

Features of a Successful Student Participation Model

The success of any student participation group is dependent on a combination of a number of variables. The following features (explained below) contribute to making Berwick Secondary College's **Student Voice** the success that it is.

Vision/ Common Goal

At the beginning of the year the Student Voice Vision is spelt out to the new leaders - these leaders are aware of the main vision of the Student Voice very early on, which is why they opt to join the group. All members of the Student Voice team are encouraged to know and believe in the Student Voice Vision. A number of common goals are established early on in the year - the Student Voice team is a group of like-minded students all working towards a common goal.

Incentives/Motivation

Whilst the leaders tend to have their own intrinsic motivation, it is vital to maintain motivation of the Student Voice team by offering benefits and incentives. Benefits should not, however, be expected. Material incentives of being a member of the team include such things as receiving a Student Voice t-shirt and Student Voice badge; attending a leadership camp and team tour; Student Voice Leader of the Year Award.

Organisations/Resources

We are always on the lookout to identify useful and helpful organisations and resources. SRC specific resources are few and far between. People can be called upon to present their ideas to the team, eg guest speakers at the leadership camp; organisations and resources also encourage new ideas and suggestions.

Teamwork

Some team building and bonding experiences are undertaken during the Student Voice camp - encouraging the development of teamwork. Working as part of a team means making new friends, developing communication skills and always having others around for support.

Communication

Two way, strong communication between all key players is essential - Student Voice - Administration - Student Body - Teachers - Parents - Community - other student groups - etc. Communication takes a lot of effort, but ensures all the key players are involved and up to date, making the best use of our most effective resources.

Student Led

Student Executives are given the responsibility to run the organisation. This provides students with leadership opportunities, provides a sense of real ownership and allows for the team to develop into whatever form students want it to be.

Constitution

The constitution is a set of rules, outlining how the organisation is to be run. The constitution is closely abided by but can be changed (through correct procedures) to accommodate student wishes.

Regular Meetings

Weekly meetings are run. Meetings can be formal and informal, compulsory and non compulsory. A combination of meeting types ensures regular contact and keeps people informed and accountable.

Resume

Involvement in the SRC not only builds skills but also looks good on the resume, which will help with future job hunting. Not that this should be the only reason for getting involved!

Building Friendships

Encourages development of friendships between students from different year levels, as well as students who normally wouldn't associate. Like minded students work on projects that interest them, with other students interested in the same area.

Student Empowerment/Ownership

Students have control of deciding which direction the organisation will head. Members of the team develop a loyalty to the Student Voice, because the organisation is theirs. They then want to work on tasks and make a difference, make the team a success.

Chance to Make a Difference - Projects Undertaken

An opportunity exists to make a real difference, to identify and change things for the betterment of the school. The Student Voice is always organising or running some activity. Activities are both big and small and vary considerably, hence encouraging involvement from different groups of students.

Personal Fulfillment/Enjoyment

Being a member of such a team allows students to develop a sense of belonging, of achievement, of enjoyment - through the involvement and participation required.

Organised

High level organisation is needed; each student needs to keep track of the tasks they have taken on; overall organisation needs to exist within the group also. Being organised includes keeping track of what things need to be done, using 'To Do' lists, calendars and timelines.



Publicity

Effective publicity informs others of the organisation's activities, through a number of methods including www, bulletin, Student Voice newsletter, school newsletter, PA announcements, posters, word of mouth, form group announcements - people can be informed of up and coming events or the outcome of past events.

Networking

Student Voice leaders develop working relationships with other SRCs and like minded students state wide, via conferences and organised activities. The Student Voice leaders run training sessions for local primary students. Networking not only helps with new ideas and support, but is another opportunity to develop friendships.

Leadership Opportunities

Opportunities arise for students to participate in conferences and forums with students from other schools. These opportunities vary and may include focusing on various topics, eg youth forums, SRC training, young leaders days.

Administration Support

Administration sees the importance of the Student Voice team and provides huge support. Student Voice often seeks financial support when running events. It is important to maintain a good working relationship - as permission, advice and support is sought regularly.

Role Models

Leaders are expected to behave in a positive manner at all times, setting a positive example for their peers. Behaviour should be such that the student body strives to reach the level of commitment and participation of Student Voice leaders.

Goal Setting/Planning

Early on in the year, the Student Voice team partake in a goal setting session - where they learn what goal setting is and the importance of goal setting. This session leads straight into planning for the year. Decisions need to be made on what big activities to undertake and who will do what and by when. Goals need to be reviewed and continuous planning undertaken throughout the year.

Improvements

Despite its many successes, Student Voice acknowledges that it is far from perfect. Regular reflection, both formal and informal is undertaken in an effort to improve our faults and operate at full capacity.

Cathey Dragasia
Berwick Secondary College
Manuka Road, Berwick Vic 3806