

Home of the Panthers



Nease High School School Advisory Council By-Laws

2015-2016

Philosophy

Members of the School Advisory council help explore ways to improve the education of the students in our school. A member can also represent the views of others in the community and encourage their participation in the school. By valuing and respecting everyone's views, the council creates a partnership among the school, the student's families, and the community. Such a partnership can help all students become well-educated, well-adjusted, and productive citizens. When the entire school community works together to support learning, children tend to succeed, not just in school but throughout their lives. Member participation in this process is crucial. Use this handbook as a guide to become an effective member of the Nease School Advisory Council.

The Nease High School Advisory Council recognizes that the education of students is a shared responsibility involving the school, students and their families, and members of this community. Parents and guardians have the right, as well as the responsibility, to participate in the education of their children, and can contribute to their children's development in a wide variety of ways. Other members of the community also offer a wealth of experience and expertise that may be of benefit to students. Members of all of these groups should, therefore, have the opportunity to advise in educational matters. Nease High School is committed to encouraging partnerships that will enhance the education of its students.

Florida Statutes (229.58 see appendix) requires that all school districts establish School Advisory Councils to increase communication between schools and their communities and, to enable parents and students to assume "a more responsible and active role" in education programs.

The St. Johns County School District (policy #2.04 see appendix) has authorized the establishment of individual school improvement teams in district schools to serve in an advisory capacity to the principal, and to assist in the development of the educational program and in the preparation and evaluation of the school improvement plan.

Nease High School School Advisory Council By-Laws

I. Benefits of Participation

The Nease School Advisory Council provides for

- A.** two way communication between school and community.
- B.** an opportunity for parents, students, and representatives of the community to take a responsible and active role in local educational issues and concerns.
(Studies show that parent involvement in schools usually increases the success of school programs and the effectiveness of the schools themselves).

A partnership of school and community representatives increases mutual understanding and interaction between the school and community in general.

II. Roles and Function

- A.** As a link between the school and the community, the two primary functions of the Nease SAC are:
 - 1. to establish and maintain good communication between the school, parents, and community
 - 2. to encourage parents and community members to participate in education.
- B.** In addition, the Nease SAC will
 - 1. serve as an advisory body of volunteers created to enhance students' learning through the cooperative efforts of parents, staff members, and others community members
 - 2. represent the diversity of the school community, including parents and guardians of students enrolled in the school, as well as people who live or work in the school's attendance area
 - 3. provide the community with opportunities to discuss educational issues and respond to local educational needs
 - 4. solicit feedback from parents and community members, and present that data to the school and school board
 - 5. help the school to identify and respond to the educational needs of our community
 - 6. provide advice to the school principal and, where appropriate, to the school board
 - 7. determine how the monies from the Educational Enhancement Trust Fund for School Improvement will be allocated based on the data received through reports, needs assessments, and the best interests of all students in the school
 - 8. be accountable to the school community it represents
 - 9. attend council meetings on regular basis
 - 10. establish and review annually the council's goals, priorities, and procedures.
 - 11. operate within the guidelines of the St. Johns County School Board policy "School Improvement Teams" (#2.04)
 - 12. hold a minimum of eight (8) meetings per year (all meetings shall be public)
 - 13. assist in the preparation of the feedback report to the Florida Commission of

Education Reform and Accountability as required by Florida Statutes

14. ensure expenditures are related directly to the SIP
15. a time keeper may be appointed at each meeting

Note: Both the council and individual members can incur personal liability if they exceed their mandate as outlined in this policy.

III. Nease School Advisory Council Membership/Composition

- A.** Composition of the SAC will be determined by the requirements of State Law.
- B.** Membership of the Nease High School Advisory Council (SAC) will
 1. Reflect the diversity of our school community.
 2. Have parents/guardians form the majority of council membership.
 3. Treat all council members as full and equal partners.
 4. Bring before the council issues and concerns of the groups they represent.
 5. Provide links to the community.
- C.** There should be three (3) subcommittees: (1) Budget (2) Needs Assessment and (3) School Improvement.
 - a. These subcommittees will designate a chairman and meet as needed. The SAC treasurer will be a member of the Budget subcommittee.
 - b. Each subcommittee will establish clearly articulated goals that must support the approved School Improvement Plan.
- D.** The suggested term of membership is two years. Members may seek additional terms. The leadership role of the Chair-Elect (1yr) and the Chair (2 years) can serve three years combined. After three years, a member should take a year off, and then return for another two years of service. However, terms should overlap to insure continuity.
- E.** Nease High School SAC must include, but not be limited to, the following persons as members:
 1. parents/guardians of students enrolled in the school;
 2. community representative(s);
 3. the school principal;
 4. instructional staff member(s);
 5. non-instructional staff member(s).

It is expected that the membership of the council reflect the diversity of the school community with respect to ethnic, racial, and economic balance.

F. Council size

1. Non-school members shall be simple majority of the council by at least 50% + 1
2. The council will determine annually how many community representatives will serve on the committee.
3. The size of the SAC shall not be less than nine (9) or exceed twenty-two (22)
4. Student representation will be allowed on specific questions.
5. If a position is vacant, the council shall function while seeking the required members to restore majority and balanced community representation.

G. Community appointees must be members who are representatives from

1. The community representative must represent local businesses of industry, social service agencies, community or non-profit organizations, and the public at large.

H. Election for SAC Membership shall comprise

1. parents/guardians who have been elected by parents and guardians of students at the school;
2. parents/guardians nominated and acclaimed if there are equal numbers of positions and candidates;
3. community representative(s) appointed by the council;
4. the school principal;
5. instructional representative(s) who have been elected by members of the instructional staff;
6. non-instructional (support) staff member(s) who have been elected by members of the non-instructional staff.

IV. Role and Responsibilities of Nease SAC Officers/Principal

A. Annually, the SAC elects the following officers:

1. Chair or Chair-Elect (in alternate years);
2. Recording Secretary;
3. Treasurer.

B. The Chair should be a 2 year position. During the second year, the Chair trains the Chair-Elect, so there is some continuity. After the second year, the Chair Elect becomes the Chair and is mentored by the immediate past-Chair.

C. The Chair Shall:

1. Organize and conduct SAC meetings.
2. Make his/her telephone number available to the school office staff, school
i. community, and school/community liaison officer.
3. Establish and communicate, in consultation with the principal, a meeting
i. schedule for the year.
4. Prepare the agenda for meetings in consultation with the principal and other
i. council members.
5. Chair the meetings and be responsible for the time management of the
i. agenda.

6. Ensure that the minutes of the meetings are recorded and distributed
 - i. according to the council procedures.
7. Strive for diversity in sub-and ad-hoc committees.
8. Facilitate collaborative decision making.
9. Ensure regular communication with the school community.
10. Assist the principal with presentation of the school improvement plan to the
 - i. school board if required.
11. Mentor the Chair-Elect.

D. The Chair-Elect shall assist the chair in the duties above.

E. The Recording Secretary shall:

1. maintain complete records of all meetings in a timely manner.
2. ensure minutes are distributed to all council members and the District Office of
 - i. Accountability.
3. keep and prepare bylaws and other historical documents for all new members.

F. The Treasurer shall:

1. Prepare monthly financial statements which include approved staff development requests, expenditures, spending proposals, monies received, monies expended or encumbered, and the current balance.

G. Guidelines for SAC expenditures:

1. Expenses should be linked to the SIP goals and/or initiatives.
2. A proposed budget is developed from the SIP.
3. To ensure equitable distribution of funds, spending should be limited to \$500 per teacher requests for staff development expenditures, and must directly support SIP goals or initiatives.

H. The Principal shall:

1. facilitate the establishment of SAC and assist in its operation.
2. attend all SAC meetings. The assistant-principal may serve as a designee if
 - i. the principal is not able to attend.
3. ensure that copies of the minutes of SAC meetings are kept at school.
4. support and promote SAC activities.
5. act as a resource on laws, regulations, school board policy, and collective
 - i. agreements.
6. obtain and provide information required by SAC to enable the Council to make
 - i. informed decisions.
7. maintain regular communication with the Chair or Chair-elect of the SAC.
8. insure that information and correspondence and other materials intended for
 - i. the SAC are forwarded to the SAC Chair and Chair-elect in a timely fashion.
9. assist the SAC in communication with the school community.
10. seek input from the SAC in areas for which it has assigned advisory
 - i. responsibility.
11. encourage the participation of parents, students, and others within the school
 - i. community.

12. ensure that all printed materials from the SAC distributed through the school
 - i. are consistent with the District School Board policy.
13. support an effective liaison among the school, the various organizations within it
 - i. and any other parent group that exists in the school, and the SAC.
14. assist the SAC Chair with presentation of the school improvement plan to the
 - i. school board.

V. Framework for School Advisory Council Elections

A. School Advisory Council Election Confirmation

1. The current SAC will establish a new council for the following academic year.
2. The council must ensure that a new council is in place by June with number of vacant positions (determined by the new council) open to allow interested persons to join at the beginning of the school year.
3. All positions must be filled by September of each year in order to maintain a term overlap on future SACs which will facilitate continuity, allow for a learning period, and maintain a group of experienced members.

B. Considerations for SAC Membership Process

1. Appeals related to the SAC election process or results shall be resolved by the past SAC.
2. If the situation is not resolved, the school principal and the co-chairs of the outgoing council shall make a decision.

C. Considerations for Parent Representatives

1. Parents/guardians of a student at the school are eligible to volunteer to serve on the SAC. Self-nomination will suffice.
2. No additional qualifiers or quotas may be used to restrict eligibility to volunteer as a parent member (for example: child's program, grade, location of home etc.)
3. Parents/guardians wishing to serve on the SAC will be invited to submit a summary of their reasons for wanting to serve. This summary will be shared with the school community through the school newsletter at least one week before the SAC considers approval of new members.
4. If the number of candidates is less than or equal to the number of positions, the candidates shall be acclaimed and no election shall be held.
5. If there is objection to an elected member, the objection may be taken to the current SAC for consideration.
6. Invitation for new members will be advertised in the same manner as are the meetings.

D. Appointment of Community Representatives

1. These representative(s) shall be elected initially through a nomination and selection process facilitated by the school principal.
2. The school principal shall seek candidates who are interested in making a commitment to participate on the SAC representing the community.

3. Letters, newsletter, or other media release shall be used by the school principal to seek candidates.
4. The school principal alone shall prepare a list of individuals seeking nomination to the SAC and shall present the list to the council for selection.

E. Election of Staff Representative(s)

1. The principal, in consultation with the SAC, will make the necessary arrangements for staff representatives to be elected.
2. Anyone assigned to the staff of the school (full or part-time) may be eligible to serve.
3. Members who shall be replaced on the Council shall be determined by majority vote of the members then serving on the SAC at the meeting. Appointments shall be made at a public meeting with appropriate public notice of the meeting.
4. The principal shall submit the list of proposed SAC members to the Superintendent for review and to the School Board by September 29 for approval at the October board meeting.

F. Vacancies in Membership

1. Vacancies occur when
 - (a) positions on the SAC have not been filled after selections in the fall.
 - (b) a member resigns.
 - (c) a member has missed two (2) consecutive meetings or a total of four (4) without a communicated message to the chair.
2. Filling a vacancy
 - (a) The SAC may appoint representative for that position until the next academic year.
 - (b) All appointments to fill vacancies on the SAC are by majority vote of the members then serving on the SAC and in attendance at the meeting.

G. Election of the Chair, the Chair-elect, and other Officers

1. The Chair and Chair-elect shall be elected by members of the SAC. The election shall occur at the last SAC meeting of the school year (May or June).
2. A Recording Secretary and Treasurer shall be elected from the SAC members at the same time as the Chair and Chair-elect
3. Should the position of Chair-elect or any officer become vacant during the school year, the SAC shall fill the vacancy at its next meeting.

VI. Council Meetings

- A.** Council meetings shall be held once a month during the school year with a minimum of eight (8) meetings per year.
- B.** Council meetings shall be open to all parents/guardians, students, and teachers of Nease High School as well as to members of the school community who wish to attend.
- C.** SAC activities, including sub-committee meetings, are subject to the Government in the Sunshine Law, section 286.001, Florida Statutes.
- D.** The date, time, and place of meetings shall be decided at the first meeting of the SAC year.
- E.** A Calendar of Meetings shall be submitted to the District Office of Accountability.
- F.** The agenda for each meeting shall be distributed to members of the SAC and advertised to the school community at least seven (7) days prior to each meeting.
- G.** The SAC shall provide public notice (e.g. school marquees, newsletter, and local newspaper) of the meeting time and place.
 - 1. No changes to the agenda may be heard by the SAC during public comments.
 - 2. If concerns need discussion and action by the council, they may be placed on the agenda for future meetings to allow all interested (affected) parties to be notified so that they may be present for discussion.
- H.** Minutes of all meetings will be distributed to members of the SAC before the next meeting.
- I.** The District Office of Accountability will be provided with a copy of approved minutes.
- J.** Meetings will be one hour, unless the SAC agrees to extend the time as needed during a meeting or when requested and announced via email prior to the meeting.

VII. Procedure at SAC Meetings

- A.** Absence of a Chair, Chair-elect, or Secretary
 - 1. The Chair-elect will chair the meeting in absence of the Chair.
 - 2. The SAC will appoint an Acting Secretary for the meeting if the Secretary is absent.
- B.** Quorum
 - 1. A quorum to conduct a business meeting requires 60% attendance of SAC members.
 - 2. Of those present, a simple majority rules.
 - 3. Only SAC members can vote.
- C.** Absence of a Quorum
 - 1. No motions may be considered or approved.
 - 2. In the absence of a quorum, the meeting may proceed for the purpose of discussion of the issues.

D. Protocol for Decision-Making

1. The SAC is advisory in nature, and every attempt should be made to reach consensus.
2. Consensus is reached when all or most members of the SAC are willing to accept a decision as the best choice.

E. Motions

1. Any member of the SAC may move a motion at any meeting.
2. Each member of the SAC will have one (1) vote on every motion.
3. A member of the SAC may abstain from voting on any motion.
4. A motion is approved if a majority of the SAC members present at the meeting vote in favor of it.

F. Public Question Period

1. Each SAC meeting agenda should contain a Public Question Period.
2. Meeting attendees, who are not SAC members, can make a request to the Chair that a particular item be placed on the agenda.

G. Amendments

Amendments to the Operational Guidelines require

1. 75% representation of approved and appointed members.
2. 75% majority vote in favor of the amendment