



Responsible Office: Office of Accountability

BOARD POLICY 5310

STUDENT VOICE

PURPOSE

The Board of Trustees ("Board") is committed to ensuring all students are empowered to voice issues and ideas that affect their education, learning environment and overall school experience. The Board recognizes the importance of establishing and maintaining Student Voice initiatives by engaging students as decision-making partners. Since students are directly affected by educational reforms, Board policies, and District practices, perspectives from students provide significant insight into decisions made by the Board and Superintendent. Fostering effective learning conditions is dependent upon the ongoing consultation of students, the structured solicitation of students' perspectives, and the access students have to communicate their needs to District leadership and school administration. Students should be seen as decision-making partners in improvement efforts and are central to any school reform processes in the Washoe County School District ("District").

POLICY

1. Guiding Principles

- a. "Student Voice" describes how students provide their input to what happens within the District, schools and classrooms. Student Voice is essential in all levels of education to include participating in classroom conversations, engaging in 21st Century Learning opportunities, partnering in curriculum development and program creation, and establishing District and school practices.
- b. The Superintendent shall ensure and maintain an atmosphere in the District that encourages two-way communication between District staff and students. Steps will be taken to maintain effective and authentic communication by and to students to allow for continuous improvement of the District and individual school sites.
- c. Student Voice will be integrated throughout the District to provide an avenue to engage students in meaningful learning and as partners in the school improvement process. Students feel empowered and motivated to

participate in their education when they believe their perspective is considered and valued by administrators, faculty, and staff. Through Student Voice:

- i. Students can provide skills and knowledge that can bring renewed relevance and authenticity to classrooms and school reform efforts.
 - ii. Students benefit from the opportunity to be involved in the problem solving, leadership and creative thinking required in a decision-making environment.
- d. Recognizing the vital role parents/guardians and families have in fostering student success, the District encourages their equal partnership in promoting active student engagement.
 - e. The District shall continue to explore national best practices for new methods of incorporating student perspective on issues facing the District.

2. Guiding Practices

- a. The Board of Trustees and Superintendent shall actively encourage student participation in decision-making in the District through regular interaction with students.
- b. The Superintendent shall establish a Student Advisory Council for the purpose of soliciting student input about key issues in the District.
 - i. The Student Advisory Council, in its advisory role to the Superintendent, shall not be considered a committee of the Board of Trustees and shall not be required to comply with Nevada's Open Meeting Law.
 - ii. Through Administrative Regulation 5041, Student Advisory, the Superintendent shall establish the procedures and protocols through which the student members shall provide feedback to the Superintendent and staff.
- c. School sites are encouraged to work with student leaders to evaluate and improve upon practices and rules that impact students.
- d. Student involvement as voting members of Board of Trustees and District committees shall be strongly encouraged.

- e. Implementation and structures will be set in place to solicit and make effective use of student voice through the following:
 - i. The District shall maintain a Student Voice Department to research and provide access to best practices to integrate Student Voice principles for the development of students' engagement in school improvement processes.
 - ii. Staff development and professional learning shall be available to provide opportunities for staff to develop their capacity to establish and maintain Student Voice.
 - iii. Student development and support shall be provided for students to engage as partners across the District and in individual school improvement processes.
 - iv. Students are encouraged, through the District's and school's established practices, to organize and engage in clubs and other organizations on the school campus in areas to include, but not limited to, those that are socially and/or culturally responsive, academic, and intramural programs. School administrators, faculty and staff are encouraged to engage with students through these informal means as a way of increasing communication.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

1. By ensuring and increasing engagement, students will benefit with increased achievement and higher graduation rates. This includes creating and maintaining a positive school climate and culture where all students are valued and respected.
2. Students provide a unique perspective to conversations surrounding all aspects of education. Such perspectives should be valued and considered as part of the decision-making process.
3. Schools will continue to search for opportunities to include student voice in the decision-making process.
4. By encouraging student voice, the District seeks to ensure a safe and respectful learning environment and increase student safety on campus and at District sponsored events.

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDELINES & ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

1. This policy reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan and complies/aligns with the governing documents of the District, to include:
 - a. Board Policy 5036.1, Family Engagement
 - b. Board Policy 9201, Equity and Diversity
2. This policy complies/aligns with Nevada state laws and regulations (Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), to include:
 - a. Chapter 392, Pupils
3. This policy complies/aligns with federal laws and regulations, to include:
 - a. Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as reauthorized from the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and the No Child Left Behind Act

REVIEW AND REPORTING

1. This document shall be reviewed as part of the bi-annual review and reporting process, following each regular session of the Nevada Legislature. The Board of Trustees shall receive notification of any required changes to the policy as well as an audit of the accompanying governing documents.
2. The Superintendent shall direct staff to create and periodically review regulations and procedures necessary to implement this policy.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
4/11/2017	1.0	Adopted