

STUDENT SCHOOL BOARD MEMBER TOOLKIT



Special Section:
For Administrators

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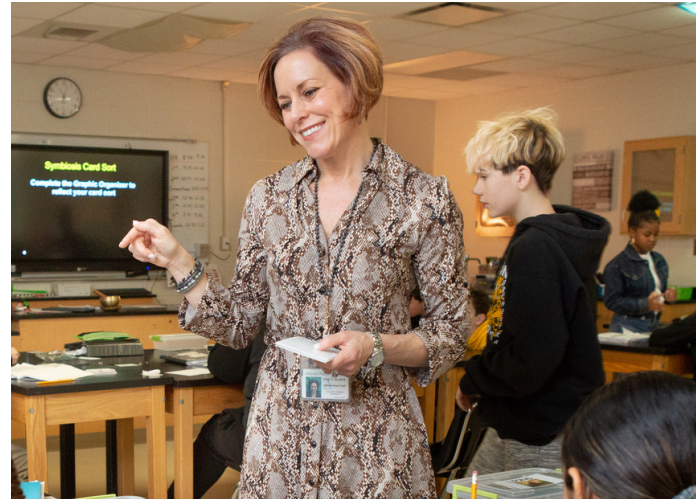
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FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Value of a Student Board Member

- Student members help make sure the board understands what it's like in the school building from a student perspective, which administrators may be removed from.
- Students should be involved in education decision-making as the primary stakeholders of the school system.



Allison Shelley/the Verbatim Agency for EDUImages

What Are Your Responsibilities?

- Superintendents:
 - Work with the board chair to make sure the board is committed to listening to the student board member(s).
 - Meet with student member(s) prior to their first meeting and periodically during the year.

“Take time to get to know the student rep before the first meeting.”

Jim Morse, Oyster River Superintendent

“Make [student board members] feel welcome, included, and valued.”

Jerry Frew, former Kearsarge Superintendent

- Principals:
 - Support student government in establishing election procedures (per NH RSA 194:23-f).
 - Support student board members in communication with the student body. This could include:
 - Facilitating mass emails
 - Helping the student organize town hall-style meetings and focus groups
 - Supporting the creation of a student advisory council
 - Periodically meet with student members during the year to discuss questions and concerns. Suggestion: at least once per month

Key Tips for Success

- Meet with student members at least monthly throughout the year.
- Respect student members' simultaneous working relationships with you and the members of the board.
- Respect the perspectives and unique experiences of the school board members, student and adult alike.



Readiness Checklist for School Boards and Administrators

- How can the board ensure that it has the time and resources to make a commitment to effective and meaningful youth participation/representation?
- What are the by-laws and policies that the board has, or needs, to ensure that young people are meaningfully and effectively represented?
- What are the board's vision and goals for youth participation?
- How can the board reflect on its current climate and identify ways to make board participation more inclusive to youth?
- Has the board defined a selection process? If appropriate, has the board outlined recruitment criteria for new representatives? (e.g., motivation, diversity, competence, quality of past experiences, etc.)
- Is there a mentor or coaching system in place?
- Does the board have a system in place for youth representatives to train new youth representatives?
- Are young people included in all decisions, not just those affecting their age group?
- Does the board's culture promote open discussion?
Is there time for all representatives (including youth) to speak at meetings?
- Are young people's terms of office consistent with those of adults?
- Can your youth representative substantially influence governance of the organization?
- Do young people have access to the resources and technology needed to participate in your board's work?
- Is there informal time to network and build relationships with other representatives?
- Are young people encouraged to keep in touch with their peers about their governance role?
- Is there a place where young people can voice their concerns outside the meeting environment?
- Do adults ask the youth representative(s) how they can better work together and take these recommendations seriously?
- If youth are confused about an issue, how does the board respond and guide them to the information they need?
- Is equal weight given to youth representative opinions?
- Do board representatives take the initiative to get to know all the representatives (including youth) of your board on a personal level?

- Does the board provide support for young people on speaking up in adult groups?
- Do you offer training for young people and adults in governance skills and board work?
- Are youth representatives briefed ahead of time on how to read financial statements?
- Are meetings accessible to students (time, location, seat at the table, etc.)?
- Are there adequate precautions and protocols to ensure that student board members are safe and protected at all times?