

Meaningful Engagement in Action:



The Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC)

The Boston Student Advisory Council (BSAC) is a citywide body of student leaders representing their respective high schools across the city. BSAC organizers work to identify and address pertinent student issues, thereby putting students at the center of the decisions that affect them the most. BSAC acts as the student union of the district, leading organizing efforts, forging relationships with district and city leaders, impacting policy change, and transforming school culture across.

Learning More and Setting Goals

A 1971 state policy stated that all districts should have a student advisory council (SAC). In 2000, there was no meaningful SAC in Boston and a school committee member brought in Youth on Board to revitalize the program.

Making a Plan

Youth on Board, a Boston-based, youth-led and adult supported program focused on ensuring that young people are at the center of the decisions that affect their lives, partnered with the Boston Public Schools to co-administer BSAC. Over the next 18 years— through their unique inside/outside partnership, they have made BSAC what it is today.

Writing it Down

Today, BSAC members:

- convene 1-2 times per week;
- meet with the Superintendent, the Mayor, and members of the School Committee to provide feedback on City and district projects and bring up issues important to them;
- provide student perspectives on education policy issues at the local, state and federal level;
- develop and disseminate materials to help students understand their rights and responsibilities;
- inform their respective schools about relevant citywide issues, and are trained in social emotional learning skills;
- develop youth-led campaigns about STTP, climate justice, student rights, education equity, SEL, and more; and
- are able to get badges or course credit for their participation.

A member of BSAC also serves as a non-voting student representative on the Boston School Committee.

Making it Happen

Now BSAC is a powerful citywide body of student leaders that represent most high schools in the district and consists almost entirely of low-income students of color, with demographics that closely mirror those of the district. BSAC members identify and organize around pertinent student-identified issues, putting these key stakeholders at the center of the decisions that affect them the most. Projects often operate on multiple levels, addressing district-level systems change, as well as systems change on the state level, while developing workable models of student-led campaign development and movement building for replication across the country. BSAC has worked with their advisors and partners on major initiatives. These include: student rights & responsibilities, sustainability and climate justice, the school-to-prison pipeline, student feedback & teacher evaluation, and more!



Learn more about what BSAC has accomplished at: youthonboard.org/boston-student-advisory-council/