

Northern Adelaide State
Secondary Schools Alliance
(NASSSA)

INNOVATIVE GOVERNANCE IN SCHOOLS AND PRESCHOOLS

Involving young people in school governance – a case study

Leader

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(former Chairperson, NASSSA)



The setting

Getting young people involved

The Northern Adelaide State Secondary Schools Alliance (NASSSA) is a group of 11 government schools with secondary students in the northern area of Adelaide, ranging from Gawler to Para Hills. The NASSSA council is made up of the chairs from each school's governing council and groups of principals and students.

The NASSSA council meets regularly to share information, develop cohesive strategies and run projects that benefit all students in the area.



“The alliance is able to take a broader view of the schools in the area and develop strategies that cross school borders and provide better educational solutions for our young people”

– Colleen Abbott

The steps

The NASSSA alliance schools pool resources to employ an executive officer for the group. This officer is responsible for coordinating activities and making sure planned actions are completed. The alliance also has support through the Department for Education and Child Development (DECD) Learning Improvement division.

The alliance has been working in its current form for about 6 years. It's chaired by principals in the alliance who take turns, with chairs appointed for a two-year term. At the end of each term, the leadership moves to the deputy chair, which means there is continuity from year to year.

There are regular guest speakers at alliance events who speak on topics that interest all of the school communities.



“Young people see themselves as having an important voice in their school communities, such as the type of teaching that makes a difference”

– Colleen Abbott

How it helped

Student involvement

A key strength of this governance model is the commitment, inclusion and promotion of student involvement. The alliance actively works with students from the NASSSA youth action team, which is made up of representatives from each school's student representative committee.

The youth action team brings important student issues to the NASSSA council, including topics such as wellbeing, subject selection and student voice.

Connecting back at a local level

Members of the NASSSA council connect back to their school's governing councils and share what's happening in the broader community.

As well, school communities consult with the NASSSA council about broader issues, such as the recent development of the Northern Economic Plan.