

Guide *to* Student Voice

in
Education
Governance

A resource from the
**VERMONT
SCHOOL
BOARDS
ASSOCIATION**

Great Governance, Excellent Education, Strong Communities



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This guide is intended to provide school boards and administrators with general guidance and information to assist them in engaging students on public school boards. It includes information

to consider when debating the inception, preparing the board and the youth for the task and implementation. This document should not be relied upon for legal advice. We recommend all boards consult with their attorney if they have legal questions.

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Introduction

One goal of American education in recent years has been to develop leadership skills in youth. Social media platforms, among other innovations, have provided extended opportunities for youth to develop opinions and defend their points of view. The nation has witnessed the power of youth voices thanks for leaders like environmental activist Greta Thunburg, National Youth Poet Laureate Amanda Gorman and tragically, surrounding the horrific events at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida in 2018, when student leaders emerged on the national stage to express their deeply held views.

What is the place of student voice in the governing of public schools? As the people for whom the system is created, designed and operated to serve, do students have a role in influencing the decisions that guide their schools?

For an increasing number of school boards, the answer is “yes.” Vermont school boards can benefit from students’ points of view, creative thinking, direct questions, and open-mindedness. Fully engaged youth leaders are essential in building a positive school climate, sharing student concerns with adults in leadership, and making good decisions as a school board. The material that follows is intended to provide guidance for students and adults who want to make a place for student voice in the governance of our schools.

We are indebted to a community of students, teachers, administrators and board representatives from around the state as well as students, teachers, administrators and board representatives from around the country who have helped shape our efforts. We also want to acknowledge the debt we owe to the Association of Alaska School Boards, The Alaska Initiative for Community Engagement, and The State of Alaska Department of Health and Social Services who together published *Youth on Boards: Why Youth Leaders Matter* with the leadership of Hans Bernard, an Alaskan student (at the time of its first publication). Much of the material in this guide is adapted from their work.

WHY HAVE YOUTH ON YOUR BOARD?

A greater number of Vermont youth want to participate in the governance of their schools, and an increasing number of previously adult-only boards are soliciting youth involvement. Vermont school boards benefit from the creative thinking, point of view and type of questions that youth voice brings to the table, and youth representatives gain leadership skills and valuable life experience.

Students, like any new adult representative, require training and support to be successful. We cannot assume that every new representative understands how boards operate, the laws and rules that

define meetings, the culture of the board, how Robert's Rules of Order work, or any of the other aspects of effective governance. A young person - like an adult new to this work - who serves on a board, should be trained and mentored.

Individually, youth who participate in governance roles with adults gain new skills, develop responsibility, learn citizenship, and acquire the assets needed to succeed as adults. In the big picture, we all benefit by having young people engaged in the institutions of a democratic society.

Here are a few reflections from work around the state and country.

- Adults who work with youth on boards gain insights about youth, broaden their own perspectives and have a more positive perception of youth.
- Boards that have incorporated youth representatives are improved by youthful energy, perspectives and insights—programs and services are improved as a result.
- Adult board representatives can be revitalized and thus will increase their commitment to the organization and gain a stronger sense of community connectedness when serving with youth board representatives.
- Anecdotally, adult board members also report that the presence of students at the board table keeps them focused, respectful, and productive.



Ready?

Boards tend to work effectively with youth if, prior to including youth members, board members are willing to:

- Be flexible with meeting times and locations in order to accommodate school schedules.
- Adjust their culture from doing things to and for youth, to working with youth.
- Relax their expectations about efficiency while new members are becoming comfortable with the culture of the board and the use of Robert's Rules of Order.
- Make some adjustments to the way the board supports its members (i.e., paying young people in advance for their expenses, providing snacks at meetings, and/or explaining the young person's role to parents/guardians). Have clear conversations regarding adjustments board member

should make to help youth members feel comfortable at meetings. VSBA can help support this type of conversation through planning and facilitation.

- Inform your board in advance of who your new members are and when they will begin attending meetings.
- Have a plan for orienting the youth board member to the board, which can include having an "Adult Board Mentor".
- Hold meetings at times that are convenient for new members. Take into consideration factors such as school or after-school activities. Occasionally, these times will not be convenient for other board members, so try and reach a compromise.



The following checklist can be used to help give direction, uncover hidden issues, clarify tasks and provide next steps for getting your board ready for a youth member. Use this as a tool and have multiple people fill it out, including board members, staff and young people previously involved.

READINESS ASSESSMENT

(Adapted from "14 Points" by Youth on Board)

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Adults can use this checklist to assess your board's ability to have meaningful youth representation. This tool can help everyone involved comprehend the necessary adjustments and to measure their commitment to these changes. It is important to note that we are not implying that every board must meet all of these criteria.

- ☐ Does the board have the time and resources to make a commitment to effective youth representation?
 - ☐ Has the board amended the by-laws or created policies stating that young people will be a permanent part of governing your organization?
 - ☐ Is the board clear about why it is involving young people in governance?
 - ☐ Is the board willing to adjust its culture to make meetings youth friendly?
 - ☐ Has the board defined a selection process? If appropriate, has the board outlined recruitment criteria for new representatives? (e.g., motivation, diversity, competence, quality of past experiences, etc.)
 - ☐ Is there a mentor or coaching system in place?
 - ☐ Does the board have a system in place for youth representatives to train new youth representatives?
 - ☐ Are young people included in all issues, not just those affecting their age group?
 - ☐ Does the board's culture promote open discussion?
 - ☐ Is there time for all representatives (including youth) to speak at meetings?
 - ☐ Are young people's terms of office consistent with those of adults?
 - ☐ Can your youth representative substantially influence governance of the organization?
 - ☐ Do young people have access to the resources and technology needed to participate in your board's work?
 - ☐ Is there informal time to network and build relationships with other representatives?
 - ☐ Are young people encouraged to keep in touch with their peers about their governance role?
 - ☐ Is there a place where young people can voice their concerns outside the meeting environment?
 - ☐ Do adults ask the youth representative(s) how they can better work together and take these recommendations seriously?
 - ☐ If youth are confused about an issue, how does the board respond and guide them to the information they need?
 - ☐ Is equal weight given to youth representative opinions?
 - ☐ Do board representatives take the initiative to get to know all the representatives (including youth) of your board on a personal level?
 - ☐ Does the board provide support for young people on speaking up in adult groups?
 - ☐ Do you offer training for young people and adults in governance skills and board work?
 - ☐ Are youth representatives briefed ahead of time on how to read financial statements?
-

Set!

Once your board has decided it is willing to make adjustments and accommodations for youth representatives, some of the following actions would be appropriate for your board to take:

- Provide some materials, including research, explaining why involving youth is important (e.g., help kids succeed, learn leadership and life skills, improve decision making, and improve their school climates; and increasing community-wide youth engagement in service activities, etc.).
- Propose the idea of having younger members on your board. Remember: people often fear change, so be persistent and let the other members become comfortable with the idea.
- Have a vision for what the board could achieve through youth representation – and share that vision with your board members.
- Help youth assess their own skills and abilities and motivations for joining your board. Understand their strengths, as well as areas where they need additional support for effective engagement. Have youth share information on their needs and set up specific times to check in on how the board is doing in meeting those needs.
- Provide positive examples of youth action/activities already existent in your community.
- Personally invite youth to attend the meetings as guests.
- Stay positive and resolute. Boards are often comprised of the busiest people in a community.
- Understand that any change in the culture of the board will cause some discomfort for certain members. The youth will be more readily welcomed if no other drastic changes occur.
- Reduce the use of acronyms or provide all members with a card of commonly used terms and acronyms. (There's a comprehensive glossary in the Appendix of *Essential Work for Vermont School Boards* which can be a great resource for youth board members, too!)
- Reach out to other boards that have youth members. Seek to learn from their experiences.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR YOUTH/ADULT PARTNERSHIPS

As you prepare to invite youth to serve on your board, adult board members will be well served to agree on fundamental values and practices to enhance students' service to the school district and community.

Respect: A culture of respect provides all participants with opportunities to speak and learn from each other. This is particularly important for youth to see and understand, and makes them more comfortable for asking questions, making mistakes or asking for changes to meet their needs as board members.

Positive communication: Youth are best heard when adults step back and listen to understand. Honest, positive and on-going communication is needed for youth to come forward and explain their perspectives and ideas for board direction and decisions.

Investment: Young people need access to ongoing information, training and support to be successful as board members. Youth must be able to develop their own skills and practice them often to have the confidence to act and speak up in adult situations. Investing in young people on your board takes time and resources, but the results are worth it for the entire board.

Meaningful involvement: Youth roles and board responsibilities should be an integral part of the way the board functions. Developing meaningful engagement means that the recruitment, roles, training and preparation of young people are well thought out and supported across all activities and processes of the board. An assessment of how ready your board is for the meaningful engagement of youth is often necessary to know where you are starting from and what gaps to address.

STRUCTURAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR ADDING YOUTH BOARD MEMBERS

Congratulations for acknowledging your board's readiness to incorporate student voice. Designing youth board positions may require the board to consider some new issues you haven't necessarily encountered before. Of course, each board's culture will determine the extent of the youth's role and involvement. Here are some things to consider:

- Best practice is for school boards to have two student board representatives who can represent the interest and perspectives of the student body at the board level and have an in depth understanding of what is occurring at the school as well as the potential impact of any decisions the school board makes on students.
- One student school board representative should be a junior and one should be a senior, each selected for two-year terms at the end of their sophomore or beginning of their junior years. In this way, the board always has one experienced student school board representative. In a recent survey of Vermont boards that have student reps, the vast majority rely on this model, as does the State Board of Education.
- Adults' roles may be different depending on the governance structure of the organization. However, adult board members, superintendents, and principals all have critical roles in supporting student board representatives.
 - Adult board members must value the important perspective that student representatives have on all issues

and recognize that students have knowledge-based authority about what is occurring in the school(s). An adult board member should be assigned to mentor the new student representative. Adult board members and student board representatives must work in collaboration; adults must recognize the student representative as a full participant on the board within legally defined limits.

- Superintendents need to work with principals and boards on establishing criteria and process for student selection to school board service. Superintendents should advocate for student voice and work with board representatives to utilize the wealth of information that students have to share. Superintendents can help clarify any questions students may have about board rules, meeting procedures, and agenda items. Principals may work with the student representative as a liaison between the school board and the student body.

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PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR INCLUDING YOUTH BOARD MEMBERS

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- Set meetings at times that will be convenient for youth.
- Because Vermont's school boards are public bodies, current state law limits youth representation to an advisory capacity. As a result, actively solicit youth input and make sure to listen.

- Avoid tokenism. Ensure that student board members have real, consequential input on the work of the board. Doing so will encourage diversity of opinion and make it more enticing for youth to participate.
- Consider a youth advisory "vote" on an issue prior to the official vote of the board.
- Consider including a member report at the beginning of each agenda. This will allow your youth members to share their involvement in board projects and report back from any other groups or subcommittees they may be a part of.
- Nominate youth to serve as co-chairs of your board and/or as members of your smaller committees.
- Assign youth to meaningful, necessary tasks, such as minute-taking or contacting other organizations on the board's behalf.
- Encourage youth to speak at events on behalf of the organization. They can be present and speak up at budget presentations and facilitate public forums on important board issues.
- When creating student positions, you may need to adjust your by-laws or board structure to accommodate the newly created position(s).
- Add student representatives to the school board email list to ensure they understand the issues facing the board and are prepared for meetings. Student representatives will not be furnished with sensitive materials/ information pertaining to personnel matters, legal action, negotiation strategy, land acquisition, individual student discipline/ family matters, or other confidential data.

CHOOSING STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

- Actual practice in Vermont, according to survey respondents, includes a variety of selection methods. Some districts have faculty recommend students who then interview with the superintendent and the board, who ultimately make the decision together. Others are nominated by teachers and then elected by the student body. Another practice is student council appointments, and still another is selection completely by faculty and administration.
- Try to ensure student school board representative(s) selection illustrates the breadth of the student body by giving equal opportunity to all students who wish to serve.
- An election or appointment processes should leverage teacher student relationships. One successful procedure is to have teachers nominate the students they feel would meet the board's needs (as defined by the board).
- Will youth members be representing a constituency on the board? If so, should that group (i.e., student body) select the representative(s)?
- In Vermont, youth representatives may not vote on board matters, as they aren't public officials elected by the voters. However, boards should encourage student participation in all discussions and may opt to record their symbolic votes in the minutes.
- 16 V.S.A. 558(a) restricts eligibility for election to a school board to a legal voter in the school district. Only board members who have been elected under 16 V.S.A. §423



SUGGESTED ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Here are some ideas to consider as you contemplate selecting youth board representatives.

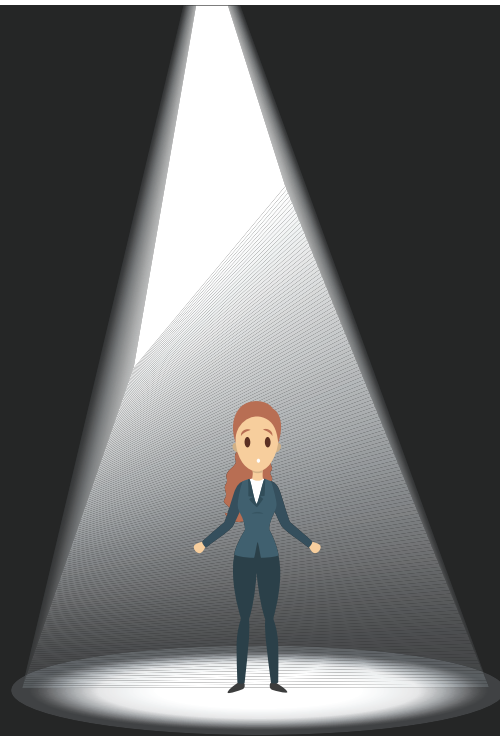
Candidates must attend at least one board member before being considered as a student representative.

Students must be in grades 9-12. For districts that provide a high school, student representatives must attend high school in the district. For districts that do not provide a high school, student representatives must have attended one of the district's schools. For districts that do not operate a school, students must be residents of the district.

The term is two years. At least one new youth representative will be appointed each year.

Students interested in joining the school board must write a letter of interest to the school board chair and superintendent.

If more than two students are interested in becoming representatives, a selection process will be developed.



LEADERSHIP

Leadership refers to the influential behaviors of one person that bring about good followership, compliance, and superior performance in others.

or appointed to the board under 16 V.S.A. §424 may vote to take action that is binding on the school district. Therefore, students serving on school boards should not make motions or vote on motions. Students should also not participate in executive sessions where confidentiality requirements prohibit sharing information about fellow students, school district employees, or contracts. Consult your district's attorney if you are unsure about limits on youth involvement.

- If you choose to have students apply to the board, any “application” should focus on issues that pertain to the board. Be careful to make the application accessible to all students and not a barrier to recruitment. Remember, this will likely be the first application of this kind completed by the youth.
- Make sure the process is open enough to attract a diverse group of qualified candidates.

Go!

PREPARING YOUTH BOARD MEMBERS



- Familiarize new board members with your services and issues by giving them your web site and putting them on your listserv or mailing lists.
- The student representative will be seated at the board table at all regular meetings. Feeling like part of the school board is essential and doesn't happen when separate seating arrangements are made.
- Prepare brief talking points about your services for youth members so they can advocate for the organization.
- Have a board member give new members a tour of your facilities, including all the schools and the central office.
- Provide all new board members with the history of the board, including previous issues, past actions taken, and other useful information. The more your new members know, the more they will be effective and thoughtful partners on your board.
- When you give your new member(s) any necessary information, include a copy of the minutes from the previous meeting. This will acquaint them with the flow of your meetings and the intricacies of Robert's Rules of Order.
- Provide your new members with a copy of the agenda and any needed materials before your next meeting. This way, they can review the information and come prepared.
- Be patient. It will take any new member time to understand the workings of the board and the intricacies of many board-level issues.
- Make certain your new members know members of the board on a personal level. This simple action will make youth members feel much more comfortable and connected to the board. Consider sharing a meal before meetings with furniture arranged to foster informal conversation.
- Identify a board member who is willing to act as a mentor. Ideally, this will be a person in a position of leadership (to add credibility). This will also enable them to advocate on the behalf of youth members.
- This "mentor" should meet with new/youth members before their first meeting, to go over issues such as the board's role, issues on the board's agenda, etc. (See section on Mentoring Youth Representatives below.)

BASIC TRAINING

Make sure your newest board members have a thorough understanding of the following. VSBA is here to help train youth and all new members on these basics:

- The differences between School Districts and Supervisory Union structures
- Structure and function of boards at all levels: Unified School Districts; Elementary schools (PreK-4, PreK-6); Middle / High School; Supervisory Union
- The work of the board and other stakeholders in the educational system. For more complete discussion of these fundamentals, consult the VSBA publication, *Essential Work of Vermont School Boards* or the Essential Work Tool Kit on the VSBA website, www.vtvsba.org.
 - *Engage the Community & Establish a Vision*
 - *Adopt Policy*
 - *Board & Superintendent Partnership*
 - *Develop a Budget & Assure Financial Oversight*
 - *Monitoring Progress*
 - *Effective & Ethical Operations*
- Meeting structures: Full board, committees, carousel structure, etc.
- Role of superintendent and principal with boards and at meetings
- Role of committees
- Nature of board issues: high level items (vision, finance, policy, hiring the superintendent, etc.), and not micro-management.
- Relationships among and between: Governor, Agency of Education, State Board of Education, Supervisory Union / School District and local school boards

MENTORING YOUTH REPRESENTATIVES

Research has identified the following best practices for adults mentoring youth. The *Elements of Effective Practice for Mentoring* (MENTOR, 2015) provides the following six standards to help mentoring adults incorporate best practices into their day-to-day interactions with youth:

- Recruit an appropriate mentor by realistically describing the role they will play as a mentor to youth board members. Explain the importance of the role and ask what supports they will need from the rest of the board.
- Screen prospective mentors to determine whether they have the time, commitment, and personal qualities needed to be an effective mentor.
- Train prospective mentors in the basic knowledge and skills needed to build an effective mentoring relationship.
- Match mentors and youth to increase the odds that mentoring relationships will endure. This can take into account the type of support youth need, and the types of skills potential mentors have.
- Monitor mentoring relationship milestones and support mentors with ongoing advice, problem-solving support, and training opportunities for the duration of the relationship.
- Facilitate bringing the match to closure in a way that affirms the contributions of both the mentor and mentee and offers both individuals the opportunity to assess the experience.

Guidance for Youth Board Members

YOUTH REPRESENTATIVE SELF-ASSESSMENT

Youth can use this checklist to assess their abilities to provide meaningful representation on a board. This tool can help everyone involved comprehend the necessary adjustments and to measure their commitment to youth board membership. It is important to note that we are not implying that every board, or youth, must meet all of these criteria.

- ☐ Am I aware of my job description and what the board expects of me?
- ☐ Am I aware of the roles this board plays?
- ☐ Has the board communicated the specific objectives they have for me as a youth member?
- ☐ Have I identified or been assigned a mentor for my role on the board?
- ☐ Do I have the abilities, and knowledge necessary to make ongoing contributions to the board?
- ☐ Do I work to know individual board members outside of board meetings?
- ☐ Am I aware of the written and unwritten agenda and flow of the board's meetings?
- ☐ Am I willing to learn through open and positive conversations about my performance?
- ☐ Am I aware of the needs, public positions, and opinions of the youth I represent?

- ☐ Do I have the abilities and knowledge to correspond about my governance activities with my community and the group(s) I represent?
- ☐ Do I have the abilities, and knowledge to take leadership roles on committees and/or the board?
- ☐ Am I willing to reflect on what I want to get out of this experience and am willing to share it with the rest of the board?
- ☐ Am I willing to ask questions that give me a better understanding of board activities?
- ☐ When receiving feedback, information, and answers to questions, do I recognize the expertise and experience of the adults on my board?
- ☐ Am I willing to give my time and attention to all board issues rather than just the ones that affect me and those I represent?
- ☐ Do the adult members of the board hold any stereotypes about young people?
- ☐ Do I hold any stereotypes about adult board members?
- ☐ Have the adult board members received training that allows them to consider their assumptions about "kids these days?"
- ☐ Does the board show its appreciation for the good work that I am doing and have done?
- ☐ Am I mentoring other potential youth representatives who may replace me?

GUIDANCE FOR YOUTH BOARD MEMBERS

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- Have confidence in yourself. By whatever means, you have been selected, appointed or voted onto the board, you belong there. Sure, it will take you a few months to get comfortable in your position, just listen, watch, ask questions and learn.
- Find a guide. There is an old saying that you can't be a guide unless you are on the journey. So, find a guide, coach, or mentor with whom you feel comfortable; someone who has experience with the board and who is willing to learn alongside you.
- Be a leader. You are now in a leadership role – use this role to advance the fact that youth are capable, intelligent and mature. People are watching you and you are now seen as an example of all youth. This does not mean that you have to change your whole personality. It does mean that you will be held to a higher standard than some of the youth who are not at the table.
- Stay interested and curious. Sometimes the issues that a board faces are not that interesting – to anyone. However, the work of a board is to do all the work it is responsible for and it is up to you to take responsibility for your learning and contribution. If you look bored, the people will have a difficult time taking you seriously.
- Show up. If you want the board to invest in you, take the time to invest in the organization and board with your time. Attend all meetings, confirm the dates, times and locations. Add them to your calendar. Plan to arrive 10 minutes early.
- Use the power you have. Speak up, if you feel like you have some ideas about how to improve the flow of the meeting, the dialogue between representatives and the agenda topics. Use your politeness skills to not offend other members and they will listen. It is also important to know that you are one of many people, so don't expect the board to do everything you say. To be treated like an equal means that your ideas are considered to be as valuable as all the others, not more so.
- Do something. Of course you are busy. School, extracurricular activities, work, family obligations, other service commitments – your schedule is packed. However, if you want to be a leader, you will have to take on some projects and deliver what you promise through action. Get on a working committee, take on a project, do some in-depth investigation of an issue or two for the board. The bottom line is that you get respect by making contributions through action.
- If you have a question, it is likely that someone else has a similar one. Becoming a decision maker is complex. Learning leaders ask questions. Questions keep dialog positive, so feel free to ask questions. In case you have so many questions that you would actually slow the meetings down to a crawl, jot your questions on a note pad and get your answers in other settings. Board members will expect you to learn the lingo, so make certain that you are learning as you go. Study their language, use their language and soon it will become second nature for you as well.

EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENT BOARD MEMBERS

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While individual boards will undoubtedly utilize their student members differently, the following list serves as general guidance on what's expected from youth on school boards in Vermont.

- Attendance at all regularly scheduled board meetings is mandatory. The board chair should be notified of any extenuating circumstances that affect attendance.
- Student school board members attend board retreats and other special activities.
- Student board members attend annual training.
- Student board members represent the views of the student body.
- Student board members communicate with student representatives from other Vermont school boards at least quarterly.
- Student school board members should receive recognition for their service on their high school transcripts.
- All board members follow Robert's Rules of Order and other board protocols.
- All board members respect confidentiality and other norms.
- Student members will report to their peers following each school board meetings:
 - *Present to the student council(s) within the district.*
 - *Write a statement for student announcements that includes school board information of interest to students*
 - *Be available to discuss school board issues.*
 - *Encourage students to attend live or watch televised school board meetings.*



Resources

LOCAL RESOURCES

THE VERMONT SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

2 Prospect St
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 223-3580
www.vtvsba.org

UP FOR LEARNING

155 Elm St., Suite 1
Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 282-552-8140
info@upforlearning.org
www.upforlearning.com

VERMONT LEARNING FOR THE FUTURE

www.vtlff.org
bfreeman@vtlff.org

NATIONAL RESOURCES

ASSOCIATION OF ALASKA SCHOOL BOARDS

1111 West 9th Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 586-1083
www.aasb.org

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

3601 C Street, Suite 878
Anchorage, Alaska 99503
(907) 269-3600
dhss.alaska.gov/dbh

ALASKA INITIATIVE FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1111 West 9th Street
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 463-1660
www.alaskaice.org

BOARDSOURCE

750 9th Street NW, Suite 520
Washington, DC 20001-4793
(202) 349-2544
members@boardsource.org
boardsource.org

KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BOARDS

1420 SW Arrowhead Rd.
Topeka, KS 66604
(785) 273-3600
www.kasb.org

KENTUCKY STUDENT VOICE TEAM

LEXINGTON, KY

www.kystudentvoiceteam.org

MASSACHUSETTS ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL COMMITTEES

1 McKinley Sq.
Boston, MA 02109
(617) 392-6023
www.masc.org

MINNESOTA SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

1900 West Jefferson Ave.
St. Peter, MN 56082-3015
(507) 934-2450
www.mnmsba.org

NEW JERSEY SCHOOL BOARDS ASSOCIATION

413 West State St.
Trenton, NJ 08618
(609) 695-7600
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John Barone, Former Superintendent, Milton

Leonard Barrett, Addison Central Supervisory
Union Board

Helen Beattie, UP for Learning

Hugh Burke, Student, Cabot School

Peter Burrows, Superintendent, Addison
Central Supervisory District

JoAnCanning, Former Superintendent, Orleans
Southwest Supervisory Union

Joe Ciccolo, Former Superintendent, Lamoille
North Supervisory Union

Lena Cohen, Student Board Representative,
Rutland City School District

Heidi Cookson, Student, Cabot School

Ryan Cooney, Student Board Representative,
Springfield High School

Steve Dale, Former Executive Director, Vermont
School Boards Association

Erin Dezell, UP for Learning

Flor Diaz-Smith, Chair, Washington Central
Unified School District Board

Sara Doe, Student, Richford Junior/Senior High
School

Dorinne Dorfman, Former Principal, Leland
and Gray Union Middle and High School

Peter Evans, UP for Learning

Lachlan Francis, Student, Brattleboro Union
High School, State Board of Education

Harry Frank, Former Associate Director,
Vermont School Boards Association

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Union Board

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Kate Lapp, Student, Mill River High Union
School

Michaela Lombard, Student, Enosburg Middle/
High School

Xander Long, Student, Burlington High School

Emily Long, Windham Central Supervisory
Union School Board

Randi Lowe, Superintendent, Bennington
Rutland Supervisory Union

Elyse Martin-Smith, Student Board
Representative, Champlain Valley School
District

Dylan McAlister, Student, Hazen Union High
School, State Board of Education

Zach McLaughlin, Superintendent, Springfield
School District

Mary Moran, Former Superintendent, Rutland City School District

Kassandra Morse, Student, Cabot School

Brigid Nease, Superintendent, Harwood Unified Union School District

Jay Nichols, Former Superintendent, Franklin Northeast Supervisory Union

Alison Notte, Former Board Chair, Rutland City School District

Sharon O'Connor, Cabot School Board Member

Herb Ogden, Chair, Taconic and Green School District Board

Bryan Olkowski, Superintendent, Washington Central School District

Keith Pillsbury, Burlington School District Board

Elaine Pinckney, Superintendent, Champlain Valley School District

Julian Plumadore, Student, Leland and Gray Union Middle and High School

Henry Prine, Student, Burlington High School

Patrick Reen, Superintendent, Mount Abraham Unified School District

Evan Reilley, Student, Leland and Gray Union Middle and High School

Eric Remsen, Teacher, Middlebury High School

Megan Rose, Student, Enosburg Middle/High School

Adam Rosenberg, Superintendent, Orleans Southwest Supervisory Union

Kelsey Smith, Student, Hanover High School Council

John Stroup, Board Chair, Addison Northwest School District

James Tager, Superintendent, Franklin West Supervisory Union

Nancy Thomas, Former Superintendent, Washington Northeast Supervisory Union

David Whitcomb, Chair, Lamoille North Supervisory Union Board

Joseph Winrich, Leland and Gray Union Middle and High School Board

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SPECIAL RECOGNITION: HANS BERNARD

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As a student, Hans was the primary author of "The Power of an Untapped Resource: Exploring Youth Representation on Your Board or Committee." He was the longest serving youth representative to a school board in America. His three consecutive one-year terms on the Anchorage (AK) School Board was unprecedented. Hans has presented at three National School Boards Association conferences and spoken to several Association of Alaska School Boards statewide audiences.

Hans was a full voting representative and subcommittee chair of Alaska's state Adolescent Health Advisory Committee for three years. He graduated from Chugiak High School, Eagle River in 2001 and from Willamette University Salem, Oregon in 2005, with a degree in Political Science. From 2003-2005, Hans served as a legislative aide to the majority leader of the Oregon State Senate and has been Associate Vice President for State and Community Affairs at University of Oregon since 2013.

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