# State Board of Education Student Membership
# Background Information

**What is the Maine State Board of Education?**

- Has 9 adult members and 2 non-voting student members
- Was created in 1949
- The Maine State Board of Education is an independent body that acts in an advisory capacity to the Maine Commissioner of Education in matters concerning state education laws and makes education policy recommendations to the legislative and executive branches of state government.
- The Board's responsibilities under Maine law also include overseeing approval of school construction projects for receipt of state funds; administering federal funds awarded to Maine for career and technical education; establishing standards for teacher certification; approving educator preparation programs; and recommending institutions of higher education for degree-granting authority.
- Its mission is: ***"to provide leadership and to support policy development that promotes equitable access to high-quality educational opportunities for all students in safe, healthy, and inclusive school environments".*** Its vision is: ***"that all students will receive a high-quality education leading to graduation with the skills, knowledge, and principles to be prepared for future learning, careers, and life".***
- For more information about the State Board of Education visit http://www.maine.gov/sbe/

**Getting Students Involved**

The process that saw placement of students on the Maine State Board of Education took place almost twenty years ago. Jim Carignan, who chaired the Maine State Board of Education at that time, was instrumental in this along with other board members and adult community members who felt passionate about the idea. The decision was made to seek help to create a legislative proposal with the intent of turning the idea of having two students on the Maine State Board of Education into Maine law. This information was shared with the full board who endorsed the idea. Senator Libby Mitchell was asked to sponsor a bill to bring student representatives to the Maine State Board of Education. Other legislators advocated for this bill, such as Representative David Farrington, who submitted the bill. After moving through the proper channels, LD 151 was voted into law.

Next, funding had to be secured to help ensure that two student members would be appointed in a thorough and inclusive manner and that time and energy would be spent talking with students in Maine about how they might envision young people being involved in educational public policy for years to come. The Maine State Board received a grant through the National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE) and funded by MetLife to support the implementation of the initiative.

In order to accomplish the two over-arching goals of appointing two students to the Board of Education and creating systems to support student involvement in educational policy making in the future, the State Board of Education sought out a partner organization. The Maine Youth Action Network (MYAN), a program of the People's Regional Opportunity Program, was hired to support this initiative. MYAN worked with the students appointed to the board and with students throughout the State of Maine to encourage student voice and participation in educational policy at all levels.

**Steps to the State Board**

Applications are sought annually from public high school sophomores alternating between Maine's two Congressional Districts. In 2027, applicants must attend school in the First Congressional District. This maintains a balance of student representation across the state. The successful candidate is seated on the board when the sophomore year has been completed.

Each student member of the State Board serves for a term of two years during their junior and senior years.

The State Board shall notify every public high school principal, high school guidance counselor, and CTE Director in the appropriate Congressional District where applications are being accepted for the student member's position.

Applications for the student member's position must be submitted to the State Board according to the published schedule.

The State Board is responsible for conducting Zoom interviews to select three applicants as finalists for the nomination. The names of these finalists are sent to the Office of the Governor.

The Governor of the State of Maine nominates one of the finalists to be the next student member of the State Board of Education.

- The Joint Standing Committee on Education and Cultural Affairs of the Maine State Legislature interviews the nominee in a public hearing and makes a recommendation about the nominee to the Maine Senate.
- The Maine Senate is charged with confirming the appointment.
- A new student member is seated on the Maine State Board of Education.

If you have questions, please email craig.flowers@maine.gov or call (207) 624-6616