



NATIONAL STUDENT BOARD MEMBER ASSOCIATION

Strategic Plan 2025 - 2027

FY26 Refresh

Our Mission

We connect, support, and empower student school board members and other educational stakeholders to advance student representation in education decision-making, providing the skills, tools, and knowledge to drive meaningful change in their schools and communities.



Our Vision

We envision an education system where students, as primary stakeholders, play a central role in all aspects of governance and decision-making, working with adults as equals to improve education.



Theory of Change

We believe that the student board member role is a **catalyst for student-led educational transformation**. By equipping student board members with knowledge and skills through effective training, we empower them to ensure that educational systems are **responsive to the needs of all students** and help **every student thrive**. Our goal is to expand the student board member position to every locality across the United States, creating a robust, democratic framework that represents and supports the students of today and tomorrow. In fostering skilled, knowledgeable and empowered student board members, we are not just supporting individual student leaders; we are **uplifting entire student communities to mobilize change** and work alongside educational leaders to **strengthen schools, improve student outcomes, and promote a culture of student-driven governance**.

Our Values

- **Democratic Process**
- **Nonpartisan Youth Civic Engagement**
- **Student Agency, Voice & Power**
- **Intergenerational Collaboration & Co-creation**
- **Fairness in Education & Representation**
- **Education & Community Building**

Democratic Process.

The voices and perspectives of students and young people are essential to effective governance and the vitality of democracy. Youth contribute to democratic society and must therefore be a part of democratic structures and processes, intentionally and by design, through meaningful participation whereby they have the power to shape the laws, policies and decisions that impact them. Furthermore, we advocate for student board members to be chosen democratically as true representatives of their peers, thereby promoting youth civic engagement.

Nonpartisan Youth Civic Engagement.

We are firmly committed to advancing student representation in educational governance and we maintain a non-partisan approach throughout our work, embracing diversity of perspectives and constructive debate as a way of improving decision-making. Elected student board member positions foster a broader culture of civic responsibility among students by providing first-hand experience in voting, receiving representation, policymaking, and accountability. Student board members provide a direct link between school boards and the student body, fostering youth civic engagement in practice.

Student Agency, Voice & Power.

Meaningful youth participation is essential to ensure the education system prepares all students to thrive. Students are uniquely positioned to understand today's education system and to contribute meaningfully to its improvement through their diverse, lived experiences. We believe students are entitled to the right of representation and should be able to influence the systems they are a part of to the same extent as adults. To this end, we believe that student board members should serve on all school boards and state boards of education across the United States, and we believe in expanding the rights of student board members to democratize education and improve student outcomes.

Intergenerational Collaboration & Co-creation.

Our greatest successes come from young people and adults working together to improve education systems. By providing space for both students and adults to share their unique experiences, perspectives, and expertise, we can develop a better understanding of the challenges we face and work together to co-create solutions that are more innovative, inclusive and effective, leading to better outcomes for all.

Fairness in Education & Representation.

All students have the right to a high-quality education, regardless of their background or circumstances. Fairness is a cornerstone of meaningful student representation and vice-versa, as meaningful representation helps all students to thrive. The student board member position should be open and accessible to all students who are interested in the role, without barriers or prerequisites.

Education & Community Building.

To make the most of their role and represent the interests of all students, student board members must understand what school boards are and how they operate. We equip student board members with the knowledge, skills and expertise to effectively navigate their school board, echoing the work of adult-led school board organizations while emphasizing student leadership. Peer-to-peer and near-peer learning and exchange are essential to building a nationwide movement of engaged, empowered and representative student board members that lead positive change for millions of students.

Priority Areas

Implementing Our Mission

1. Grow our network
2. Develop our programming
3. Work towards long-term sustainability

1. Enhance & Expand Our Membership Base

We estimate that as of the 2024-25 school year, there are at least 1,000 student board members serving across 18 states nationwide. As the first and only national network built by, with, and for student board members, NSBMA aims to reach as many student board members as possible.

NSBMA will grow and solidify its membership network. By 2027, at least 100 members will participate in our programming annually from at least six states. Additionally, we will establish robust systems and structures to support and scale up the membership framework.

1. Enhance & Expand Our Membership Base

1.1 Begin Developing Comprehensive and Sustainable Membership Systems

1.2 Support and Formalize State Association Development

1.3 Consolidate and Grow Presence in New England

1.4 Empower Student Board Member Leadership

1.5 Enhance Member Engagement Across the Student Board
Member Lifecycle

2. Develop Our Programming

Student board members usually receive little if any training that is tailored to their specific needs and situation, and often work in isolation, lacking a wider support network. Where training is provided, it is almost always adult-led rather than peer-led. Additionally, school staff and administrators who support student board members lack dedicated spaces to meet and learn from one another.

NSBMA will build high-quality online and offline programming to support and engage with student board members throughout their term and to foster mutual learning and exchange among student board member advisors, hosting at least three regional, in-person conferences with a minimum of 40 participants each by 2027.

2. Develop Our Programming

2.1 Prepare Student Board Members for an Effective Term of Service

2.2 Provide Ongoing Learning, Support and Networking Opportunities

3. Develop Revenue Streams for Financial Sustainability

To continue and expand our work with and for student board members and other educational stakeholders, NSBMA must identify ways of generating revenue that are sustainable in the long-term.

NSBMA will increase its annual revenue to reach its goals and objectives by 2027, diversifying income sources to include membership and conference fees, corporate sponsorships, consulting services, and other revenue-generating activities to reduce dependency on donor funding in the long-term.

3. Develop Revenue Streams for Financial Sustainability

3.1 Begin Developing Comprehensive and Sustainable Membership Systems

3.2 Enhance Fundraising and Sponsorship Efforts

3.3 Monitor and Evolve our Financial Roadmap

Reaching Our Vision

4. Establish ourselves as a trusted partner & stakeholder
5. Advance student representation through research and strategic support

4. Elevate Our Communications & Build a Robust National Reputation

Founded in 2022, NSBMA is a new player in the education landscape. Many stakeholders, from school districts to prominent, national educational organizations are still learning about our work and the added value we bring to the table.

NSBMA will position itself as a leading voice and resource in educational governance by enhancing relationships with key stakeholders, expanding media presence, and optimizing our digital engagement strategies.

4. Elevate Our Communications & Build a Robust National Reputation

4.1 Strengthen and Scale a Comprehensive Communications Strategy

4.2 Strengthen Relationships with Educational Stakeholders and Organizations at the National and State Levels

5. Empower and Expand Student Board Member Influence through Research and Strategic Support

A majority of school districts in the United States do not have a student board member, and where the position does exist, the vast majority of student board members do not have voting rights. Additionally, detailed evidence on student board members and their impact is currently lacking. Research can bolster efforts to demonstrate the potential of student voice, including on educational outcomes, and support the expansion of student board member positions and voting rights.

NSBMA will position itself as a leading voice on the role and impact of student board members nationwide, strengthening the evidence base that demonstrates their contributions to effective governance and student outcomes. Through research partnerships and the dissemination of credible data, NSBMA will highlight the value of student board members and inform conversations about expanding their positions and rights. By 2027, NSBMA will publish a research report that advances the understanding of student representation and supports the continued growth of student voice in education governance.

5. Empower and Expand Student Board Member Influence through Research and Strategic Support

5.1 Support Initial Research and Publicize Findings

Working in Partnership

To achieve our goals and objectives, we will continue to work in close partnership with our incubator and fiscal sponsor, the **National Center on Education and the Economy** (NCEE). NCEE is an invaluable ally and champion of NSBMA, and student agency more broadly. Our partnership embodies our value of intergenerational collaboration and co-creation, which we are proud to demonstrate in practice, learning from one another and working together to improve education systems.