

## **VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOLS VISION STATEMENT**

*Through the individual commitment of all, our students will graduate with the knowledge, skills, and values necessary to be successful contributors to our democratic society.*

School Board approved and adopted April 14, 1992

### **SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT IN VOLUSIA COUNTY SCHOOLS**

Several years ago, Volusia County Schools embarked on a plan of school improvement based on a body of research that describes effective schools. Other school districts have initiated other school improvement strategies. We see Florida's accountability legislation as a method of institutionalizing school improvement statewide and of measuring and achieving improvements in student outcomes. We believe that with adequate time and support we have the potential for dramatic improvement in our schools.

By enacting eight state goals, the Florida Legislature intends to provide clear guidelines for achieving educational accountability and for returning the responsibilities for education to those closest to the students, that is, the schools, teachers, and families. The Legislature recognizes, however, its ultimate responsibility and that of the Governor, the Commissioner of Education, the State Board of Education and other state policy-making bodies, is to provide the strong leadership needed to forge a new concept of school improvement and to make adequate provisions for a uniform system of free public education as required by the State Constitution.

Both the district plan and accountability legislation identify a process for improvement which emphasizes local school needs assessment and parental and staff involvement in the decision making which determines those methods which the local schools will use to improve student achievement.

In Volusia County, we believe that school improvement is based on several guiding principles that have been adopted by our school board as part of our district goals. The board has also adopted a vision statement and defined the goals that provide the framework for school-level goal setting. Our guiding principles include:

#### ***Guiding Principal: Clear Understanding of Mission***

A clearly stated mission will be articulated throughout the school. All staff will share an understanding of and a commitment to the instructional goals, priorities, assessment procedures, and accountability of that mission.

#### ***Guiding Principle: Academic Focus***

In the belief that all students will learn, school staffs will maintain high expectations for student achievement through delivery of effective and challenging instructional programs and with frequent monitoring and assessment of student progress.

#### ***Guiding Principle: Bold Leadership***

Principals and other persons in leadership roles will exhibit boldness, will communicate the mission of the school dynamically, and will establish and support an effective instructional program.

#### ***Guiding Principle: Involved Community***

Parents and community members will understand and support the mission of the school and will be given the opportunity to participate in helping the schools accomplish that mission.

#### ***Guiding Principle: Safe and Orderly Environment***

The environment within schools will be orderly, safe, and drug free, thus conducive to teaching and learning.

Volusia County Schools embarked on a comprehensive staff development program in 1990, which has involved school and district administrators, teachers, parents, and support staff. After receiving training on goal setting, team building, and how to measure student outcomes, schools selected improvement teams comprised of teachers, administrators, staff members, families, business partners, and students to develop the school's mission and plan for improvement which support the district's vision, guiding principles, and goals. Ongoing staff development is provided in such areas as facilitative leadership, quality management, data analysis, collaborative learning groups, and communication skills to meet district and individual schools needs.

The critical focus of school improvement is, of course, to increase student achievement. Student achievement measures include the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT), the FCAT NRT, a norm-referenced standardized test, district developed criterion-referenced tests, writing portfolios, graduation rates, dropout rates, discipline referrals, family involvement, and other benchmarks established by each school advisory council.

Florida's accountability legislation is based on the eight state goals which are consistent with the national goals, and which complement our district's guiding principles. Through the school improvement planning process, the school advisory councils will have the authority, as well as the responsibility, to be able to make recommendations about how schools should operate and how they can improve. Each year, the school advisory councils at each school will update their plans and address both the district goals and the state goals.

NAME OF SCHOOL: \_\_\_\_\_

**SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL CANDIDACY REQUEST FORM**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ (DAY)  
\_\_\_\_\_ (EVENING)

I am seeking to represent the following group of individuals on our School Advisory Council.

(Please circle one)      Parents      Teachers      Staff      Students

Please describe why you are interested in serving on our School Advisory Council:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **EXPECTATIONS FOR SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC) MEMBERS**

- Develop/Review the school's mission statement
- Use Florida's 8 education goals and the district's goals as guiding principles
- Examine all aspects of the school when developing the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- Prioritize the needs of the school
- Develop strategies for improving the areas of need
- Develop a plan for measuring the results of the SIP
- Assist in the preparation and evaluation of the SIP
- Assist in the preparation of the school's annual budget
- Decide how to spend the SAC funds to meet the SIP goals
- Assist in recruiting and retaining other SAC members

# **SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL (SAC) ELECTION PROCEDURES & MEMBER COMPOSITION**

## **ELECTION PROCEDURES**

1. Elections will take place between the following dates: August 26 – September 13
2. All elections will be held by secret ballot.
3. Spanish and English ballots will be available.
4. Names will appear on ballots in alphabetical order in each category: teachers, support personnel, students, and parents.
5. The principal, following input from the existing School Advisory Council, will open the appropriate number of vacancies for the election and announce those vacancies in the orientation packet.
6. Each school will select an appropriate election date. Election times will be varied to accommodate working parents. The principal may establish off-campus election sites.
7. All voters must sign off on a master list of eligible voters for each voting group.
8. Teachers shall be elected by teachers. Support personnel shall be elected by support personnel. Students shall be elected by students. Parents shall be elected by parents.
9. Voters will vote for one candidate for each vacancy. For example, if there are three vacancies for parent representatives, parents will vote for three parent candidates whose names appear on the ballot. If there are two vacancies for support personnel representatives, support personnel will vote for two support personnel candidates whose names appear on the ballot.
10. The ballot box at each site will be supervised by the School Advisory Council election committee.
11. The School Advisory Council election committee will consist of the principal or designee, the teacher of the year, a parent representative selected by the current School Advisory Council members, a student (where appropriate), and a member of the support personnel selected by the principal.
12. Absentee ballots will be provided to individual parents upon written requests.
13. Those receiving the most votes in each category will be recommended to serve on the School Advisory Council.
14. The principal will submit the School Advisory Council membership, as verified by the election committee, to the district school improvement specialist by September 18, 2002. The school board will approve the membership when approving the school improvement plan.

## **SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL MEMBERSHIP**

1. The principal, following input from the existing School Advisory Council, will establish the size and membership make-up of the 2002-2003 team as follows:
  - ⇒ The principal or designee shall serve on the School Advisory Council.
  - ⇒ At least fifty-one percent (51%) of the School Advisory Council shall be parents and community representatives not employed by the school.
  - ⇒ Each team must include at least one member from the school's support personnel.
  - ⇒ School Advisory Councils in high schools shall include students. School Advisory Councils in middle and elementary schools may include students at the discretion of the principal.
  - ⇒ The principal, following input from the existing School Advisory Council, may appoint other interested stakeholders.
  - ⇒ Membership of the School Advisory Council will reflect the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school.
2. Should the principal determine that membership elected by the school is not representative of the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school, the principal, following input from the School Advisory Council, shall recommend additional members to the school board to achieve proper representation.
3. Members will serve on the School Advisory Council for a period of two years.
4. The principal will select business and community members for inclusion on the School Advisory Council following input of the School Advisory Council.

## **SAMPLE**

(Insert TEACHER, PARENT, STAFF, or STUDENT) BALLOT

Please vote for (insert number of vacancies) candidates by marking the space next to the name of the candidate(s) of your choice.

(List candidates in alphabetical order)

\_\_\_\_\_ Name A, length of term

\_\_\_\_\_ Name B, length of term

\_\_\_\_\_ etc.

## **PARENT ABSENTEE BALLOT**

Please vote for (insert number of vacancies) candidate(s) by marking the space next to the name of the candidate of your choice.

(list candidates in alphabetical order)

\_\_\_\_\_ Name A, length of term

\_\_\_\_\_ Name B, length of term

\_\_\_\_\_ etc.

For your vote to count, you must RETURN THIS BALLOT to (name of school, place, person) by (date).

## **SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL ELECTIONS**

(INSERT NAME OF SCHOOL) is seeking parent members for our School Advisory Council. Parents interested in becoming candidates may obtain election information packets from (insert dates) at (location). Our election will take place (insert date, times, place).

**COME JOIN US! COME VOTE!**

## **TIMELINE FOR 2002-2003 SCHOOL ADVISORY COUNCIL ELECTIONS**

**Election Window: August 26 – September 13**

**Results to District: September 18**

**School Board meeting: October 22**

## Checklist: Preparing For Your School Advisory Council Election

- ◆ Review the election procedures and guidelines (see district orientation packet).
- ◆ Determine the best date(s) for your election within your election window (consider pairing elections with a highly attended event at your school).
- ◆ Determine election times of day that accommodate family/communities needs (such as early morning and early evening).
- ◆ Determine number of vacancies & length of term in each role group category.
  - Parents/guardians & community members must compose 51% of the team
  - Parents/guardians & community members may not be employed at your school
- ◆ Communicate the date(s) and procedures to all candidate/voter role groups in English & Spanish, as appropriate. Consider communicating information through the following avenues.

faculty/staff meetings	school bulletin boards
school newsletters	community centers, stores
school marquee	school banners
local newspapers	families/community
- ◆ Distribute orientation packets to all potential candidates.
- ◆ Establish election committee (see district packet).
- ◆ Prepare ballots with candidates listed alphabetically.
- ◆ Prepare separate ballots for teachers, support personnel, parents/guardians, and students (required in high school).
- ◆ Distribute requested absentee ballots in English and Spanish, as appropriate.
- ◆ Prepare area(s) where elections will take place.
  - Provide conditions that support the secret ballot concept.
  - Consider off-campus site(s).
- ◆ Hold Elections: check off voters' names on eligible voter list.
- ◆ Count ballots after all polling booths close.
- ◆ Appoint community members with input from School Advisory Council.
- ◆ Submit results on school letterhead to district specialist by **September 18, 2002** and include the letter as part of the 2001-2002 School Improvement Plan that will be shared with the school board for final approval. The principal's signature attests to the fact that the team reflects the ethnic, racial, and economic community served by the school.