



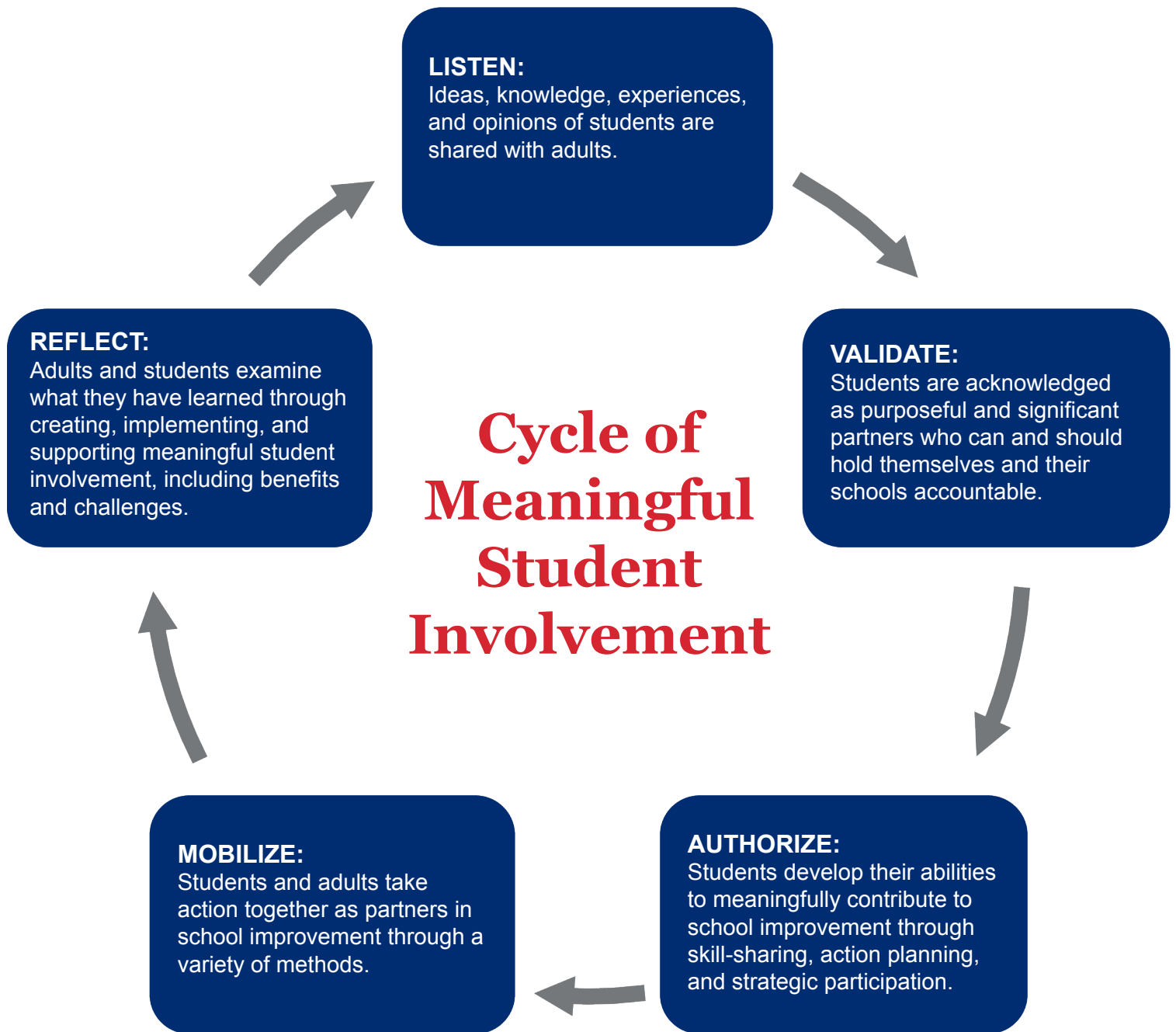
Student Involvement Series: Meaningful Involvement

Schools of all levels can reference the **Cycle of Meaningful Student Involvement** to promote meaningful student involvement in Response to Instruction and Intervention for Behavior (RTI²-B) planning.¹

This cycle shows five steps to actively engage students in school improvement decisions. As opportunities for student involvement in RTI²-B are considered, schools can use Fletcher and Hart's **Ladder of Student Involvement** to examine the extent to which an opportunity is meaningful.¹

This ladder illustrates eight levels of student involvement. The lower rungs of the ladder represent non-participation, while the higher rungs represent high-quality, meaningful involvement. When using this tool, consider how your school could climb the ladder when involving students in decisions regarding the RTI²-B framework.





Acknowledgments

This resource is adapted from:

Fletcher, A. (2005). *Meaningful student involvement: Guide to students as partners in school change*. SoundOut.
<https://adamfletcher.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/bcd5b-d45dc-msiguide.pdf>

Ladder of Student Involvement

Use this tool to assess your students' current opportunities to participate in RTI²-B planning. The highest level of participation – Level 8 – is the most meaningful. As you refine your RTI²-B plan, aim for higher rungs and more meaningful student involvement.

Characteristic		Example
Degrees of Participation	8. Student-initiated, shared decisions with adults	Students initiate action and share decision making with adults.
	7. Student-initiated, student-led decisions	Meaningful student involvement is propelled by students and creates opportunities for students to initiate and direct projects, classes, or activities. Adults are involved only in supportive roles.
	6. Adult-initiated, shared decisions with students	Students are involved in designing projects, classes, or activities that are initiated by adults. Many activities, including decision making, teaching, and evaluation, are shared with students.
	5. Students informed and consulted	Students give advice on projects, classes, or activities designed and run by adults. The students are informed about how their input will be used and the outcomes of the decisions made by adults.
	4. Students informed and assigned	Student involvement is assigned by teachers who assign specific roles and teach students why they are being involved.
Degrees of Non-Participation	3. Tokenization	Students appear to be given a voice, but in fact have little or no choice about what they do or how they participate.
	2. Decoration	Students are used to help or bolster a cause in a relatively indirect way; adults do not suggest that the cause is inspired by students. Causes are determined by adults, and adults make all decisions.
	1. Manipulation	Adults use students to support causes by falsely claiming that those causes are inspired by students.

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<https://adamfletcher.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/bcd5b-d45dc-msiguide.pdf>

Hart, R. (1994). *Children's participation: From tokenism to citizenship*. London: Earthscan

https://www.youthpolicy.org/uploads/documents/1992_Childrens_Participation_from_Tokenism_to_Citizenship_Eng.pdf



Summary

Involving students in the planning process of the RTI²-B framework is important, and schools need to make sure students have a meaningful level of involvement. Students should feel their ideas are valued when asked for input, and adults should be ready to fully collaborate with students and share in the decision-making process.

For Further Reading

Feuerborn, L., Wallace, C., & Tyre, A. (2016). A qualitative analysis of middle and high school teacher perceptions of school wide positive behavior supports. *Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions*, 18(4), 219-229.

Mitra, D. (2006). Increasing student voice. *The Prevention Researcher*, 13(1), 7-10.

Smyth, J. (2006). When students have power. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 9(4), 285-298.

Endnotes

¹Fletcher, A. (2005). *Meaningful student involvement: Guide to students as partners in school change*. SoundOut.
<https://adamfletcher.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/bcd5b-d45dc-msiguide.pdf>