

STUDENT REPRESENTATION ON THE DANVILLE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD

The Danville School Board values student representatives on its board to facilitate a productive and reciprocal communication on board matters. As liaisons between the student body and the board, student representatives are expected (1) to voice the interests, concerns and perspectives of their constituents to enhance the board's awareness and understanding of student issues and (2) to convey board deliberations and actions to the student body, which educationally impact them, potentially or actually. The goal of this representation is to encourage the transformation of a role of students-as-solely-objects-of-board-actions into one of students-as-collaborators, invested and integrated, directly or indirectly, in a decision-making process which affects their educational experiences and success.

ROLE & JOB RESPONSIBILITY

(1) Powers. Student representatives are appointed advisors of the board, and as a consequence, shall have the same rights as school board members, unless legally prohibited. They are expected and will be encouraged to inform, comment, clarify, advocate, caution and enlighten the board regarding, primarily, but not limited to, the student body's activities, interests, concerns and aspirations, in furtherance of the board's understanding the best interests of students in its decision-making. They are expected to participate in all regular meetings of the board and in special meetings upon request of the chair, who shall be aware of the student's schedule. Accordingly, the representatives shall have access to all board agendas, minutes, and non-confidential emails and reports, and may propose items for inclusion on an agenda using extant board procedures.

(2) Constraints. Vermont statutes authorize only school board members (directors), who are elected officials of Town municipal government, to make and vote on motions during district school board meetings. However, student board representatives may propose that a specific motion be made by a board member, may advocate their position on a motion, and may cast a preference-vote, which shall be recorded in the minutes, before a motion is formally voted upon.

Also, Vermont statute limits the initial participation in executive (closed) sessions of the board, during which personnel and student confidential matters are addressed, to school board directors only. Other persons necessary for a fair hearing and resolution of the confidential matters at hand, in the judgment of the board, may participate in the session only by specific invitation by the board.

Student representatives shall not be considered as members of the board with respect to the determination of a quorum.

(3) Mentor. Importantly, each student representative shall be assigned a mentor from the board by the board chair for the duration of their tenure on the board. Successful and efficient participation in board business, even in an advisory capacity, will be enhanced by a basic understanding of the board's position and role in a hierarchical governmental structure which both delegates authority to exercise power (to act) and constrains that authority. For school boards this structure stretches from federal and state constitutions to locally agreed-upon rules for the conduct of public meetings. The mentor's role is to help the representative with the basic navigation of this structure in which the board is immersed, to provide context for the representative's communication with the student body, and to enhance the student's own understanding of their additional role as a responsible citizen. The mentor is encouraged to work with the principal in guiding the representative's maturation.

ELIGIBILITY

Representatives must be members of the junior or senior classes at Danville High School during their service on the board. They must have attended Danville High School for a minimum of one full school year in good standing with respect to academic performance, eligibility for extracurricular activities and behavior as set forth in the School's current *Student and Family Handbook*, as assessed by the Principal and the Board. The Board encourages prospective applicants either to attend a school board meeting as a member of the public or as the guest of a current board member.

ACADEMIC CREDIT

The Danville School will award the equivalent of one semester social studies credit to student representatives upon completion of their first full year of service. Qualification for the credit will be based on regular attendance and participation and a reflection on the applicable learning proficiencies, as established by the school's current process. The principal will be directed to establish specific criteria for attendance, as well as current applicable social studies proficiencies, in cooperation with the pathways coordinator, school counselor, or other designated faculty.

SELECTION & TERM

A student representative shall normally serve a two-year term on the board, beginning as a junior and remaining on the board until the end of their senior year. Selection of a student representative shall be made from all eligible sophomore students through an application process:

- (1) the submission of an on-line application form by April 1st, with two letters of recommendation (at least one from a teacher with whom they had a class during the past 2 years),
- (2) the principal's recommendation from the pool of applicants of a maximum of 3 students for interviews by the board, which shall be conducted at its discretion and completed by May 1st. The Principal's recommendations may be ranked, but if so, justification for the ranking should be provided, and
- (3) the board's selection by June 1st of not more than one applicant to be the student representative based on the student's application and interview, if one has been conducted, the two recommendations submitted on behalf of the student, the recommendation of the Principal and the Board's own independent assessment of the candidates. The newly selected student shall be introduced as a representative at the June regular meeting of the Board and invested to assume their position upon their impending graduation into the junior class.

Vacancy. Vacant representative positions may be (1) left vacant, (2) filled by the normal selection process outlined in this policy adapted to fit the available time frame and situation and with full tenure, or (3) if deemed necessary, filled with a temporary appointment made by the board at its discretion, and which shall not extend beyond the end of the school year in which it is made. Such temporary appointment shall not disqualify the student from engaging in the normal representative selection process for the following year.

REMOVAL

A student representative can be removed from the board for failure to maintain academic good standing, for being ineligible for extracurricular activities and for criminal and improper behavior as defined by the School's current *Student and Families Handbook*, as assessed by the Board, and by a chronic failure to attend and be prepared for board meetings in the judgment of the Board. Removal requires a minimum of a 4/5 vote of the entire 5-member board

Date Warned: 9/1/2020-Danville

Date Adopted: 10/27/2020-Danville

Legal references:

1 V.S.A. 313(b) - Executive sessions

16 V.S.A 423, 424 - Directors, number, election, term

16 V.S.A. 563 - Powers of school boards