

**Florida School District Policies**  
**SAC: Student Membership, Election & State Statutes**  
*Policy research of February 25, 2003*

**SOLUTION:**

Letter to Attorney General asking for a legal opinion regarding elementary students as members on School Advisory Councils and the language many districts have added to allow student elections only when “appropriate”.

- ss. 1001.452 (1)(a) “Technical center and high school advisory councils shall include students and middle and junior high school advisory councils may include students...AND...
- ss. 1001.452. (1)(a) 3. “students shall be elected by students.”

Are elementary students, under state statute 1001.452 eligible to be school advisory council members? And is the Pinellas District Policy complying with the law when the policy reads, “students, *when appropriate*, will be elected by students? 14 school districts have policy which allows elementary students to be SAC members without regard to age and also change student elections to ‘when appropriate,’ which would pertain to high school and vo-tech student elections since there is no language to indicate otherwise.

Concerns: SAC members are final decision makers for the school improvement plan (SIP), for spending school improvement funds, preparing and evaluating SIP, decides on dispersing A+ funds and are also to comply with all Government in the Sunshine Laws – including penalties.

History: Audits of school districts indicate many schools are out of compliance in regard to ‘balanced SAC membership’. Escambia County, 2000 Audit, was written up for SAC membership out of compliance (Report pg. 17-20) [http://www.state.fl.us/audgen/pages/pdf\\_files/13657.pdf](http://www.state.fl.us/audgen/pages/pdf_files/13657.pdf)) Auditor found that Escambia County was in violation of the law because Elementary School students were on 3 SACs. Pinellas has an elementary school with 11 SAC members; another middle school with 28% students.

**NOTEWORTHY ITEMS**

- Auditor General: Percentages and balances are subjective to the individual auditor. Auditor only selects a small sampling of schools to check for SAC membership compliance.
- Florida House Reports – Committee on Education K-20, School Advisory Councils (SACs) [http://www.leg.state.fl.us/house/Publications/h\\_reports.html](http://www.leg.state.fl.us/house/Publications/h_reports.html) acknowledges the problems of SAC membership composition.
- No guidelines regarding SAC – it is up to individual interpretation. Audits are performed by individual CPA’s

**DISTRICTS POLICIES REGARDING ELEMENTARY STUDENTS:**

1. **Collier:** <http://www.collier.k12.fl.us/> <http://www.collier.k12.fl.us/board/policies/CPA.pdf> “Student representation shall be required for School Advisory Councils established at the Lorenzo Walker Institute of Technology and high schools and may be included for School Advisory Councils serving middle schools. Student representation is not required for School Advisory Councils serving elementary schools.”
2. **DeSoto:** <http://www.desotoschools.com/BCF.htm> “Student representation shall be required for school advisory councils established at vocational-technical centers and high schools and may be included for school advisory councils serving middle and junior high schools. Student representation shall not be required for school advisory councils serving elementary schools.  
II.a.3. A student(s), when appropriate, shall be elected by students; and,”
3. **Gulf:** Gulf: <http://www.gulf.k12.fl.us/school%20board/policy/Policy%202.30.htm> Policy 2.30: (b) “Student representation shall be required for school advisory councils established at vocational-technical centers and high schools and may be included for school advisory councils serving middle and junior high schools. Student representation shall not be required for school advisory councils serving elementary schools.”.... (2)(a) 3. “A student(s), when appropriate, shall be elected by students;”

4. **Jefferson:** <http://www.paec.org/jefferson/>  
[http://www.paec.org/jefferson/Admin/policy/schbdrule/chapter/chapter\\_1.htm#1.211](http://www.paec.org/jefferson/Admin/policy/schbdrule/chapter/chapter_1.htm#1.211)  
(b) "Student representation shall be required for the school advisory council established at the high school and may be included for school advisory councils serving the middle school. Student representation shall not be required for school advisory councils serving the elementary school. (2)(a) 3. A student(s), when appropriate, shall be elected by students;"
5. **Manatee:** <http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/> Policy 2.14  
[http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/policy\\_procedure/pdfs/Chapter\\_2.pdf](http://www.manatee.k12.fl.us/policy_procedure/pdfs/Chapter_2.pdf) "Composition of school advisory councils shall comply with Florida statutes. Criteria for compliance are found in the School Improvement Guidelines for Manatee County Schools." The Guidelines: "SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GUIDELINES UPDATE, MANATEE SCHOOL DISTRICT, JULY 2002, THIRD EDITION" at page 45-2 in "Article V. Composition" of the "Sample Operational Guidelines" provided for each school. The wording: "The School Advisory Council shall include the school principal and an appropriately balanced number of teachers, education support employees, students (Elementary students are not required, but strongly encouraged), parents, business and community representatives."
6. **Marion:** <http://www.marion.k12.fl.us/> Policy 2.30  
<http://216.239.37.100/custom?q=cache:ZbrOv6yZYv0C:www.marion.k12.fl.us/dept/hrm/database/policies/Policy%25202.30.doc+policy+%2B+school+advisory+councils&hl=en&ie=UTF-8> (b) "Student representation shall be required for school advisory councils established at vocational-technical centers and high schools and may be included for school advisory councils serving middle and junior high schools. Student representation shall not be required for school advisory councils serving elementary schools. (2.a.3) 3. A student(s), when appropriate, shall be elected by students;"
7. **Miami-Dade:** <http://www.dadeschools.net/> <http://www.dadeschools.net/sbr-pdf/chapt1/1b-1.031.pdf> Policy: 6Gx13- 1B-1.031: (2)(b)"Student(1) - Advisory councils of vocational/adult-technical centers, high schools, middle schools and elementary schools containing grades five and/or six shall include students. Elementary schools not housing grades five and six may include students on their advisory councils. Elementary schools may include no more than one student representative."
8. **Okeechobee:** <http://www.okee.k12.fl.us/web.nsf>  
<http://www.okee.k12.fl.us/board.nsf/be38f07bbe5d617385256a04004a98b6/7f24b6d029b8476f85256a04004f8b6f?OpenDocument> Policy 2.40 "2. Student representation shall be required for school advisory councils established at vocational-technical centers and high schools and may be included for school advisory councils serving middle and junior high schools. Student representation shall not be required for school advisory councils serving elementary schools. (2.b.c) c. A student(s), when appropriate, shall be elected by students;"
9. **Osceola:** <http://www.osceola.k12.fl.us/> [http://www.osceola.k12.fl.us/SBRules\\_02\\_03/Chp\\_01.asp](http://www.osceola.k12.fl.us/SBRules_02_03/Chp_01.asp) Policy: 1.31: "C. Students shall be members of School Advisory Councils at the high school and post secondary levels. Students at the middle school and elementary school levels may be members of the School Advisory Councils at the discretion of each SAC."
10. **Palm Beach:** <http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/> <http://www.palmbeach.k12.fl.us/policies/> Policy 6Gx50-2.09; Policy 2.09: (3.b.) iii. "Students(s), when appropriate, shall be elected by students; and" (2.e. "Middle and junior high schools may include student representation on their SAC")
11. **Pinellas:** <http://www.pinellas.k12.fl.us/> Policy: [http://www.pinellas.k12.fl.us/planning/CHAPTERS/CHPTR\\_2.pdf](http://www.pinellas.k12.fl.us/planning/CHAPTERS/CHPTR_2.pdf)  
Policy 2.17 (3)(b) "Student representation shall be required for school advisory councils established at career technical centers and high schools and may be included for school advisory councils serving elementary and middle schools. Policy 2.17 (4)(3) "Student(s), when appropriate, shall be elected by students;"
12. **Santa Rosa:** <http://www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/> Policy: <http://www.santarosa.k12.fl.us/policy/> Policy 2.30 (1.b.) "Student representation shall be required for school advisory councils established at vocational-technical centers and high schools and may be included for school advisory councils serving middle schools. Student representation shall not be required for school advisory councils serving elementary schools."... (2.a.)(iii) "A student(s), when appropriate, shall be elected by students;"

13. **Sarasota:** <http://www.sarasota.k12.fl.us/> Policy: <http://www.sarasota.k12.fl.us/Policy/> Policy 2.26 (2.)(b) "Student representation shall be required for school advisory councils established at vocational-technical centers, high schools, and middle schools. Student representation shall not be required for school advisory councils serving elementary schools, however it is permitted. (3)(a) 3. A student(s), when appropriate, shall be elected by students;"
14. **Seminole:** <http://www.scps.k12.fl.us/> Policy: [http://www.scps.k12.fl.us/schoolboard/doc/Policy%20Files%20\(PDF\)/Section%20B/30.01.PDF](http://www.scps.k12.fl.us/schoolboard/doc/Policy%20Files%20(PDF)/Section%20B/30.01.PDF) "In addition to the Principal, the Council will be minimally composed of the following: In addition to the Principal, the Council will be minimally composed of the following: Student 1 (optional at elementary and middle school) .....Parents and community members must make up at least half plus one of the total membership on the School Advisory Council. In the event that a parent who is also a School Board employee and assigned to the school, is elected by the parents, he/she may serve, but will not be counted as a parent/community member (half plus one). This balance does not include the student."
15. **Volusia:** <http://www.volusia.k12.fl.us/> Policy: <http://www.volusia.k12.fl.us/policies/809.doc> (3.b) 3. "Students shall be elected by students. School Advisory Council in high schools shall include students. School Advisory Council in middle and elementary schools may include students at the discretion of the principal;"

#### **DISTRICT POLICY – EXAMPLE OF EXCELLENT POLICY**

1. **Alachua:** <http://www.sbac.edu/> <http://www.sbac.edu/~wpop/policy/policy.html> Policy 2.42
  - Clear definition of who is a community representative: "Other Citizens (not employed by school) 25% or more - must include one business representative; - cannot include parents at the school site; - cannot include teachers or employees of the school site"
  - Voting is clearly defined and so is Public Records regarding elections: "Voting shall be by written ballot." ... "Documentation of the nomination and election process will be maintained at the school as a public record."
  - Public notice is also clear and is actually more than the law requires: ""Notice of meetings: the school shall use a HomeFone message and shall provide other public notice (e.g. school marquees, newsletters, notes to parents, posted notices, media releases) of the meeting time, place and agenda, normally, at least seven (7) days in advance."

#### **DISTRICT POLICIES CHECKED & POLICY APPEARS COMPLIANT:**

1. **Bay** - <http://www.bay.k12.fl.us/district/policy/policy.pdf> (\*Good language regarding training) "Advisory Council Member Training. The District's Office of Staff Development shall offer Advisory Council member training each school year. The training shall be designed to inform Advisory Council members of the structure, purpose and role, Florida's Sunshine Law requirements, school and community involvement, how the Council works through the school improvement planning cycles and needs assessment, and how to assist in the development of the school improvement plan."
2. **Brevard:** [http://www.brevard.k12.fl.us/School\\_Board/](http://www.brevard.k12.fl.us/School_Board/) policy: <http://www.neola.com/brevardco-fl/>
3. **Charlotte:** <http://www.ccps.k12.fl.us/ccpsmain.html>
4. **Clay:** [http://www.clay.k12.fl.us/Root/board\\_policies.htm](http://www.clay.k12.fl.us/Root/board_policies.htm)
5. **Hillsborough:** <http://www.sdhc.k12.fl.us/> <http://apps.sdhc.k12.fl.us/sdhc2/Administration/PolicyManual/> (Policy 2.04>Summary of Procedures>Guidelines for School Improvement) Hillsborough SAC Procedures Manual Students: a) must be included, by election, at the high school and vocational/technical center levels; b) may be included at the junior high and/or middle school level. But, they must be elected if the site decides to invite them to participate. <http://apps.sdhc.k12.fl.us/sdhc2/sip/DOCS/intro.rtf> (1998 Guidelines allowed elementary students but now, no longer allows it appears)
6. **Leon:** <http://www.leon.k12.fl.us/> <http://www.planning.leon.k12.fl.us/Policies/>
7. **Polk:** <http://www.pcsb.k12.fl.us/> [http://www.pcsb.k12.fl.us/brd\\_policies/chap01/ch1-007.htm](http://www.pcsb.k12.fl.us/brd_policies/chap01/ch1-007.htm)

**DISTRICTS WITH NO POLICY ONLINE:**

1. Baker - <http://prod.schoolcruiser.com/bcsd/>
2. Bradford: <http://www.bradford.k12.fl.us/>
3. Calhoun: <http://www.paec.org/calhoun/district/>
4. Citrus: <http://www.citrus.k12.fl.us>
5. Columbia: <http://www.columbia.k12.fl.us> (offline)
6. Dixie: <http://dixieschools.dixie.k12.fl.us/>
7. Flagler: <http://www.flagler.k12.fl.us/index.html>
8. Franklin: <http://www.franklincountyschools.org/>
9. Gadsden: <http://www.gcps.k12.fl.us/>
10. Gilchrist: <http://www.gilchristschools.org/>
11. Glades: <http://www.firn.edu/schools/glades/glades/>
12. Hamilton: <http://www.firn.edu/schools/hamilton/hamilton/index.htm>
13. Hardy: <http://www.hardee.k12.fl.us/>
14. Hendry: <http://www.hendry-schools.org/>
15. Hernando: <http://www.hcsb.k12.fl.us/>
16. Highlands: <http://www.highlands.k12.fl.us/>
17. Holmes: <http://www.firn.edu/schools/holmes/holmessb/>
18. Indian River: <http://www.indian-river.k12.fl.us/par/parents.htm>
19. Jackson: <http://www.firn.edu/schools/jackson/jacksonsb/>
20. Lafayette: <http://hornet.lafayette.k12.fl.us/>
21. Lake: <http://www.lake.k12.fl.us/default.asp>
22. Lee: <http://www.lee.k12.fl.us/>
23. Levy: <http://www.levycountyschools.org/> Offline or non existent
24. Liberty: <http://www.firn.edu/schools/liberty/liberty/>
25. Madison: <http://www.janusgroup.com/madison/>
26. Martin: <http://www.sbmcc.org/>
27. Nassau: <http://www.nassaucountyschools.org/>
28. Monroe: <http://www.monroe.k12.fl.us/>
29. Okaloosa: <http://www.okaloosaschools.com/>
30. Orange: <http://www.ocps.k12.fl.us/>
31. Pasco: <http://www.pasco.k12.fl.us/>
32. Putnam: <http://www.putnamschools.org/>
33. St. John's Offline or non existent
34. St. Lucie: <http://plato.stlucie.k12.fl.us/>
35. Sumter: <http://www.sumter.k12.fl.us/>
36. Suwannee: <http://home.suwannee.k12.fl.us/policies/> Policy 2.04 (not available)
37. Taylor: <http://www.taylor.k12.fl.us/>
38. Union: [http://www.firn.edu/schools/union/union\\_hs/district/](http://www.firn.edu/schools/union/union_hs/district/) Offline or non existent
39. Wakulla: <http://www.firn.edu/schools/wakulla/wakulla/>
40. Walton: <http://www.walton.k12.fl.us/>
41. Washington: <http://www.firn.edu/schools/washington/wash/>