

The consideration of the opportunities and challenges provided by creating a (non-voting) student member of the Board are important to weigh. The County Student Advisory Council is excited that the Board is supportive of increasing student involvement and feedback in its work. These student leaders look forward to working with the Board more regularly in the coming year.

However, even as a group of students from each high school, the student members have to be reminded regularly that their perspectives are limited and that they need to gather and consider more information before they draw conclusions. This has been a real focus of our work together as a group and will be even more important as students interact with Board members more regularly.

Many school divisions have a non-voting student member of the Board. While the position is admirable, it is clear that one student is not representative of students as a whole. Sadly, in many divisions this means that a student member becomes more of a symbolic figure.

As an alternative to a single student member, we could develop a rotation of members from the County Student Advisory Council to attend meetings periodically. A concern with this rotation model would be that it would dilute the ability of a student member to become expert and comfortable with the Board and the position. In addition a shared responsibility model is more likely to create challenges in terms of students being able to commit to meeting times and maintaining consistent attendance.

If the Board decides to create a student position, we will work to make this position one that is both meaningful and productive. Ideally, the student would be a liaison with the County Student Advisory Council and would serve as a point person for bringing other students into the conversation as needed (for example reaching out to student attendees for work sessions and leading requests for input through the County Student Advisory Council). The student member would need to visit student leaders and groups in schools across the division and use fellow County Student Advisory Council members to create a reflective cycle for student discussions.

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