



A+ Student VOICES Team

A statewide advocacy group for Alabama high school students

About the Program

The A+ Student VOICES Team is a student advocacy group comprised of Alabama high school students from different districts across the state. Founded in 2018, we work to ensure that students' voices are heard in spaces where education decisions are being made. Students work together as a team to identify issues within our education system, gather research, and advocate for student-centered improvements.

Important Findings from the 2022 Student Survey

Our Student Survey gathered input from Alabama students in grades 9-12 on the impact of COVID-19, student mental health, and student input in our schools. Relaying the experiences of 267 students statewide, our survey revealed:

1 **There is a lack of prepared and supported teachers and school leaders amid COVID recovery.**

When teachers and administrators are not supported and held accountable, students lack guidance, support, and structure in our schools. There is a major teacher shortage, and many schools cannot staff every classroom. Teachers and administrators are overwhelmed. They need more help and professional development on how to better support students. Here is a direct quotes from a surveyed student:

"There is little to no support from adults. We are seen as a group, or numbers, never an individual. I feel like the school could do more. Our mental health and success in life matters. I just wish I had more opportunities to get support and guidance."

2 **We need a statewide, comprehensive plan to address student mental health.**

Amid COVID-related safety concerns and other strains on student mental health, prioritizing mental health in schools is crucial. Students do not feel supported by our schools. While many schools are attempting to use the resources at their disposal, these one-off efforts are not enough.

58% of students feel that their school does not address or prioritize student mental health needs.

55% of students feel that their school does not make an effort to educate students on mental health.

3 **We need student voice in every school and an officially-recognized, statewide student advisory council for decision-makers.**

Students do not feel our feedback is well-represented or taken seriously in schools. An established student advisory council that works with decision-makers to address the concerns of students is crucial to ensure that the changes being made in schools are what's best for students.

23% of students feel that their school is open to making changes.

58% of students do not see changes made when they give feedback to teachers, principals, and other adults at their school.

75% of students agree that there should be an additional statewide student group to advocate for students' needs with adults at school and with leaders in the state.