

STUDENT SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER TOOLKIT



Special Section:
for Student Bodies

a project of
**REACHING
HIGHER NH**

The logo for Reaching Higher NH features a white silhouette of a hand reaching upwards, holding a red apple with a green leaf. The text "a project of" is positioned above the hand, and "REACHING HIGHER NH" is written in a bold, sans-serif font below the hand.

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FOR STUDENT BODIES



Allison Shelley/the Verbatim Agency for EDUImages

Value of a Student Board Member

- As a student, your opinion matters and should be represented on the school board. You have unique experiences because you are in the school building every day. Your student member can help get your opinions and concerns heard!
- Beyond the student board member, you also have the right to go to a school board meeting yourself and provide public comment. In fact, doing so strengthens student voice across the board and shows your support for the student board member position.

What Are Your Responsibilities?

- Individual Students:
 - Keep up with board meetings and activity.
 - Communicate questions, concerns, or opinions to your representative: Report to student member activities of interest, academic successes, school performances, sports scores, club activities, community service, etc.
 - Attend board meetings and provide public comment.

- Student Government: Per NH RSA 194:23-f, the student government of the high school shall establish procedures for the nomination and election of candidates for student board member.
 - The student government should create an official process for electing the student board member and advertise it to the student body. These procedures might include:
 - Nomination by students and/or teachers
 - Establishment of guidelines for campaigns, including:
 - Platforms
 - Debates/Q&A sessions
 - Spending limits, if applicable
 - Coordination between different high school buildings, if applicable
 - Selection of an election day and procedures for election, including:
 - Ballot form: paper or electronic?
 - Time of day: synchronous or asynchronous for the entire school?
 - Location: in a specific class, auditorium, or lunch room?

- The student government should create and publicize an official process for students to petition the student board member and present proposals and opinions to the school board, in accordance with NH RSA 194:23-f.
- Student voice in student government: The student government should be engaged on substantive policy issues, not just activities and events. They should strive to engage diverse members of the student body so that all perspectives are represented.

Key Tips for Success

- Attend any meetings the student board member holds and contribute your opinions.
- Ask the student board member to bring your concerns to the board.

Ensuring Effective, Diverse Leadership

The student government should make efforts to open the election to as many students from as many backgrounds as possible. Seek out candidates who are, for example:



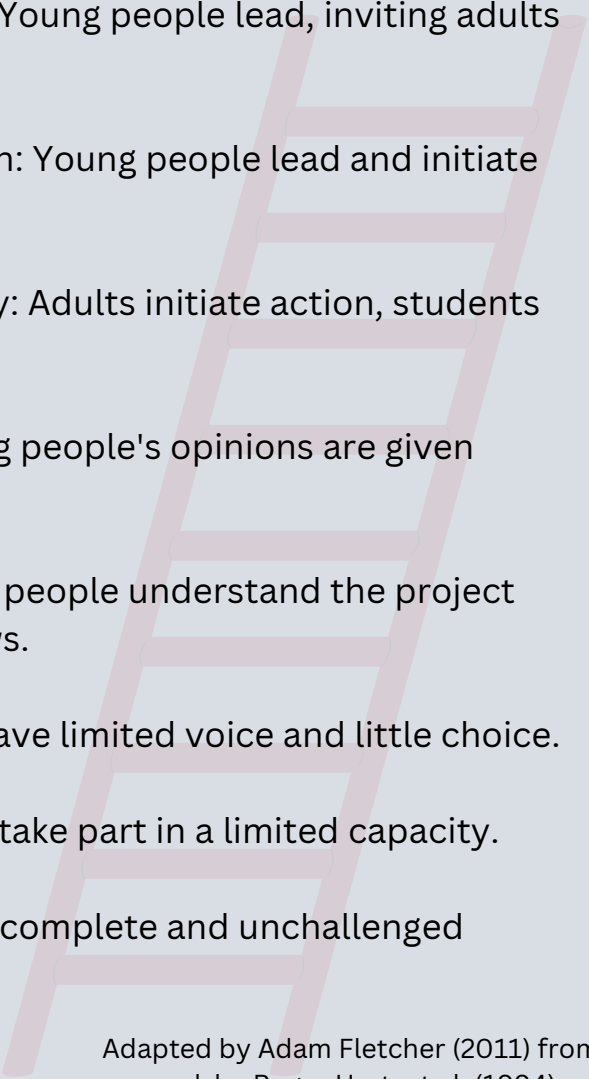
- Approachable and accessible to students
- Calm, thoughtful, and articulate
- Willing to dedicate time and effort to the position
- Willing to listen to and represent all students' opinions

To promote access to the position, don't limit the candidate pool by criteria such as GPA or previous leadership experience.

Additional Resources

- Student Voice: [Student Voice Ladder](#)
- [Center for American Progress Continuum of Student Voice](#)
- [Hart's Ladder](#)
- Youth Participatory Action Research Hub:
yparhub.berkeley.edu

Student Voice Ladder

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8. Student and Adult Equity: Young people lead, inviting adults to share in decision making.
 7. Completely Student-Driven: Young people lead and initiate action.
 6. Student and Adult Equality: Adults initiate action, students share in decision making.
 5. Students Consulted: Young people's opinions are given weight.
 4. Students Informed: Young people understand the project and adults respect their views.
 3. Tokenism: Young people have limited voice and little choice.
 2. Decoration: Young people take part in a limited capacity.
 1. Manipulation: Adults have complete and unchallenged authority.

Adapted by Adam Fletcher (2011) from
work by Roger Hart, et al. (1994)