The SAC Guide
School Advisory Council
Collier County Public Schools
VISION STATEMENT

All students will complete school prepared for ongoing learning as well as community and global responsibilities.

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Employees: Educational Equity Act, Title IX, Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act) or the Americans with Disabilities Act, contact Debbie Terry, Assistant Superintendent, Human Resources and Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Employees, (239) 377-0365, The District School Board of Collier County, 5775 Osceola Trail, Naples, Florida 34109.

Students: Educational Equity Act, Title IX, or the Age Discrimination Act of 1975, contact Stephen McFadden, Coordinator, School Counseling K-8, and Deputy Title IX Coordinator for Students, (239) 377-0517, The District School Board of Collier County, 5775 Osceola Trail, Naples, Florida 34109

Section 504 (Rehabilitation Act) and the Americans with Disabilities Act, contact Dr. L. Van Hylemon, Coordinator, Psychological Services, (239) 377-0521, The District School Board of Collier County, 5775 Osceola Trail, Naples, Florida, 34109.
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Introduction

Working Together for Better Schools

Several years ago, the Florida state legislature developed a System of School Improvement and Accountability. Those changes created opportunities to shape the educational futures of students in very positive ways. In keeping with the spirit of that legislation, it is imperative that the following things take place in order to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for all students.

- School staff, district staff, students, parents, and community members must work together as a total learning community to create and maintain learning environments that will meet the changing needs of students.
- School-based leaders must think strategically and manage change constructively as they plan for the future.
- Available resources must be used efficiently, while new resources are constantly being sought.
- School improvement plans (SIPs) must represent real and dynamic commitments to action.
- Accountability must become a central part of the school improvement/strategic planning process.
- Success for all students must always be the focus of school improvement planning.

The key to effective decision-making in Florida’s school improvement system is that those closest to the classroom and the students make more of the important decisions affecting education. The law requires that each school establish a School Advisory Council (SAC) so that parents can work together with school staff and administrators to ensure the success of students enrolled in local schools. Our school system implements a school-based budgeting system under which schools can allot money and other finite resources where they best meet student and community needs--this helps to further enhance community support for public education. Adding business and community leaders to the SAC strengthens community support and provides a broader perspective when planning for the future.

While the local school community plays a more active role, the state and district play more supportive roles in helping schools accomplish school improvement goals. While retaining the responsibility for progress monitoring and accountability, the district and state continue to encourage maximum decision-making at school sites. In its supportive role and in accordance with state law, the local school board is required to do the following:

- Monitor SAC compliance regarding membership, bylaws, and minutes.
- Annually certify that each school in the district has an active school improvement plan.
- Monitor progress during the school year.
- Review and evaluate school performance.

All of the entities of the school community have important roles that impact the educational futures of young people. Comprised of school board members, district office personnel, principals, teachers, support staff, parents and community leaders, the collective school community becomes actively involved as it plans and works together for the success of its schools.

Teamwork and an attitude of mutual respect are characteristics that make a SAC shine in the eyes of the school community. This positive, pervasive, respectful attitude will undergird any principal as he or she takes on the large and difficult task of leading a school. The support given by the SAC will encourage confidence in the entire school staff as all entities of the school community work together for a better school.
The SAC represents the school community as the voice for school improvement. Teachers, school support staff, students, and parents are elected to the SAC. Business and community leaders are appointed by the principal. The SAC’s primary role is to assist the principal in developing and evaluating the school improvement plan for the current year [Florida Statutes 1001.452, 1001.42(18), and 24.121].

The SAC also provides assistance to the principal in the planning of the upcoming year’s budget. It is to the principal’s advantage to have the assistance of representatives from all areas of the school community in developing the improvement plan for the school.

Utilization of district and community resources will keep SAC members aware of the progress and challenges of our school district and help them make informed decisions that will improve student achievement at their school. Staying on track in each phase of school improvement planning is key to the success of the SAC and its final product, the school improvement plan. The effective SAC becomes knowledgeable, remains diligent, and provides collaborative support that strengthens and improves its school.

**Getting Started**

The first task in the school improvement process is the formation of the SAC in August and September followed by the development of the school improvement plan. The most critical elements of the planning process include developing the plan, implementing the plan, and evaluating the plan. The process is cyclical in that an evaluation of the current plan serves as part of the needs assessment for the next plan.

After the plan has been developed and approved, the plan needs to be implemented. During the school year, the actions listed in the plan need to be carried out. It is important that the activities listed in the plan are actually implemented in order to achieve the objectives of the plan. The plan is reviewed in the middle of the year to ensure that progress is being made.

The SAC has a very important role to perform in the development and evaluation of the plan as is stated in Florida statute. However, the responsibility for implementing the plan is with the principal and staff of the school. The role of the SAC in the planning process is to help set the vision and priorities for the school; it is the responsibility of the school staff to implement the plan and manage the school.

The SAC is the school community voice in the planning process for school improvement.

**Finding Candidates for the SAC**

People usually respond positively when they are asked to do meaningful work. An effective recruiting method for finding candidates for the SAC is simply to ask people to put themselves up for election. In addition, the school may want to set up a recruiting committee that can develop methods to find the membership needed on the SAC and assist the principal with organizing and coordinating the required elections. Some of the methods the committee can use to recruit members include: making announcements at Parent Teacher Association/Organization (PTA/O) meetings or other school gatherings; speaking at meetings of civic and service groups; inviting community organizations to send representatives; setting up SAC information booths at nearby shopping areas; sending personal letters; making phone calls; or adding information to the school website. Elections should always be conducted in cooperation with the appropriate constituent organizations at the school, such as the Faculty Advisory Committee (FAC), PTA/O, or other parent/community groups.
Don't underestimate the importance of simply telling people why they are needed — make sure people understand that the need is not just to fill a slot, but to bring a valuable perspective to the SAC that might not be represented without them. Be sure to look at solving any problems that may deter involvement in the SAC. For example, consider the possibility of providing child care and/or transportation for meetings.

When seeking representation within the school, special areas such as the community school, exceptional education, Title I, in-school GED programs, English Language Learners (ELL), extended day, and others should be considered. Keep in mind that the composition of the SAC must mirror the school’s population.

**Election and Appointment of SAC Members**

The SAC should meet early on in the school year to get established. If vacant positions exist, they need to be filled. Many schools elect the chairman at this time, but schools may specify that the chairperson be elected at another time in accordance with its SAC bylaws. The SAC will work closely with the principal throughout the year to ensure successful planning and evaluation of the school’s improvement plan. The principal’s enthusiasm is key to creating a student- and parent-friendly environment at the school. He or she will play a central role in school improvement by involving all the stakeholder groups in determining the school’s priorities for improvement.

The school is responsible for setting up election and appointment procedures. These procedures should be accurately reflected in the school’s bylaws. The school board must approve the final composition and racial/economic balance of all SACs in the district in order to comply with state law. The key to understanding balance in the composition of SACs is critical and cannot be over emphasized.

- The SAC membership must reflect the racial/economic makeup of the school’s population.
- The majority — at least 51 percent — of the SAC members must be non-school district employees.
- Each of the respective peer groups (teachers, education support employees, students for high and technical schools, and parents) shall be represented.

By following Florida’s legislative requirements for establishing the SAC, a representative SAC can be achieved as follows:

- Teachers shall be elected by teachers.
- Education support employees shall be elected by education support employees.
- Students shall be elected by students. High school SACs must have student members; middle school SACs may have student members.
- Parents shall be elected by parents.
- Business and community leaders shall be appointed by the principal. (Business leaders are valuable assets for SACs. They bring different community perspectives from places where students may eventually seek employment. Remember, businesses often have access to tangible resources for schools.)
- SACs of vocational-technical and adult education centers are not required to include parents as members.
- The school shall give reasonable notice of the election of SAC members.
- Information about SAC and identified vacancies are sent to all parents, school-based employees, and partners in education.
- Candidates notify the principal or previous year’s SAC chair of their interest in serving on SAC and complete a brief information statement.
- Statements are compiled and sent to all respective groups with ballots. Ballots for parent members shall be distributed one ballot per family.
- Ballots are returned to the school office.
- The SAC chair, principal, and other SAC members shall open and count ballots at an advertised place and time.

**Voting Procedures**
- The agenda will include items scheduled to come before the SAC for a vote. The agenda will be posted no less than three days prior to the scheduled SAC meeting.
- A quorum shall be 51% of the total SAC membership. Votes may only be taken if a quorum is present.
- There shall be no voting by proxy.
- There shall be no secret ballots.
- All voting shall take place at an open meeting (not by phone, email, or any other nonpublic way) in compliance with the Sunshine Law.

**Restrictions on SAC Membership**
Recently the Department of Education has interpreted SAC membership more strictly. Deans or assistant principals cannot be members of SACs, since they are in administrative roles. Only the school principal is authorized to be a member as an administrator.

*Again, it is imperative that 51 percent of the SAC be non-school district employees* pursuant to Florida Statute 1001.452. The Florida legislature changed the statute in 2008 and now requires that the majority of the SAC members must not be employed by the school district. The Florida School Code further requires that lottery funds shall be withheld from any school district in which one or more schools do not comply with SAC membership composition requirements.

If, after elections of SAC members, it is determined that either a majority of members are school employees or that the membership is not racially/ethnically balanced, the school board has empowered the school principal to make appointments to bring the membership into compliance with the Florida statutes.

Once elections have taken place, make updates to your SAC membership roster.

**Bylaws**
Florida Statute 1001.452(1)(d) requires all SACs to have bylaws that address several issues. Bylaws are the ground rules which school advisory council members agree to follow. They give structure to the meeting process which is focused on the school’s improvement plan and student achievement. Several of these issues are also addressed in the Sunshine and Public Records Laws. Recent legislation clarified and added to Sunshine Law requirements. Some specific requirements for the operation of the SAC include the following:
• Requiring a quorum to be present before a vote may be taken by the school advisory council. A majority of **membership** of the council constitutes a quorum.

• Giving reasonable notice of all SAC meetings. A seven-day notice is considered reasonable notice.

• Requiring at least a three-day advance notice in writing to all members of the advisory council of any matter scheduled to come before the council for a vote.

• Scheduling meetings when parents, students, teachers, businesspersons, and members of the community can attend.

• Replacing any member who resigns during the year and replace any member who has two unexcused consecutive absences from a school advisory council meeting that is noticed according to the procedures in the bylaws.

• Recording minutes of meetings.

Schools that have turnover of members and difficulty in getting every member to attend may have difficulties having a quorum present. If this is the case, it is important to take actions to get enough members to attend to have a quorum. Therefore, it is important to implement bylaw procedures to replace members who have two unexcused consecutive absences.

SAC bylaws should:

• Be brief, complete, simple, and understandable to all.

• Be clear as to who is responsible for what.

• Be in compliance with the Florida statutes.

• Give enough authority to the SAC chairperson so he or she can act.

• Be available to all SAC members.

The school district is required to review, approve, and maintain copies of all SAC bylaws.

**Agendas and Meetings**

Plan ahead. Always have an agenda for meetings and plan with the element of time in mind. Keep the focus on improving the school and don’t give way to using time for complaining and negative input. Make your meetings productive!

Try occasionally to hold SAC meetings at places other than school and at times of the day that facilitate parent, student, and community member participation. For example, a business member or partner-in-education might be willing to host a meeting or two. Schools often rotate meeting times and places to make it mutually convenient for all members to participate.

It is required by School Board policy that SACs meet at least eight times per year to review the school improvement plan for the school year, conduct a midyear review of progress, and conduct a final assessment of progress. To meet Five Star School requirements, SACs should be meeting a minimum of eight times per year.

Meetings require 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.

Keeping accurate minutes of SAC meetings is very important, not only from the standpoint that they are required, but because minutes of the previous meeting give continuity to upcoming business and record
the history of the work of the SAC. Agendas, minutes of meetings, and important documents pertaining to the operation of SAC are posted on the District website and individual school websites.

Reasonable Notice of Meetings

The Sunshine Law states that there must be a reasonable notice of meetings. The statute has not exactly defined reasonable notice but generally, a seven-day notice is considered reasonable notice. The district recommends that a seven-day notice be given before meetings. Several ways in which you can give notice include the following:

- Send home a schedule of meetings for the year.
- Post the next meeting on the school’s marquee.
- Use a bulletin board and a stand dedicated to SAC business in a visible place in the school. This bulletin board could be in the administration office or the media center.
- Advertise the meeting on the school’s website.

In addition to the Sunshine Law requirements of reasonable notice, the School Improvement Statute requires that there be a written three-day notice to all members of any matter that is scheduled to come before the council for a vote. This requirement can be accomplished by publishing the agenda at least three days prior to the meeting. Ways in which the agenda can be published include the following:

- Post the agenda on the SAC bulletin board.
- Publish the agenda in the school’s website.
- Distribute the agenda to SAC members three days prior to the meeting.
- Develop an agenda of action items at a SAC meeting and only consider those items at the next meeting. Using this approach any new issues that come up at the meeting can be brought up under the New Business part of the agenda and discussed. Only the decision and voting must be postponed until the next meeting.

Emergency and Cancellation of Meetings

Emergency meetings shall only be called if jointly agreed upon by the SAC chair and the principal; and shall abide by all the guidelines of a regular meeting. These meetings shall be afforded the most appropriate and effective notice under the circumstances and shall have at least 24 hours reasonable notice to the public.

Cancellation of meetings should provide as much notice as possible and should be communicated to stakeholders in a timely manner.

Notice of Subcommittee Meetings

Any subcommittee meetings of the SAC also come under the same Sunshine Laws and Public Records Laws. Notice should be given as with meetings of the entire SAC as indicated above. If a subgroup of the SAC meets to plan the agenda for an SAC meeting, this meeting would be considered a subcommittee meeting and needs to be advertised also.
Discussion of SAC Business among SAC Members

The Sunshine Law requires that issues that will come before the SAC should not be discussed by members of the SAC outside of a meeting. The purpose of this provision is to keep officials from meeting privately “behind closed doors,” agreeing to a decision, and then formally making the decision in a meeting. You should encourage all members of the SAC not to discuss SAC business with other SAC members outside of a meeting. This includes parent members as well as school employee members.

This can become a difficult distinction to make when faculty members who are SAC members have discussions in meetings. You then have to decide if what is being talked about in a faculty meeting or team meeting is something that will be discussed at an upcoming SAC meeting. In theory, anything having to do with the improvement of the school could possibly come before the SAC. If you think this will present a problem, some actions you might take could include the following:

- State in a SAC meeting and record in the meeting minutes that members should not discuss SAC issues with other SAC members outside of the meeting.
- At a faculty meeting, distinguish between school business and pending SAC issues.
- When issues that will come before the SAC are discussed, excuse faculty who are members of the SAC from the meeting.
- If SAC issues will be discussed at a faculty or team meeting, post a notice of the faculty meeting regarding SAC matters. The notice should apply only to the SAC parts of the agenda. The rest of the meeting that doesn’t apply to SAC matters does not need to be posted. Post a notice of this meeting according to the guidelines for a reasonable notice of meetings.

Meetings Open to the Public

- The Sunshine Law requires that meetings should be open to the public, accessible to the handicapped, and scheduled so that all members can attend. In a school situation, this usually means open to parents and school staff members. However, meetings are open to any member of the public.

The right of attendance does not take away from the responsibility of the SAC chairperson to conduct an orderly meeting. Members of the public can attend a meeting but not disrupt a meeting. Discussion of SAC business can be appropriately limited to members of the SAC present. A simple way of maintaining an orderly meeting and allowing for input from anyone who attends the meeting is to have a place on the agenda where those who are not SAC members can address their issues and express concerns to the SAC. Time limits may be set on any presentations to the SAC.

Access for the Handicapped

In the spirit of public access and involvement, meetings must be held where there is access for the handicapped. Most school facilities are handicapped accessible. It is important to be sure that the meeting is in a location that is handicapped accessible.

Documents Open for Public Inspection

Any reports, minutes, plans, or any other records created by or presented to the SAC must be available for public inspection. It is a good idea to maintain these records in a designated place such as the media center or the administration office. Examples of materials that must be made available for public
inspection include the school improvement plan, the SAC membership roster and summary sheet, reports to the SAC, and minutes.

Records should be maintained for at least the school year for which they apply. Agendas, minutes of meetings, and important documents pertaining to the operation of SAC are posted on the District website and individual school websites.

**Guidelines for SAC Meeting Procedures**

The Attorney General Opinion states that school advisory councils come under the requirements of the state Sunshine Law. Periodically, an issue comes up about recording meetings. According to information from the Attorney General’s Office, the public has a right to attend and make recordings of SAC meetings, including video recordings. The same information also states that the SAC is “allowed to adopt reasonable rules and regulations which ensure the orderly conduct of a public meeting and which require orderly behavior on the part of the public attending. This includes limiting the amount of time an individual can speak.”

These two requirements indicate that the SAC can adopt rules of procedure so that the public rights of an open meeting are maintained, and the SAC operates in an orderly businesslike manner. In order to meet these needs, an SAC may adopt rules of procedure for conducting an orderly meeting “in the sunshine."

The following two sections list suggested language that an SAC may use, modify, or incorporate into its procedures.

**Recording of Meetings**

- The video or audio recorder will be placed on a tripod or stand in an unobtrusive part of the meeting room.
- Recording devices will be set up in a way so that they can record meeting actions without focusing on any single individual or group.
- Recording devices may not be moved during a meeting.
- Recording devices may not be operated in a manner that is disruptive to a meeting.

**Participation in Public Meetings**

Full and open participation by members of a SAC are critical for meeting the goals of school improvement and accomplishing the purpose of SACs. Participation by non-SAC members can also be a valuable resource for a SAC in making its decisions. Procedural rules are primarily designed to allow for maximum participation of members and non-SAC members and also to conduct a meeting in an orderly and businesslike manner to accomplish the objectives of a meeting.

- Set aside a specific time on the agenda for input by non-SAC members on any topic of concern.
- Allow a time for input on specific agenda items under consideration by the SAC.
- Set a time limit for input by members and non-SAC members for discussion of agenda items or presentations to the SAC. Time limits do not need to be the same for members as for non-SAC members. Setting time limits for non-SAC members does not imply that the same time limits for members must be set or that time limits for member discussions need to be set. However, the rules that are developed should be consistently applied to avoid any possible charges of favoritism or arbitrariness.
• It is the role of the chairperson to conduct the meeting according to the procedural rules adopted by the SAC. Sometimes it is helpful to have a person serve as a timekeeper and inform the speaker and the chairperson when the time allowed is up.
• It is the responsibility of the chairperson, members, and participants to adhere to the procedural rules of the meeting. Participation in a meeting is subject to understanding and following the rules of participation.
• In the event that a participant violates rules of procedure in a meeting, the chairperson has the authority and responsibility to maintain order and to keep the meeting running smoothly according to the procedures.

Statutes that refer to SAC agendas and meetings can be found in Florida Statutes 1001.452 and 286.011.

Minutes
Minutes are the written record of a meeting and of actions taken by the SAC. The SAC is required to keep minutes of all meetings. It is not necessary to record every detail of the meeting or the discussion that took place on an item under consideration. It is only necessary to record actions taken and specifics about the date, time, and place of the meeting. Be sure to include on the minutes the name of your school, that it is a SAC meeting, and that they are minutes.

Florida statutes require the district office to maintain a record of SAC minutes. The minutes should be recorded and approved at the next meeting and then, after approval, uploaded to the school website. Minutes do not need to include every word spoken, but should be a concise reporting of what actions took place in a meeting. Minutes, along with a copy of the agenda, should be uploaded only after they have been approved at the next SAC meeting.

A person should be designated as responsible for recording minutes. The secretary of the SAC is usually the person responsible for this job. The duties of officers, including the secretary, should be stated in the bylaws.

Required sections to include in your minutes:
• School name, date, time, and location
• Attendance (quorum)
• Call to order
• Approval of previous minutes
• Principal’s report
• Old business
• New business
• Description of and record of votes
• Meeting adjournment
• Next meeting date, time, and location
• Submitted by (name and position)

Minutes of meetings should be sufficiently detailed and specific to provide a good understanding to the reader of the proceedings during the meeting, outcome of any votes, and topics discussed.
Statutes that refer to SAC minutes can be found in Florida Statutes 1001.452, 1001.42, and 286.011.

**Possibilities for Using Outside Resources for the SAC**
When concerns arise in SAC meetings, they should be studied. Subcommittees should be formed and chaired by SAC members. Non-SAC members with particular interest or expertise may serve on subcommittees. Subcommittee meetings must also meet Sunshine Law requirements.

**A Clear Understanding of District Goals and Policies**
Awareness of the District Strategic Plan’s vision, mission, and goals will prepare the SAC to serve its school well. The appendices contain information about each of these important keys that will help in the preparation of a progressive, challenging, and achievable school improvement plan.

**District Functions**
Supporting the process of school improvement in Collier County Public Schools requires that certain functions take place not only at the school, but at district level. The district provides support and technical assistance to schools. Additionally, the district monitors compliance.

**District Office Functions and Responsibilities**
- Provide overall direction to schools in the school improvement process.
- Develop and maintain all SAC related templates and other resources.
- Coordinate, review, approve, and maintain copies of all SAC bylaws.
- Collect and maintain SAC minutes.
- Transmit information received from the Florida Department of Education (FLDOE) to schools and learning communities.
- Coordinate the approval of the SAC membership rosters by the school board.
- Report summary information to the superintendent and school board.
- Maintain a district copy of the SAC membership rosters and summaries of representation, and the school improvement plans.
- Maintain direct contact with the FLDOE to facilitate communication between the FLDOE and the district.
- Give general guidance to schools in all aspects of the school improvement process.
- Provide specific guidance and direction to schools in developing their school improvement plans.
- Review and approve school improvement plans in preparation for school board approval.
- Review SAC membership rosters for representation of all school populations.
- Review progress made by schools in implementing their school improvement plans including mid- and year-end reviews.
Available Services/Resources

School Improvement
The School Improvement Office provides a comprehensive training session each fall to prepare principals and SAC chairpersons to participate in the school improvement process. Other kinds of technical assistance sessions are provided throughout the year. This department further provides assistance with the clarification of state laws and meeting compliance requirements. Call the School Improvement Office at 239.377.0016 for further assistance.

Student Assessment
One of the most rapidly changing areas of school improvement is determining whether students are progressing in their learning. The Office of Continuous Improvement Initiatives and the Assessment and Data Management Office can assist SACs in planning, implementing, and evaluating assessment strategies.

Progress monitoring assessments are available for schools to help determine how well students are making progress during the school year. These include: CCPS Benchmark Assessments, CCPS Mini-Benchmark Assessments, End-of-Course Benchmark Assessments, and Florida Assessment for Instruction in Reading (FAIR). All of these assessments are scheduled districtwide during the school year according to the district’s Testing Calendar. Call the Coordinator of School Improvement at 239.377.0028 for further assistance.

In terms of a needs assessment as part of the overall school improvement process, one good source of data is a survey of the school’s learning environment. You may use your own survey or one provided by the district. Whichever survey is used, it should give you important information about the environment of the school as you conduct your needs assessment.

Data Analysis and Reporting services are offered on an ongoing basis to: provide schools with student achievement and other reports; to help with conducting needs assessments; to interpret data; information and assistance with accountability; and to help improve/inform instruction. Call the Department of Assessment and Data Management at 239.377.0008 for further assistance.

School Improvement Plan Process
As stated in the Teaching and Learning Framework, the school improvement plan serves as the school’s statement of work. As the statement of work it is the blueprint schools use to organize and plan strategies focused on maximizing continuous improvement, increasing student achievement, and closing the achievement gap. All schools are required to use the FLDOE school improvement plan template. FLDOE’s template aligns with the Framework for Teaching and Learning non-negotiables and is designed to keep our focus on all of our students. Throughout the year, the Department of Continuous Improvement Initiatives will facilitate communications between the Department of Education and schools. District administrators will support the implementation and monitoring of the School Improvement Plans.

Florida Continuous Improvement Model
Florida Continuous Improvement Model (FCIM) is the process that schools use to guide continuous improvement. FCIM is a systematic process for planning, teaching, assessing, and reevaluating results. It is the road map that directs our actions as we improve student achievement. The FCIM is a four-part instructional cycle of Plan-Do-Check Act which outlines a critical path that schools should follow to achieve...
organizational improvement. Using this cycle will constantly define and refine schools as they meet the needs of students.

**Websites**

The [CCPS website](http://www.ccps.org), [the Department of Continuous Improvement Initiatives](http://www.ccsd.k12.ca.us/initiatives), as well as [the Florida School Advisory Council website](http://www.flsac.org), offers information pertinent to school improvement. It includes paths to the [Florida School Code](http://www.fldoe.org) and other helpful data such as [school grades](http://www.fldoe.org/schoolgrading).

Sunshine Law information may be found at [http://myfloridalegal.com/sunshine](http://myfloridalegal.com/sunshine). Consult [http://www.robertsrules.com](http://www.robertsrules.com) for information on parliamentary procedure publications that will help in conducting successful SAC meetings.

**Florida Statutes and the Sunshine State Laws**

School advisory councils are governed by Florida Statutes and the Sunshine Laws of the state. These links will take you to the necessary websites: [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/Statutes) and [http://www.myfloridalegal.com/sunshine](http://www.myfloridalegal.com/sunshine).

It is imperative to make certain your SAC is in full compliance with state law and operating “in the sunshine,” an expression used to emphasize openness and honesty with the school community. For published statutes, call 850.488.2323. For Sunshine State Law manuals, call 850.224.4555.
APPENDICES

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### APPENDIX A

**School Improvement: Year at a Glance**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task or Activity</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Fall Data Dialogues</td>
<td>August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Organize and conduct elections of new SAC members.</td>
<td>August - September</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Review and revise SAC bylaws</td>
<td>August - October</td>
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<td>4. Appoint business/community people to the SAC.</td>
<td>August - September</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. School Improvement Drafts Due for DA Schools (Save, don’t submit)</td>
<td>September 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. District SAC Training (Optional)</td>
<td>September 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. School Improvement Due for Peer Review (Save, don’t submit)</td>
<td>October 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>8. Review new SAC membership for balance and representation.</td>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Report membership and composition of the SAC to Data Warehouse.</td>
<td>October 29</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. School Improvement Due to state (Final submission)</td>
<td>November 3</td>
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<tr>
<td>11. Conduct a needs assessment based on an analysis of student achievement and</td>
<td>October - December</td>
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<tr>
<td>other data.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>12. Vote and approve A+ Recognition Funds (if applicable)</td>
<td>November - December</td>
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<tr>
<td>13. Complete mid-year reflections (DA Schools)</td>
<td>January - February</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Begin developing your plan for next year. Use needs assessment results to</td>
<td>March - April</td>
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<tr>
<td>address budget, training, instructional materials, technology, staffing, student</td>
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<tr>
<td>support services, specific school safety, discipline strategies, student health</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>and fitness, including physical fitness, parental information on student</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>health/fitness, and indoor environmental air quality.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Winter Data Dialogues</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. As state template becomes available, complete next year’s school</td>
<td>May</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>improvement plan with the SAC without finalizing data.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Review year-end assessment data to determine results for the current year.</td>
<td>June - July</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Add specific data required for annual goals on state template based on</td>
<td>July - August</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>results from the current year.</td>
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APPENDIX B

Required Objectives for the School Improvement Plan
The following is a list of objectives that must be included in the school improvement plan. The required objectives are based on Goal 1 in the District Strategic Plan. When developing objectives, keep in mind that data for the annual objectives and needs assessments are usually not available until the very end of the school year or later. Alternative schools should develop objectives based on either elementary or high schools, depending on the student population served by the school. The requirements are listed by school level.

District Strategic Plan Goals
✓ Expand Early Childhood Education to Enhance School Readiness and Early Learning
✓ Extend College and Career Readiness to Advance Rigor and Relevance
✓ Engage Science, Technology, Engineering and Math Education (STEM) to Strengthen Global Awareness and 21st Century Learning Skills
✓ Elevate Talent Management to Augment a Highly Qualified Workforce
✓ Narrow Achievement Gaps On Statewide Accountability Assessments

District School Improvement Goals
✓ Rigor
✓ Differentiation
✓ Content Area Literacy for Learning (CALL)
APPENDIX C

Requirements for Title I Schools
To comply with Title I audit requirements, the amendments listed below must be made to the School Improvement Plan (SIP) before it is submitted. A copy must also be sent to the Title I Office. As a Title I school, please make certain that any printed copy of the SIP includes all Title I requirements.

- In the Action Plan activities, specify Title I as a funding source wherever appropriate.
- Create a cover page identifying the contents as the Title I Schoolwide Plan.
- Create a Table of Contents for Title I Requirements. If the item is already in the SIP, just reference the page number. If the item has to be added to the SIP, please do so and then assign a page number.

1. Strategies based on scientifically-based research to strengthen the core curriculum – page number.
2. Practices that have great likelihood of ensuring that all students meet the grade level requirements by 2014-2015 – page number.
3. A Professional Development Plan that shows the school will spend 10 percent or more of Title I funds on professional development – page number.
4. Measurable objectives for growth of each subgroup to be proficient by 2013-2014 – page number.
5. Describe how the school will provide written notice to parents about the identification of school improvement status (accountability report) – page number.
6. Specify the responsibilities of the school, the district, and the state under the SIP – page number.
7. Give activities for effective parental involvement in a Parental Involvement Plan. One percent of the school’s Title I allocation must be spent on parental involvement – page number.
8. Show where appropriate activities before and after school or during the summer are incorporated in the SIP – page number.
9. Show how a teacher mentoring program is incorporated in the SIP – page number.
10. A copy of the school’s compact between teacher, parent, and child – page number.
11. The curriculum and assessment instruments at each grade level for reading, math, and writing – page number.
APPENDIX D

State Education Goals
Florida Statute 1008.31(2)(c)

1008.31 Florida’s K-20 education performance accountability system; legislative intent; mission, goals, and systemwide measures; data quality improvements.—

(2)(c) The Department of Education shall maintain an accountability system that measures student progress toward the following goals:

1. Highest student achievement, as indicated by evidence of student learning gains at all levels.
2. Seamless articulation and maximum access, as measured by evidence of progression, readiness, and access by targeted groups of students identified by the Commissioner of Education.
3. Skilled workforce and economic development, as measured by evidence of employment and earnings.
4. Quality efficient services, as measured by evidence of return on investment.
5. Other goals as identified by law or rule.

Florida Education Priorities
School improvement plans shall be designed to achieve the State education priorities pursuant to Florida Statute 1000.03(5), and student performance in Florida Statute 1001.42(18)(a).

1000.03(5)
(5) The priorities of Florida’s K-20 education system include:

a) Learning and completion at all levels, including increased high school graduation rate and readiness for postsecondary education without remediation.—All students demonstrate increased learning and completion at all levels, graduate from high school, and are prepared to enter postsecondary education without remediation.

b) Student performance.—Students demonstrate that they meet the expected academic standards consistently at all levels of their education.

c) Alignment of standards and resources.—Academic standards for every level of the K-20 education system are aligned, and education financial resources are aligned with student performance expectations at each level of the K-20 education system.

d) Educational leadership.—The quality of educational leadership at all levels of K-20 education is improved.

e) Workforce education.—Workforce education is appropriately aligned with the skills required by the new global economy.

f) Parental, student, family, educational institution, and community involvement.—Parents, students, families, educational institutions, and communities are collaborative partners in education, and each plays an important role in the success of individual students. Therefore, the State of Florida cannot be the guarantor of each individual student’s success. The goals of Florida’s K-20 education system are not guarantees that each individual student will succeed or that each individual school will perform at the level indicated in the goals.

g) Comprehensive K-20 career and education planning.—It is essential that Florida’s K-20 education system better prepare all students at every level for the transition from school to postsecondary education or work by providing information regarding:
1. Career opportunities, educational requirements associated with each career, educational institutions that prepare students to enter each career, and student financial aid available to pursue postsecondary instruction required to enter each career.
2. How to make informed decisions about the program of study that best addresses the students’ interests and abilities while preparing them to enter postsecondary education or the workforce.
3. Recommended coursework and programs that prepare students for success in their areas of interest and ability.

1001.42(18)(a)

(18) IMPLEMENT SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY. — Maintain a state system of school improvement and education accountability as provided by statute and State Board of Education rule. This system of school improvement and education accountability shall be consistent with, and implemented through, the district’s continuing system of planning and budgeting required by this section and ss. 1008.385, 1010.01, and 1011.01. This system of school improvement and education accountability shall comply with the provisions of ss. 1008.33, 1008.34, 1008.345, and 1008.385 and include the following:

a) School improvement plans. — The district school board shall annually approve and require implementation of a new, amended, or continuation school improvement plan for each school in the district. If a school has a significant gap in achievement on statewide assessments pursuant to s. 1008.34(3)(b) by one or more student subgroups, as defined in the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), 20 U.S.C. s. 6311(b)(2)(C)(v)(II); has not significantly decreased the percentage of students scoring below satisfactory on statewide assessments; or has significantly lower graduation rates for a subgroup when compared to the state’s graduation rate, that school’s improvement plan shall include strategies for improving these results. The state board shall adopt rules establishing thresholds and for determining compliance with this paragraph.
APPENDIX E

District and School Advisory Councils

Florida Statute 1001.452

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 decision making 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.
APPENDIX F

Recommendations for Best Practices for the School Recognition Awards Process

Technical Assistance Paper

Schools that receive an “A” grade or improve their grade are eligible for School Recognition funds. Each year the legislature allocates funds for this program. The allocation is up to $100 per full-time equivalent (FTE) student for each qualifying school. The statute requires that the school staff and SAC jointly decide how to use the financial award. If school staff and the SAC cannot reach agreement by February 1, the awards must be equally distributed to all classroom teachers currently teaching at the school. These legal requirements are also affected by the Sunshine Law and have a potentially serious impact on the school such as when a faculty meeting or faculty committee will be discussing the award money. If more than one SAC member is on the committee or in the faculty meeting, notice of the meeting must be given. The meeting is then a public meeting, and the public can attend. Some things to consider if you receive the recognition money include the following:

- If performance awards are discussed at a faculty meeting, faculty SAC members can be excused from the meeting.

As specified in statute, schools must use their awards for one or any combination of the following:

- Nonrecurring bonuses to the faculty and staff;
- Nonrecurring expenditures for educational equipment or materials to assist in maintaining and improving student performance; or
- Temporary personnel for the school to assist in maintaining and improving student performance.

The purpose of this technical assistance paper is to provide recommendations on the process to use in deciding how school recognition funds should be distributed. While the law is specific in stating that distribution must be determined jointly by the school’s staff and school advisory council, it is not specific as to guidelines to be used in that determination. Several schools have had conflicts with the process in previous years.

The recommendations below are based on the School Recognition Program state statute. Any interpretation of these recommendations must be guided by the statute and must be interpreted consistently with statute. The School Recognition Program Statute can be found in Florida Statute 1008.36.

Issues were identified and used to develop a school survey, which was sent to each school in the district. The results of the survey were used to develop the following recommendations for each question listed below.

1. At what time of the year are decisions made?

Consider developing a plan during the previous spring before the grades are released to determine who is to be included in the awards. This way decisions can be considered before stakeholders have a personal stake in the decisions. This timeline will make it easier to finalize the plan before the February 1 deadline. If school staff and the school advisory council cannot reach agreement by February 1, the awards must be equally distributed to all classroom teachers currently teaching in the school.

Florida Statute 1008.36(4) refers to classroom teachers. In Florida Statute 1012.01(2)(a), classroom teachers are defined as follows:
(a) Classroom teachers.—Classroom teachers are staff members assigned the professional activity of instructing students in courses in classroom situations, including basic instruction, exceptional student education, career education, and adult education, including substitute teachers.

2. What needs to be done to lay the groundwork or build awareness of the School Recognition Program?
   - Review Florida Statute 1008.36, the law that deals with the Florida School Recognition Program.
   - Provide an organized set of materials as a resource for SACs and school staff.
   - Consult the district website for information about recommended best practices.
   - Clarify roles prior to the beginning of the process so that both the staff and SAC know and understand their roles in the process.
   - Place information to help schools about the process on the district website.
   - Provide specific timelines for the process and amount of money available to all who will be involved.

3. How are committees formed to make the decisions?
   - Consider forming one committee of SAC, faculty, and other school staff. Consideration should be given to, including representatives of, all staff groups. It is important that the committee represent all groups and solicit and include feedback from all groups in the school.
   - Once the committee has been formed, the committee should be empowered by the principal to make recommendations.
   - The principal should decide on his or her role in advance. He or she should consider not being a member of the committee(s).
   - The committee needs to be oriented at the beginning of the process about what the requirements and expectations are including all statutory requirements. Reviewing Florida Statute 1008.36 is a good place to begin.
   - The committee should bring back recommendations to the staff and the SAC for approval by both groups.
   - The committee should strive for consensus, if at all possible.
   - The principal should share with the committee any relevant information needed in making recommendations.

4. About what percent of funds has your school allocated to staff bonuses compared to school program funds?
   - The survey data reflected that funds are generally divided between bonuses for staff and funds to improve the school. The majority of schools reported that bonuses ranged between 70-100% of funds. Specifically 31% of schools surveyed reported bonuses of 91-100%, 51% of schools reported bonuses of 71-90%, and 17% reported bonuses of 70% or less. The average bonus reported was 80%.

5. Who are included in bonuses?
   - Everyone surveyed thought all staff should be included in bonuses. Some principals who receive bonuses may opt out or contribute their bonuses to the benefit of the school.

6. How does the size of bonus vary by category of staff?
   - Schools handle this issue in various ways. To avoid divisiveness, consider an equal way to allocate funds, either by dollar amount or percent of salary. If bonuses are not allocated equally, the committee needs to be prepared to justify any decisions for non-equal
distribution. Committees involved in the process need to be sure the justification is valid and will be agreeable to the different categories of staff.

7. How are new and previous staff included?
   - According to the survey, returning staff are always included.
   - Consider giving new staff partial bonuses. Survey results showed some schools do give partial bonuses.
   - Consider new staff that come from a school that has also received an award. Consider whether such staff should receive two bonuses or be given the opportunity to choose which bonus they prefer.
   - Most schools do not include previous staff that has left.
   - Consider faculty and other staff who have been involuntarily transferred. Those who voluntarily transfer should likewise be mindful that they might miss receiving a bonus in the coming year.

8. How does the principal participate in the process?
   - Most principals reported that they do not try to influence the allocations of funds. Consider the role of the principal as a participant in the following two ways:
     - to organize and delegate to others the decision-making roles
     - to facilitate the process as a non-influential party

The school budget committee, charged with the task of overseeing the budget, should work closely with the SAC or perhaps be a subcommittee of the SAC in order to ensure that school funds and other resources have a close relationship to the highest priorities of the school listed in the school improvement plan. Review Appendix G (Involvement of the School Advisory Council in the School Budgeting Process) for recommendations regarding the budget process and the SAC.

The legislature has not provided school improvement funds recently and funding is not presently available to schools and SACs.

If you have questions related to recognition funds, call your school’s budget contact at the district office, the Department of Continuous Improvement.
APPENDIX G

Recommendations for Best Practices Involvement of the School Advisory Council (SAC) in the School Budgeting Process

Technical Assistance Paper

The purpose of this technical assistance paper is to provide recommendations on the process to use involving the SAC in the development of the school’s budget. While the law is specific in stating that the SAC needs to be involved in the development of the school budget and the expenditure of School Improvement Funds, it is not specific as to guidelines to be used in that determination.

The following recommendations focus on what principals can do to educate and prepare SAC members to provide effective input into the budget process at SAC meetings. The recommendations are based on the citations in state statute. Any interpretation of these recommendations must be guided by the statute and must be interpreted consistently with statute. Review Florida Statutes 1001.42(18)(a), 1001.452(2), and 24.121(5)(c) that refer to SACs and the school budget.

1. Create a Common Vision
   - Discuss a shared vision among school leaders and SAC members regarding the relationship between the school’s budget and the school improvement goals.

2. Provide Education for SAC Members
   - Provide explanation of the statutes that affect the SAC and the school’s budget.
   - Discuss roles of stakeholders.
   - Share budget allocations and curriculum needs and plans.
   - Explain new programs and district initiatives.
   - Explain budgeting procedures such as:
     - Timelines
     - Discretionary and categorical funds
     - School Budget and School Improvement funds
     - Appropriations
     - Significant changes for the year
     - The school-based budget process

3. Provide for the Reporting of Expenditures
   - Report periodically to the SAC the status of the general budget and school improvement fund.

Note: The legislature has not provided school improvement funds recently and funding is not presently available to schools and SACs.