

SENATE STAFF ANALYSIS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT STATEMENT

(This document is based only on the provisions contained in the legislation as of the latest date listed below.)

Date: April 16, 1998 Revised: _____

Subject: School Advisory Councils

	<u>Analyst</u>	<u>Staff Director</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Action</u>
1.	<u>Harkey</u>	<u>O'Farrell</u>	<u>ED</u>	<u>Favorable/CS</u>
2.	_____	_____	<u>WM</u>	_____
3.	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____	_____	_____

I. Summary:

The bill prohibits the release of lottery funds to school districts that do not comply with school advisory council (SAC) membership composition requirements. The Florida Commission on Education Reform and Accountability must serve as a review body to determine if schools have maximized their efforts to include on their advisory councils minority persons and persons of lower socioeconomic status. School boards must also develop policies to monitor membership composition of school advisory councils to ensure compliance with statute.

Each SAC must include in its name the words "school advisory council." Each council, with technical assistance provided by the Department of Education, must assist in the preparation of the school's annual budget and plan. A portion of funds provided in the General Appropriations Act for use by SACs must be used for implementing school improvement plans. Beginning in 1999-2000, school improvement plans must address issues relative to budget, training, instructional materials, technology, staffing, student support services, and other matters of resource allocation as determined by school board policy.

School boards must adopt policies to encourage and enhance decision making at the school site and must adopt a waiver process to allow schools to exercise maximum flexibility and must notify school advisory councils of waiver processes.

The bill takes effect in the 1999-2000 school year.

This bill substantially amends sections 24.121, 229.58, 229.592, and 230.23, of the Florida Statutes.

II. Present Situation:

School advisory councils (SAC's) are an important component of Florida's school improvement and accountability system. Section 229.58, F.S., requires the school board to establish a SAC for each school in the district, but gives smaller school districts (those with fewer than 10,000 students) the option of establishing a district advisory council. Each SAC assists in preparing and evaluating the school's improvement plan and provides any assistance requested by the principal in preparing the school's annual budget. School improvement plans are locally developed, school-specific plans for achieving the state education goals and student performance standards. Section 229.58(2), F.S., specifies that no SAC shall have any of the powers and duties now reserved by law to the school board.

Each SAC must be 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 community served by the school. Performance reviews conducted by the Office of the Auditor General in 1993-94 and by the Office of Program Policy Analysis and Governmental Accountability (OPPAGA) in 1995-96 found persistent problems in SAC memberships. The 1995-96 performance review looked at school improvement efforts in 14 school districts. In one-third of the SACs reviewed, 50 percent of the SAC members were new to the councils. Almost half of the SACs reviewed did not include all statutorily required membership groups, such as business/community members and education support employees. About one-third did not reflect the school community's racial and ethnic diversity. Sixty-three percent were dominated by school employees and 78 percent were dominated by school district employees. Legislation passed during the 1997 legislative session required each SAC to draw a majority of its membership from individuals who are not school board employees.

The Legislature annually appropriates funds for SACs to use for school improvement. From the school district's lump sum allocation of lottery funds, the school board must allocate \$10 per FTE student (in FY 1997-98) for uses determined by each school's advisory council or by the school's parent advisory committee, if there is no school advisory council.

Section 230.23(16), F.S., requires district school boards to annually approve and require implementation of a school improvement plan for each school in the district. Section 24.121, F.S., prohibits the release of funds from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund to any school district in which one or more schools do not have an approved school improvement plan pursuant to s. 230.23(16), F.S. This provision took effect July 1, 1993, and in conjunction with the requirement of s. 230.23(16), F.S., for the annual approval of school improvement plans, has been interpreted by districts and the Department of Education (DOE) to mean that school improvement plans must annually be approved by July 1.

The Florida Commission on Education Reform and Accountability was created in 1991 as an advisory body which oversees the development, establishment, implementation and maintenance of a program of school improvement and accountability from preschool through grade 12. The

Commission is assigned to the Office of the Commissioner of Education for administrative and fiscal accountability purposes but otherwise functions independently. The Commission consists of the Commissioner of Education, the Lieutenant Governor and 21 appointees determined by the Governor, the Senate President, the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the Commissioner of Education.

III. Effect of Proposed Changes:

The bill amends s. 24.121, F.S., to provide that school districts that do not comply with the SAC membership composition requirements of s. 229.58(1), F.S., will not receive funds from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund administered by DOE. The department must send a technical assistance team to each school without appropriate school advisory council membership composition to help develop a strategy for corrective action. Funds will be released upon establishment of a plan of corrective action.

An amendment to s. 24.121, F.S., relating to the allocation of revenues and expenditures of funds for public education, deletes an obsolete date. The provision of law initially took effect July 1, 1993, and in conjunction with the requirement of s. 230.23(16), F.S., for the annual approval of school improvement plans, has been interpreted by districts and the DOE to mean that school improvement plans must annually be approved by July 1.

The bill amends s. 229.58, F.S., to specify that each school advisory council must include in its name the words "school advisory council." The Florida Commission on Education Reform and Accountability will serve as a review body to determine if schools have maximized their efforts to include minority persons and persons of lower socioeconomic status on their advisory councils.

By the 1999-2000 academic year, each SAC, with technical assistance from DOE, must assist in the preparation of the school's annual budget and plan as required by statute. A portion of funds provided in the General Appropriations Act for use by SACs must be used for implementing school improvement plans. Beginning in 1999-2000, each school improvement plan must address the following issues: budget, training, instructional materials, technology, staffing, student support services, and other matters of resource allocation. The SAC must be the sole body responsible for final decision making at the school relating to implementation of the state system of school improvement and education accountability under to ss. 229.591, 229.592, and 230.23(16), F.S.

School boards must adopt policies that encourage and enhance maximum decision making appropriate to the school site. The policies must include guidelines concerning the adoption and purchase of district and school site instructional materials and technology, staff training, student support services, budgeting, and the allocation of staff resources.

The bill requires that school boards adopt a waiver process by which schools can exercise maximum flexibility. School boards must notify school advisory councils of their option to make use of the waiver process to waive school district and state policies.

School boards must develop policies for monitoring the membership composition of school advisory councils to ensure compliance with requirements established in s. 229.58, F.S.

IV. Constitutional Issues:

A. Municipality/County Mandates Restrictions:

None.

B. Public Records/Open Meetings Issues:

None.

C. Trust Funds Restrictions:

None.

V. Economic Impact and Fiscal Note:

A. Tax/Fee Issues:

None.

B. Private Sector Impact:

None.

C. Government Sector Impact:

None.

VI. Technical Deficiencies:

None.

VII. Related Issues:

None.

VIII. Amendments:

None.

