



Superintendent's Circular

School Year 2020-2021

NUMBER:
FAM-03

DATE:
September 29, 2020

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT GOVERNMENT

"As we continue to work at improving the quality of education for all students, it is important that the voice of students be heard at the local, state and national levels."
Massachusetts Dept. of Elementary and Secondary Education, www.doe.mass.edu

Every Boston public middle and high school (including district schools, exam schools, and all alternative, pilot, and in-district charter schools) must have a written student engagement policy documenting opportunities for students to assume leadership roles within classrooms and the broader school community, as stated in the BPS 7 Essentials of Whole School Improvement. The student engagement policy should be part of each school's Family Engagement Plan. **As part of this policy, each high school must also have a functioning and engaged student government. Middle schools are encouraged to have a student government.** Student leaders in this body will represent their peers by serving as advisors, researchers and participants in the decision-making process at the school and district level. Student government serves to engage students in learning about democracy and leadership.

Schools shall strive to form a student government that reflects the diversity of the student population in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, grade level, educational program (e.g., general, special and bilingual education), and other factors. The number of participants should be dependent on the size of your school and what is manageable for the Advisor. The recommendation is to have 10-15 students serve on Student Government. Small Learning Communities (SLCs) are also encouraged to develop their own student governments, with two representatives from each SLC forming the school-wide student government.

The principal/headmaster, with student input, should appoint one or more faculty advisors to oversee each student government. Student governments can be considered school clubs, and as such principals/headmasters are strongly encouraged to pay a stipend to the faculty advisor(s).

It is the responsibility of every principal/headmaster to ensure that elections are held and the student government is established no later than October 1st. Once the Student Government is established, each school must send information on the student members, including their BSAC (Superintendent Circular FAM-6) and Greater Boston Regional Student Advisory Council (GBRSAC) representatives and the teacher advisor to the Office of Engagement. Please note the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education requires secondary schools host their student elections for their

GBRSAC Reps and name be submitted no later than mid April for reps serving the following school year.

The recommendation is that all student elections be held as one process by April 15th of the current school year for roll out the following school year. See the [Student Elections Toolkit](#) for guidance on facilitating student elections and all the necessary reporting forms.

MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL OVERVIEW

Middle school student governments serve the same functions as high school student governments.

Middle school is usually the first time that students gain a recognized voice in the school community.

Learning about leadership is a key activity for many middle school student governments. Student government members learn how to research, plan, organize and execute programs and activities for a large number of students. The student government advisor leads student government members in developing their leadership skills.

Some examples include:

Practicing Democracy: Governing democratically is a skill students learn during student government. Student Government gives students a hands-on experience in the workings of a democracy and teaches them how to work cooperatively with others. Meetings should be run to promote students' working together for the common good and learning how to put leadership into action.

Implementing Fundraisers and Activities: Building school spirit can be one of the responsibilities of the student government. Through school events, such as talent shows, fundraisers and assemblies students, teachers, faculty members and parents come together to help plan these activities throughout the school year and appoint various people to run these functions.

Addressing Cares and Concerns: Students will raise issues in school that can best be addressed in student government. Whether it is more nutritious foods served in the cafeteria or issues regarding school spirit days, student government meetings give students a forum for sharing their grievances and analyzing possible solutions to these problems.

Read more: [What Are the Responsibilities of a Student Council Meeting? | eHow.com](http://www.ehow.com/info_8154689_responsibilities-student-council-meeting.html#ixzz2QjDi4RXb) http://www.ehow.com/info_8154689_responsibilities-student-council-meeting.html#ixzz2QjDi4RXb

HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL OVERVIEW

The job of the student government is not to just organize dances or school events. With faculty and administrative support, student government members should:

- Ensure student voices are heard and incorporated in school decision making through the School Site Council (SSC), and meetings with the administration
- Develop and grow as student leaders by working closely with the faculty advisor(s) and the headmaster

Through student government and SSC students can assist in fulfilling the school's mission and design and improve the culture and climate of the school.

Student government members should also include:

- 2 students who are elected to serve on **SSC or Governing Board** (one of these students shall also serve on the personnel subcommittee)
- 1-2 representatives to serve on the **Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC)**. See *Superintendent Circular FAM-6 for more information*. Citywide BSAC meetings are coordinated by the Office of Engagement and Youth on Board.
- 2 representatives to serve on the [Greater Boston Regional Student Advisory Council](#).

It is recommended that Student Government Members be connected to other school-based groups such as the School-Based Wellness Council. These positions can be dual roles with other positions on Student Government or can be stand alone. This is dependent on the student and other commitments. The Advisor should help students think about their time and commitments and what it would mean to take on dual roles on student government.

ROLE OF THE FACULTY ADVISOR

The principal/headmaster will designate one or more faculty advisors to oversee the student government.

The principal/headmaster will include students in the selection process.

The Faculty Advisor(s) will:

- Meet with the student government at least twice per month and organize at least two retreats per school year
- Act as a liaison between the student government and the Instructional Leadership Team (ILT)
- Assist the student government in managing their events/activities
- Assist student government members with in-school logistics and date approvals
- Assist students in the development of action plans for the school and obtain the appropriate approvals before the plans are implemented
- Track and support members as they complete tasks on the action plans
- Give the principal/headmaster regular updates on how the action plans are being carried out
- Assist the student government in creating the meeting and retreat agendas
- Monitor and record all student work and approvals for proposals and dates
- Develop student leaders by providing training and support as necessary

ALIGNMENT with PRINCIPAL/HEADMASTER EVALUATION

Please refer to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Educator Evaluation: Appendix B: School-Level Administrator Rubric.

- Indicator III-A1. Family Engagement
 - Engages SG in activities, events and opportunities to create a welcoming environment.
 - Students contribute in the design sharing their knowledge of family and culture.
 - Students evaluate and problem solve with staff and leadership challenges/barriers to including families in school community.
- Indicator IV-B1. Policies and Practices
 - Students participate in an activity identifying the make up of the school.
 - Cultural Sharing day.
 - Students participate on SSC and/or other groups that develop culturally sensitive policies.
- Indicator IV-E-1. Shared Vision Development
 - Students are part of the visioning process through focus groups, surveys, community meetings, etc.
 - Students share in the developing messaging for student body.
- Indicator IV-F-3. Consensus Building

- Conflict Resolution.
- Restorative Justice practices.
- Student Involvement in SSC and decision-making body.

Summary of significant dates and deadlines:

Date	Activity
October 30	Deadline for student government elections to be held
October 30	Deadline for Student Government Roster to be submitted to the Office of Student, Family and Community Advancement

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