


Student Voice in Education Governance

Why have Student Representatives on the school board?

- Student representatives bring
 - insight into student experience
 - creative thinking
 - Comments and questions from a student point of view
- Student representatives gain
 - leadership skills
 - citizenship experience

Why have Student Representatives on the school board?

- Adults who work with student representatives on boards
 - gain insights into the student experience
 - broaden their own perspectives
 - have a more positive perception of youth 

Proposing the idea of Student Representatives

- Have a vision for what the board could achieve by working with youth representatives and share it with your board members.
- Provide a research basis for why involving youth is important. [?]
- Give positive examples of youth action/activities in your community. [?]
[?]
- Reach out to other boards that have youth representatives to learn from their experiences.
- Discuss and understand the changes in the culture of the board that will be challenging for everyone involved.

Student Representatives: Nomination and Selection

- Have two student board representatives who can represent the interest and perspectives of the student body at the board level
 - One student school board representative should be a junior and one should be a senior.
 - The junior who is on the board should serve again as a senior. In this way, the board always has one experienced student school board representative.
- Make sure student school board representative selection illustrates the breadth of the student body by giving equal opportunity to all students who wish to serve.
 - An election or appointment processes that would fulfill this objective needs to utilize teacher student relationships.
 - The nomination process would begin with teachers nominating the students they felt fit the description.
 - The chosen students would then have the opportunity to apply if interested.

Adult Board Members: Working with Student Representatives

- Adult board members, superintendents, and principals all have critical roles in supporting student board representatives.
- Adult board members must value the important perspective that student representatives have on all issues and recognize that students have knowledge based authority about what is occurring in the school(s).
- An adult board member should be assigned to mentor the new student representative.

Preparation for all board members

- Familiarize new board representatives with the board's work by including them on all communications??
- Be patient the new representative's learning curve is probably very steep ??
- Make certain your new representatives know other members of the board on a personal level

Advice from Student Representatives

- Have confidence in yourself
- Find a guide
- Be a leader
- Stay interested and curious
- Show up
- Use the power you have
- Do something
- If you have a question, ask it.
 - It is likely that someone else has a similar one

Recommendations for Adult Board Members

- Nominate student representative to serve as co-chairs of your board and/or committees? ?
- Place a student representative report - focused on the board's work - at the beginning of each meeting
- Discuss and define responsibilities of youth representatives
- Discuss and decide how to gather student voice/input
- Make student representatives comfortable/knowledgeable

Student Representatives: Responsibilities

- Student Representatives have an essential role of conveying the ideas and needs of the students in the district to the school board.
- Student Representatives also have the responsibility of sharing concepts and decisions of the board with the student body

Student Representatives: Communication with other students

- Present to the middle and high school student councils
- Write a statement for the student announcements that includes school board information of interest to students
- Make yourself available to discuss school board issues
- Encourage students to watch the televised school board meeting
- Survey students to solicit their viewpoints on issues the Board is considering

Discussion, Decision Making and Voting

- Student participation should mirror the role of an elected adult board member, with the exception that students cannot make motions, vote on a motion, or attend executive sessions.
- However, students' may cast a symbolic vote on each motion that is recorded in the meeting minutes.
- Students should participate in all discussion and other parts of the meeting. With the exception of confidential material, all information provided to adult board members should also be provided to student board representatives.

Considering Legal Issues

- 16 V.S.A. 558(a) restricts eligibility for election to a school board to a legal voter in the school district. Only board members who have been elected under 16 V.S.A. §423 or appointed to the board under 16 V.S.A. §424 may vote to take action that is binding on the school district.
- Therefore, students serving on school boards should not make motions or vote on motions.
- Students should also not participate in executive sessions where confidentiality requirements prohibit sharing information about fellow students, school district employees, , or contracts with non-board members.

Orienting the Student Representative to board service

- Role and Responsibilities of the board
 - Vision, Policy, Budget and Finance, Superintendent, Monitoring, Community Engagement
- Nature of board issues: oversight, not micro-management.
- Role of the Board, Superintendent and Principal
- Meeting structures: Full board, committees, carousel structure, etc.
- Agenda formats: including time, place, length
- Robert's Rules of Order
- Relationships among and between: Governor, Agency of Education, State Board of Education, Supervisory Union / School District and local school boards

Joe Winrich, Board Chair, Leland and Gray Union Middle & High School

- Why have student representatives on school boards?
 - Learning experience
 - Student perspective and feedback
 - Board statement of purpose: students at the center
 - Budget example: 3D printer
 - Impact on student's learning experience

Joe Winrich, Board Chair, Leland and Gray Union Middle & High School

- Challenges
 - arrive with little understanding of board work
 - want to micro-manage
 - Need to learn and understand level at which the board operates
 - Long-term, sustainability, budgeting
 - Eye opening experience to look at the money
- Opportunities
 - Model good governance, behavior
 - Stay focused on what the board's job should be
- Recommendations
 - Training
 - 2 year terms for student representatives
 - Student Report - standing item on agenda
 - Solicit student input and opinion

Rainbow Chen, Student Representative Winooski School District and Vermont State Board of Education

- Why have student representatives on school boards?
 - Students know the school system
 - Students need a voice in governance and rule making
 - Students can take the initiative to address issues and opportunities

Rainbow Chen, Student Representative Winooski School District and Vermont State Board of Education

- Challenging
 - Lack of training
 - Need training to understand budgeting process, structure of meetings and the organization
 - Need orientation to understand Laws and Acts that effect school systems
- Promising
 - Understanding the complexity of our education system
 - Open our minds to new understandings and possibilities
 - Respect and care from adult board members
 - From announcing events to reporting student opinions and perspectives
 - Reaching out beyond friend group

Rainbow Chen, Student Representative Winooski School District and Vermont State Board of Education

- Recommendations
 - Adults
 - Open their minds to the world of students
 - Take into account what students are saying
 - We are working from the same goal
 - Students
 - Keep updated
 - In all schools
 - Take the work seriously rather than taking it for granted
 - Governance work takes time

Dylan McAllister, Student Representative Hazen Union High School and Vermont State Board of Education

- Why have student representatives on school boards?
 - Unique perspective
 - Largest stakeholder in their own education
 - To be valued and cared for

Dylan McAllister, Student Representative Hazen Union High School and Vermont State Board of Education

- Positives
 - Skills
 - Confidence
 - Sense of purpose
 - Voice for other students
 - Meaningful change
 - Think about the big picture

Dylan McAllister, Student Representative Hazen Union High School and Vermont State Board of Education

- Difficulties
 - Communication
 - Limited with peers
 - Thought about what the majority would think and what would be ethical
 - Most direct contact was through personal network, not systematic

Dylan McAllister, Student Representative Hazen Union High School and Vermont State Board of Education

- Recommendations
 - Support structure for communication with students
 - Advice for students
 - Have patience
 - Take time to understand issues
 - Find other ways to bring student voice to bear on decisions
 - Advice for adults
 - Develop and use effective communication strategies
 - Listening for understanding
 - Looking beyond the individual student

Resources, Supports and Training

- Guide to Student Voice in Education Governance
 - <http://www.vtvsba.org/student-voice>

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