

STUDENT REPRESENTATION IN GOVERNANCE

MODEL POLICY

PURPOSE

The Board values the perspective of the students it serves. This policy establishes a district-wide Student Advisory Board and a rotating student delegate to the Board, so that student voice is a regular part of the Board's deliberations.

STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD

The district shall establish an application process, open to students enrolled in a district high school, for service on the Student Advisory Board. Each Board member may select two students from among the applicants to serve on the Student Advisory Board.

The Board shall ensure that every high school in the district has at least one representative on the Student Advisory Board. If Board members' individual selections would not result in representation from every high school, the Board shall coordinate and adjust its appointments before finalizing them so that every high school is represented.

TERM

A student's term on the Student Advisory Board shall run for one school year. A student who remains enrolled in a district high school may reapply for additional terms.

STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD MEETINGS

The Student Advisory Board shall meet on a regular schedule that it establishes. The Student Advisory Board may develop and submit recommendations to the Board on matters before the Board, and may request that an item be placed on a future Board meeting agenda for the Board's consideration.

DELEGATE TO THE BOARD

Each month, the Student Advisory Board shall select one of its members to serve as a non-voting delegate at the Board's regular public meeting. The role shall rotate among the Student Advisory Board's membership, so that different students serve as the delegate in different months over the course of the school year.

DELEGATE PARTICIPATION AND PREFERENTIAL VOTE

The delegate shall be a full participant in the Board's discussion and receive open-session meeting materials for that meeting on the same timeline as Board members. The delegate shall not attend closed sessions and shall not receive materials prepared for closed sessions.

On matters considered in open session, the delegate may cast a preferential vote. A preferential vote is a formal expression of opinion, recorded in the minutes and cast before the Board's official vote, that does not count toward the final outcome of the vote but shall be considered by the Board.

STAFFING AND SUPPORT

[INSERT: designated staff liaison, meeting space, transportation, translation, or other support]

CONSIDERATIONS FOR DISCUSSION

The items below are not part of the model policy language itself. They are issues a board may want to work through, with administration and with legal counsel, before adopting a policy along these lines.

Appointment versus petition is a real tradeoff.

This model has each Board member select students, rather than having students petition their peers for the role, as some states' single student representative models do. Appointment gives the Board a direct hand in ensuring every school and a range of perspectives is represented, and gives each Board member a closer relationship with the students they selected. Some Boards may prefer a policy that gives students the ability to vote for their representatives.

Set clear application criteria in advance.

Boards should decide what the application involves, such as a short written statement or an interview, and should be explicit about what they are looking for, so the process is transparent to applicants and doesn't come to feel arbitrary or dependent on who a given Board member already knows.

Let the Student Advisory Board set its own method for choosing the monthly delegate.

This policy leaves the method for selecting the delegate to the Student Advisory Board itself. Boards may want to set a minimum ground rule, such as requiring that every member serve as delegate at least once before anyone serves a second time, so the rotation doesn't quietly become dominated by a few students.

Check open meeting law.

Some states' open meeting laws apply to any advisory body a public board creates, which could mean the Student Advisory Board's own meetings need their own notice and minutes. Boards should have counsel confirm whether that is the case before the Student Advisory Board starts meeting on its own.



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A Note on Using This Model Policy

This model policy is a starting point, not a finished product. It is intended to prompt discussion among board members and with district administration, not to be adopted verbatim. Every board should revise this language to reflect its own district's circumstances, governance culture, and priorities before bringing it forward for adoption.

This model policy is published freely and openly. Boards, board members, administrators, and consultants are welcome to use, share, and amend it in any way that is useful to them, without needing to ask permission.

Boards considering this policy should consult with their district's legal counsel to confirm that any policy they adopt complies with applicable state law governing school board composition and open meetings, which varies by state and is not addressed in this document.