



2.2 Rights of Children and Youth to Participation

Human Rights Goal

Schools shall enable students to be active and effective participants in the learning process, to express their views and to give input into decisions that affect their lives and education. Schools shall inform students about school policies and practices and their rights connected to them.⁶⁸

Recommended Language

- A. States, districts and schools shall develop structures that allow students to be heard on issues affecting their education and school policies and procedures, including, but not limited to:**
1. Age-appropriate student councils and advisory bodies providing for student input into the design and function of policies and procedures affecting students;
 2. Student representation on school-wide decision-making bodies (i.e. school leadership teams) and on district and state-level boards of education;
 3. Age appropriate student participation in hiring, granting tenure to and developing training programs for school staff;
 4. School-wide forums—for example, town hall meetings—that offer students an opportunity to voice their opinions about school decisions and policies;
 5. Processes to repair harm, restore trust and identify solutions to school conflict and disciplinary incidents through methods such as peer counseling and mediation, restorative circles, or conferences;⁶⁹
 6. Student participation on School Climate and Culture Leadership Teams and discipline committees, such as fairness committees (see Section 3.7.b Model Policy on Restorative Justice Practices); and
 7. Grievance procedures and a process for appealing decisions that affect students directly, including on issues of curricula, school policy, discipline, and school climate and culture.
- B. States, districts and schools shall ensure that all students and school staff are made aware of and have access to detailed information about school rules, policies, and procedures and state and local laws guaranteeing or affecting students’ right to participation, made available in the language the students’ understand best.**
- C. States, districts and schools, in partnership with students and other members of the school community, shall create a Students’ Bill of Rights.**
- D. States, districts and schools shall ensure that students are active participants in the educational process by working with educators and staff to adopt instructional techniques and classroom management systems that encourage student participation in decision-making, take into account student views, teach students effective leadership and participation skills, and provide explanations to students when decisions go against their views.**
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⁶⁸ U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child art. 29 cmt. 1.

⁶⁹ Telling it Like It Is. Power U Center. Available at: <https://poweru.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Tell-It-Like-It-Is.pdf>