

Board Proposal

Feb 08, 2022

Issue

1 Medicine Hat Public School Division's Board of Trustees has requested a structure whereby they can receive input from students. Student representatives would bring issues and ideas to the table for consideration to assist Board members in understanding the impacts on and wishes of the student population in Board decisions. By providing a forum for student voice, students will have the opportunity to be more connected to decision-making and feel valued and listened to, while also developing leadership and communication skills.

Process

2 Teacher representatives from Medicine Hat High School and Crescent Heights High School have been tasked to develop a proposal and procedure for the creation of a high school senate and the selection of student ambassadors to attend Medicine Hat School Division Board Meetings.

Membership

3 Board trustees will contact Crescent Heights High School, Medicine Hat High School, and Coulee Collegiate, to identify two students who would be invited from the school-based Senate to serve in an advisory capacity as Student Ambassadors. Individual schools may decide the structure of their school-based Senate committee, but will be asked to have two students liaise with the School Board. Students in grades 10, 11 and 12 will be eligible for participation.

Student Senators will:

- (a) Attend school consistently
- (b) Demonstrate academic effort
- (c) Demonstrate behaviours and attitudes that contribute to a positive environment, both in the school and the broader community, including effective communication skills and reliability
- (d) Have the support of at least one teacher currently on staff and the principal of their school

4 Student ambassadors will be invited from within a smaller Senate leadership group (where possible) from each school.

- (a) Student ambassadors may rotate from within this smaller group to provide a variety of voices to the board as well as opportunities for the students.
- (b) School-based Senates are open to all students and should be advertised widely within schools to provide an opportunity to participate that reflect a cross-section of student interests and backgrounds.

Structure

- 5 (a)** Delegates will meet within their school groups to discuss upcoming issues within their schools group prior to the monthly board meeting.
- (b)** The school-based Senate will engage in a mentoring meeting with a member of the Board to ensure that procedures and routines are being followed.
- (c)** Delegates will attend monthly board meetings and sit as non-voting members

Student Ambassador Responsibilities/Duties

6 Student ambassadors will be responsible to:

- (e)** Gather regular feedback from within their student body on pertinent issues
- (i)** Seek out ideas and information from all students in the school
 - (ii)** Communicate this information to their teacher mentors and board members through a meeting report or meeting minutes
 - (iii)** Being thoughtful about how best to engage with students and gather their voice or perspectives; caution around the potential for “feedback fatigue” or overburdening school staff
- (f)** Attend in-school working meetings as set by teacher mentors
- (g)** Have ideas prepared for the issues on the agenda that are relevant to their school for discussion each month
- (h)** Attend a monthly board meeting to share their concerns and thoughts on policy and procedure as well as initiate conversations around what is important to students
- (i)** Respond to direct requests from the board to provide feedback on issues from the school board and division administration
- (j)** Student senators will act only in the best interest of the student body they represent

Responsibilities of the Board of Trustees

7 The Board of Trustees will:

- (a)** identify topics that they would like feedback on prior to each board meeting
- (b)** invite the Student SENATORS to participate in a minimum of five public Board meetings a year to report on the Student Senate’s work and/or bring student perspective to critical educational issues.
- (c)** keep the Student Senate in mind and will invite them to attend other Division or Board events where student voice and representation would be appropriate.
- (d)** as appropriate, reach out to the Student Senate during the school year as a source of youth voice or perspective.

Benefits to the School Board

- Receive timely and relevant feedback from students on issues, policies and procedures
- A structure that provides continuity year over year in engagement between Board and student populations
- Develop working relationships with teachers and students in schools

Benefits to the Student Delegates/Senate

- Skills that are transferable to the workplace (e.g., communication, managing meetings, event planning, collaboration)
- An opportunity to understand different points of view
- Relationship building and connections across schools
- A greater understanding of the public education system
- An understanding of the importance and appreciation of student voice in education
- A way to have an impact on decisions being made both for themselves and peers
- A starting point for future participation in the community

Sources:

1. <https://www.ddsbc.ca/en/about-ddsb/resources/Documents/Constitution-of-the-DDSB-Student-Senate.pdf>
2. <https://epsb.ca/media/epsb/ourdistrict/boardoftrustees/boardmeetings/2019-20/june92020/02-StudentSenate-SummaryofWorkAccomplishedandProposedRevisionstoModel.pdf>
3. <https://signalhfx.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/2016.02.03-DSU-Senate-Reform-Proposal.pdf>
4. <https://www.wrdsb.ca/wp-content/uploads/Student-Senate-Handbook.pdf>