



Future Leaders Academy Update

Meet Mason Bierbaum and Dylan Bradford-Kesti

This month's mentorship pair will leave you feeling hopeful for the future of politics.

First, we'd like to introduce Future Leader, Mason Bierbaum, a senior at Albany High School in Albany, Minnesota. As class president, a varsity football and basketball player and a student representative on his local school board, Mason has plenty of opportunities to hone his leadership skills. Mason's values are integrity, happiness, health, education, and freedom.

Mason's mentor, Dylan Bradford-Kesti, is a senior policy aide with the City of Minneapolis. His background includes electoral advocacy and lobbying experience leading multi-constituency collaborative efforts for social, racial, and environmental change. Dylan's values are excellence, fairness, friendship, integrity, and safety.

With Mason's interest in politics and Dylan's extensive experience in advocacy, policy, and government affairs, including a stint in Washington, D.C., the pair share a passion for making the world a better place. In the short term, they're focusing on positive changes close to home.

"My first goal is to increase student body satisfaction in and around the high school," says Mason. Working with Dylan, the pair devised a plan to send out quarterly Google forms to measure overall satisfaction with the school environment. They set initial targets of 75% approval or higher with respondent participation of 50% or higher.



Values-driven Mentorship

Mason's Values

Integrity

Happiness

Health

Education

Freedom

Dylan's Values

Excellence

Fairness

Friendship

Integrity

Safety

Another student-centric goal is for Mason to be the most effective student school board representative he can be. To help achieve that goal, he will be working to improve, continue or change three topics of interest identified by the student body.

To help inform Mason's career exploration, Dylan will introduce him to a variety of leaders with the goal of Mason completing six one-on-one information interviews during the next twelve months. "I'm excited to support Mason in his leadership development and help connect him with people who are doing work that interests him," says Dylan. Mason also got first-hand experience with a state senator's campaign this spring and summer. "I have been proud and excited to hear about Mason's experience working with a candidate on the campaign trail," says Dylan.

"One of the things I've enjoyed most about being partnered with Dylan is our conversations," says Mason. "We have such very insightful and positive conversations about the world and current affairs, I've never really had conversations like this before."

"I've enjoyed getting to know Mason," says Dylan. "Mason is intelligent, kind, and motivated. It is a joy and so easy to work with him as we work on his goals."

When Mason considers what it means to be a good leader, he offers very sage advice: "It's become really evident to me how important it is to listen," he says. "When you're in a position of power and you're present with people and really listening, it goes a long way in showing the amount of respect you have for the other person and what they have to say."

Reflecting on how Mason and Dylan are working together to achieve Mason's goals, specifically through quarterly surveys of the Albany High student population, it's evident that Mason's nascent leadership style is centered on listening and respecting the opinions of others. We look forward to seeing his name on a campaign ballot in the years to come.

Check back next month for another Future Leader and Mentor spotlight. If you know of someone who would make a great Future Leader, send them an **application for the 2023-2024 Future Leaders Academy** cohort, available [here](#).

Learn more about the Future Leaders Academy: [Flyer](#) and [Website](#)