



## Council for Lifelong Learning

# School Advisory Councils (SACs)

## Fact Sheet

September 2001

<p>1. What are School Advisory Councils?</p>	<p>Each school board is required to establish a School Advisory Council (SAC) for each school in the district or a district advisory council if the district has fewer than 10,000 students. A SAC assists in preparing and evaluating the School Improvement Plan (SIP) and provides assistance in the preparation of the school's annual budget. SIPs are locally developed "blueprints" for achieving the state education goals and student performance standards.</p>
<p>2. Who is eligible to be a member of a SAC?</p>	<p>The SAC is composed of the school's principal and an appropriately balanced number of teachers, education support employees, students, parents, and other business and community members who are representative of the ethnic, racial, and economic makeup of the community. A majority of the members must not be persons who are employed by the school. Council members must be elected by their respective peer groups at the school; the school board establishes procedures to select business and community members and must review the membership composition of each SAC. If needed, the board must appoint additional members to achieve proper representation. Vocational-technical center and high school advisory councils must include students, and middle and junior high school advisory councils may include students. SACs of vocational-technical and adult education centers are not required to include parents as members. Funds from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund (lottery dollars) may not be released to a district that does not comply with SAC membership composition requirements.</p>
<p>3. How has the membership requirement for SACs evolved?</p>	<p>Prior to 1991, school boards were not required to establish SACs. Any SACs which were established were required to have membership which was "broadly representative of the community served by the school." The 1991 Legislature replaced the "broadly representative..." language with the present language of, "(members) who are representative of the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school..."</p> <p>Since 1991, that language has been altered eight different times. Most of these changes have dealt with increasing the responsibility of SACs, but several of these changes have dealt with specific issues concerning the membership composition of the SAC. The 1997 Legislature required SACs</p>

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	<p>to draw a majority of its membership from individuals who are not school board employees.</p>
<p>4. Have reviews been conducted regarding the membership requirements of SACs?</p>	<p>A 1993-1994 performance review by the Office of the Auditor General, and a 1995-1996 report by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Government Accountability (OPPAGA) found persistent problems in SAC membership in the 14 school districts reviewed. In one-third of the SACs reviewed, 50 percent of the SAC membership were new to the council. Nearly half of the SACs reviewed did not include all statutorily required membership groups, such as business/community members and education support employees. Nearly one third did not reflect the school community's racial, and ethnic diversity. Finally, school employees dominated 63 percent of the SACs, and school board employees dominated 78 percent of the SACs.</p> <p>Additionally, the OPPAGA reviews SAC membership composition through the Best Financial Management Practice Reviews. Of the four Best Practice Reviews performed by OPPAGA, two districts had problems with SAC membership composition in specific schools; one district had four SACs out of 38 that did not meet the required membership composition; and the second district had seven SACs out of 108 that did not meet the required membership composition.</p> <p>The Auditor General also reviews SAC membership composition in their annual audits of school districts. The Auditor General's recent reports are as follows: in FY 1997-98, twelve districts out of 65 audited did not meet the SAC membership requirements; in FY 1998-99, six districts out of 51 audited did not meet the SAC membership requirement; and in FY 1999-2000, three districts out of 51 audited did not meet the SAC membership requirements.</p>
<p>5. Is it difficult for a district to meet the membership composition requirements?</p>	<p>According to the Department of Education, districts and schools frequently report that securing parental involvement at the schools and on the SACs is challenging. They report that this difficulty arises in finding participants who represent the lower economic groups served by the school, and who have the desire and time to serve on the SAC. This problem is magnified in schools with a high number of low income students, in that once the principal and several teachers fill positions on the council, the rest of the council must be representative of the lower economic community. This requirement may prevent certain concerned individuals who wish to serve from being allowed on a SAC. Additionally,</p>

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	it can be intrusive and impractical for schools to determine which ethnic, racial, or economic group an individual represents.
6. Does a SAC have money to spend and how can they spend it?	A portion of the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund is distributed to each school (through the districts) for the SAC to use for programs and projects to enhance school performance through the implementation of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). A principal may not override the recommendations of the school advisory council for the use of the money. The money may not be used for capital improvements or for projects or programs with a duration of more than one year.
7. How much money is appropriated?	The earmarked amount in the 1997, 1998, 1999, 2000, and 2001 General Appropriations Act for discretionary use by SACs was \$10 per unweighted FTE student.
8. What are the applicable statutes and rules?	<p>Section 24.121, F.S. -- Lottery money            Section 229.58, F.S. -- District and School Advisory Councils            Section 229.59, F.S. -- Educational improvement projects            Section 230.23(16), F.S. -- School improvement plans</p> <p>2001-2002 General Appropriations Act, S.A. 4A            2000-2001 General Appropriations Act, S.A. 3 - \$10 per FTE for SACs use</p> <p>State Board of Education Rule 6A-7.096, F.A.C.</p>
9. Where can I get additional information?	<p>Department of Education            Office of School Improvement            (850) 487-1023</p> <p>The Florida House of Representatives            Committee on General Education            (850) 414-9780</p> <p>Department of Education Publications</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Technical Assistance Document for Evaluating Your School Improvement Process</i></li> </ul> <p>Department of Education General Council Opinions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 98-04 Composition of school board advisory councils</li> <li>• 94-022 Role of school advisory councils in preparation of SIP</li> <li>• 94-019 SAC role in preparation of the SIP</li> </ul>