



**Alaska Association of Student Government
Resolution #4**

Establishment, Rights, and Voting Privileges of Student School Board Members

Submitted by:

Ben Kolendo (MSBSD Head Student Representative)

MSBSD Student Advisory Board (SAB) / Student Government Association (SGA)

Wasilla High School Student Government

Palmer High School Student Government

Mat-Su Career and Technical High School Student Government

October 13, 2023

Be it resolved by the Alaskan Association of Student Governments that:

1. **Whereas**, the student board member on the school board has been a recognized member of the the Mat-Su Borough School Board in the MSBSD since its establishment in 1995^{2,3}; and
2. **Whereas**, Board Policy 9110 not only bars the responsibilities of the current student representative, but for all student representatives in the future; and
3. **Whereas**, on September 6, 2023, the Mat-Su Borough School District, by a vote of 5-2, amended its Board Policy 9110, significantly reducing the role and responsibilities of its student representative by 1) revoking the power to cast preferential votes, 2) denying the student representative a position on the dais, and 3) denying the student representative the ability to engage in questioning witnesses and engaging in discussions on matters of the board¹; and
4. **Whereas**, the Anchorage, Fairbanks, Kenai, and Juneau school districts, each of the state's five largest school districts, as well as the State of Alaska Board of Education and

Early Development, incorporate a student representative who is granted the opportunity to address meetings and participate in preferential voting⁴; and

5. **Whereas**, no known School Board in Alaska’s history has ever reprimanded a student representative position before this decision; and
6. **Whereas**, the Alaska Association of School Boards contends that student representatives serving on school boards have not only made substantial and positive contributions to their respective school districts through their board positions but have also exhibited the ability to “judiciously leverage their positions to improves the way decisions are made by the entire board,” and “increases the confidence and commitment of all members”^{7,8}; and
7. **Whereas**, it is recognized that student perspectives are invaluable in shaping the educational program and fostering a conducive learning environment within the school district⁵; and
8. **Whereas**, to ensure student input and engagement in the decision-making process, School Boards with an average daily membership exceeding 5,000 shall establish a Student Government Association (SGA)⁶; and
9. **Whereas**, the SGA shall be responsible for the election of a student representative member to serve on the School Board; and
10. **Whereas**, it is imperative to delineate the rights and privileges afforded to Student Board members to guarantee their meaningful participation and contribution to the Board's proceedings⁶; and
11. **Whereas**, According to Alaska Statute 14.14.300 (c), Involvement of Young People in Governance, “An individual appointed to a district committee or advisory body under this section is entitled to the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of other members, and the appointment is subject to confirmation by the board when required by law”^{2,6};

Therefore, be it resolved by the Alaska Association of Student Governments: the following sections:

Section 1: Establishment of Student Board Member Position

School Boards with an average daily membership exceeding 5,000 hereby establishes the position of a Student Board Member to represent the student body on the School Board. This position shall be filled by a student elected by the Student Government Association.

Section 2: Student Board Member Rights

- a. Student board members shall have the right to attend all public meetings of the School Board.
- b. Student board members shall be recognized at meetings and given the opportunity to participate in questioning witnesses and discussing issues brought before the Board.

- c. Student board members shall receive all materials and documents presented to regular board members, with the exception of materials related to executive sessions.
- d. Student board members shall have the authority to make motions and second motions during board meetings.
- e. Student board members shall hold the official title of "School Board Member."

Section 3: Student Board Member Voting Privileges

- a. Student board members are granted the privilege to cast votes on all matters discussed by the board, except for issues subject to executive session discussion.
- b. A School Board may decide to make the student board members vote preferential.
- c. Preferential votes must be cast prior to the official board vote and shall not impact the final outcome of any vote and shall be recorded in the official minutes of the School Board meetings.

Section 4: Implementation

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon acknowledgement by the School Board and shall remain in force until amended or revoked by Alaska State School Board action.

Section 5: Review

The Alaska State School Board shall periodically review the effectiveness of this resolution in ensuring meaningful student engagement and may make necessary adjustments as deemed appropriate.

Action Statement: if passed by the general assembly of AASG, the Alaska Association of Student Government shall expeditiously transmit this resolution to the Mat-Su Borough School District Board, vigorously advocate for its adoption, and ensure the enduring preservation of the establishment, rights, and voting privileges of Student Board Members. Concurrently, we shall promptly introduce this resolution to the Alaska Senate during the 33rd Legislative Session with the objective of enacting permanent safeguards to protect the rights of all present and future student board members from any diminution or infringement.

Legal Reference:

ALASKA STATUTES⁶

14.08.041 Regional school boards
14.08.091 Administration
14.12.030 School boards
14.12.110 Single body as assembly and school board
14.14.070 Organization of school board
14.14.250 - 14.14.310 Involvement of young people in government
29.20.300 School boards
29.20.300 School Boards

Works Cited

- ⁶ Alaska State Legislator. "Alaska Statutes 2022." *Alaska State Legislature*,
<https://www.akleg.gov/basis/statutes.asp#14.08.111>. Accessed 10 October 2023.
- ⁵ Anchorage School District. "Anchorage School District Policy 9110." *Anchorage School District*, 9 March 2019, <https://www.boardpolicyonline.com/?b=anchorage&s=318618>.
Accessed 10 October 2023.
- ⁸ Association of Alaska School Boards. "What Are the Benefits of Having Youth Representatives on Your Board?" *Association of Alaska School Boards*, 16 Sept. 2019,
aasb.org/what-are-the-benefits-of-having-youth-representatives-on-your-board/,
- ⁷ Earle, Sarah. "Student Membership on School Boards Provides Benefits for All."
ReachingHigherNH, 16 Nov. 2022,
reachinghighernh.org/2022/11/15/student-membership-on-school-boards-provides-benefits-for-all/.
- ¹ Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District. "Featured - Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District BoardDocs® Pro." *BoardDocs*, <https://go.boarddocs.com/ak/matsu/Board.nsf/Public#>.
Accessed 10 October 2023.

³ Matanuska-Susitna Borough School District. *MSBSD Inside*. 16 December 2009,
<https://www.matuschoolsfoundation.org/grants/MSBSD%20Inside%2012.16.09.pdf>.

Accessed 10 October 2023.

⁴ Rockey, Tim. “Mat-Su school board proposes sidelining student member after pointed exchanges on controversial topics.” *Alaska Public Media*, 28 August 2023,
<https://alaskapublic.org/2023/08/28/mat-su-school-board-proposes-sidelining-student-member-after-pointed-exchanges-on-controversial-topics/>. Accessed 10 October 2023.

² Staick, Katie. ““We want the SAB to continue to do great things” A brief explanation of the Student Advisory Board.” *Frontiersman*, 1 September 2023,
https://www.frontiersman.com/news/we-want-the-sab-to-continue-to-do-great-things-a-brief-explanation-of-the/article_60efeefc-4895-11ee-8b39-eb5e0cff70bc.html. Accessed 10 October 2023.

The resolution passes with unanimous consent

Passed by the Fall 2023 General Assembly of AASG hosted by West Valley High School

Danika Hamm

AASG Vice President, Danika Hamm

Kathleen A. Navarre

AASG Executive Director, Kathleen Navarre