

# Facilitating Professional Student Voice Cohorts

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# What is a Student Voice Cohort?

A professional “student voice cohort” is a group of school personnel committed to learning together (similar to a professional learning community).

The cohort learns about student voice best practices, designs student voice projects, and receives technical assistance when implementing those projects on their school sites.





# Benefits of Cohorts<sup>1</sup>

## Collaboration

Facilitates social interactions & collaboration with your peers.

## Support

Connects you to the support of peers & faculty.

## Structure

Provides structure in terms of due dates and discussion forums.

## Perspective

Exposes you to other opinions, experiences and ideas.

## Networking

Makes it easier to meet other professionals and expand your professional network.

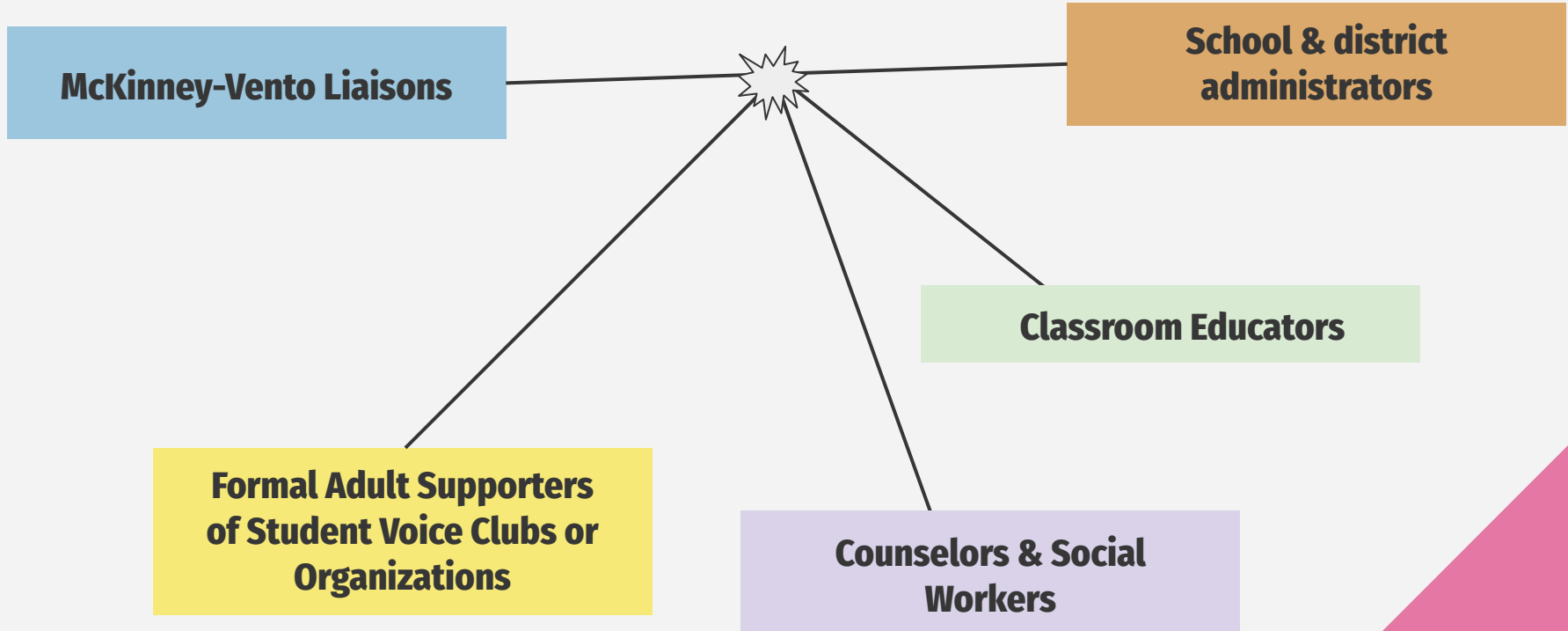
<sup>1</sup>University of Pennsylvania



# Kern Co. Student Voice Cohort:

- Comprised of school personnel from multiple LEAs, including K-8 districts, high school districts, charter schools, and community schools.
- Meets monthly via Zoom.
- Facilitated by KCSOS Foster & Homeless Education Program (Kern COE) staff.

# **Who should be invited to join the cohort?**



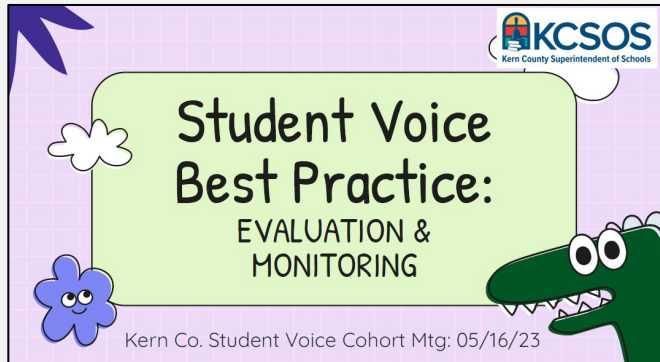
# Sample Cohort Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions
2. Overview of a Student Voice Best Practice (examples include teaching the cohort about Youth Advisory Boards, evaluations, or tokenism)
3. Discuss all student voice projects that cohort members are currently working on (including providing technical assistance/ feedback for concerns they may have)
4. Roundtable discussion related to potential student voice projects, best practices, or project barriers
5. Schedule individual technical assistance meetings with cohort members, who request them

Check out the Sample Student Voice  
Cohort Presentation PDF on

[www.kern.org/hip](http://www.kern.org/hip)

to see what a Student Voice Best  
Practice PowerPoint looks like!



**The sample presentation was given to the  
Kern County Student Voice Cohort in May  
2023 & focuses on evaluations &  
monitoring of student voice projects.**



# Lessons Learned as a Cohort Facilitator

- **It's OK if you don't always know the answer!** Use the cohort as a professional learning community. Have the cohort members help give feedback & advice to other cohort members.
- **Send reminder emails.** Your cohort members are very busy professionals. Sending multiple reminder emails assists in ensuring the meetings are well attended.
- **Provide financial support for student voice projects, if able.** Many LEAs/sites want to invest in student voice but don't have the means to do so.
- **Do your own research on student voice best practices.** Learn from other communities & experts in the field.
- **Be willing to do presentations to cohort members' LEA administrators.** Sometimes it helps for administrators to hear from the COE & why it is important to invest in student voice. Do a primary presentation for LEA administrators on student voice basics to set the stage for cohort members to get the OK to create LEA student voice projects.





# How do you determine if the cohort is helping?

## **Give evaluations at the beginning of the school year & end of the school year**

Include in the evaluations what the participants have learned & how they have utilized those skills to implement projects.

## **Give surveys at the end of every cohort meeting**

Ask participants to take a short survey regarding how helpful the meeting was & what they want out of future meetings.

## **Keep yourself available to do one-on-one technical assistance sessions outside of cohort meetings**



# One-on-One Technical Assistance

Cohort facilitator duties don't end after monthly meetings.

As a cohort facilitator, provide cohort members with dates/times you are available to provide one-on-one technical assistance. You can do this via drop-in hours or scheduled appointments. Assist the cohort members during TA hours with brainstorming, planning, implementing, and evaluating student voice projects at their LEAs.





**Check out [www.kern.org/hip](http://www.kern.org/hip)**

Need more individual coaching on  
creating a student voice cohort?

**Email:**

**[fosteredcoordinator@kern.org](mailto:fosteredcoordinator@kern.org)**