

SoundOut Guide to Students on School Boards

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About This Guide

This is a short guide to how to get students on school boards. We conducted research, facilitated workshops, and led a local campaign to get a student on a school board. Through our work, we have identified some best practices and other information we think YOU should know.

Share your knowledge on [our Facebook page](#), on [Twitter](#), or by emailing info@soundout.org.

Please cite as: Fletcher, A. & King, A. (2014) Guide to Students on School Boards. Olympia, WA: SoundOut. Retrieved at www.soundout.org.

Contents

Introduction	5
What Do They Do?	6
Where Is It Happening?	7
Case Studies	9
Why Have Students On School Boards?	11
Options for School Boards	12
Elected or Selected?	13
How To Get Students On School Boards	15
Moving Forward	20
Terms You Should Know	21
Resources	22
About This Guide	26



Introduction

Across the United States and Canada, there is a growing awareness that student voice matters, a lot. It turns out that student voice—which is any expression of any student, anytime, anywhere, about anything related to education—drives all aspects of learning and teaching in schools. More than ever before, students are beginning to ask why student voice isn't driving leadership in schools, too.

School boards have to change what they're doing as soon as possible. There is an old adage that says, "Nothing about us without us is for us." Starting at least in the 1930s, some students began to suspect this was true for them. In the 1960s, that became startlingly evident to a larger group of students. However, with the advent of the Internet, never before have more young people felt more compelled to take action.

This guide was written by a student activist and a national advocate working together to promote this concept. One of us launched a local campaign to get students on a school board; the other shares workshops and speeches to rally thousands across the continent to take action. Together, we have created this publication to share our insights so *you* can take action. We believe we can all get students on school boards, and by doing that, make schools more democratic—and meaningful—for everyone. Read on to learn how!

What Do They Do?

School boards have many different names, including board of regents, board of education, school committee, board of directors, and board of trustees. Sometimes, they are publicly elected entities; other times, they are appointed by elected officials; and other times, they are privately selected groups.

Regardless of what they're called, students can do all of the activities of a school board, including participating in all decision-making, advocacy, and personnel issues. That includes:

- **Vision:** Students can participate in setting the vision and goals of a district or state board of education.
- **Rules:** Student board members can adopt policies that give schools direction as they set priorities and achieve goals.
- **Hiring:** As board members, students can be responsible for hiring and evaluating the district or state chief school officer, whether a superintendent, executive director, or otherwise.
- **Money:** Students can work with other board members to adopt and oversee the annual budget.
- **Personnel:** Student board members can join the board in managing the collective bargaining process for employees.

School boards really manage the leadership side of local education agencies, or often the state education agency as well. A typical school board meeting includes all kinds of business items, including:

- Approving the school calendar
- Adopting curriculum
- Overseeing school construction
- Approving contracts with outside vendors.

Good school boards maintain a balance between the hard work of running the district at the same time as they focus on the district's priorities for academic achievement. Students should be part of all these activities, and more!

Where Is It Happening?

Roles for students on school boards are not routine. In fact, each state and province chooses whether they want the opportunity to engage students this way. The following states self-reported whether they allow students on boards of education. See the end of this guide for a complete summary.

State Boards of Education

SoundOut, working with a researcher in Kentucky, has found that currently, as many as 19 states in the United States include students on their state boards of education. They include, but aren't limited to:

- Alaska
- California
- Connecticut
- Hawai'i
- Illinois
- Louisiana
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Minnesota
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- Montana
- Nevada
- New Jersey
- North Carolina
- Tennessee
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Washington

The [Student Voice Initiative](#) found that in Canada, Ontario and New Brunswick are the only two provinces that have mandated student representatives on all school boards.

District School Boards

In 2012, 25 states reported to the National School Boards Association that they allowed students on district school boards. However, just because a state allows students on boards does not mean they actually have them there. For instance, in Delaware, two of 19 school boards have student representatives, and in Florida, seven of 67 school boards have student members. The states that allow students on local boards of education include, but aren't limited to:

- Alaska
- Arizona
- Arkansas
- California
- Connecticut
- Delaware
- Florida
- Iowa
- Kansas
- Maryland
- Massachusetts
- Michigan
- Minnesota
- New Jersey
- New York
- North Carolina
- Oregon
- Pennsylvania
- South Carolina
- Tennessee
- Utah
- Vermont
- Virginia
- Wisconsin
- Wyoming

Nowhere, Ever

14 states have laws that specifically do not allow students to serve on district school boards. They include:

- Alabama
- Georgia
- Idaho
- Indiana
- Louisiana
- Mississippi
- Missouri
- New Mexico
- North Dakota
- Ohio
- Oklahoma
- South Dakota
- Texas
- West Virginia

Case Studies

Students are being involved on boards of education in a variety of ways across the United States and Canada today. This is not meant to be a complete list of every student on every school board today; instead, these are case studies that highlight the roles of students.

California

The [California Association of Student Councils](#), founded in 1947, proudly proclaims that all their programs are student-led. One of their most powerful activities is the [Student Advisory Board on Legislation in Education](#), or SABLE. Each February SABLE convenes in the state capital to set education priorities and share them with key decision-makers. They have a direct audience with the Senate Education Committee, and their influence helped form a position for a full-voting student member of the California State Board of Education, whose position was created in 1969. Every summer, the Governor appoints one high school senior to the State Board of Education (SBE) for a one-year term. The student member functions as a regular voting member of the SBE. They gained full voting rights in 1983, including closed sessions.

Boston, Massachusetts

In the Boston Public Schools, the [Boston Student Advisory Council](#) is a citywide body of student leaders representing their respective high schools. BSAC, which is coordinated by the administered by the district office in partnership with a nonprofit called [Youth on Board](#), offers student perspectives on high school renewal efforts and inform their respective schools about relevant citywide school issues. In addition to personal skill development and knowledge building activities for their 20-plus members, BSAC students have strongly influenced district policy-making about cell phone usage, truancy, and reducing the drop out rate. They also have regular dialogues with the district superintendent and school board members.

Maryland

In Maryland, where students already have a role on the state board of education and in six district boards, in counties across the state there are active campaigns to increase the effect of student voice, with students calling for a full and regular vote in education policy-making. There is even an instance in Maryland where an 18-year-old named [Edward Burroughs](#) was elected to his local school board through regular office after running an effective campaign. The counties include Baltimore City, Baltimore County, Howard County, Montgomery County, and Prince George's County.

Denver, Colorado

The Denver, Colorado School District hosts a group of 30 students who represent the 15 high schools in district called the [Denver Student Board of Education](#). They are charged to serve as leaders in their schools and represent all students at the district level. Students create projects that affect their local schools and report back on them to the district. They have also created a curriculum that is used in several high school leadership classes. However, these students have to ask permission to speak to their regular board, and that does not happen frequently. According to a recent local newspaper article, the district has trepidations about giving students a regular voice in school policy-making. A school district attorney was quoted saying, "The law does not provide for a means by which to create a student position on the board, whether it's a voting position or not."

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Calling for student voice in educational decision-making, Sonia Yaco was the youngest-ever documented candidate for a publicly-elected school board position in the United States. In 1972, she ran for the Ann Arbor, Michigan school board. After announcing her campaign, Yaco completed the procedural requirements for candidacy. However, Ann Arbor Public Schools denied certification of Yaco's candidacy to stop her from running for the school board. A local district court judge allowed their decision to stand, and the election happened without Yaco. She received 8% of the total votes as a write-in candidate. In 1973, another lawsuit found that school boards can exclude students under eighteen from running for school-board seats, primarily because of concerns about "maturity."

Why Have Students On School Boards?

There are a lot of reasons to have students on school boards. Research shows* that some of them include:

- **Academic Achievement.** Meaningfully involving students on school boards can ensure student engagement, which raises academic achievement.
- **Fairness.** Students have valid opinions, knowledge, ideas, and experiences that school boards can benefit from.
- **Accuracy.** Having students on school boards can help ensure that adults know what is actually happening in schools right now.
- **Democracy.** “Anything about us without us is not for us.” Schools can put democracy into action with students on school boards.
- **Real Learning.** Engaging students on school boards may be one of the most powerful ways to teach students about democracy in society.
- **Better Teaching.** Student involvement throughout the leadership process of schools can show teachers school boards are committed to teaching and the sustainability of school.
- **Effective School Improvement.** Engaging students on school boards can significantly improve the effectiveness of school improvement measures in school.
- **Youth Development.** Students can become more effective learners when they are engaged on school boards, and in processes of decision-making affecting them throughout their lives.
- **School Culture.** The attitudes, policies, and structures of schools may change when students are on school boards.
- **Embracing Diversity.** Embracing a diversity of perspectives can make student voice the most significant tool in the school leadership toolbox.
- **The "Bottom Line".** Students on school boards can help schools save money while meeting the rigorous demands facing public education systems.
- **Integrity.** Educators and school leaders have an ethical responsibility to engage students as partners throughout education, particularly in the decision-making that affects them every single day.

MAYBE the most important factor to engaging students on school boards is that it just feels right. Voters, teachers, administrators, parents, board members, businesspeople, higher education... Each of these has a stake in school board decision-making. Students have a major stake, too, and it is time to acknowledge it.

** For research supporting this section, see the Resources section.*

Options for School Boards

There are many options to consider when school boards are considering adding students. Here are a few:

Equitable Engagement

School boards establish a tiered system that ensure equitable engagement for all students and adults in all schools throughout the district. Beginning on the classroom level, students identify other students they want to represent them. Similarly on the building level, students name their representatives. On the district level, building representatives gather to discuss issues and actions. An equal number of students to adults on the school board are elected to represent their peers at every meeting, in every committee, and throughout every function of the school board with a full vote.

Complete Connection

Creating a district student advisory committee with representatives from each high school can form a complete connection between students and adults. Students are chosen by their peers through processes designed to reflect *entire* student bodies, and not merely popularity contests. As advisors to the school board, students are meaningfully involved throughout issues that directly affect them, and have opportunities to introduce and challenge other issues accordingly.

Interested Parties

A student is selected by the district school board to represent student interests in district policy making. Minus an intact policy that addresses students' rights to meaningful involvement, the student speaks only when spoken to, and does not bring issues to the floor. Their attendance represents adults' interest in student voice without any substantive ability to affect change in schools.

Tokenizing Students

Simply and routinely asking students to speak up about what they think about school board policy-making issues is the lowest form of student representation on school boards. Often a voluntary request, this sometimes happens through facebook pages, online surveys or in-person student forums. Mostly it is done by asking students to attend school board meetings, then making them speak at the appropriate times. These are well-meaning, but poorly informed forms of student involvement, as they do not require students have an active role in the process of decision-making beyond that of "informant".

Elected or Selected?

How do students get on board? According to a 2012 survey by the National School Board Association provided to SoundOut, states vary widely for whether students are elected or selected to serve on local school boards. The following states responded that they do have students on district boards, and they shared how they get there.

STATE	ELECTED OR SELECTED?
Alaska	Selected—Appointed by the local school board.
Arizona	Election then selection—Student body president.
Arkansas	Both—Process determined district-by-district.
California	Both—Process determined district-by-district.
Connecticut	Selected—Principal appoints.
Delaware	Election then selection—Student body president.
Florida	Selected—By the local school board.
Iowa	Selected—By the local school board.
Kansas	No response.
Maryland	Both—Process determined district-by-district.
Massachusetts	Both—Process determined district-by-district.
Michigan	No response.
Minnesota	Both—Process determined district-by-district.
New Jersey	Both—Under 18, selected; over 18, elected.
New York	Both—Under 18, selected; over 18, elected.
North Carolina	Both—Process determined district-by-district.
Oregon	Both—Process determined district-by-district.
Pennsylvania	Election then selection—Student body president.
South Carolina	No response.

Tennessee	Both—Process determined district-by-district.
Utah	Both—Process determined district-by-district.
Vermont	Both—Process determined district-by-district.
Virginia	Elected by the local high school.
Wisconsin	Selected—Superintendent chooses.
Wyoming	Both—Process determined district-by-district.

Selection or Election?—Examples

In Maryland, generally, student representatives from each secondary school gather in a kind of mini-election convention and put forth three names for consideration by the local board and/or superintendent. As many as seven counties have student members on board in some fashion.

Students in New Jersey who are under 18 serve in an advisory capacity that is appointed for a one-year term. They have no voting representation. Students who are 18 years old or older and meet the voting requirements are elected for a three-year term. They may vote on anything not directly relating to their own school.

In New York, students who are over 18 years old and meet other minimum requirements can be officially elected. Students who are under 18 are appointed as ex-officio representatives, typically with non-voting status. The selection of a student representative is a bit complicated. He/she can be identified by a variety of methods, must be recommended by the superintendent and ratified by a majority of the board. The student must be a senior who has attended a high school in the district for at least the last two years.

North Carolina local boards mostly select the class president at local high schools to serve as a student representative on the school board. In Oregon, most local boards appoint student representatives.

How To Get Students On School Boards

Here are several practical, purpose-filled steps to *take action* and get students on school boards. You can do them right now!

1. **Before You Start:** Work out exactly what you are looking for in having a student on the school board. Outline the specifics of your proposal, compare it to other existing school boards with students, and determine what you are seeking to accomplish. Run your ideas by others for input. Be sure to do your research.
2. **Spread the Word:** Talk with your friends, teachers, principal, and other decision-makers in schools and throughout your community. Build support and train students about student engagement, why it matters, and how they can experience it more. Share useful websites, materials, and other info with people who care or need to know.
3. **Get Going:** Write a letter to the members of the school board explaining why you believe the school board should consider adding students.
4. **Work Within the System:** Bring your proposals to your school's student council. It would be more influential to say that your proposal has the support of the student body if the student council endorses your ideas. However, if they do not support your proposal, move on to the next step.
5. **Seek Adult Allies:** Try talking to your school's principal about your ideas and request his or her support. Your school's principal might gladly support your ideas, but on the other hand, he or she may be completely against having a student. If you obtain the support of your school's principal, seeking the support of your school's teachers will be much easier. Begin seeking the support of teachers by first asking the teachers who know you well. As you get more support, ask other teachers within the school.
6. **Move Forward:** Ask all the administrators and teachers in favor of your proposal to sign a petition that outlines your proposal. If you have the support of your school's administrators, be sure to have them sign the petition before any teachers. Teachers will feel more comfortable signing a document if they see their bosses' signatures on it as well.
7. **Build the Network:** After you have established a solid base of support at your school, contact the student councils and principals from other high

schools in your school district to gain support and popularity for your proposal.

8. **Spread the News:** As you gather support, write a simple press release outlining your efforts and the amount of support thus far. Give a copy of the press release to your school's newspaper, and send it all of the local media outlets by fax or email. Be sure to include newspapers, television stations, and radio stations of all sizes.
9. **Look to the Treetops:** Contact local and state politicians explaining your efforts. Be sure to ask for their support. Although these government officials have little control over the school board, it is a good idea to get their endorsements.
10. **Spreak the Truth:** Research the process in obtaining formal speaking time at school board meetings. Make sure that you are familiar with the rules of your board, such as the amount of time you are given to speak. Be sure to have enough copies of your documents for every member of the school board. If you cannot obtain formal speaking time, speak during the public comment session.
11. **Reach the Grassroots:** Ask students, teachers, and principals in support of your proposal to attend the school board meeting with you. Be sure that the local media outlets are informed of the date, time, and location of the meeting.
12. **Write a Letter or Email:** You'll want to appeal to the people in positions of authority. Do that by writing a formal letter or email.

Name
Address
City, ST ZIP
Phone Number
Email Address

Date

Dear School Board Members:

As a student, I believe that it is necessary for [Name of School System] to implement the idea of creating non-voting seats on the school board for several students from the district.

I feel that it is necessary for students to have representation in the decisions that affect their education. Students will feel like they are an integral part of making these decisions. By giving a qualified student a non-voting position on the board, youth will be empowered with direct representation and provided an opportunity to experience actual, legal policymaking first-hand. Their knowledge of the local government would also be greatly enhanced.

By creating a direct dialogue between the student body of [Name of County or City] and the school board parents and students will be better informed of important school policy decisions; the school administration will have a source of regular comprehensive feedback from the students affected by their policies; and a spirit of self-education on the behalf of students would be immediately fostered. A non-voting position on the school board would allow students to learn the process that goes into improving education, thus encouraging further interaction between the community and the school board.

I strongly encourage you to consider this proposal as it directly benefits the school board, school administration, teachers, parents, and students. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Name
Position (if applicable)
School

12. Write a Sample Proposal: Write a concrete proposal that details of the position. You might include the following:

Reasons For Position

- Students will be empowered with direct representation.
- Students will be provided an opportunity to experience actual, legal policymaking firsthand.
- Students will have an increased knowledge of local government systems.
- It teaches students that local government is often the level that has the most impact on daily lives.
- Students will learn the process that goes into improving education, thus encouraging further interaction between the community and the school board.
- By creating a direct dialogue between the student body of [Name of County or City] and the school board, parents and students will be better informed of important school policy decisions.
- School administrators will have a source of regular comprehensive feedback from the students affected by their policies.

- School board members are not as involved in all of the issues that face students every day, unlike students who sit in class for nearly 8 hours a day.
- Students often feel more comfortable sharing personal information with other students than with adults they may not know.
- There are countless school boards across the nation that have students on board. For example, Washington DC, Boston, Baltimore, Portland OR, and San Francisco all have students on school boards.

Share a Possible Selection Process

The Board of Education would be ultimately responsible for deciding how a student is selected. A possible selection method, however, is to make the project a coordinated effort among all [#] high school student councils. The president or other appointed delegate from each student council would sit on a student panel. This student panel would then elect one person to be the district's student school board member. The students would attend the school board meetings, share their opinions and the opinions of other students, and vote up or down on all topics. He or she would proceed to report to the student panel after the meeting.

Detail the Possible Responsibilities

The student panel could meet together before a school board meeting. The students on the school board would gather ideas and feedback from the delegates concerning agenda items. They would then present these opinions to the school board.

- After the school board meeting, the students would either have another meeting or contact all of the delegates by some means of communication.
- Be a liaison between the school board and the student councils of the [County or City] high schools.
- Represent the delegates of the [#] high school student councils and his or her peers, just as a school board member would represent his constituents.
- Other duties that the school board deems appropriate for students to carry out.

13. Present Your Idea: Presentation is highly important. When you present your proposal to faculty, the student council, and especially the school board, you must remain confident. If you have been invited to speak at a school board meeting, be sure to dress in slacks, a dress shirt, and possibly a tie for men, and a blouse and skirt or dress for women. Try not to talk fast, but speak loudly and clearly so that everyone can hear you. Be sure that you are prepared to answer anyone's questions.

14. Always Be Prompt: You should arrive a few minutes early to the board meeting if you have never been to a meeting before. Allow yourself enough time to arrive on time while taking traffic or unforeseen incidents into consideration. If you cannot show up for some reason, notify the secretary of the school board as soon as possible. If it is until after the school board meeting has taken place, write a letter of apology and explanation to the school board.

15. Get Some Press: If possible, it is a good idea to inform the press of your efforts. Write a press release and fax or email copies to your local newspaper, local TV news stations, local radio stations, and even your local AP bureau.

Moving Forward

Once you've secured positions for students on school boards, there are many ways to get started. The following steps were adapted from a [publication](#) by the National School Boards Association:

1. Ensure student representatives are a true cross-section of your district's student culture, involvement, and interests.
2. Make positions for six to 10 students to join the school board so that students are equally represented in all conversations.
3. Have students meet with the entire school board as frequently as possible.
4. Encourage students to invite caring adults to come along with them—for instance, a teacher, coach, youth worker, or other adult ally they trust.
5. Have school board meetings in comfortable locations as frequently as possible—and allow them to be selected by students.
6. Routinely schedule your school board meetings to run 60 to 90 minutes.
7. Ask students and adults to write up their reflections on the meetings afterward, and ask for at least both students and adults to volunteer to share those reflections. They could be published in a school publication or on the district website.

Once students are on board, schools will be transformed *forever*. GOOD JOB!

Terms You Should Know

- **Board of Education** is generally synonymous with **school board**. Both terms can be used interchangeably.
- **Meaningful student involvement** is a framework for engaging students as partners throughout schools and the education system.
- **Student board member**, or a **student trustee**, is a *fully voting*, complete member of a school board who has the same rights and responsibilities of adult school board members.
- **Student council** is a form of **student government**, just like **student senate** and **associated student body (ASB)**.
- **Student engagement** is the sustained connection a student has to schools and learning.
- **Student representative** is a partially participating student who is meant to represent students without having substantive authority.
- **Student voice** is any expression of any student about any part of education, anywhere at anytime.

Notes

- The phrase “student board member” is sometimes used synonymously with “student representative”. Both terms are distinct though, and should be used with full awareness of their meaning.
- In some locations, a board of education oversees the county schools (usually defined by political boundaries). The county (political boundaries) is typically divided into districts or regions. However, there are some locations where the geographical county is divided into public county schools and public city schools. It is still possible for city schools to have districts, but not always.
- According to Canada’s [Student Voice Initiative](#), unlike adult school board trustees or representatives who are elected to represent the voices of taxpayers, student trustees are students elected by their fellow peers to represent the voices of the student body on their local school board. The student trustee is not only responsible for voicing students’ concerns on the issues they care about, but also has the ability to propose policies on students’ behalf and exercise a vote.

Resources

SoundOut has many more resources related to Students on School Boards, including studies, research summaries, and examples. Here are some:

- “Typical Engagement? Students on School Boards in the United States“ soundout.org/article.113.html
- “Guide to Students on School Boards” soundout.org/Guide.106.html
- “How Decisions are Made in Schools” soundout.org/howdecisions.html
- “65 Ways Students Can Change Schools” soundout.org/article.115.html
- National report of students on state boards soundout.org/webbreport.html
- National report of students on district boards soundout.org/Summary.html
- “Frameworks for Meaningful Student Involvement“ soundout.org/frameworks.html
- “Resources for Students as Decision-Makers” soundout.org/decision-making.html
- “Unleashing Student Voice: Research Supporting Meaningful Student Involvement” soundout.org/article.103.html
- “What Is Student Voice About?” soundout.org/article.107.html
- “Student Voice in School Building Leadership” soundout.org/article.105.html
- “Meaningful Student Involvement Research Guide“ soundout.org/MSIResearch.pdf

Other Organizations

Since [SoundOut](https://soundout.org) was founded, there have been a growing number of organizations working to promote students on school boards and other forms of meaningful student involvement. Below are a few.

- [Student Voice Initiative](#)
- [Ontario Student Trustee Association](#)
- [Student Voice Matters](#)
- [Student Voice](#)
- [California Association of Student Councils](#)
- [Maryland Association of Student Councils](#)
- [National School Boards Association](#)

Summary of Laws

Every state has different laws affecting the roles of students on school boards. Generally speaking, these positions are not recognized as the rights of students to have. However, with increased interest in student engagement, there is an increased possibility that the laws affecting student representation on boards of education could change. This is a summary of those laws from across the United States.

STATE	SUMMARY OF THE LAW(S) ON STUDENT INVOLVEMENT ON DISTRICT AND/OR STATE SCHOOL BOARDS.
Alaska	There is no specific law addressing whether students can legally join or vote on district or state-level school boards in Alaska.
Arizona	Students can join district and state level school boards; however, they cannot legally vote in Arizona.
California	Students in California can join district and state level school boards. Students can legally vote.
Colorado	In Colorado, students cannot legally join district school boards or vote on them.
Connecticut	Students can legally join district and state school boards; they cannot legally vote on either in Connecticut.
Delaware	Students in Delaware can legally join district school boards; they cannot vote on them.
Hawaii	Students in Hawaii cannot legally join or vote on district school boards. Students can join the state school board; they cannot vote on the state school board.
Idaho	Students cannot join or vote on district school boards in Idaho.
Illinois	Students in Illinois can join and vote on district school boards. Students can join the state school board; however, they cannot vote on the state school board.
Indiana	Students in Indiana can join district school boards; however, they cannot vote.
Iowa	There is no specific law regarding students joining or voting on district school boards in Iowa. Students can join the state school board; however, they cannot vote.

Louisiana	Students in Louisiana can join the state school board; however, they cannot vote.
Maine	Students can join and vote on district school boards.
Maryland	Students in Maryland can join district school boards; however, they cannot vote. Students can join and vote on the state school board.
Massachusetts	Students in Massachusetts can join district school boards; however, they cannot vote. Students can join and vote on the state school board.
Michigan	Students in Michigan can join district school boards; however, they cannot vote.
Minnesota	Students in Minnesota can join district school boards; however, they cannot vote. Students cannot join or vote on district school boards.
Mississippi	Students cannot join or vote on the state school board in Mississippi.
Missouri	Students cannot join or vote on the state school board in Missouri.
Montana	Students can join the state school board in Montana; however, they cannot vote.
Nebraska	Students cannot join or vote on district school boards in Nebraska.
Nevada	Students in Nevada can join district and state school boards; however, they cannot vote on either.
New Hampshire	Students can join and vote on district school boards in New Hampshire.
New Jersey	Students in New Jersey can join district and state school boards; however, they cannot vote on either.
New Mexico	Students in New Mexico can join district school boards; however, they cannot vote.
New York	Students in New York can join district school boards; however, they cannot vote.
North Carolina	Students in North Carolina can join district and state school boards. Students cannot vote on the state school board.

Ohio	Students in Ohio can join district school boards; however, they cannot vote. Students cannot vote on the state school board.
Oklahoma	Students in Oklahoma can join district school boards; however, they cannot vote. Students cannot vote on the state school board.
Oregon	Students in Oregon can join district school boards; however, they cannot vote. They cannot vote on the state school board either.
Pennsylvania	Students in Pennsylvania can join district school boards; however, they cannot vote. Students cannot vote on the state school board.
Tennessee	Students in Tennessee can join district and state school boards. They cannot vote on district school boards; however, they can vote on the state school board.
Texas	Students cannot join or vote on district school boards in Texas.
Utah	Students can join and vote on district school boards in Utah.
Vermont	There is no specific law in Vermont regarding students joining or voting on district school boards. Students can join and vote on the state school board.
Virginia	Students in Virginia can join district and state school boards; however, they cannot vote on either.
Washington	Students in Washington can join district and state school boards; however, they cannot vote on either.
West Virginia	Students cannot join or vote on district school boards in West Virginia.
Wisconsin	Students in Wisconsin can join the state school board.

About This Guide

This guide was written by Adam Fletcher and Adam King for SoundOut.

Adam King was a high school junior when he coordinated a local campaign in Asheville, North Carolina, to add a student adviser onto the local school board. He made significant progress and throughout that time and accumulated dozens of appearances in the news media. Today, he is persuring his passion for nursing in his home state.

Adam Fletcher has trained thousands of students and school boards across the United States and Canada on student voice, student engagement, and meaningful student involvement. He was the first-ever student engagement specialist for Washington State’s education agency, studying these issues in hundreds of school districts. The author of dozens of publications about schools, he has been published by ASCD and Scholastic School Administrators magazine, and has trained for the National School Boards Association and several districts on this topic.

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