

# School Advisory Council Handbook



Assessment and Accountability Department

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[Board Policy: 2125](#)

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# Overview

## Welcome to your school's School Advisory Council (SAC).

Your participation as a member of your school advisory council is one of the most important functions you will perform as a school volunteer. As a SAC member, you will be learning new information about complex issues that impact student success. This handbook is designed to clarify the responsibilities you have as a member of your school advisory council.

The role of a school advisory council is to develop, monitor, and evaluate the school improvement plan which is written or revised annually and submitted to the school board. You will inquire, evaluate, inform, suggest, and make recommendations as a SAC member to insure that your school's plan reflects the goals of the entire school community.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

For Information Contact:

**Christopher Taylor**  
Director of Assessment and Accountability  
6500 57<sup>th</sup> Street  
Vero Beach, FL 32967  
772-564-3033

Laura Addison  
Administrative Assistant  
772-564-3124

# What is a School Advisory Council?

**School advisory council, or SAC**, is the name given to each school advisory council in the School District of Indian River County. Florida's 1991 System for School Improvement and Accountability legislation mandated that every school have a school advisory council.

Elected members of a school advisory council include teachers, educational support personnel, and parents. In high schools, students are also elected members. Business partners and community representatives are invited to be members by the principal.

SAC membership should reflect the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school. The majority of the SAC members should be parents and community members who are not employed at that school.

Purpose:

**The purpose of the SAC** is to assist in the development, monitoring, and evaluation of the school improvement plan. SAC members may be requested to serve in other roles related to school improvement.

The SAC:

- leads the way in creating a vision and mission for the school.
- annually develops a school improvement plan that is focused on student learning.
- centers its meetings on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the school's plan.
- ensures there is representation from all designated groups.
- impacts curriculum design and student performance.
- has input into the preparation of the school's annual budget and determines the use of school improvement funds (lottery enhancement, contingent upon availability of funds).
- at a Title I site, has input into the development of the Title I Parent Involvement Plan.
- receives printed materials and school improvement updates periodically.
- may call upon district and state resources to assist school efforts.

The SAC meets at regularly scheduled times, usually once a month. However, the SAC may meet more frequently in order to complete the School Improvement Plan. To maintain membership, members must attend meetings and attendance is recorded.

School advisory councils operate under the Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law and are open to the public.

Officers and member responsibilities:

- **The Principal** is the instructional leader of the school and shares in the facilitative leadership of the team.
- **The Chairperson** is the organizational leader of the team, ensuring that SAC guidelines are followed and that members participate in the development and evaluation of the plan. They are responsible for creating meeting agendas with input from the principal and other SAC team members.
- **The Secretary** is the person responsible for taking minutes of each meeting. Those minutes must be publicly accessible. The secretary will maintain continual records of meetings and send those minutes electronically (as requested) to the District Office. [SAC minutes are to be archived electronically by each school on the School Improvement page of the District website: <https://www.indianriverschools.org/>]
- **Members** attend meetings regularly and represent their respective groups.

### Guidelines

The School Advisory Council in each school serves in an advisory capacity to the school principal in the preparation and evaluation of the school improvement plan required pursuant to Section 1001.452, Florida Statutes. The principal shall receive and consider SAC advice; however, the principal remains responsible for making decisions necessary for administering and supervising the school. The principal shall promote communication among students, staff, parents, and community representatives. School advisory councils shall not assume any of the powers or duties now reserved by Florida Statute for the School Board or its administrative or instructional staff. The SAC shall be representative of teachers, parents, support service employees, students (if appropriate), and other community members.

- The membership should reflect the school's ethnic, racial, and economic community.
- At least 51% of the SAC membership must be non-district employees, such as parents, students, and community members/business partners.
- The principal must serve on the team.

- SAC membership must be approved by the School Board. Nominees may be revised as needed and determined by individual SAC operational guidelines.
- The SAC operates under Florida's Government in the Sunshine Law. Notice must be given of all meetings and minutes and attendance must be kept.
- Each representative group, except community members, must be elected by its peers.
- Notice of business/community vacancies will be widely distributed prior to the principal presenting a slate of nominees for selection by the school advisory council.
- Each team should establish operational guidelines. The School Board may approve the by-laws of each SAC.
- The principal will inform the school community, including parents of upcoming students, that nominations to the SAC are invited. The invitation for nomination should clearly note the deadline, membership categories, and the process by which the vote shall be taken. Documentation of the nomination and election process will be maintained at the school as a public record.

### **Membership**

Each principal is to facilitate an election process to determine from within the school and community those individuals willing to make a commitment to participate on the school advisory council. Team members representing teachers, educational support employees, students, and parents shall be elected by their respective peer groups. Teachers will elect teachers, parents will elect parents, educational support personnel will elect educational support personnel, and students will elect students. The principal and the SAC will select other business and community members. If these elections do not fulfill statutory requirements, the principal shall recommend additional members to provide proper representation. Assistant principals may not serve as members.

Each principal submits a membership/composition report to the School Board each year, and should turn the report to the Assessment and Accountability Office for review by September 30. The report will include members by name, address, telephone number, peer group, employment status, ethnic/racial category, and demographic representation of the school community. The term of office of each member shall be determined by the SAC.

A vacancy in any membership category may be filled utilizing the regular election/selection process.

The principal shall determine the size of the SAC which is most functional for that particular school and which allows for all constituencies to be represented. The following percentages for membership are required by Florida legislation:

**Non-School District Employees (51% or a majority of the SAC)**

Parents of children at the school - SAC members classified as "Parents" cannot be employed by the district.

Business partners or community representatives

Students attending the school - High school required; middle school optional; elementary not included

**School District Employees (49% or less)**

The principal

Teachers

Educational support employees

Employees who have children attending a school other than their own may serve on another school's SAC team as a parent. However, they must be counted as a school district employee.

The configuration of the team must also reflect the school's ethnic, racial, and economic community. It is recommended that the school's student demographic statistics be used to determine representation of these constituencies.

District Office or School Board personnel serving as resource or liaison assistants are non-voting members of school advisory council. As such, they are not included in the above percentages or representation requirements.

High Schools must have elected student members. Middle schools may have elected student members. Elementary schools should not have students on their SAC teams.

## **Responsibilities**

### **The School Advisory Council shall:**

1. perform such functions as may be prescribed by the School Board;
2. assist in the preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the school improvement plan required by Florida Statutes;
3. review the results of an annual needs assessments conducted by the school administration;
4. monitor students' progress and the school's progress in attaining goals;
5. define adequate progress; obtain public input when defining adequate progress for school goals and revising the plan;
6. promote communication among students, staff, parents, administration, and the community;
7. assist the principal with the school's annual budget and determine the use of school improvement funds when allocated;
8. decide jointly with school faculty how A+ recognition funds are spent;
9. serve as a resource for the principal and perform such other functions as are requested by the principal.

## **Operational Procedures**

Each school advisory council shall develop practical and functional procedures/ bylaws appropriate to the local SAC, but not limited to the following issues:

1. Selection of Chairperson, Co-Chairperson, Recording Secretary
2. Notice of meetings: The school shall provide public notice (e.g., school marquee, newsletters, notes to parents, posted notes, media releases) of the meeting time, place, and agenda. FL Statute requires at least 3-days' advance notice in writing to

all members of the advisory council of any matter that is scheduled to come before the council for a vote.

3. Voting procedures, such as the option to use consensus, voice vote, written ballot, or roll call vote.
4. Attendance requirements for SAC membership and a process for replacement of members. Effective July 2002, FL Statute requires replacing any member who has two unexcused consecutive absences from a school advisory council meeting that is noticed according to the procedures in the bylaws.
5. Quorum requirements. FL Statute requires a quorum to be present before a vote may be taken. Effective July 2002 in FL Statute, a majority of the membership of the council constitutes a quorum.
6. School Recognition Funds. Include a decision-making procedure in the event such funds are granted. Reference: F.S. 1008.36

Each school advisory council shall maintain minutes and an attendance roster of its meetings, which shall be subject to public review. The minutes shall include copies of meeting notices. By FL Statute, the district school board shall approve SAC membership, shall maintain a record of minutes of council meetings, and may review SAC bylaws. These records should be uploaded to the SDIRC website in PDF format in a timely manner.

Each SAC shall meet as often as is necessary to perform its duties. All SAC activities, including subcommittee meetings, are subject to the Government in the Sunshine Law, section 286.011, Florida Statutes, and the voting conflicts provisions in section 112.3143, Florida Statutes.

In Brief:

- Public advertising of meeting
- Public meeting place & accessible to the public
- Minutes taken, attendance and votes recorded
- Quorum for a meeting and present for voting
- Minutes, bylaws and documents available to public
- Public may videotape or record meetings

- Even just 2 members discussing SAC issues must be “in the Sunshine”

### **Effective Meetings -- Suggested Practices**

#### **Before**

- Communicate meeting notice, which includes agenda whenever possible, 10 days to two weeks prior to the meeting. Meeting dates must be sent to the Executive Assistant to the School Board.
- A three-day notice in writing is required in advance of any item to come before members for a vote.
- Take into account varying work schedules when setting meeting times. Consider rotation of meeting dates and times.

#### **During**

- Members sign in at each meeting. A roster of attendance must be kept.
- Minutes must be taken.
- Limited time for public input can be provided. Only members can vote on action taken.

#### **After**

- Minutes of the meeting may be sent with the notice of the next meeting or handed out at the next meeting.
- Minutes should reflect members present and/or absent, and action taken.
- Minutes should be kept at the school for public reference and uploaded to the SDIRC website in PDF form in a timely manner. SAC activities and actions should be regularly shared with the school community.

## **Statute:**

### **1001.452 District and school advisory councils.—**

#### (1) ESTABLISHMENT.—

(a) The district school board shall establish an advisory council for each school in the district and shall develop procedures for the election and appointment of advisory council members. Each school advisory council shall include in its name the words "school advisory council." The school advisory council shall be the sole body responsible for final decisionmaking at the school relating to implementation of ss. 1001.42(18) and 1008.345. A majority of the members of each school advisory council must be persons who are not employed by the school district. Each advisory council shall be composed of the principal and an appropriately balanced number of teachers, education support employees, students, parents, and other business and community citizens who are representative of the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school. Career center and high school advisory councils shall include students, and middle and junior high school advisory councils may include students. School advisory councils of career centers and adult education centers are not required to include parents as members. Council members representing teachers, education support employees, students, and parents shall be elected by their respective peer groups at the school in a fair and equitable manner as follows:

1. Teachers shall be elected by teachers.
2. Education support employees shall be elected by education support employees.
3. Students shall be elected by students.
4. Parents shall be elected by parents.

The district school board shall establish procedures to be used by schools in selecting business and community members that include means of ensuring wide notice of vacancies and of taking input on possible members from local business, chambers of commerce, community and civic organizations and groups, and the public at large. The district school board shall review the membership composition of each advisory council. If the district school board determines that the membership elected by the school is not representative of the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school, the district school board shall appoint additional members to achieve proper representation. The commissioner shall determine if schools have maximized their efforts to include on their advisory councils minority persons and persons of lower socioeconomic status. Although schools are strongly encouraged to establish school advisory councils, the district school board of any school district that has a student population of 10,000 or fewer may establish a district advisory council which includes at least one duly elected teacher from each school in the

district. For the purposes of school advisory councils and district advisory councils, the term “teacher” includes classroom teachers, certified student services personnel, and media specialists. For purposes of this paragraph, “education support employee” means any person employed by a school who is not defined as instructional or administrative personnel pursuant to s. 1012.01 and whose duties require 20 or more hours in each normal working week.

(b) The district school board may establish a district advisory council representative of the district and composed of teachers, students, parents, and other citizens or a district advisory council that may be comprised of representatives of each school advisory council. Recognized schoolwide support groups that meet all criteria established by law or rule may function as school advisory councils.

(c) For those schools operating for the purpose of providing educational services to youth in Department of Juvenile Justice programs, district school boards may establish a district advisory council with appropriate representatives for the purpose of developing and monitoring a district school improvement plan that encompasses all such schools in the district, pursuant to s. 1001.42(18)(a).

(d) Each school advisory council shall adopt bylaws establishing procedures for:

1. Requiring a quorum to be present before a vote may be taken by the school advisory council. A majority of the membership of the council constitutes a quorum.
2. Requiring at least 3 days’ advance notice in writing to all members of the advisory council of any matter that is scheduled to come before the council for a vote.
3. Scheduling meetings when parents, students, teachers, businesspersons, and members of the community can attend.
4. Replacing any member who has two unexcused consecutive absences from a school advisory council meeting that is noticed according to the procedures in the bylaws.
5. Recording minutes of meetings.

The district school board may review all proposed bylaws of a school advisory council and shall maintain a record of minutes of council meetings.

(2) DUTIES.—Each advisory council shall perform functions prescribed by regulations of the district school board; however, no advisory council shall have any of the powers and duties now reserved by law to the district school board. Each school advisory council shall assist in the preparation and evaluation of the school improvement plan required pursuant to s. 1001.42(18). With technical assistance from the Department of Education, each school advisory council shall assist in the preparation of the school’s annual budget and plan as required by s. 1008.385(1). A portion of funds provided in the annual General Appropriations Act for use by school advisory councils must be used for implementing the school improvement plan.

**History.**—s. 1, ch. 2002-49; s. 59, ch. 2002-387; s. 73, ch. 2004-357; s. 10, ch. 2008-108; s. 5, ch. 2008-235.

**286.011 Public meetings and records; public inspection; criminal and civil penalties.—**

(1) All meetings of any board or commission of any state agency or authority or of any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision, except as otherwise provided in the Constitution, including meetings with or attended by any person elected to such board or commission, but who has not yet taken office, at which official acts are to be taken are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times, and no resolution, rule, or formal action shall be considered binding except as taken or made at such meeting. The board or commission must provide reasonable notice of all such meetings.

(2) The minutes of a meeting of any such board or commission of any such state agency or authority shall be promptly recorded, and such records shall be open to public inspection. The circuit courts of this state shall have jurisdiction to issue injunctions to enforce the purposes of this section upon application by any citizen of this state.

(3)(a) Any public officer who violates any provision of this section is guilty of a noncriminal infraction, punishable by fine not exceeding \$500.

(b) Any person who is a member of a board or commission or of any state agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision who knowingly violates the provisions of this section by attending a meeting not held in accordance with the provisions hereof is guilty of a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. [775.082](#) or s. [775.083](#).

(c) Conduct which occurs outside the state which would constitute a knowing violation of this section is a misdemeanor of the second degree, punishable as provided in s. [775.082](#) or s. [775.083](#).

(4) Whenever an action has been filed against any board or commission of any state agency or authority or any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision to enforce the provisions of this section or to invalidate the actions of any such board, commission, agency, or authority, which action was taken in violation of this section, and the court determines that the defendant or defendants to such action acted in violation of this section, the court shall assess a reasonable attorney's fee against such agency, and may assess a reasonable attorney's fee against the individual filing such an action if the court finds it was filed in bad faith or was frivolous. Any fees so assessed may be assessed against the individual member or members of such board or commission; provided, that in any case where the board or commission seeks the advice of its attorney and such advice is followed, no such fees shall be assessed against the individual member or members of the board or commission.

However, this subsection shall not apply to a state attorney or his or her duly authorized assistants or any officer charged with enforcing the provisions of this section.

(5) Whenever any board or commission of any state agency or authority or any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision appeals any court order which has found said board, commission, agency, or authority to have violated this section, and such order is affirmed, the court shall assess a reasonable attorney's fee for the appeal against such board, commission, agency, or authority. Any fees so assessed may be assessed against the individual member or members of such board or commission; provided, that in any case where the board or commission seeks the advice of its attorney and such advice is followed, no such fees shall be assessed against the individual member or members of the board or commission.

(6) All persons subject to subsection (1) are prohibited from holding meetings at any facility or location which discriminates on the basis of sex, age, race, creed, color, origin, or economic status or which operates in such a manner as to unreasonably restrict public access to such a facility.

(7) Whenever any member of any board or commission of any state agency or authority or any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision is charged with a violation of this section and is subsequently acquitted, the board or commission is authorized to reimburse said member for any portion of his or her reasonable attorney's fees.

(8) Notwithstanding the provisions of subsection (1), any board or commission of any state agency or authority or any agency or authority of any county, municipal corporation, or political subdivision, and the chief administrative or executive officer of the governmental entity, may meet in private with the entity's attorney to discuss pending litigation to which the entity is presently a party before a court or administrative agency, provided that the following conditions are met:

(a) The entity's attorney shall advise the entity at a public meeting that he or she desires advice concerning the litigation.

(b) The subject matter of the meeting shall be confined to settlement negotiations or strategy sessions related to litigation expenditures.

(c) The entire session shall be recorded by a certified court reporter. The reporter shall record the times of commencement and termination of the session, all discussion and proceedings, the names of all persons present at any time, and the names of all persons speaking. No portion of the session shall be off the record. The court reporter's notes shall be fully transcribed and filed with the entity's clerk within a reasonable time after the meeting.

(d) The entity shall give reasonable public notice of the time and date of the attorney-client session and the names of persons who will be attending the session. The session shall

commence at an open meeting at which the persons chairing the meeting shall announce the commencement and estimated length of the attorney-client session and the names of the persons attending. At the conclusion of the attorney-client session, the meeting shall be reopened, and the person chairing the meeting shall announce the termination of the session.

(e) The transcript shall be made part of the public record upon conclusion of the litigation.

*History.*—s. 1, ch. 67-356; s. 159, ch. 71-136; s. 1, ch. 78-365; s. 6, ch. 85-301; s. 33, ch. 91-224; s. 1, ch. 93-232; s. 210, ch. 95-148; s. 1, ch. 95-353; s. 2, ch. 2012-25.

**Other statutes for reference:**

***24.121 Allocation of revenues and expenditure of funds for public education.—***

***112.3143 Voting conflicts.—***

***1008.33 Authority to enforce public school improvement.—***

***1008.34 School grading system; school report cards; district grade.—***

***1008.36 Florida School Recognition Program.—***