

Student Voice

There are three components to student voice:

1. Sharing thoughts and ideas in an environment underpinned by trust and respect
2. Offering realistic suggestions for the good of the whole
3. Accepting responsibility for not only what is said but also what needs to be done

To realize student voice, it is important for everyone to have a common definition and understanding of what voice means. The following are a few common myths and truths about student voice:

Myth: Student voice is only for extroverted students.

Truth: Students do not have to be loud or even in person to use their voices. When you write an editorial or a letter to the principal, you are expressing your voice. Sometimes the quiet, active voices can achieve the most!

Myth: Student voice cannot be learned.

Truth: Student voice does not come naturally to everyone. Some students need to learn how to form opinions, listen to others, and work together. Do not give up if you are not yet confident with your voice. Keep practicing!

Myth: Student voice only exists in official school government roles and on committees.

Truth: Student government is certainly one place for student voice, but it is not the only one. Students have a voice in their classrooms, in after school activities, with their peers, and anywhere they are willing to get involved and become part of a solution.

Myth: Students need to be given a voice.

Truth: You already have a voice! It is up to you to use your voice to benefit others and take action to improve issues you care about.



Think about the difference between noise and voice and then list some examples that you have observed or experienced.

Take Action!

Break up into small groups and include at least one adult in each team of peers.
Work cooperatively to make an idea become reality!

Part 1: *Sharing thoughts and ideas in an environment underpinned by trust and respect*
Brainstorm a list of ten ideas your group has to improve your classroom or school.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

Part 2: *Offering realistic suggestions for the good of the whole*

Examine what your group wrote in Part 1. Select two ideas that are realistic and benefit other people (not just yourselves). Explain how each idea can make a real difference.

Part 3: *Accepting responsibility for not only what is said but also what needs to be done*

Choose one of the two ideas to act on. Work as a team to create an action plan that will make the idea become reality. Be sure the action plan includes a timeline, a list of each individual's job/responsibilities, and the anticipated outcome.