynamic Goal-Oriented Leadership Team
2. Ongoing Club Development and Training Program
3. Demonstrated Commitment to helping Clubs serve more Kids and Communities through Growth
4. Develop and Implement a Strategic Plan

THE STEPS TO IMPLEMENT THESE BEST PRACTICES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

1. Dynamic Goal-Oriented Leadership Team
 - a. Active identification of potential leaders
 - b. Effective training/growth/mentoring for development of leaders
 - c. Good communication skills stressed, promoted, and fostered
2. Ongoing Club Development and Training Program
 - a. Assist Clubs in conducting regular community needs assessment
 - b. Promote and communicate successful programs and Club best practices to Clubs
 - c. Provide effective results-oriented leadership training
3. Demonstrated Commitment to helping Clubs serve more Kids and Communities through Growth
 - a. Provide tools and assistance to Clubs to increase membership
 - b. Provide tools and assistance to expand service to new communities through creation of new Clubs
 - c. Provide tools and assistance to help clubs implement best practices that improve Club member retention in a changing environment
4. Develop and implement a Strategic Plan
 - a. Adopt and communicate a plan tailored to the District's needs
 - b. Review and monitor the implementation of the Plan regularly
 - c. Annually adopt and update the Plan

AT RISK SIGNALS:

No one of the following signals appearing alone means a District is at risk. These signals are generally evident over a multiple year time frame.

1. Leadership Decline
 - a. Multiple years without a Governor-Elect
 - b. Pattern of repeat District officers
 - c. Lack of communication/response from District to Optimist International
 - d. Lack of Plan for identification of leadership succession
2. Club Development Decline
 - a. Lack of effective and accessible leadership training for Clubs
 - b. Increase in number of Clubs deficient in dues
 - c. Decline of Clubs participation in District activities and training
3. Service Level Decline
 - a. Decrease in District membership (NOTE: From their experience, it is believed a District at or below 1200 members is no longer financially and administratively viable.)
 - b. Increasing number of Clubs in District that drop below 85% membership retention level (verify %)
 - c. Lack of positive net growth in number of Clubs
 - d. Decrease in number of Honor Clubs
4. Failure to develop and implement a Strategic Plan
 - a. Failure to adopt a Strategic Plan tailored to meet the District needs
 - b. Failure to monitor the implementation of the Plan regularly
 - c. Failure to annually review, update, and approve Strategic Plan

RECOVERY PLAN FOR AT RISK DISTRICTS:

For Districts that have exhibited an unacceptable number of At Risk Signals, Optimist International will follow the Recovery Plan as set forth below for the purpose of helping the District reduce and eliminate At Risk Signals. To help the District return to healthy status and to position the District to improve its delivery of best practices, the Optimist International Board of Directors will initiate the following process:

1. Optimist International staff will perform an annual audit of each District.
2. The staff will communicate the results to Optimist International Board of Directors for their review and action.

3. If the Board determines that a District exhibits an unacceptable number of signals, the Board will direct that a letter will be sent to the District informing them of the At Risk Status, that it is being considered for merger, advising them of the specifics that support a potential merger and that the District has one (1) year to mitigate or eliminate the adverse situation, and offer assistance as determined by the Board and staff. The notification shall include the Governor, Governor Elect, Lt. Governors, Committee Chairs, Past Governors and Club Presidents.
 - a. When a District has been identified as an At Risk District and being considered for merger by the Board of Directors of Optimist International, the Board Chair shall also appoint a District Rescue Specialist to work with the District. This individual shall (If possible) visit the District Leaders to offer assistance as determined by the Board and staff, advise the district of the specifics that support a potential merger and that the District has one (1) year to mitigate or eliminate the adverse situation as required by Article VII, Section 1, Optimist International Bylaws, as amended in 2008.
 - b. The District shall form a survival task force to develop or revise and implement an immediate action plan to mitigate or eliminate the specific adverse situations that support a potential merger and provide a long range strategic plan to increase membership and develop future District Leaders.
 - c. The District shall submit Monthly progress reports to the International office with copies going to the assigned District Rescue Specialist, and the OI Board Members and Vice President for the Region the District is located in.
4. If the District fails to perform its part in accordance with paragraph 3 above, and otherwise respond meaningfully to the written offer of assistance, Optimist International will make additional efforts to communicate with District during the At Risk Status.
5. If the District continues to fail to respond meaningfully, Optimist International will proceed with merger action in accordance with Board Policy ID-7.
6. If a District responds to the written offer of assistance and cooperates with the District Rescue Specialist to adopt and implement an immediate action plan and long range strategic plan but is still unsuccessful in curing its At Risk Status and efforts by the District and Optimist International are unsuccessful in curing the At Risk Status during the year of its At Risk Status, then the Optimist International Board of Directors will initiate a merger or annexation in accordance with Board Policy ID-7.

REMEDY PLAN FOR A DISTRICT IN DEFAULT OF ELECTING A GOVERNOR-ELECT

In addition to the Recovery Plan shown above, should a District fail to elect a Governor-Elect at its annual convention (or by special convention no later than January 15th of the year they are to take office) as required by International Bylaws Article VII, Section 6C, the International Board of Directors shall declare the District office vacant and the District in default and take the following actions:

1. The Board will direct that a letter be sent to the District informing them of the default status. The notification will be sent to the Governor and the District Secretary/Treasurer.
2. The Board of Directors will appoint a Conservator for the District who will work with the Governor and Optimist International Staff to provide direct support to the clubs in the defined geographical area of the District.
3. The District Officers and Committee Chairs will remain responsible for District Scholarship contests and Junior programs (JOI, Golf, etc.).
4. District Officers and Committee Chairs will remain responsible for planning and executing a District Convention in coordination with the assigned Conservator.
5. The assigned Conservator will be responsible for training, leadership development and growth efforts for clubs in the District geographical area, in coordination with District Officers, Committee Chairs and Optimist International Staff.
6. The assigned Conservator will be responsible for the finances of the District. The conservator will work with District Officers and Finance Committee to insure the District Dues are properly budgeted and allocated. Optimist International will take over Dues billing and collection.

Default Status will continue until the International Board of Directors determines the District is able to fulfill Article VII, Section 2 of the Bylaws or the District is merged or otherwise reconstituted in a different strategic operating unit. The International Board of Directors may appoint a new Conservator if it determines this to be necessary.

(Mar 2007; Sep 2008; Mar 2020)