



Elevating Student Voice on School Boards

CASB 85th Annual Convention

December 13, 2025




nsbma

National Student Board
Member Association

nsbma.net

Objectives

- **Understand the Role and Importance of Student Board Members (SBMs):** Explore the SBM role and its significance in educational decision-making from an intergenerational perspective.
- **Examine Challenges in Student Representation:** Understand the risks and unintended consequences of tokenizing student voices, as well as strategies for meaningful student engagement that is supported by adult allies.
- **Empower Participants to Elevate Student Voice:** Center the SBM position as a primary vehicle for involving students in educational decision-making.
- **Understand the National Context:** Share the objectives, impact and insights from NSBMA

Agenda

Welcome and introduction to the session

Ice breaker

What is a Student Board Member? Where do they exist around the country?

Structure of the SBM role and learning with a Colorado community

Q&A

Commitments and thinking about your context

Closing

Our Mission

We connect, support, and empower student school board members and other educational stakeholders to advance student representation in education decision-making, providing the skills, tools, and knowledge to drive meaningful change in their schools and communities.



Our Vision

We envision an education system where students, as primary stakeholders, play a central role in all aspects of governance and decision-making, working with adults as equals to improve education.



Who is in the room?

Raise your hand if you are a....

- Current student
- School board member
- District administrator
- Other?
- Representing a district where there is one or more student board member on the school board

Ice Breaker

What's your screen time?

If you have an iPhone:

1. Open Settings
2. Search Screen Time
3. Open Screen Time

Ice Breaker

Collin

Daily Average
8h 19m



See All App & Website Activity >

Marissa

Last Week's Average
6h 57m ⬇️ 19% from last week



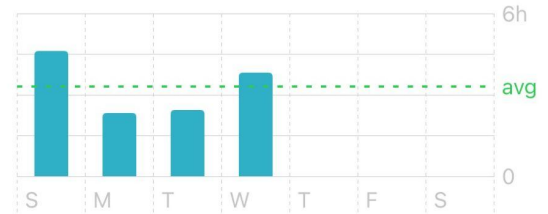
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Updated today at 4:02 PM ✨

LIMIT USAGE

Andrea

Daily Average
3h 18m



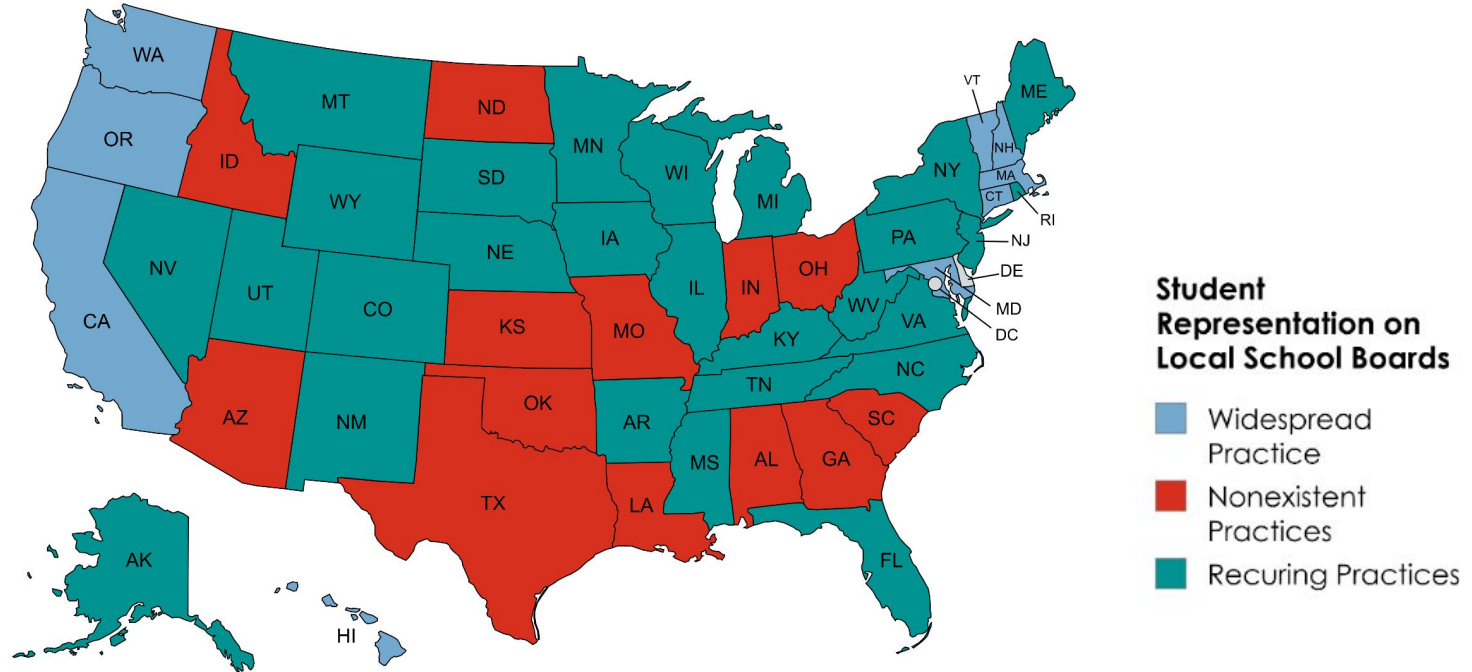
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What is a Student Board Member (SBM)?

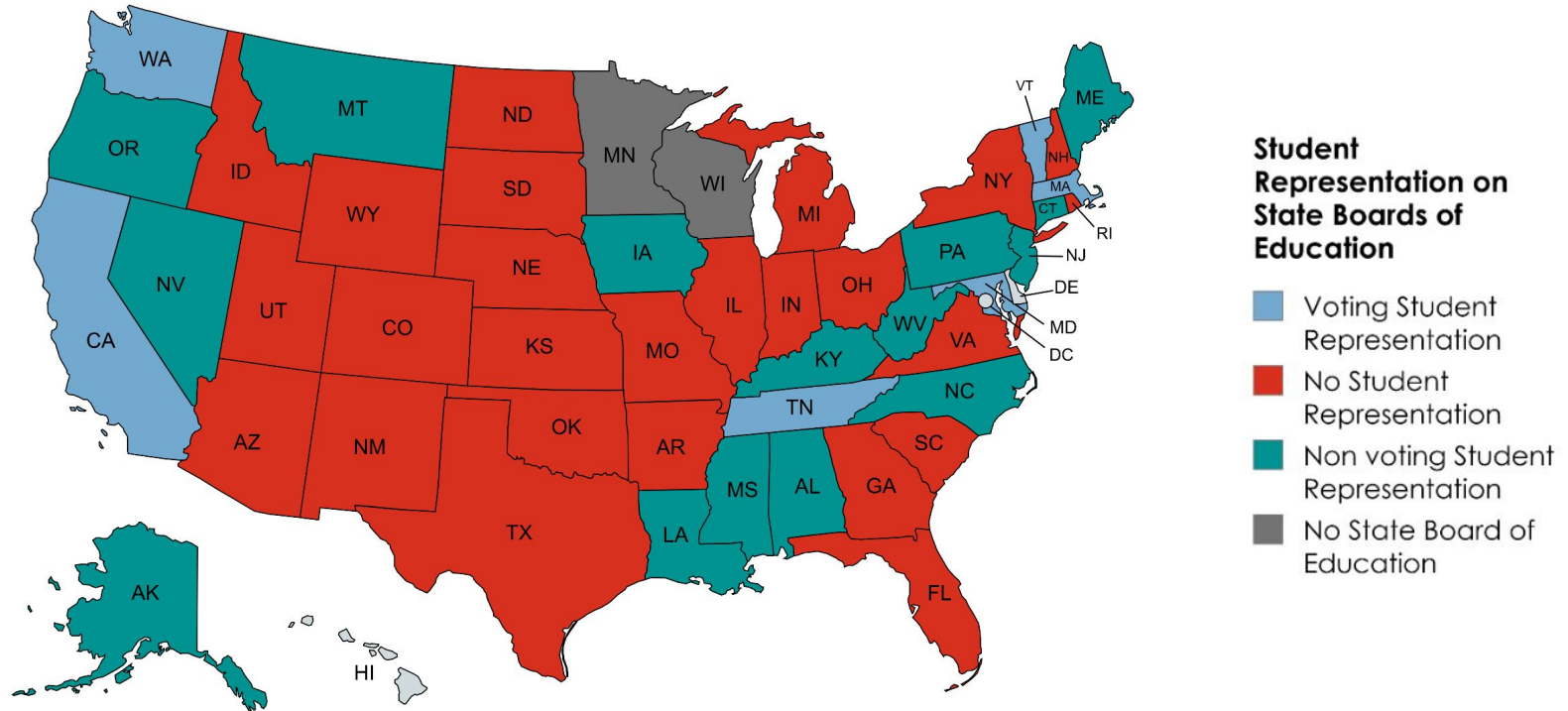
Student serving on a **state, local, regional, or charter** school Board of Education or equivalent who is invited to and actively participates in at least 50% of regular business meetings in their official capacity.

Student board members are the membership of NSBMA

Local Student Board Member Presence



State Student Board Member Presence



Ice Breaker

Mentimeter questions

Student Leadership

Democracy

Education



Democracy

- Making education **more responsive to student needs** & bringing boards of Education **closer to the student population**
- Students **learn civics in practice**: only government role for youth under 18
- **Take A Seat Campaign**: support student leaders and school districts in creating the SBM position locally, or to advance statewide policy on SBMs
 - *Draft student board member policy for school districts*

Education

- Education **with & for students**: learning from student perspectives
- **Intergenerational partnership**: adults & students co-creating solutions to educational challenges

Student-Led Change

OREGON

560,000 students

Haley Hardcastle passes mental health days bill in Oregon.

MARYLAND

180,000 students

SBM Nick Asante passes mental health day policy change in Montgomery County.

CALIFORNIA

5,800,000 students

The California Student Board Member Association passes mental health day policy statewide.

NATIONWIDE

Student board members in our network inspired bills across the USA. Today, 13 states have passed a mental health day policy.

IMPACT

The network provided by NSBMA helped over **15 million students** across **13 states** benefit from mental health day policies.

200+ current & former student board members

20+ States in which our network members are present

20 million students represented by SBMs in our network

Elevating Student Voice

Selection Process

| Emerging Role for Student Voice | Emerging Representation | Role for Students in Governance Decisions | Elevated Role for Students in Governance Decisions |
|---|--|---|---|
| District does not currently have a student board member but has an active student government. | One high school student is selected by the superintendent in collaboration with the high school principal to sit on the school board until they graduate from high school. | Student board members are selected by the student council of the high school through an application process. There are multiple student board members with staggered terms. | Student board members are elected. All enrolled middle and high school students in the district are eligible to vote. |

Requirements and Compensation

| | Emerging Role for Student Voice | Emerging Representation | Role for Students in Governance Decisions | Elevated Role for Students in Governance Decisions |
|---------------------|---|---|---|---|
| Requirements | District does not currently have a student board member but has an active student government. | There is a SBM in the district and there are GPA requirements for the role. | Students must meet eligibility requirements to participate in extracurricular activities in order to be a student board member. | All students enrolled in grades 9-12 are eligible to run for student board member. * |
| Compensation | District does not currently have a student board member but has an active student government. | District has SBMs but they are not compensated for their role. | SBMs are compensated equivalently to adult board members. | SBMs are compensated for their time, energy, and leadership—through a stipend, elective course credit, scholarship, transportation or gas mileage reimbursement, and other forms of tangible support. |

Onboarding, Training, and Support

| Emerging Role for Student Voice | Emerging Representation | Role for Students in Governance Decisions | Elevated Role for Students in Governance Decisions |
|---|--|--|--|
| District does not currently have a student board member but has an active student government. | There is a SBM role in the district. Students connect with each other around transition of role, adult board members are welcoming to students and fill them in when they have questions. Onboarding, training, and support are informal often initiated by the student. | Students have access to professional development opportunities and are invited into conversation with adult board members and district administrators prior to meetings. Onboarding, training, and support norms are not codified in policy. | Students have access to professional development opportunities and the funding to attend them, there is formal training to start the role included in the district policy (equivalent to what adult board members receive). Students have regular check-ins with district administrators before their term and at regular intervals throughout the year, these practices are codified in local policy. |

Voting and Motioning Rights

| Emerging Role for Student Voice | Emerging Representation | Role for Students in Governance Decisions | Elevated Role for Students in Governance Decisions |
|---|--|--|---|
| District does not currently have a student board member but has an active student government. | There is a SBM role in the district, student board member(s) serves in a purely advisory capacity. | <p>Students have preferential voting rights but are not able to make a motion.</p> <p>Students have voting rights on certain issues. Students have limited motioning rights.</p> | <p>Student board members have full voting and motioning rights.*</p> <p>* We recognize this can be a legal issues in some states.</p> |

Inviting Students into District Decision-Making

| Emerging Role for Student Voice | Emerging Representation | Role for Students in Governance Decisions | Elevated Role for Students in Governance Decisions |
|---|--|---|---|
| District does not currently have a student board member but has an active student government. | <p>There are student government structures in the middle and high schools.</p> <p>There are avenues for students to impact decision-making and connect with decision-makers.</p> | There is an active student council in the middle and high schools and a student advisory council. | District has SBM and an active student advisory council. School leaders regularly engage students' feedback around school decisions and use that feedback to inform next steps. Every school in the district has formal structures for student decision-making and the SBMs regularly connect with each school. |

Questions for Us?

Turn and Talk

Begin by brainstorming and then turn to a neighbor at your table

- Working with a neighbor, how might you think about moving toward a model of centering students in your community? Maybe pick one dimension that would be helpful in your context.
- Identify one key area and a concrete next step you can take to further elevate student voice in governance.

Report Out



Resources



NATIONAL STUDENT BOARD MEMBER ASSOCIATION

Empowering Student Board Members Nationwide Resources to Strengthen Student Representation and Impact

Access toolkits, policy guides, and model bylaws designed to help student board members lead with confidence, advocate effectively, and drive meaningful change in their districts. *New resources are added regularly, so check back often for updates.*

Featured Resources:

- **Model Bylaws** — Establish a Student Board Member position and define clear responsibilities.
- **Getting Started Toolkit** — Navigate your role and represent your peers with professionalism.
- **Policy Toolkit** — Learn strategies to influence policy, build partnerships, and lead with purpose.
- **Effective Representation Toolkit** — Collect meaningful student feedback, reach diverse stakeholders, and advocate for solutions rooted in real student experiences.

Explore additional materials curated from state associations advancing youth voice in education governance.

👉 Visit nsbma.net/resources to explore all instructional materials.

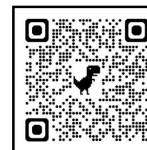


National Student Board Member Association



nsbma.net

SCAN
ME!



Thank You!



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