RENNIE CENTER
EDUCATION RESEARCH & POLICY

# Condition of Education
## IN THE COMMONWEALTH

## Student Voice:
How Young People Can Shape
the Future of Education

# Overview

"It's all about the students." How often do we hear this sentiment—or something similar—in conversations on educational policy and practice? Education leaders take action every day to support and guide students. Dedicated teachers review and revise their approaches to instruction, while school leaders institute new strategies to enhance learning inside and outside the school building. Communities rally around innovative institutions to augment and sustain success. Without question, these efforts aim to accomplish a noble goal: helping students achieve better outcomes in school and in life.

Yet one voice that's usually missing in discussions about how best to support student outcomes is the one that arguably matters the most: students themselves.[1] Within the education system, decision-making structures and practices often do not recognize or encourage students as legitimate stakeholders.[2] In educational debates dominated by questions of learning inputs (standards, curricula, funding) and outcomes (assessments, college and career success), we often neglect to listen to the students who are most impacted by proposed or actual reforms. What experiences do they value most about their education? How do they measure their success in school and real-world settings? Students' ideas on these issues, so core to any debate over improving education, are not always part of the conversation.

Year after year, Massachusetts faces challenges in preparing all students for lifelong success, with substantial disparities in both opportunities and outcomes.[3] For instance, on the 2017 National Assessment of Educational Progress, less than 30 percent of black and Latino fourth graders in Massachusetts demonstrated proficiency in reading, compared to 60 percent of their white peers.[4] The disparity is equally stark in eighth grade math, with only 22 percent of black and 29 percent of Latino students achieving proficiency, versus 56 percent of white students.[5] Meanwhile, low-income students have significantly fewer opportunities than their peers to take part in the types of applied learning experiences that extend and deepen what they learn in school. In 2006, national data indicated that the wealthiest parents spent more than 6.7 times as much as parents in the lowest income quintile on enrichment activities for their children.[6] Even when school systems offer robust in-school and out-of-school enrichment programs, few are set up to address this wide of a gap.

The persistence of these disparities in outcomes and opportunities points to the need to look deeply into the root causes of ineffectiveness and inequity. It is impossible to fully understand the challenges of the educational system if we're not hearing from those most affected by it. This year's Condition of Education Action Guide reexamines the current way of doing business, looking at how we can incorporate student voice into decision-making processes in order to help all learners construct a pathway to success in college, careers, and life.

## THE PROJECT

The Condition of Education in the Commonwealth project is one way the Rennie Center fulfills its mission of producing non-partisan, high-quality, independent research that promotes improvement in public education for all Massachusetts children.

## PROJECT COMPONENTS

**Data Dashboard:** This interactive tool provides an in-depth look at 25 school performance indicators. Users can delve deeper by looking at different student groups and monitor progress over time. This data is collected from the Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care, the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education, the United States Census Bureau, and the United States Department of Education.

**Action Guide:** The Action Guide builds on the Data Dashboard with research-informed recommendations for statewide actions—policies, investments, and expansion of best practices—that have potential to address performance gaps and contribute to broad improvement in student outcomes. The report looks at progress made and challenges that remain, suggesting strategies on how to apply those lessons to foster the success of all the Commonwealth's learners.

## 2019: A Time for Change

This year's report comes at an auspicious moment, as young people react to the current social and political environment with increasing public activism. Youth civic engagement is not a new phenomenon—for example, the civil rights movement of the mid-20th Century drew from the energy and passion of young people coming of age in a segregated country, and members of student power movements in the 1960s and 1970s sparked nationwide debates about students' right to free expression and their ability to shape their classroom and school experiences.[8] But evidence indicates that today's youth are part of an unusually energized, politically engaged generation. Especially in the aftermath of a devastating school shooting in Parkland, Florida, student leaders have channeled their outrage and disillusionment into action. Young people aged 18-24 were three times more likely to attend a demonstration or march in 2018 than in 2016, with the proportion of active protesters rising from 5 percent to 15 percent over just two years.[9] Youth participation in the 2018 midterm elections was estimated to be the highest of the last 25 years, with nearly one-third of eligible voters turning out to vote.[10]

Young people exercising their voice in national policy debates vividly illustrates that students hold impassioned opinions about issues that affect their lives. And states, including Massachusetts, are increasingly recognizing the need for schools to prepare students to be engaged and active citizens. Under the terms of a new civics education law passed in November 2018, Massachusetts students starting in grade 8 will be required to complete a "student-led, non-partisan civics project" that helps them develop skills in critical thinking, analysis, and reasoned debate, along with an understanding of the policy environment.[11]

However, as young people forge their own leadership roles on issues ranging from gun control to immigration to civil rights, and as schools prepare to offer enhanced civics education for their students, youth voice has gotten little traction in discussions on systemic issues in education. Researchers point to several factors that can limit students' engagement in school reform conversations: large and impersonal schools that can lead to disengagement and alienation, grade-level separation that limits repeated interaction with like-minded peers, and views among educators and reformers that students are clients rather than participants in decision-making.[12] Given these barriers, how can we bring students to the forefront of conversations on educational improvement?

This report explores how focusing on student voice, along with the closely linked concepts of student agency and leadership, can serve as a necessary lever for equity and effectiveness. We start by laying out what we mean by student voice, why it matters, and what it looks like in action.

### WHERE WE'VE BEEN

Over the past six years, the Condition of Education has examined critical leverage points across the education pipeline, analyzing trends and areas for improvement (see page 1 for more information on the project and its main components). Previous Condition of Education Action Guides have examined several critical strategies for driving improvement in schools: leveraging community partnerships to offer student support, broadening the definition of student success to include social and emotional learning alongside academics, and adopting instructional practices and policies that enable student-centered learning. Beginning with last year's Action Guide, we shifted our focus from the substance to the process of reform, looking at how schools and communities can use a continuous improvement approach to learn from, adjust, and improve their practice.

Our previous reports often present students as passive participants in the improvement process, waiting for an intervention that will produce the intended results. In reality, though, success is not something that happens *to* students. Students must participate actively in their own learning for any change, no matter how well-designed, to generate positive outcomes. And students often do not share cultural backgrounds with those designing and implementing reforms (for instance, 40 percent of Massachusetts students—but just 8 percent of teachers—are non-white).[7] Differences in background and perspective, including positive experiences in their own schooling, can make it difficult for state, district, and school leaders to fully understand the challenges many students face with engagement and persistence. The 2019 Action Guide therefore proposes an approach to improvement that acknowledges and honors the diverse voices of students to address the continuing inequities in our education system.
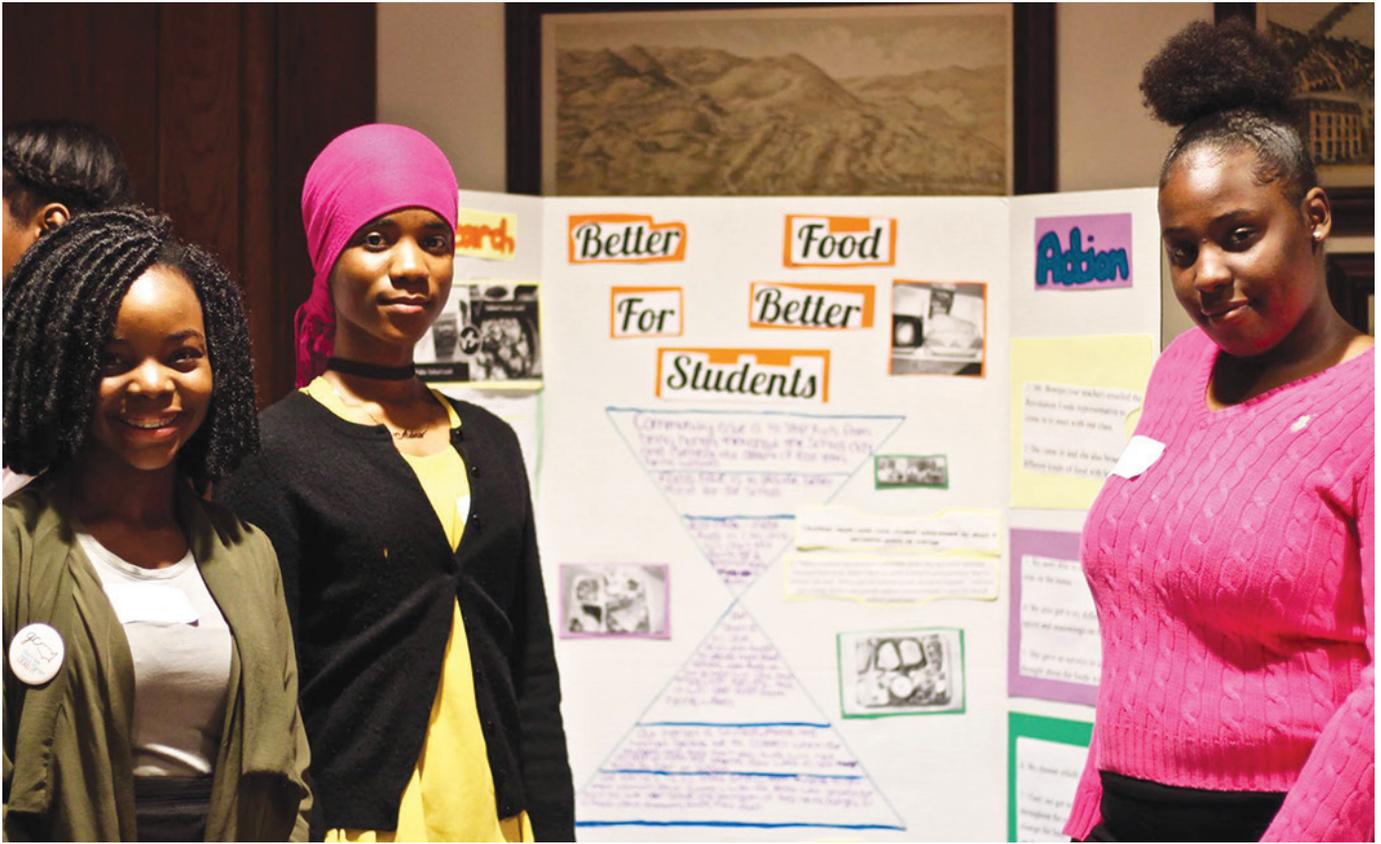
# What is Student Voice?

"Student voice" can take on different shades of meaning based on how and why the term is being used. As we define it here, student voice means student participation and decision making in the structures and practices that shape their educational experiences.[13] Therefore, student voice requires more than student participation during classroom lessons—instead, it seeks to elevate student ideas and contributions about how learning occurs (or should occur).

Especially as student populations in the Commonwealth and nationwide become increasingly diverse, it is essential to acknowledge the variety in students' lived experiences when thinking about opportunities to include students in decision-making. Recognizing the diversity of students' abilities, cultural backgrounds, values, and opinions highlights the need for a broad-based effort to capture student voice, since hearing from any one student will not be enough to represent a range of perspectives.[14] It also requires educators to think about how to empower *all* students to contribute to conversations about their educational experiences and asks leaders to see every student's contribution as meaningful and valuable.

Student voice can be both a cause and an effect of educational reforms. Student voice in the decision-making process can help inspire and inform new approaches to teaching and learning. But student voice can also be the result of learning experiences that help build students' sense of efficacy and elevate their opinions. For instance, students who participate in a community-based internship or service learning project may gain the ability and opportunity to express their views to local leaders. A number of strategies that can help students develop or leverage their opinions—such as community partnerships, social-emotional learning, and individualized or competency-based approaches to instruction—are applied in the examples described in later sections.

## Why Does Student Voice Matter?

Student voice is an effective method of promoting students' investment in their long-term success and advancing core democratic values like participation and leadership.[15] When students have a say in their own learning, they build their sense of academic self-efficacy and are more likely to engage deeply in challenging academic work.[16] In addition, by helping students see and express

themselves within a larger social environment, the exercise of student voice can develop skills such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration, all of which are essential civic—and workforce—attributes.[17]

Student voice can also bridge the divide between students' experiences inside and outside of school, helping them see how their education is relevant to their daily lives.[18] In particular, offering students a role in decision-making allows them to exercise responsibility in a school setting in ways that they often seek outside of school. In today's media-saturated culture, young people frequently make decisions about how to present themselves and their opinions on social media and other digital platforms, yet they have few opportunities to exercise these skills to help shape their educational experience.[19]

Along with helping students become thoughtful, reflective scholars and participants in our democratic society, student voice can help advance a more equitable and effective educational system. To advance equity, the exercise of voice must itself be open to diverse perspectives, so that rather than hearing and responding to one voice, leaders hear from a multitude of students, particularly those from historically marginalized groups.[20] An equitable conversation values the authentic cultures and experiences of historically marginalized students instead of asking them to articulate how they might fit into the existing, mainstream system.

Student voice also has the potential to be a crucial lever in making transformational change within the education system.[21] Students can provide valuable insight into the strengths and weaknesses, successes and ongoing challenges of an initiative or system. Their input is particularly important in any system that prioritizes continuous improvement, as students can provide timely feedback on a reform and drive its future iterations. And by sharing their individual but diverse needs, students can help cultivate learning cultures within schools and communities that are culturally responsive and offer opportunities for meaningful engagement with peers and adults.[22]

Ultimately, research indicates that if students have opportunities to actively shape their educational experiences, then:

- Students will demonstrate increased engagement in their education;[23]
- Schools and districts will improve their cultural responsiveness by hearing, supporting, and validating student needs;[24] and
- Systems and communities will offer students a greater range of educational opportunities.[25]

## Taking Action

Given the benefits of student voice to students themselves and to the educational system, how can practitioners incorporate student voice into current approaches to teaching and learning? Research indicates that initiatives focused on elevating student voice should have four key elements:

- A designated opportunity for students to share their views;
- Facilitated conversation during which students can express themselves;
- An audience to hear students' thoughts; and
- Follow-up actions based on students' expressed ideas and perspectives.[26]

The fourth of these is especially critical to highlight. Asking students for their opinion on an issue without the intent or ability to use that opinion in practice offers limited benefits for students and no benefit to the educational system as a whole.[27] Student voice should not be merely an academic exercise—it should point toward changes in systemic norms, beliefs, and structures.

While each of the four elements listed above is important for elevating student voice, there are many different ways to operationalize student voice in practice. Methods may be formal (such as a student council) or informal (such as when a teacher polls his or her students to determine whether a project will be completed individually or in groups).[28] Students may approach these opportunities on their own, with the support of peers, or as part of a larger group. In any case, though, incorporating student voice often requires a change in role for education stakeholders, starting with students themselves. Teachers, school and district leaders, and community members may also need to shift their perception of their individual responsibilities to create new opportunities for student leadership, ensuring that student participation is able to develop and gain momentum over time.[29]

In the following sections, this report examines how student voice and leadership can be put into action to support equity and effectiveness at three levels of the system:
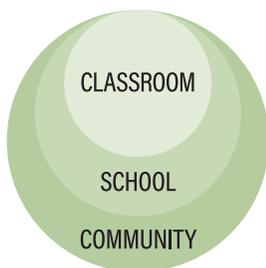


- **Classroom:** How can educators provide the support and facilitation needed to allow students to participate in developing their own learning experiences?
- **School:** How can schools bring students into the process of identifying a diverse and comprehensive set of learning opportunities?
- **Community:** How can we work together to build a dynamic, culturally responsive education system prepared to hear, support, and validate the needs of students at critical transition points?

Focusing on all three levels offers a comprehensive approach to elevating student voice while highlighting the potential for classroom educators, school leaders, and community members to support student involvement in decision-making. At the same time, it is worth noting that many approaches to student voice cut across two or even three levels of the system, as illustrated in the profiles of local programs that follow.

In each of the following sections, we describe the core features of student voice at a particular level (classroom, school, or community), then spotlight a program that demonstrates these core features in action. Each section also includes a text box with a high-level description of another promising approach to elevating student voice. The end of the report offers some cross-cutting recommendations on policies and investments the state can make to support student voice in all its varied forms.

## Measuring Our Progress: Key Data Indicators Related to Student Voice

The Rennie Center's Data Dashboard provides an in-depth look at school performance by compiling 25 state-level indicators that illuminate areas of success and areas for continued improvement. Each year, we highlight particular indicators worthy of further analysis. For instance, the following indicators provide a starting point to investigate disparities in student experience, as well as the equity and effectiveness of our education system:

- **High-Quality Early Education:** Access to quality early education provides a solid foundation for the academic and social-emotional development of our youngest learners, especially those who have fewer opportunities to access informal out-of-school learning experiences. [A]
- **Chronic Absenteeism:** Absenteeism is often seen as a proxy for student engagement, especially during the middle and high school years. Student voice can support additional engagement in schoolwork by giving students a say over their learning and helping them become more invested in their long-term goals. [B]

For more on these and other current indicators, see our online data dashboard **(renniecenter.org/data)**. It allows users to monitor general trends in the data over time and disaggregate results based on a range of student characteristics (e.g., race and English Learner status).

## Broadening the Scope of Data Collection with an Eye Toward Equity

The disparities we see in achievement and opportunity are a result of inequities both inside and outside of schools, and the data indicators we currently track through our Data Dashboard—while important for describing where we are as a system—do not capture whether and how that system is addressing the inequities that produce disparate results. They also do not fully represent the topics at the heart of this report, namely student voice and related ideas such as school climate and cultural competency.

Over the next year, the Rennie Center will be digging deeper into how we can use data to create a more holistic picture of student experience within the Commonwealth. Our aim is to roll out an updated Data Dashboard in 2020 that allows users to analyze the diverse inputs and outcomes that contribute to inequity in students' learning experiences. Although we are still in the initial stages of this effort, we look forward to incorporating a range of indicators focused on college and career pathways, student discipline, school finance, and other areas.

While we work toward an updated set of data indicators, we are also exploring how to include a local lens, so that communities can dig into the challenges that are contributing to inequities and examine the root causes of disparities. Ultimately, we hope that deeper analysis of data will enhance practitioners' knowledge of the local context and support a community-wide approach to improvement.

[A] Source: Massachusetts Department of Early Education and Care: data provided by staff for school year 2018 (fall 2017–spring 2018)

[B] Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education: data provided by staff for school year 2018 (fall 2017–spring 2018)
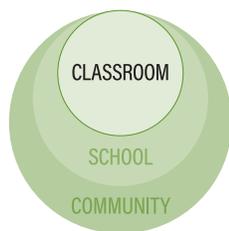
# Cultivating Student Voice in the Classroom

The classroom is the epicenter for the development and application of student voice. A supportive classroom environment helps students build the skills and confidence to speak up on behalf of their needs and interests in a variety of settings. They can also see their lived experiences acknowledged as critical components of the learning process, strengthening their personal identity and outlook. Elevating student voice at the classroom level means involving young people in conversations that directly impact their learning, while ensuring that they are prepared to grapple with issues and participate in conversations related to the broader education system.

## Core Features of Student Voice in the Classroom

The classroom is where students experience their most direct connection with educators. For that reason, educators play an outsized role in cultivating student voice by creating classrooms rich in opportunities for student input and leadership. In particular, student voice in the classroom is often developed through purposeful activities that allow students to participate in their own learning. Research points to several core features of student voice in the classroom.

- **Applied learning activities:** Student voice is not something that can be taught from a book or shared in a lecture. Instead, nurturing student voice in the classroom requires applied learning activities that ask students to co-design and lead their own approaches to learning. For instance, after an educator sets the structure and guidelines for a project, students may be asked to select their own topic and method of investigation, so that they can focus on a subject they are passionate about.[30] Projects are most effective when they help students gain a better understanding of their own skills, interests, and how they learn[31]—while also demonstrating to students their ability to make a valuable contribution to their schools and communities.[32]

- **Development of non-cognitive competencies:** In applied activities and all other aspects of classroom learning, it is critical for educators to support the development of all the foundational skills that allow students to understand their own capabilities and their role within a larger social environment. In addition to social and emotional skills, which help students monitor their emotions and reflect on their interactions with others,[33] one of the core competencies that supports student voice is civic efficacy. Students with high civic efficacy feel that their actions can make a difference. This can motivate students' efforts and help them advocate for their needs and interests among their peers and teachers.[34] Educators can foster civic efficacy by offering real-world learning opportunities (inside and outside the classroom), cooperative learning experiences, and projects that engage students in controversial issues or questions that matter to them.[35]

- **Deconstructing adult-student power dynamics:** Empowering student voice within the classroom requires new roles for the teacher and the student. This is a key step in normalizing student voice and leadership as a consistent component of classroom practice rather than a one-off approach tied to a particular project.[36] The question of who in a classroom has "voice" and the power to speak is deeply embedded in historical norms and traditions, and is often intertwined with issues of race, culture, and class.[37] Teachers focused on maintaining their authority in a classroom may see student voice as an occasional way to generate student engagement.[38] In its most profound form, though, a classroom focused on student voice requires a cultural shift, offering students the chance to exercise their own agency within a space that is receptive to student presence and power.[39]

Putting these elements into practice in the classroom hinges on the commitment of educators to an environment where student voice is heard and valued. In particular, educators should think about creating a communication-rich environment in which students and teachers can collaboratively learn, experiment, trust, and lead. Students experience the classroom as a place to investigate and learn alongside their peers,[40] whether they are investigating new academic topics or their own interests and skills. Group work helps students develop leadership skills such as setting a vision and generating a plan.[41]

Open communication between students and teachers is also critical. Teachers who create a climate receptive to discussion and student input demonstrate that they place a high value on student opinions and also model how to learn and improve their own practice.[42] Furthermore, conversations about curriculum, pedagogy, school climate, and classroom power dynamics, while difficult, can bond students and teachers in positive, learning-focused partnerships.[43]

Of course, not every educator comes to the classroom prepared to undertake these learning activities and conversations. Teachers must be supported in developing student-driven projects and prepared to help students as they navigate a new, more student-driven environment. Providing time and professional development for teachers to build their own skills is vital. As teachers test out new approaches to cultivating student voice, time to meet with peers and share feedback can help avoid feelings of isolation and frustration, while also building a collection of positive practices that can be shared from classroom to classroom.[44]

The following examples highlight some of these strategies for encouraging student voice in the classroom and offer insight into how such strategies can be implemented and spread.

# Generation Citizen

If you step into a social studies classroom in Fall River, Lynn, or Methuen, you may be surprised at what you find. Instead of students discussing hypothetical scenarios from a textbook, you may see students developing and disseminating surveys, interviewing community experts, and rallying their peers on real community issues. These districts—and seven others across the state—are working with Generation Citizen, a national organization that brings action civics to underserved public schools where students often lack chances to participate in project-based or experiential learning opportunities.

Through Generation Citizen, students have the opportunity to exercise their voice in a meaningful way, while learning how to tackle a community issue through action steps that involve collaboration, communication, and creativity. The class collectively determines a topic of focus using a consensus-building process that asks for the input of each student. After the topic is selected, students research the issue to understand the context and identify a specific, local policy goal. Small groups of students then engage in collaborative data collection, using surveys, interviews, and reviews of existing research to better understand their chosen topic. Next, students generate and implement an action plan with guidance from their teacher and a "tactical toolkit" that offers suggestions on how to build support for a proposed policy change. Among other activities, students may reach out to local legislators, assemble coalitions with community groups, and disseminate information within and beyond the school. The program culminates in a Civics Day event at the State House, where students showcase their work and pitch their ideas to leaders in the community.

The Generation Citizen model, which usually functions as a two- to three-year partnership with a local district, helps students build their civic efficacy as they tackle a real challenge facing their community. It also relies heavily on effective communication between teachers and students (as when classes work toward a consensus about the target issue) and among students (with students working in small groups to carry out action research projects). Additionally, Generation Citizen places a heavy emphasis


Youth voice in democracy is important to me because... it affects our future

on building teachers' capacity to support student voice and youth development. Along with providing professional development trainings and ongoing one-on-one coaching support, Generation Citizen has created a network of communities where participating teachers, schools, and districts can share topics, progress, and policy goals. This serves as a repository of knowledge for educators, allowing them to access new ideas and address common obstacles. Generation Citizen also uses a standards-aligned curriculum that goes through an annual revision process based on teacher input.

Generation Citizen continues to see positive student outcomes, particularly increased efficacy and civic engagement. In the 2014-2015 school year, 75 percent of Generation Citizen students reported that they had the power to make local change, and 80 percent expressed that they plan to vote when they are of age. As Massachusetts moves toward new civics education requirements, this model offers an intriguing example of how to channel student energy and passion into projects that benefit local communities.

### The Changemaker Academy at Waltham High School: Transforming the High School Experience

Seeking a way to prioritize student voice within a traditional high school setting, educators at Waltham High School developed the Change-maker Academy, an interdisciplinary, project-based learning opportunity for rising freshmen. Welcoming its first cohort of 57 participants this year, the Academy includes a diverse cross-section of students, with English Learners in need of Sheltered English Immersion[c] working alongside English-proficient peers on a range of student-led projects. For instance, a group of students recently investigated the dietary importance of protein. Through research and experiential learning opportunities, students developed cricket cookies as a resourceful way to aid global communities that may lack access to necessary protein. Another group, meanwhile, conducted a social experiment on the bystander effect, documenting when students are likely to help their peers and when they are not.

All students involved in Changemaker Academy are seen as collaborators and advocates for their own learning. The experience is intended to provide a smoother transition into high school by building effective learning habits and creating a welcoming community for all students. In its first year, the Academy is tracking a number of data points to determine progress and impact, from course completion and grades to growth in English language proficiency. The results will determine how the program changes and expands over the coming years.

[c] Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) is an approach to teaching academic content in English to English Learners. Source: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, www.doe.mass.edu/licensure/endorsements/sei.html.
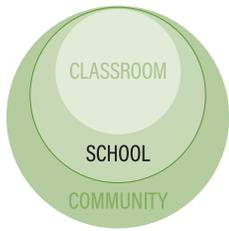
# Elevating Student Voice in Schools

When schools take intentional measures to create a climate where student voice is valued and build pathways for students to exercise voice in school-level decisions and functions, they become ideal settings for students to apply skills that they have developed in the classroom. Students with direct experience of school practices can play a vital role in proposing changes that better address their interests and needs. And when school leaders are looking for information on how a new initiative is progressing, student input is a critical (but often overlooked) source of information.

Schools can also offer students the sense that they are part of a larger social group with similar needs and converging (or conflicting) interests,[45] providing a valuable opportunity for democratic practice. Of course, not every student experiences a sense of belonging at school. Schools may need to consider changing existing structures and processes to be more inclusive and representative of students with diverse backgrounds, particularly those from historically marginalized groups. As they seek to elevate student voice, schools must hear and respond to comments informed by a wide range of lived experiences.

## Core Features of Student Voice at the School Level

By working within supportive school environments and structures, students can come to see themselves as leaders capable of making a real impact on their educational experience. This, in turn, builds social capital that they can tap into when participating in other civic spaces beyond the school walls. Research highlights several components of cultivating and amplifying student voice at the school level.

- **Positive, inclusive school climate:** A positive school climate focuses on a broad set of indicators: physical and emotional safety, supportive relationships, high expectations for teaching and learning, attention to students' social development, and more.[46] Schools that offer safe and supportive environments promote students' emotional and mental health and are correlated with lower absenteeism and fewer risky behaviors.[47] Moreover, advancing student voice and creating a positive school climate tend to reinforce each other—the more supportive a school, the more students have the opportunity to share their unique gifts and viewpoints, which in turn reinforces the sense that the school offers a welcoming and equitable learning environment.

- **Institutionalized channels for students to exercise voice:** Schools committed to elevating student voice must think about creating formal processes for student voice to be considered in school operations and practices. After all, student voice is not just about hearing from students, but also using their input in decision-making processes.[48] For instance, community meetings on significant school decisions can be timed to allow for student participation, or schools can make it a practice to solicit student input before changing schedules, course offerings, and the like. In planning opportunities for student voice, schools should see students as assets who can help drive improvement, not merely as subjects whose input is meant to hold decision-makers accountable.[49] Furthermore, schools must keep in mind that students do not speak as a unified whole, and there may be significant differences between students' perspectives based on their backgrounds and lived experiences.[50]

- **Opportunities for student leadership:** In addition to providing avenues for student voice, schools can also go a step further and bring students into the process of designing and advocating for changes. Leadership opportunities might begin informally, as part of discussions with peers about how to improve young people's experiences in the school, and then be brought to receptive teachers and administrators. In one example, a group of fifth graders were concerned that school lunch offerings did not adhere to the dietary restrictions that some students faced as part of their religious observance. A teacher connected the concerned students with the principal and allowed students to make a presentation and collect input from their peers, leading to a policy change that addressed the issue.[51] On the other hand, leadership opportunities may be part of formal school decision-making processes, as with student governance bodies and student positions on school leadership councils.

Student participation in school-level decision-making increases students' sense of agency, feelings of belonging, and civic efficacy. It also has the potential, when made available to all students, to move schools toward a more equitable dialogue that explicitly

incorporates, acknowledges, and values a diverse array of perspectives. This is especially important when most of the students in a school come from a different cultural background than school leaders, as long as school leaders demonstrate a commitment to inclusivity and a willingness to implement structural changes that enable student voice to reach decision makers.

Through the use of collaborative leadership structures, school administrators can offer meaningful opportunities for participation in school operations.[52] These leadership structures need not include students alone. In fact, empowering teachers, families, and community members is also an important strategy for building and maintaining a positive school climate and advancing equity within schools.[53] Such a collective leadership model works best when participants recognize the unique value and expertise that every other participant brings to the exercise of power and responsibility—including students with first-hand knowledge of school operations.[54]

## SPOTLIGHT ON
# Andover Public Schools and Monomoy Regional School District

School districts around Massachusetts have undertaken new initiatives over the past few years to bolster students' social-emotional learning (SEL), seeing this as a critical lever to support student success in school and in life.[55] Andover Public Schools and the Monomoy Regional School District stand out for the way they see SEL and student voice as intertwined—and mutually reinforcing—pillars of improvement within schools.

Starting in 2015, Andover Public Schools adopted a new district-wide focus on empowering students to make change within their community and the world at large. District leaders refined Andover's theory of change to focus on the creation of safe, inclusive, and culturally responsive learning environments. Based on this theory of change, Andover schools have intentionally approached the work of social-emotional learning and student leadership, including the establishment of inclusive communities that support students' connections to each other and to school.

Elementary schools within the district—which already use Open Circle as a social skills development curriculum—have adopted Responsive Classroom, an evidence-based approach to teaching that focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness. The approach emphasizes the importance of making connections with peers, teachers, and the community, helping build conflict resolution and leadership skills. In a further effort to build an inclusive school climate, students in elementary school study their community and the diversity of students' cultures and heritages.

At the middle school level, Andover has implemented a mentorship program entitled *Where Everyone Belongs*, engaging 8th graders in year-long mentorship of 6th graders as well as providing a wide array of additional learning opportunities. And at the high school level, Andover has restructured the school schedule to accommodate an advisory block once every eight days, offering a channel for students to exercise student voice by connecting with peers, educators, and community members through leadership and service opportunities. Students can also select an area of interest and design a year-long capstone project for course credit, which they share with the community through showcases and "TED Talk"-type events. Through this and other projects, Andover administrators and teachers celebrate student talent and success, while also offering opportunities for students to engage with school leaders on their needs and issues of interest.

Likewise, Monomoy Regional School District sees SEL and student leadership as embedded in teaching and learning, not as add-ons to the core work of schools. Monomoy schools have brought students into the process of school improvement through multiple formal leadership roles. When the district created a steering committee on SEL three years ago, they made sure to include students as members of that committee. Students have also played leadership roles in analyzing and sharing information on health and wellness by developing a presentation to share findings from the youth risk behavior survey with their peers and parents. Student members sit on the district wellness committee, and a "teen coalition" of thirteen high school sophomores worked with a local agency to address child abuse and teen dating violence. School leaders have seen tremendous investment from students in contributing to conversations on addiction, violence, and other issues that affect their community.

## The Bard Early Colleges (BEC): Prioritizing Student Leadership

The best practice guide at the Bard Early Colleges states that adults at the school "are committed to the idea that students' views have as much value as those of the authors they read." This approach is a cornerstone of the schools' culture, in which students are expected to serve as agents of their own learning and that of their peers. During their four-year liberal arts program, which culminates in an Associate in Arts degree from Bard College, high school students exercise leadership through student-led peer tutoring and seminar-style classes.

BEC operates ten full- and part-time public early colleges based on a model initially developed at Bard College at Simon's Rock, an early college located in Great Barrington, MA. Recognizing the strengths of the Simon's Rock model, leaders exported key practices from this private, residential setting to public, nonresidential programs in major cities including New York, New Orleans, and Baltimore. The schools, which serve an urban population that includes approximately 74 percent students of color, have achieved impressive results: 82 percent of students earn an associate degree by graduation and 97 percent of the first graduating class earned a bachelor's degree within 6 years.

# Amplifying Student Voice in the Community

Student voice and community involvement share a complex relationship, as student voice is both shaped by and capable of helping shape the communities in which students live and grow. Out-of-school factors tend to have a large impact on students' educational outcomes, as well as influencing their beliefs about themselves and the world. Such factors (which for economically disadvantaged students may include challenges such as food insecurity and housing instability) have been shown to represent 60 percent of the variance in student assessment results.[56] In addition, both formal and informal learning experiences extend far beyond the school walls—students learn as they interact with peers within their neighborhoods, attend after-school classes at local recreation centers, and patronize or work in local businesses. These experiences shape students' views on their schools, the educational system as a whole, and a host of other issues.

Even as they are influenced by their surroundings, young people can also use their voice to exert an influence within the community. Community-based organizations offer a supportive setting for students to apply the civic and leadership skills they develop in the classroom and practice in school. Engagement with local institutions helps orient students to a world beyond the school walls where their voice is still welcomed and valued. It also lays the groundwork for students to be civically engaged, active contributors to democratic society throughout their lives.[57]

## Core Features of Student Voice in the Community

As in classrooms and schools, elevating student voice in the community requires making space for students to participate, allowing them to air their ideas openly, listening to those ideas, and taking action based on what students are saying.[58] In community settings, however, there may not be preexisting processes and routines where student voice can be incorporated. Additionally, cultivating student voice in the community is not just a job for education professionals. Instead, it falls to each of us as members of the community to reflect on and build our own receptiveness to youth voice. These factors, which diverge from student voice in classrooms and schools, are reflected in the following research-based features of student voice in the community.

- **Experiential learning:** Fostering student voice at the community level can take place in a wide variety of settings, often in partnership with community organizations, businesses, and other institutions. Experiential learning—in other words, learning that takes place as students work on authentic, applied projects[59]—provides opportunities for students to exercise agency over their work while engaging in projects that have a real impact on their community.[60] Examples of experiential learning with high potential for the exercise of student voice include internships, apprenticeships, service learning projects, and expanded learning opportunities for credit.[61]

- **Cultural competency and responsiveness:** Student voice thrives in environments where diverse backgrounds and experiences are respected and valued, and where participants acknowledge the cultural roots that underpin their attitudes.[62] By giving youth a platform to speak about their identities and perspectives, communities can use student voice to help build cultural competency—as long as the young people feel that they are being invited to speak in a safe and welcoming space. In some cases, community organizations accomplish this by bringing together young people with similar cultural identities, who can collaborate to better understand their strengths, assets, and needs.[63] In other cases, when students are sharing community spaces with those of different backgrounds, it is useful to establish norms of respect and inclusion before engaging in deeper learning or collective action.

- **Reciprocal dialogue:** To promote productive dialogue between adults and students in the community, there needs to be a framework for mutual respect. Reciprocal dialogue—which one researcher defines as "interactions in which participants listen to one another and build on each other's words"[64]—offers a useful model. Too often, rather than using dialogue to work toward shared goals, adults do not incorporate and engage youth input. One study examined the responses of a group of teachers and administrators to presentations from Latino and black high school students who had conducted participatory research on school conditions and resource distribution. The findings showed that only 6 of 19 decision-makers responded in a positive way that promoted future discussion (see text box for more). Adopting and modeling principles of reciprocal dialogue can help students see that their voice makes an impact on community decisions.

SPOTLIGHT ON
# Sociedad Latina and Youth on Board

Anyone looking for ideas about how to address the needs of young people would do well to spend time with the students of Sociedad Latina and Youth on Board. The young people who engage with these community-based organizations are bursting with ideas about how to address the challenges they experience every day in their neighborhoods and schools. By offering a receptive environment, space for dialogue, and opportunities to interact with leaders in Boston and beyond, the two organizations help students turn their passion into action.

Since 1968, Sociedad Latina has been working in partnership with Boston youth and families to create the next generation of Latino leaders who are competent, confident, self-sustaining, and proud of their cultural heritage. The organization promotes the assets of culture and youth voice as a valuable lens to better understand and address the needs of the community. By intentionally partnering with schools with large populations of Latino students, English Learners, and students of color, Sociedad Latina creates a supportive and culturally responsive space that addresses the barriers young people face in achieving their education and professional goals in high school and beyond. The organization serves more than 5,000 youth annually from middle school, through high school, and on to college and careers.

Youth on Board (YOB), which was founded in 1994, focuses on addressing community-based issues through youth-led activism using its signature "action and support" model of organizing. One of YOB's main projects is co-administering the Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) with the Boston Public Schools (BPS). BSAC is a citywide body of elected student leaders representing most BPS high schools that acts as the district's student union. BSAC organizers work to identify and address pertinent student issues, thereby putting students at the center of the decisions that affect them the most. YOB aims to restructure the power dynamic between students and adults through targeted trainings paired with intentional social-emotional support and relationship building. The organization confronts head-on the concept of "adultism" and seeks recognition of students as valued leaders in their community, while looking for opportunities to collaborate with adult allies on changes to policy and practice.

Student participants in both Sociedad Latina and Youth on Board have multiple ways to exercise their voice in settings that offer valuable experiential learning opportunities. In their fifty-year history, Sociedad Latina's Youth Community Organizers (YCOs) have worked tirelessly to participate in decision-making processes that particularly affect themselves, their peers, and Boston's Latino community. For instance, they were the first group of youth to be invited by the mayor to serve as part of an Impact Advisory

Group, a committee of residents who weigh in on institutional expansion and development projects in their neighborhood. YCOs also worked with the Boston City Council to close loopholes on unhealthy storefront advertising. YCOs frequently attend meetings of the Boston School Committee and other community hearings to advocate for needs such as additional internship opportunities and dual enrollment classes for Latino students within Boston Public Schools.

Youth on Board participants, meanwhile, advocate for changes to district-level policies such as the use of student feedback in teacher evaluations and promoting policies to slow climate change. One member of the Boston Student Advisory Council serves as a non-voting member on the Boston School Committee, allowing the group to solicit information from district leaders and play a role in debates on contentious issues.

## Worcester: Using Student Voice to Drive Community-Wide Conversations

In Worcester, school readiness and student success are community-wide priorities. Leaders from Worcester Public Schools and other municipal departments have sought the voices of students, families, service providers, and others in order to drive better outcomes for students and the community.

In early education, for instance, city leaders noted that 37 percent of students have no formal preschool education prior to kindergarten. Aiming to help the city's youngest learners feel invested in their learning, leaders from local business and civic groups launched the Worcester Reads Campaign on World Smile Day, hosting events across the city focused on reading, talking, playing, and singing. The success of this event inspired a contest in which children from the community were invited to share what makes them smile about Worcester. The contest generated more than 1,500 entries from children aged 3 to 13, and the results were compiled in The Smile Book, which was shared with an audience of business leaders, politicians, and families. As a companion to other initiatives (for instance, bringing high school youth together with public health leaders to focus on youth violence prevention), Worcester's efforts demonstrate the value of input from students of all ages in shaping community-wide conversations.

# Recommendations for District- and State-level Action



Placing student experience and leadership at the center of education conversations will require new ways of thinking and acting at multiple levels, from personal to systemic. At a personal level, individual educators may need to reassess their roles and responsibilities relative to students, as well as how they interact with and engage young people. At the systemic level, leaders must undertake a reappraisal of how various structures and processes are designed to develop and elevate student voice, especially for students from historically marginalized groups.

To advance this work, we propose a set of district and state practices that begin to address individual and systemic needs. These recommendations build on the local examples detailed on previous pages, which highlight various ways in which organizations, schools, and communities are currently using student voice as an important lever for quality improvement.

## District Practices

- **Create authentic opportunities for students to exercise their voice in school and district decision-making.** District leaders should seek to integrate student voice in a range of decisions related to practice and policy. These opportunities may look different at different grade levels. For instance, students in the elementary grades may be asked to weigh in on cafeteria options or research how to reduce waste through recycling or composting practices, while students in middle or high school may develop resources on student rights and the disciplinary process (as the Boston Student Advisory Council has done by creating a "Boston Student Rights" app).[67] Students should have the chance to drive some of these conversations by identifying challenges and areas of interest, rather than always responding to school or district proposals.

  Furthermore, districts should create official roles for students on official school- and district-wide committees, task forces, and boards, allowing adult members to hear from those who are most directly impacted by the issues. Since only a handful of students could serve as official representatives, it is critical to consider candidates who will bring a diversity of experiences, and to seek additional ways to engage all students around the topics of interest.

- **Offer training for educators on reciprocal and respectful dialogue.** Most educators (including school leaders as well as classroom teachers) have not had explicit training on how to elevate student voice or interact with students in ways that alter the traditional power dynamics of schools. Districts should provide educators with tools, resources, and training on using strategies such as reciprocal dialogue to ensure that student opinions (and students themselves) are respected and valued. Any such trainings should aim to help educators "step back" in order to let students step up into leadership roles—a process that requires being comfortable with some degree of vulnerability, as well as understanding how to facilitate a student-driven learning experience.

- **Facilitate community-wide conversations to ensure a cohesive approach to student support.** Recognizing that student learning is shaped by a range of factors inside and outside schools, districts should convene a cross-section of community partners to discuss how to invest holistically in student empowerment. In Worcester, for instance, community conversations on student support have brought in early education providers, district administrators, institutions of higher education, local health care providers, law enforcement officers, and cultural institutions, as well as students, families, and K-12 educators. These conversations could generate new and innovative ideas for promoting experiential learning and supporting students as community leaders.

## State Practices

- **Share survey results on school and district climate:** Massachusetts schools and districts can examine their current climate by digging into the results of the Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) Student Survey,[68] administered annually to students in grades 5, 8, and 10 by the state Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. This survey asks students for their input on nine aspects of school climate, grouped under the three headings of engagement, safety, and environment, and districts and schools receive personalized reports to indicate their results.[69] At present, though, there are no mechanisms for sharing district or school results with students and parents. As the Department revamps its public-facing school and district report cards, it should consider ways to communicate the highlights from these informative surveys more broadly. Leaders should also look into ways to use the annual survey administration to measure how schools and districts are elevating student voice.

- **Make the accountability system more culturally responsive by considering measures of equity and effectiveness.** The federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has given states the opportunity to include non-academic indicators in their measures of school performance, offering state leaders flexibility to build in new measures focused on equity and effectiveness. By allowing districts to pilot the use of innovative measures, Massachusetts can study the validity and application of various indicators that address how well districts are meeting the needs of historically marginalized students, with the intention of eventually incorporating such measures into the statewide accountability system.

- **Ensure that student outcomes and data systems support effective school-community partnerships.** State leaders should explore ways to better link data and support systems across agencies—and help districts do the same—so that educators and community leaders can provide more seamless learning opportunities inside and outside schools. Experiential learning opportunities within the community (such as internships, service projects, and participation in youth development programming) can be valuable ways for students to extend and deepen the skills they learn in the classroom. State leaders should explore methods of linking that learning with traditional measures of school success (such as by offering credit or awarding digital badges for out-of-school learning opportunities).

# Conclusion

Young people today have more ways to share their voice than ever before. Social media offers a potent tool for broadcasting messages and organizing collective action, culminating in mass movements like the National Student Walkout in April 2018 that called for new forms of gun control. Yet when it comes to their education, students often have limited opportunities to share their opinions and experiences, even though students are, in many ways, the ultimate experts about how the education system is functioning.

Although the education system as a whole is not currently designed to elevate student voice, there are bright spots across the Commonwealth that point to promising avenues for change. Within the classroom, models like Generation Citizen and Waltham's Changemaker Academy are helping students take ownership of their own learning and see that they can make change inside and outside the school walls. Andover and Monomoy schools are building pathways for students to participate in school-level decision making, while also helping students develop their own identities as individuals and learners. And young people in Boston are working through organizations such as Sociedad Latina and Youth on Board to cultivate their voice and lead community discussions on the issues that matter most in their lives.

Year after year, Massachusetts continues to grapple with clear and very real disparities across student subgroups in access to opportunities and educational outcomes. Looking forward, the Commonwealth should reconsider how to elevate student voice and harness student leadership in developing and improving education opportunities that address the needs, abilities, and interests of all students.

# ENDNOTES

1.  Withers, M. (2009). Why the Student Experience Matters. *New England Journal of Higher Education 24*(2), 17-19.

2.  Nthontho, M. (2017). Children as stakeholders in education: Does their voice matter? *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 7*(1), a434. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v7i1.434

3.  No. 1 for Some: Opportunity & Achievement (September 2018). Retrieved from https://number1forsome.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/16/2018/09/Number-1-for-Some-9.25-18.pdf

4.  National Center for Education Statistics, The Nation's Report Card, "NAEP Data Explorer," 2017, available at: https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/ndecore/landing.

5.  National Center for Education Statistics, The Nation's Report Card, "NAEP Data Explorer," 2017, available at: https://www.nationsreportcard.gov/ndecore/landing.

6.  Duncan, G. J., & Murnane, R. J. (2011). Whither opportunity? rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.

7.  Annie E. Casey Foundation, Kids Count Data Center. (2012-2016). *Young children not in school (by poverty status and by race).* Retrieved from: https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data#MA/2/8/10,11,12,13,15,14,2719/ char/0.

8.  Cusick, P. A. (1973). Inside high school: The student's world. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
    deCharms, R. (1976). Enhancing motivation: Change in the classroom. New York: Irvington Publishers.

9.  The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (2018). So Much for Slacktivism, As Youth Translate Online Engagement to Offline Political Action. Retrieved from: https://civicyouth.org/circle-poll-so-much-for-slacktivism-as-youth-translate-online-engagement-to-offline-political-action/

10. The Center for Information & Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (2018). Young People Dramatically Increase their Turnout to 31%, Shape Midterm Elections. Retrieved from: https://civicyouth.org/young-people-dramatically-increase-their-turnout-31-percent-shape-2018-midterm-elections/

11. Camero, K. (2018, November 08). Baker signs 'nonpartisan' civics education bill. Boston Globe. Retrieved from https://www.bostonglobe.com/metro/2018/11/08/baker-signs-non-partisan-civics-education-bill/ZK4RT0U9XTWTp4RwpItgxJ/story.html

12. Costello, J., Toles, M., Spielberger, J., & Wynn, J. (2000). History, Ideology and Structure Shape the Organizations that Shape Youth. In Youth development: Issues, challenges, and directions (pp. 185–231). Philadelphia: Public/Private Ventures.

13. Cook-Sather, A. (2006). Sound, Presence, and Power: "Student Voice" in Educational Research and Reform. *Curriculum Inquiry, 36*(4), 359-390.
    Hadfield, M., & Haw, K. (2001). 'Voice', young people and action research. *Educational Action Research, 9*(3), 485-499.

14. Great School Partnerships (2013). The Glossary of Education Reform. Retrieved from: https://www.edglossary.org/student-voice/

15. Bron, J., & Veugelers, W. (2014). Why we need to involve our students in curriculum design: Five arguments for student voice. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue, 16*(1), 125-139. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/11245/1.440444

16. Charting a Path to the *Future Through Individualized Learning Plans (2016). Roadmap to Expanding Opportunities.* Retrieved from: http://www.renniecenter.org/sites/default/files/2017-01/ILPs.pdf

17. Bron, J., & Veugelers, W. (2014). Why we need to involve our students in curriculum design: Five arguments for student voice. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue, 16*(1), 125-139. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/11245/1.440444

18. Dykes, G., Furdyk, M., Hassan, S., & Corriero, J. (2013). *Promethean thinking deeper research Paper No. 6. From learner voice to emerging leaders.* Retrieved from www.prometheanworld.com

19. Bron, J., & Veugelers, W. (2014). Why we need to involve our students in curriculum design: Five arguments for student voice. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue, 16*(1), 125-139. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/11245/1.440444

20. Bron, J., & Veugelers, W. (2014). Why we need to involve our students in curriculum design: Five arguments for student voice. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue, 16*(1), 125-139. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/11245/1.440444

21. Butler, J.K., Kane, R.G., & Morshead, C.E. (2017). "It's My Safe Space": Student Voice, Teacher Education, and the Relational Space of an Urban High School. *Urban Education, 52*(7), 889-916. DOI: 10.1177/0042085915574530

22. Fielding, M. (2001). Students as radical agents of change. *Journal of Educational Change, 2,* 123-141.
    Baroutsis, A., Mills, M., McGregor, G., Te Riele, K. & Hayes, D. (2016) Alternative education and social justice: considering issues of affective and contributive justice, *Critical Studies in Education, 57*:1, 100-115, DOI: 10.1080/17508487.2016.1087413
    Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A Review of School Climate Research. *Review of Educational Research, 83*(3), 357-385.

23. Cook-Sather, A. (2007). What Would Happen If We Treated Students as Those With Opinions That Matter? The Benefits to Principals and Teachers of Supporting Youth Engagement in School. *NASSP Bulletin, 91*(4), 343-362.

24. Williams, B. (2001). Accomplishing Cross Cultural Competence in Youth Development Programs. *Journal of Extension, 39*(6). Retrieved from https://www.joe.org/joe/2001december/iw1.php)

25. Bertrand, M. (2014). Reciprocal dialogue between educational decision makers and students of color: opportunities and obstacles. *Education Administration Quarterly, 50*(5), 812-843.

26. Lundy, L. (2007). "Voice" is not enough: Conceptualizing Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal, 33*(6), 927-942.

27. Lundy, L. (2007). "Voice" is not enough: Conceptualizing Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal, 33*(6), 927-942.

28. Bron, J., & Veugelers, W. (2014). Why we need to involve our students in curriculum design: Five arguments for student voice. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue, 16*(1), 125-139. Retrieved from http://hdl.handle.net/11245/1.440444

29. Nthontho, M. (2017). Children as stakeholders in education: Does their voice matter? *South African Journal of Childhood Education, 7*(1), a434. https://doi.org/10.4102/sajce.v7i1.434

30. Fielding, M. (2001). Students as radical agents of change. *Journal of Educational Change, 2,* 123-141.

31. Mitra, D. L. (2004). The Significance of Students: Can Increasing Student Voice in Schools Lead to Gains in Youth Development?. *Teachers College Record, 106*(4), 651-688.

32. Oldfather, P. (1995). Songs "come back most to them": Students' experiences as researchers. *Theory Into Practice, 34*(2), 131.

33. Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning. (2015). 2015 CASEL Guide: Effective Social and Emotional Learning Programs, Middle and High School Edition. Chicago, IL: Author

34. Morgan, Lori A. (2016). Developing Civic Literacy and Efficacy: Insights Gleaned through the Implementation of Project Citizen. i.e.: inquiry in education, Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 3.

35. Morgan, Lori A. (2016). Developing Civic Literacy and Efficacy: Insights Gleaned through the Implementation of Project Citizen. *i.e.: inquiry in education, Vol. 8: Iss. 1, Article 3.*

36. Cook-Sather, A. (2006). Sound, Presence, and Power: "Student Voice" in Educational Research and Reform. *Curriculum Inquiry, 36*(4), 359-390.

37. Fielding, M. (2001). Students as radical agents of change. *Journal of Educational Change, 2,* 123-141.

38. Demetriou, H. & Wilson, E. (2010). Children should be seen and heard: the power of student voice in sustaining new teachers. Improving Schools, 13(1), 54-69.

39. Cook-Sather, A. (2006). Sound, Presence, and Power: "Student Voice" in Educational Research and Reform. *Curriculum Inquiry, 36*(4), 359-390.

40. Flanagan, C., Cumsille, P., Gill, S., & Gallay, L. (2007). School and community climates and civic commitments: Processes for ethnic minority and majority students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(2), 421-431.

41. Mitra, D. L. (2004). The Significance of Students: Can Increasing Student Voice in Schools Lead to Gains in Youth Development?. *Teachers College Record, 106*(4), 651-688.

42. Flanagan, C., Cumsille, P., Gill, S., & Gallay, L. (2007). School and community climates and civic commitments: Processes for ethnic minority and majority students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(2), 421-431.

43. Butler, J.K., Kane, R.G., & Morshead, C.E. (2017). "It's My Safe Space": Student Voice, Teacher Education, and the Relational Space of an Urban High School. *Urban Education, 52*(7), 889-916. DOI: 10.1177/0042085915574530

    Cook-Sather, A. (2007). What Would Happen If We Treated Students as Those With Opinions That Matter? The Benefits to Principals and Teachers of Supporting Youth Engagement in School. *NASSP Bulletin, 91*(4), 343-362.

44. Demetriou, H. & Wilson, E. (2010). Children should be seen and heard: the power of student voice in sustaining new teachers. *Improving Schools, 13*(1), 54-69.

45. Flanagan, C., Cumsille, P., Gill, S., & Gallay, L. (2007). School and community climates and civic commitments: Processes for ethnic minority and majority students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(2), 421-431.

46. Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A Review of School Climate Research. *Review of Educational Research, 83*(3), 357-385.

47. Thapa, A., Cohen, J., Guffey, S., & Higgins-D'Alessandro, A. (2013). A Review of School Climate Research. *Review of Educational Research, 83*(3), 357-385.

48. Cook-Sather, A. (2006). Sound, Presence, and Power: "Student Voice" in Educational Research and Reform. *Curriculum Inquiry, 36*(4), 359-390.

49. Fielding, M. (2001). Students as radical agents of change. *Journal of Educational Change, 2,* 123-141.

50. Cook-Sather, A. (2006). Sound, Presence, and Power: "Student Voice" in Educational Research and Reform. *Curriculum Inquiry, 36*(4), 359-390.

51. Mitra, D. L., & Serriere, S.C. (2012). Student Voice in Elementary School Reform: Examining Youth Development in Fifth Graders. *American Educational Research Journal, 49*(4),743-774.

52. Blank, M.J., Jacobson, R., & Melaville, A. (2012). Achieving Results through Community School Partnerships: How District and Community Leaders Are Building Effective, Sustainable Relationships. Washington, D.C.: Center for American Progress.

53. York-Barr, J., & Duke, K. (2004). What do we know about teacher leadership? Findings from two decades of scholarship. *Review of Educational Research, 74*(3), 255–316.

54. Daniel, J., & University of Colorado at Boulder, N. C. (2017). Strong Collaborative Relationships for Strong Community Schools. *National Education Policy Center*, 1-25.

55. Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. (2016). *Toward a More Comprehensive Vision of Student Learning*. Boston, MA: Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy.

56. Berliner, D.C. (2013, December). Effects of Inequality and Poverty vs. Teachers and Schooling on America's Youth. *Teachers College Record, 115*(12), 1–26.

57. Flanagan, C., Cumsille, P., Gill, S., & Gallay, L. (2007). School and community climates and civic commitments: Processes for ethnic minority and majority students. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 99*(2), 421-431.

58. Lundy, L. (2007). "Voice" is not enough: Conceptualizing Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. *British Educational Research Journal, 33*(6), 927-942.

59. Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. (2017). *Putting Students at the Center of Reform.* Boston, MA: Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy.

60. Gould, J., Hall Jamieson, K., Levine, P., McConnell, T., Smith, D. B., McKinney-Browning, M., & Cambell, K. (Eds.). (n.d.). *Guardian of Democracy: The Civic Mission of Schools* (Rep.). Retrieved https://www.judybaartopinka.org/wp-content/uploads/Guardian-of-Democracy-report-resized.pdf

61. Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. (May 2016). Beyond School Walls: Earning Credit for Expanded Learning Opportunities. Boston, MA: Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy.

    Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. (November 2018). Expanding the Boundaries of Education. Boston, MA: Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy.

62. Williams, B. (2001). Accomplishing Cross Cultural Competence in Youth Development Programs. *Journal of Extension, 39*(6). Retrieved from https://www.joe.org/joe/2001december/iw1.php)

63. Williams, B. (2001). Accomplishing Cross Cultural Competence in Youth Development Programs. *Journal of Extension, 39*(6). Retrieved from https://www.joe.org/joe/2001december/iw1.php)

64. Bertrand, M. (2014). Reciprocal dialogue between educational decision makers and students of color: opportunities and obstacles. *Education Administration Quarterly, 50*(5), 812-843.

65. Bertrand, M. (2014). Reciprocal dialogue between educational decision makers and students of color: opportunities and obstacles. *Education Administration Quarterly, 50*(5), 812-843.

66. Cook-Sather, A. (2007). What Would Happen If We Treated Students as Those With Opinions That Matter? The Benefits to Principals and Teachers of Supporting Youth Engagement in School. *NASSP Bulletin, 91*(4), 343-362.

67. Youth on Board & Boston Student Advisory Council. Boston Student Rights App. http://www.bostonstudentrights.org/home

68. Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. (2018) Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) Student Survey Project. Retrieved from: www.doe.mass.edu/research/vocal/2018

69. Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education. (2018) Views of Climate and Learning (VOCAL) Student Survey Project. Retrieved from: www.doe.mass.edu/research/vocal/2018

## About the Rennie Center

The Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy's mission is to improve public education through well-informed decision-making based on deep knowledge and evidence of effective policymaking and practice. As Massachusetts' preeminent voice in public education reform, we create open spaces for educators and policymakers to consider evidence, discuss cutting-edge issues, and develop new approaches to advance student learning and achievement. Through our staunch commitment to independent, non-partisan research and constructive conversations, we work to promote an education system that provides every child with the opportunity to be successful in school and in life.

For more information about this report, please contact Chad d'Entremont, Executive Director, at cdentremont@renniecenter.org.

## Suggested Citation

Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy. (2019). *Student Voice: How Young People Can Shape the Future of Education*. Boston, MA: Rennie Center for Education Research & Policy.