

**Our Children, Our Families Council**  
**Summary of the SFUSD Student Advisory Council**  
*(Last updated 6/3/15)*

**Goals of the Effort**

The Student Advisory Council (SAC) is a citywide, youth-led organization that is committed to providing a voice for the students of the San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD) by representing and presenting the interests of the students to the administrative and policy-making bodies of SFUSD.

SAC member responsibilities include:

- Attend an orientation retreat at the beginning of the school year
- Attend all SAC meetings (on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday of every month)
- Attend other special engagement & committee meetings as appropriate
- Represent your school & the entire SFUSD student community
- Deliberate & advise the Board of Education as to policies, resolutions, and/or student views

The SAC also hosts an annual leadership summit for between 200 and 300 high school students, and the day-long event includes speakers, student and adult presenters, and networking opportunities.

**Focal Population of the Effort**

The SAC focuses on increasing the voice of high school students in decision-making that impacts them as SFUSD students. Specifically, the SAC welcomes applications from all high school students within SFUSD, but preference is given to juniors and seniors, given that they have more experience in high school and therefore tend to be more informed advocates.

**Impact**

The SAC's greatest strength is that it gives students a voice to advocate for themselves. The SAC has the opportunity to offer input to both the school district and the Board of Education, and in the past, initiatives put forth by SAC members have become part of district policy. One recent example is the resolution creating a district-wide ethnic studies program passed by the Board of Education in December of 2014. The SAC was influential in getting that resolution passed, because they advocated strongly for the importance of learning about diverse communities and cultures to supplement the traditional history curriculum.

**Challenges**

The greatest challenge affecting the SAC relates to fiscal roadblocks they often encounter when pushing for a given initiative. While the members of the SAC have grand visions of ways to improve the educational experience for students in the district, budget restrictions often limit the extent to which SAC priorities and aspirations can be carried out.

**Origins of the Effort**

The Student Advisory Council was first established in 1961 by the SF Board of Education, and section 9150 of the SF Board of Education Bylaws calls for two members of the SAC to sit on the School Board, stating: "The Board of Education believes it is important to seek out and consider students' ideas, viewpoints and reactions to the educational program. In order to provide student input and involvement, two students will sit on the Board. One Student Delegate shall be appointed by the Student Advisory Council and the other elected by the district students through a democratic process approved by the Student Advisory Council." Since 1961, the SAC has served as a platform for students to voice their opinions to both SFUSD and the Board of Education.

**Leading the Effort**

While the SAC does have its own student leadership structure – a 6-person cabinet with a President, Vice-President, Treasurer, Secretary, Historian, and PR Officer, – responsibility for organizing SAC events and running meetings falls on

Mr. Salvador Lopez Barr, the Student Advisory Council Coordinator for SFUSD. He is a full-time, salaried employee within the district's Student, Family, & Community Support Department, and he receives occasional assistance from two secretaries within the same SFUSD Department. Mr. Lopez Barr has served as SAC Coordinator for the past two years.

### **Members of the Effort**

The SAC is made up of 36 high school students (predominantly juniors and seniors) from the 18 high schools in SFUSD. One member is elected by peers at each high school, while the second is appointed by high school faculty to the SAC. Of these 34 student members, six are then elected to serve in positions in the cabinet. Two of the SAC members are also appointed to serve on the San Francisco Board of Education as Student Delegates, who can introduce resolutions and cast advisory votes.

### **Structure of the Effort**

The entire SAC meets twice each month, on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Monday. In addition, the members of the Cabinet also convene on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of each month. The two Student Delegates serving on the Board of Education also attend every Board of Education meeting, generally once or twice per month. Students on the SAC are generally involved students who often balance their commitments on the SAC with sports and other extracurricular activities. As a result, attendance at general meetings varies from full attendance to fifty percent attendance.

At the meetings, students divide into committees based on their interests. The committees for the 2014-2015 academic year were Health, Budget, Curriculum, Youth Summit Event Planning, Public Education Enrichment Fund Community Advisory Committee (PEEF-CAC), and Youth Advisory Council, a partner youth-led organization through DCYF. While working in their committees, SAC members devise ways to capture student input on pertinent issues, brainstorm and draft resolutions, and prepare recommendations for the Board of Education and SFUSD.

### **The Role of Data**

The SAC tracks attendance data at the annual events it hosts.

### **Related Documents**

- The SAC website, which includes the SAC event calendar, application, meeting minutes, and membership <<https://sfusdsac.wordpress.com/>>
- Information on the SAC from the SFUSD website <<http://www.sfusd.edu/en/councils-committees/school-advisory-committee.html>>