POLICY PORTAL™ PSBA

POLICY

228 Student Government

POLICY NUMBER	ADOPTED	LAST REVIEWED	VERSION
228	7/23/2002	6/12/2018	v1.2

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Purpose

The Board recognizes the value of providing students meaningful opportunities to participate in student government (or **student council,** which is interchangeable) and contribute to the life of their schools. Student government supports leadership development, civic learning, responsible decision-making and constructive student voice.

Student government shall:

Develop student leadership and responsible participation in school communities.

Provide an age-appropriate learning experience in representative and democratic decision-making.

Provide a structured avenue for students to identify concerns, propose ideas, support school improvement and advance district goals.

Authority

Students may organize student government, conduct meetings, elect officers and representatives, communicate recommendations to school administration and petition the Board, subject to applicable law, Board policy and reasonable district procedures governing time, place, manner, safety and the orderly operation of schools.

The Board recognizes the authorized student government/council organization in each school as a representative voice of the student body. Student government does not displace the right of individual students or student groups to express views or petition the Board in accordance with Board policy and law.

The building principal shall appoint a qualified district employee to serve as advisor to each authorized student government organization. The advisor shall provide guidance and supervision without directing student viewpoints or decisions, except as necessary to ensure compliance with law, Board policy, school rules and fiscal requirements.

Guidelines

Student government organizations should be guided by a written constitution or bylaws developed with student participation and reviewed with the building principal or designee. The governing document may address matters such as membership, elections, officer responsibilities, meetings, vacancies, committees, financial procedures and amendments, while allowing reasonable flexibility based on the needs and traditions of the school.

Student government participation, voting, and eligibility for office shall be available without unlawful discrimination. Any eligibility requirements shall be written, educationally related, applied consistently and communicated before nominations or elections.

Student government recommendations are advisory unless authority is expressly delegated by the Board or administration. Final authority over district operations, curriculum, personnel, student discipline, safety, budget and policy remains with the Board and district administration.

Student government meetings and activities shall be conducted under appropriate district supervision and in a manner that does not materially disrupt instruction or school operations.

All funds raised, received or expended by student government shall be administered in accordance with Board policy, district procedures and applicable law. Student government may not enter contracts, open financial accounts or obligate the district without prior authorization.

Delegation of Responsibility

The Superintendent or designee shall develop administrative regulations to implement this policy that:

Invite meaningful student participation in the development and periodic review of student government procedures.

Promote equitable access to participation, voting, and candidacy, consistent with lawful and uniformly applied eligibility requirements.

Require fiscal accountability, administrative approval, and adherence to Board policy for all financial aspects of student government activity.

Establish procedures for elections, meetings, advisor responsibilities, student proposals, records, communications, complaints and appeals, with appropriate reference to any constitution or bylaws used to guide student government operations.

CENTRAL BUCKS SCHOOL DISTRICT

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION

COMMENCED:

REVISED:

ADMINISTRATIVE REGULATION FOR POLICY 228
STUDENT GOVERNMENT

Purpose

This administrative regulation establishes consistent expectations for student government organization, elections, meetings, representation, advising, finances and communication with school and district leadership.

Authorization and Governing Documents

1. Each secondary school may maintain an authorized student government organization representing the student body, consistent with school needs and established practices.
2. A written constitution or bylaws may be used to guide the organization's operations. The document should reflect the organization's structure and practices while allowing reasonable flexibility for the school.
3. When used, the constitution or bylaws may be reviewed periodically with student participation and shared with the building principal or designee to support general consistency with Board policy, district procedures and school operations.
4. Revisions to a constitution or bylaws should follow the process identified in the document, when applicable, and be shared with the building principal or designee before implementation.

Membership, Voting and Candidacy

- Students within the grades represented by the organization should have reasonable opportunities to participate and vote, consistent with the organization's structure, school practices and any applicable constitution or bylaws.
- Eligibility expectations for office or representation should be communicated in advance and applied in a fair and consistent manner.
- Eligibility considerations may include enrollment, attendance, conduct, academic standing or fulfillment of office responsibilities when educationally related and appropriate for the school. Such considerations may be reflected in the constitution, bylaws or other established student government procedures.
- Participation, voting and candidacy shall be administered in a manner consistent with applicable law and Board policy and without unlawful discrimination.
- Reasonable accommodations shall be provided as required by law and Board policy to support access for students with disabilities.

Elections

1. Publish offices, eligibility requirements, nomination procedures, campaign rules and the election timeline before nominations open.
2. Provide candidates an equal opportunity to communicate with voters through approved methods.
3. Require campaign materials and activities to comply with Policy 220, school rules and reasonable time, place and manner restrictions.
4. Use a voting method that supports ballot integrity, student privacy and accurate results.
5. Separate vote administration and counting from candidate control and document certified results.
6. Establish a prompt process for reporting and reviewing alleged election irregularities.

Officers, Vacancies and Removal

The constitution or bylaws shall define officer duties, terms, succession and procedures for vacancies. Removal from office may occur only for stated grounds and through a fair process that provides notice of the concern and an opportunity for the student to respond. Any disciplinary consequence shall be handled separately under applicable Board policy and the Code of Student Conduct.

Meetings and Records

- Meetings shall occur at approved times and locations under advisor supervision.
- The organization shall use an agenda and maintain concise minutes recording attendance, motions, votes and assigned actions.
- Records shall be retained in a location designated by the principal and transferred to incoming officers and advisors.
- Student government records are district records and shall be handled in accordance with applicable confidentiality and retention requirements.

Advisor Responsibilities

- Support student planning, leadership development and compliance with governing documents.
- Ensure appropriate supervision and student safety.
- Review proposed activities, communications and expenditures for compliance with policy and procedure.
- Avoid directing student viewpoints or controlling decisions solely because a viewpoint is unpopular or critical of school administration.
- Refer unresolved legal, fiscal, safety or policy questions to the principal or designee.

Student Proposals and Administrative Response

Student government may submit recommendations to the building principal or designee regarding school climate, student activities, facilities, procedures and other matters affecting students. The administration shall acknowledge significant written proposals and provide a response within a reasonable period. A response may approve, deny, modify or refer the proposal and should explain material legal, safety, fiscal or operational considerations.

Student government may request an opportunity to present a matter to district administration or petition the Board in accordance with Board policy and established meeting procedures. Student government does not independently direct district employees or commit district resources.

Finances – In coordination with the Faculty Advisor:

1. Prepare an annual budget or spending plan for administrative approval.

2. Deposit, safeguard and disburse funds through district-approved student activity accounts.
3. Obtain required approvals before purchases, fundraising, contracts or commitments.
4. Maintain invoices, receipts, approvals and other supporting records.
5. Provide periodic financial reports to members and the advisor.
6. Comply with Policy 618 and all district purchasing, fundraising and audit procedures.

Communications and Digital Platforms

Student government communications using district systems, school publications, websites or social media shall comply with Board policy, district procedures and advisor oversight. Students may not create an account or represent that they speak for the district without authorization. Access credentials for approved accounts shall be maintained through district procedures and may not be controlled solely by an individual student.

Complaints and Appeals

A student may raise a concern regarding access, eligibility, elections, officer removal or application of the governing document with the advisor or principal. The principal or designee shall review the concern and provide a timely response. An appeal may be submitted to the Superintendent or designee within ten (10) school days of the building-level decision. The Superintendent or designee's decision shall be final.

Annual Review and Transition

At the conclusion of each school year, the advisor and student officers shall review the organization's activities, finances, records and recommendations for the next year. Outgoing officers shall transfer records, account information and pending matters through the advisor to incoming officers.