



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 concerns and ideas that affect their education, learning environment and overall school experience. Ongoing consultation and structured solicitation of students' perspectives, as well as providing students access to communicate their needs to Washoe County School District (District) leadership and school administration fosters effective learning environments. 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 and are the central focus of educational reforms, Board Policies, and District practices, students' perspectives provide significant insight into decisions made by the Board and Superintendent.

DEFINITIONS

1. "Student Voice" describes how students engage in school improvement processes within the District, schools, and classrooms. Student Voice is essential in all levels of education and includes participating in classroom conversations, engaging in 21st Century Learning opportunities, partnering in curriculum development and program creation, establishing District and school practices, and sharing ownership of school improvement efforts.

POLICY

1. The Superintendent shall ensure and maintain an atmosphere in the District that encourages two-way communication between District employees 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.
2. Leadership departments and schools throughout the District shall integrate Student Voice into goals and objectives in department and school planning process to engage students in meaningful learning and as partners in the school improvement process. Through Student Voice:
 - a. Students can provide skills and knowledge that can bring renewed relevance and authenticity to classrooms and school reform efforts;

- b. Students benefit from the opportunity to be involved in the problem solving, leadership and creative thinking required in a decision-making environment; and
 - c. Students will feel empowered and motivated to participate in their education when they believe their perspective is considered and valued by administrators, faculty, and employees.
3. The District shall continue to explore national best practices for new methods of incorporating student perspective on issues facing the District.
4. The Board and Superintendent shall actively encourage student participation in decision-making in the District through regular interaction with students.
 - a. 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 and shall not be required to comply with Nevada's Open Meeting Law;
 - ii. The Student Advisory Council and the Superintendent shall establish the procedures and protocols through which the student members shall provide feedback to the Superintendent and employees;
 - b. School sites are encouraged to work with student leaders to evaluate and improve upon practices and rules that impact students;
 - c. Students may be given opportunities for engagement as voting members of Board committees and District committees, which is consistent with best practices for Student Voice;
 - d. 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. Employee development and professional learning shall be available to provide opportunities for employees 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; and
- 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 employees are encouraged to engage with students through these informal means as a way of increasing communication.

LEGAL REQUIREMENTS AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

- 1. This Board Policy reflects the goals of the District's Strategic Plan and complies with the governing documents of the District, to include:
 - a. Board Policy 9210, Equity and Diversity.
- 2. This Board Policy complies with Nevada Revised Statutes (NRS) and Nevada Administrative Code (NAC), to include:
 - a. NRS Chapter 392, Pupils.
- 3. This Board Policy complies 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.

REVISION HISTORY

Date	Revision	Modification
04/11/2017	1.0	Adopted
03/08/2022	2.0	Revised: Update formatting and clarify language.