

Heeding and Hearing Student Voices

Engaging matters: Community engagement for
school boards conference

January 22, 2014

What the Research Says

- **Student voice - activities occurring in and out of schools**
- **Expression, performance, creativity, collaboration, co-creation**
- **Agency and student centered**

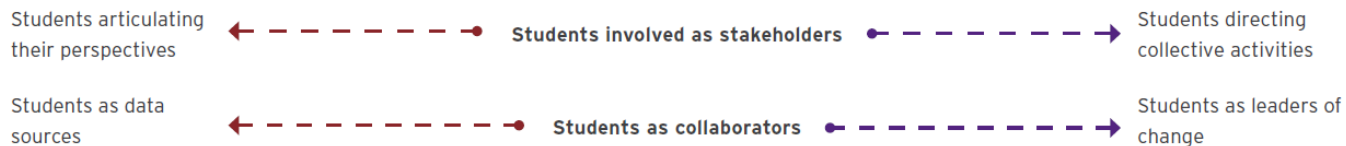
Why is student voice important?

- **Increased levels of motivation and engagement**
- **Higher academic achievement**
- **Greater classroom participation**
- **Self-reflection and preparation for improvement in at-risk students**
- **Decrease in behavioural problems**



Student Voice Activities – A Spectrum

THE SPECTRUM OF STUDENT VOICE ORIENTED ACTIVITY



Expression	Consultation	Participation	Partnership	Activism	Leadership
Volunteering opinions, creating art, celebrating, complaining, praising, objecting	Being asked for their opinion, providing feedback, serving on a focus group, completing a survey	Attending meetings or events in which decisions are made, frequent inclusion when issues are framed and actions planned	Formalized role in decision making, standard operations require (not just invite) student involvement, adults are trained in how to work collaboratively with youth partners	Identifying problems, generating solutions, organizing responses, agitating and/or educating for change both in and outside of school contexts	(Co-)Planning, making decisions and accepting significant responsibility for outcomes, (co-) guiding group processes, (co-) conducting activities

Most student voice activity in schools/ classrooms resides at this end of the spectrum.

The need for adults to share authority, demonstrate trust, protect against co-optation, learn from students, and handle disagreement **increases** from left to right.

Students' influence, responsibility, and decision-making roles **increase** from left to right.



Effective Student Engagement – Essential Conditions

- **Commitment to facilitating student voice**
- **Support from District and School Leadership and Teachers**
- **Changing processes and practices**
- **Taking Action**

Are You Ready to Engage?

What are students saying?

Challenges

- **Who do you need to hear from?**
- **Capacity and Time**

Are You Ready to Engage?

- **Preparedness / Training**
- **What is “student speak”?**
- **Methods of engagement**
- **Culture Shift**

Implementation – What does it look like?

Speak Out – Alberta Student Engagement Initiative

- **Minister's Student Advisory Council**
- **Forums**
- **Website**
- **Conference**

Resources

www.speakout.alberta.ca

