

School Boards and Student Partnership: A Self-Assessment Tool

Where is your board on a spectrum of student partnership?

This assessment is built for honest, collaborative conversation. Set aside 30 minutes to complete the activities together. The questions are designed to surface what's *actually* happening and where you want to go next go — *not just what sounds good*.

Designate someone to facilitate the conversation and someone to take notes.

Step 1: Group Discussion (15 min)

1. How do students shape board decisions?

Name one decision the board made differently in the past six months because of what students told you. Be specific: what was the decision, what did students say, what changed?

2. Who sets the board's agenda?

Think about your last three board meetings. How many agenda items were issues students raised or helped frame?

3. What do students have to navigate alone?

The last time students engaged with your board, how did the board support their engagement (orientation, materials, compensation, time on the agenda)? What did students have to figure out for themselves?

4. Who does the board hear from?

Think about the last few times student input was shared with your board. What do you know about the lived experience of those students? Whose experience is missing and why?

Step 2: Rate Your Board (10 min)

Based on your conversation, check the statement that best describes your board today. Discuss the similarities and differences in your answers.

Level	Student Influence	What It Looks Like	
4	Makes decisions	Students cast votes, participate on committees, and share decision-making authority.	☐
3	Major influence	Student perspectives shape what the board does, not just what it hears.	☐
2	Taken into account	The board listens, weighs, and considers student input, even when students don't decide.	☐
1	Gets attention	Students' experience reaches the board, but doesn't yet shape its work.	☐
0	Not on the radar	The board governs without sustained input from students.	☐

Step 3: Your Next Move (5 min)

Open the [full toolkit](#) and follow the guidance below:

If you rated your board 0, 1, or 2:

Start by identifying the structure most likely to build momentum for your board.

- If your board needs to build a baseline habit of listening to students:
→ Start with Student Voice Mechanisms.
- If your board needs an ongoing relationship with a group of students:
→ Start with a Student Advisory Council.
- If your board has a specific decision where student knowledge is essential:
→ Start with Student Convenings.
- If your board is ready to share authority:
→ Start with a Student School Board Member.

If you rated your board 3 or 4:

Turn to the guides for the structure(s) you already have:

- Student School Board Member
- Student Advisory Council
- Special Student Convenings
- Student Voice Mechanisms

Review the guide and complete the [Conditions Check](#). Use the results to identify the specific practices that are strong in progress, or not yet in place.

