

Red Wing Public Schools
2451 Eagle Ridge Drive
Red Wing, MN 55066



Phone 651.385.4500

www.rwps.org

School Board Meeting Agenda Item

Topic: Proposed Student School Board Member Changes
Contact(s):
Presenter(s): Anna Ostendorf. Student School Board Member Liaison

Nature of Action Requested

Board Action
Board Information or Report

Background Information

In her role as the Student School Board Member Liaison, Anna Ostendorf explored possible changes to our program. She spoke with Jean Marvin, the Chair of the Rochester School Board to learn more about their work incorporating more student voices into discussions. Several years ago, Rochester Public Schools moved from having a few select students to present at school board meetings to a large student group serving as advisory to the school board.

Students would self-select to be part of the group by completing a brief application. During meetings, which are held one time each month and last about 60-90 minutes, students, staff members, and/or board members give presentations about various issues. After small group or breakout sessions, students reconvene to share their thoughts and see what rises to the surface. They collectively determine what needs to be brought to the school board. Every meeting ends with a change for them to ask the superintendent questions.

Participating students collect feedback and input from the rest of the student body, work with the principal to explore issues facing their school, and work on what they can do as an action group within their school. Students then advise the school board about issues that pertain to them. When a major issue is coming up for board discussion—for example, student dress code—the issue typically first goes to the student group before being presented to the school board with student feedback.

Rochester lets students self-select to be part of the student school board and, generally, if they apply they are accepted. This encourages a diverse range of voices, not just from those students who are typically involved in student government. The group can be quite large, but Rochester has found it still works well by utilizing small group discussions.

Anna solicited feedback from high school administrators and posed questions about the timing of meetings during the school day, location of meetings, and possible start for the program. High school administrators and the Superintendent are supportive of the potential changes.

Recommendation

I move to authorize the Superintendent and Student School Board Liaison to develop a formal plan for approval by the School Board on December 20th.