

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

*Review of Program Structure and
Proposed Representation Models*



SCOPE OF TODAY'S WORKSHOP

This workshop is intended to examine how the district can best support students serving in visible leadership roles within an evolving public environment.

The purpose of this discussion is not to reduce student leadership opportunities, but rather to thoughtfully reexamine:

- **how student representation is structured publicly**
- **how the district balances visibility and student well-being moving forward**

HISTORY OF THE REPRESENTATIVE ROLE

1. March 8, 2011: Workshop review and tentative approval
2. May 3, 2011: Public hearing conducted
3. Condensed Policy 2.213 formally adopted (3-1 vote)
4. Policy was not transferred over into the Neola policies in 2017

2.213

*STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE
SCHOOL BOARD*

POLICY:

It is the policy of the School Board to reach out to its stakeholders. To that end, the School Board hereby establishes the non-voting position of Student Representative to the School Board to be selected from the high schools of the Hernando County School District. The Superintendent shall create and manage a selection process for the representative.

PAST BOARD DELIBERATIONS & CONSIDERATIONS

Board discussions across workshop and regular meetings highlighted:

Support

- Role enhances student engagement
- Provides valuable real-time feedback for Board decisions
- Builds a pipeline of student leaders and civic participants
- Enhances transparency and community trust in Board decisions

Concerns

- Potential for student exposure to public criticism
- Logistics of participation and attendance
- Clear expectations and safeguards for student participation

CURRENT STRUCTURE OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

- **Nomination & Preparation:** Each high school nominates one senior candidate; students and advisors participate in a virtual orientation reviewing campaign expectations, election procedures, and role responsibilities, with materials housed in Canvas
- **Campaign Process:** Candidates campaign across schools with advisor support; student delegates (K-8) engage peers, review campaign videos, and gather student input to inform voting decisions



CURRENT STRUCTURE OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

- **Election Event:** A district-wide mock election is facilitated by the Supervisor of Elections, including guest speakers, candidate speeches, video presentations, and formal voting
- **Voting Structure:** Each school casts one vote (K-8 schools receive two votes); ballots are securely collected and counted, and the winning student is announced



CURRENT STRUCTURE OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

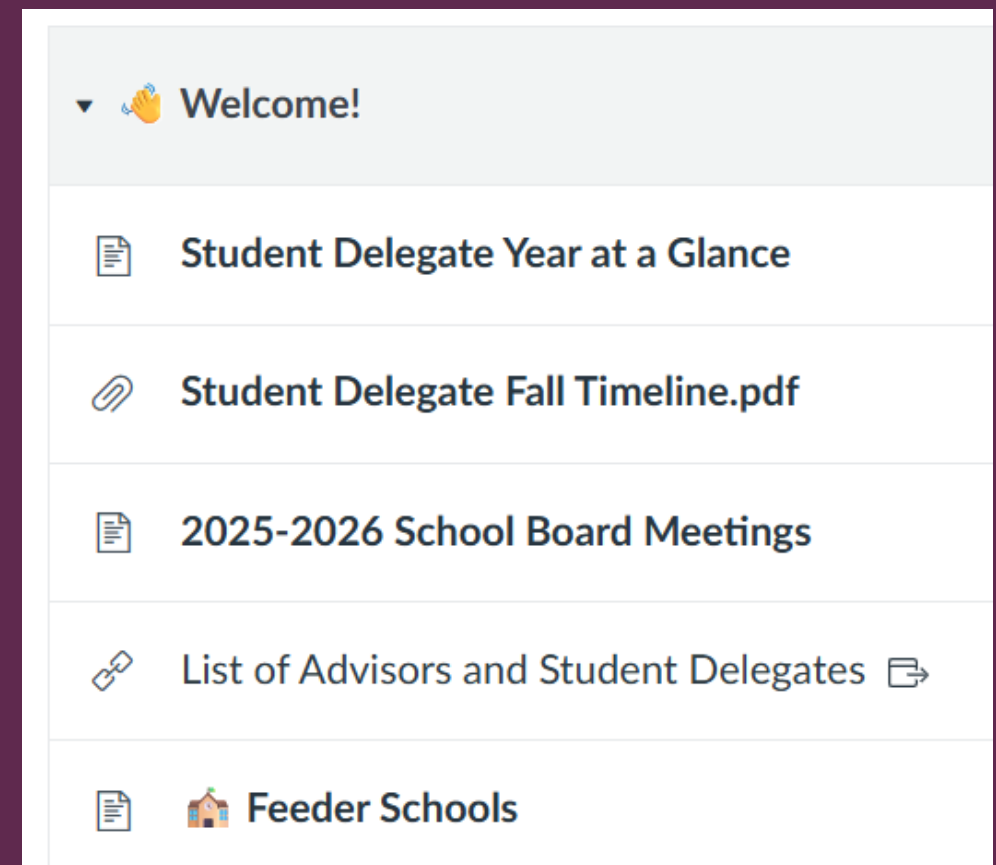
- **Board Responsibilities:** The selected Student Representative begins service immediately, providing regular updates at School Board meetings based on input gathered from student delegates across the district
- **Leadership & Engagement:** The representative participates in district events, helps coordinate delegate meetings, and serves as a student voice in multiple speaking opportunities



CURRENT STRUCTURE OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

Canvas LMS

- Canvas serves as the central hub for communication, including updates, discussion boards, student input, and multimedia submissions, guided by the district advisor.
- The Student Representative to the Board works with the advisor to create discussion prompts and areas of focus that they would like to highlight at upcoming board meetings during their agenda item. Students can also submit photo and video entries on Canvas.



CURRENT STRUCTURE OF THE STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE PROGRAM

The Student Representative to the Board currently...

- is seated on the dais alongside board members
- provides school updates during a dedicated agenda item
- is not invited to participate in deliberation or provide input on Board agenda items unless specifically requested.
- remains seated on the dais through citizen comments and the remainder of the meeting



**HERNANDO COUNTY IS CONSIDERED A PIONEER OF
THIS MODEL FOR FLORIDA SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

ADVISOR RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

High school advisors met on May 13th, 2026 to discuss recommendations and consider alternative models for the Student Representative to the Board position to address safety and visibility concerns.

There are several improvements that can be applied under any model, since they focus on preparation, support, and confidential student input rather than seating location.



1

STANDARDIZED ONBOARDING AND TRAINING FOR ALL SENIOR REPRESENTATIVE CANDIDATES VIA CANVAS

- *Application upload with parent acknowledgement regarding time commitment and public-facing nature of the role*
- *School Board structure and procedures:*
 - *Robert's Rules and Sunshine Law*
 - *Informal, workshop, and regular board meeting procedures*
- *Meeting etiquette and professional expectations*
- *Role expectations and district support systems*
- *Online/social media awareness including digital footprint and communication safety*
- *Media literacy and appropriate response to public attention*

2

STRUCTURED PRE-SERVICE ORIENTATION REQUIRED BEFORE THE ELECTED STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE BOARD ASSUMES ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- *Introductions with each Board member (at the election or immediately following)*
- *Family orientation and district tour, including meetings with:*
 - *Superintendent and Board Chair - to establish expectations for meetings and safety protocols (including Safe Schools)*
 - *Director of Communications - to establish presentation requirements and district media protocols*
 - *Director of Student Services - to establish support available to the student throughout the year (school and district level)*

3

ONGOING ADULT SUPPORT STRUCTURE AND ESCALATION PROCESS

- ***Regular Check-ins and Pre-Meeting Support:*** Provide structured check-ins and opportunities for the student to prepare for board meetings, with parents kept informed and engaged
- ***Clear Communication and Escalation Process:*** Implement a defined, transparent pathway for addressing concerns, with parents included at each step:
 - *Concerns begin at the school level*
 - *If needed, they are elevated to the district advisor*
 - *The district advisor coordinates with relevant district personnel for resolution and follow-up*
 - *Briefs are provided to school board members on matters requiring board attention*

4

EXPANDED MEANINGFUL STUDENT INPUT SYSTEM

- ***Student Advisory Workshops:*** Regular confidential sessions between high school representatives, Superintendent, and district leadership
- ***Feedback Loop:*** Representatives bring topics to feeder schools, gather input, and report back at the next workshop
- ***Board Reporting & Impact:*** Student Representative board meeting updates highlight progress and outcomes from advisory work (PBIS efforts, school participation, emerging initiatives) and connect students with district departments (Safe Schools, Communications, Facilities) for deeper engagement and collaboration

PARTICIPATION MODELS FOR CONSIDERATION

OPTION 1: MAINTAIN SEAT ON THE DAIS WITH ADDED SUPPORTS

OPTION 2: REMOVE THE STUDENT SEAT FROM THE DAIS AND REPLACE WITH PODIUM PRESENTATIONS (ADVISORY REAR TABLE MODEL)

OPTION 1

MAINTAIN THE SEAT ON THE DAIS WITH ADDED SUPPORTS

Focus on Support and Preparation

- *Standardized onboarding and training for all senior representative candidates*
- *Structured pre-service orientation and district tour for elected representative and family*
- *Ongoing adult support structure and escalation process*
- *Expanded meaningful student input system*

OPTION 1 MAINTAIN THE SEAT ON THE DAIS WITH ADDED SUPPORTS

BENEFITS

- *Preserves visible student voice*
- *Reinforces student leadership opportunities*
- *Encourages civic engagement*
- *Maintains district tradition*

CONCERNS

- *Increased public visibility and camera time*
- *Pressure associated with the role*
- *Misunderstanding of student authority*

OPTION 2

**REMOVE THE STUDENT SEAT
FROM THE DAIS AND REPLACE
WITH PODIUM PRESENTATIONS
(ADVISORY REAR TABLE MODEL)**

Focus on Student Visibility

- *Maintain election of one senior student representative, as collectively voiced by students and advisors*
- *Student has a reserved seat at the staff table alongside district personnel at board meetings*
- *Board retains standing agenda item for Student Representative program updates*

OPTION 2 REMOVE DAIS SEAT AND REPLACE WITH PODIUM PRESENTATIONS

BENEFITS

- *Maintains participation while moderating exposure*
- *Reduced pressure on students, including continuous livestream prominence*
- *Proposed added supports still apply*

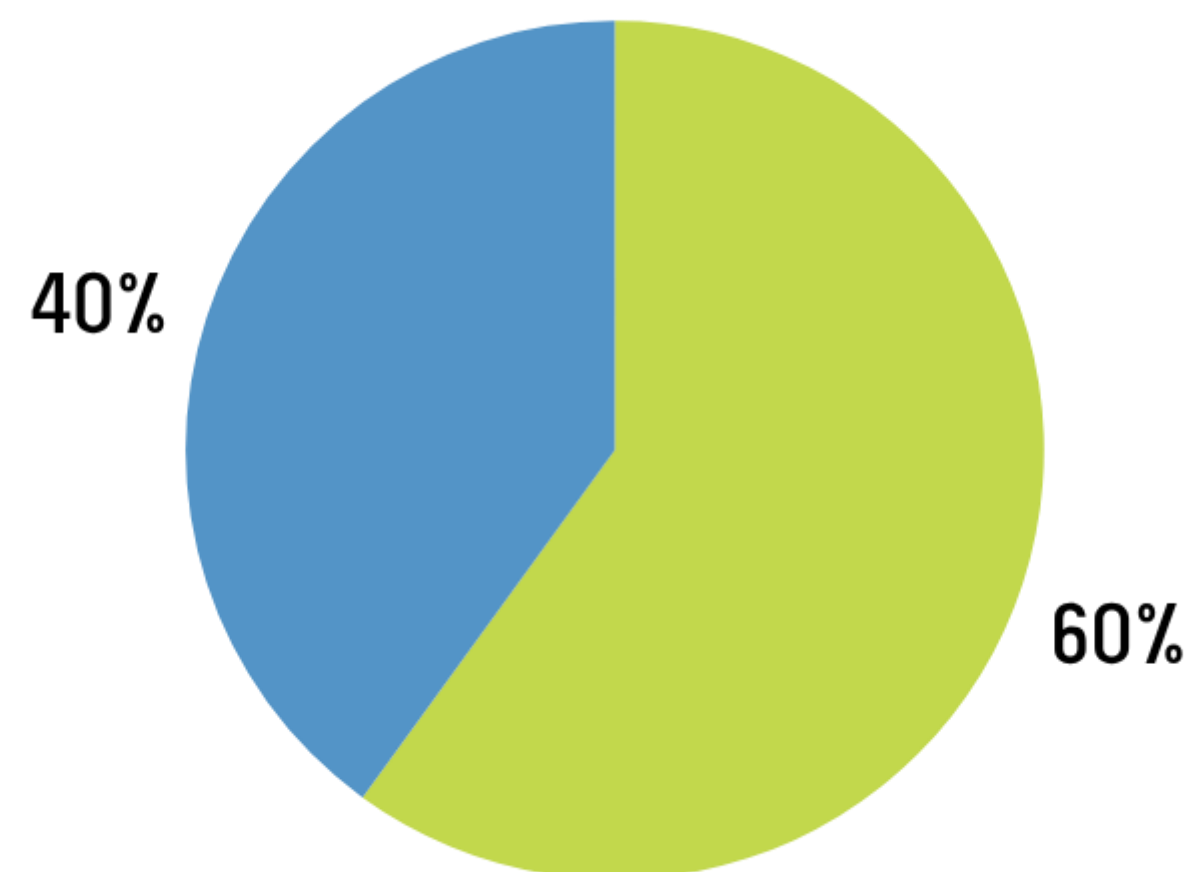
CONCERNS

- *May reduce perceived value of student voice*
- *May appear reactive to criticism*
- *Student visibility would still remain*
- *Could weaken tradition*

WHICH OPTION DO YOU CURRENTLY BELIEVE BEST BALANCES STUDENT VOICE, LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITY, AND APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE CURRENT CONCERNS?

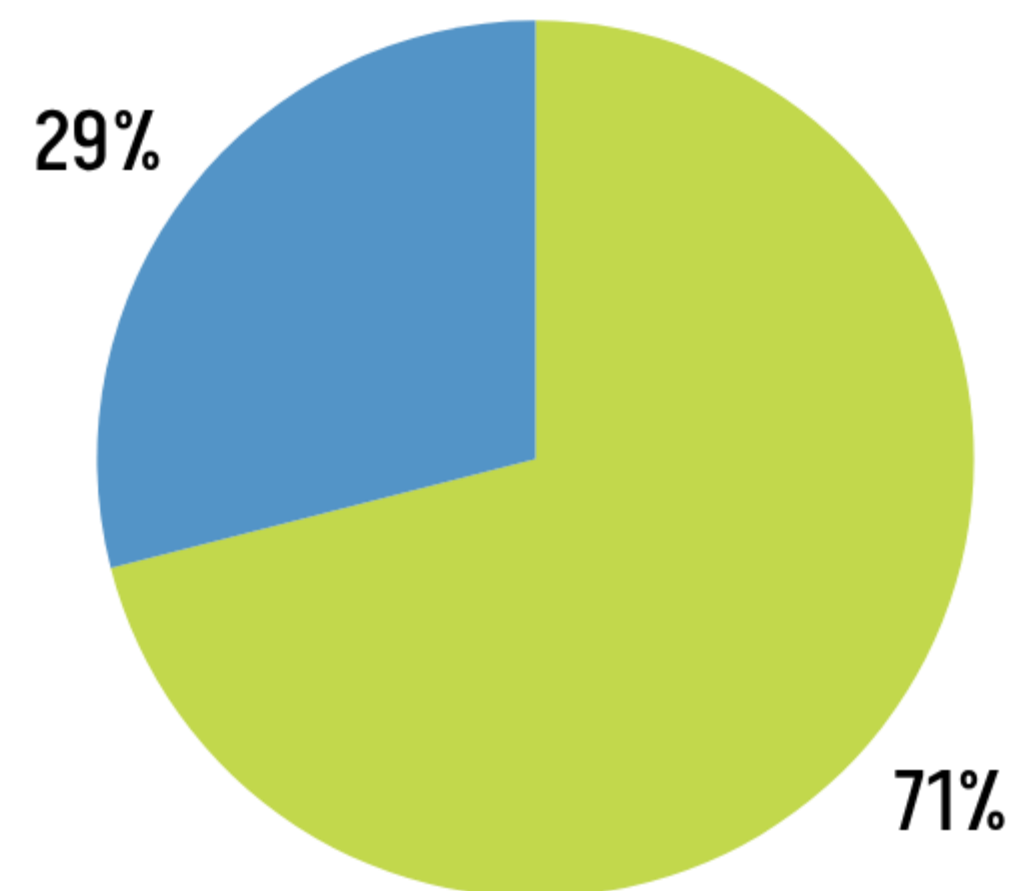
HIGH SCHOOL ADVISOR RESPONSE

- Maintain the seat on the dais: 3
- Remove seat from the dais: 2



JUNIOR AND SENIOR DELEGATE RESPONSE

- Maintain the seat on the dais: 5
- Remove seat from the dais: 2



CORE ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



There is broad consensus that the district should continue the tradition of electing one senior Student Representative to the Board.

The role will continue to involve some level of public visibility and recognition under either model.

The primary decision before the Board is:

- maintaining the structure of dais
- adopting an alternative set-up

RESEARCH OF FLORIDA STUDENT VOICE IN SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE

MODEL 1: Students Seated on the Dais

These districts explicitly or structurally include a student as part of the board during meetings:

- Miami-Dade County Public Schools: Student Advisor sits on dais
- Broward County Public Schools: Student Advisor sits on dais
- Leon County Schools: Student "School Board Member" sits on dais
- Palm Beach County School District: Student Representative sits on dais
- Gadsden County School District[formerly]: Student Representative sat on dais until 2009

RESEARCH OF FLORIDA STUDENT VOICE IN SCHOOL BOARD GOVERNANCE

MODEL 2: Students Included Through Agenda Items, Reports, or Presentations

A. Student Advisory Councils → Board Presentation Model

- Pasco County Schools
- Hillsborough County Public Schools
- Clay County District Schools
- Volusia County Schools
- Lee County Schools

B. Agenda-Based Student Presentation Model

- Pinellas County Schools
- Seminole County Public Schools
- Brevard Public Schools

CONSIDERATIONS INFORMING DISCUSSION

There is no single statewide model for student representation. Districts structure student participation differently based on local priorities, traditions, and governance philosophy.

We must consider how Hernando County Schools can:

- Preserve meaningful student leadership opportunities
- Ensure students feel supported and prepared
- Maintain student voice in district governance
- Balance visibility with appropriate support structures



**“WHAT GREATER OR BETTER GIFT CAN WE OFFER THE REPUBLIC
THAN TO TEACH AND INSTRUCT OUR YOUTH?” – CICERO**