

ESCAMBIA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR
2024-2025 SCHOOL RECOGNITION AWARDS

Purpose: To establish general guidelines for allocating funds received by schools as School Recognition Program awards.

Recommended Procedures:

1. Principals who have received notification of a school recognition award from the District Budgeting Department should meet with all staff to discuss the process and explain limitations on expenditures from this source. These procedures will be posted on the Budget department website for easy reference. In addition, principals should post the District procedures as well as the school's procedures for collection of proposals and relevant timelines in an area accessible to all staff and/or distribute this information to all staff members.
2.
 - a) Each department, grade level team, teaching team, or functional area such as custodial, transportation, or food service should be considered when meeting to develop a proposal. Proposals should be submitted to the principal.
 - b) The Student Advisory Council (SAC) must be part of the development of the proposed plan. Proposed plans should be detailed enough to allow for implementation without further explanation, especially with regard to payments of bonuses to former and/or current employees.
 - c) For potential bonus payments, staff may wish to consider current employees, employees from the previous year who retired, employees who were non-renewed, transferred, terminated -- either voluntarily or involuntarily, or employees who left the district.
 - d) Non-traditional staff such as health technicians and community school staff may also be considered in the planning of the proposals.
 - e) If there is an intention to pro-rate bonus payments for employees or recipients based on the number of days/weeks or months that a person was employed at that school, then the proposed plan must include such specific instructions prior to any votes on the plans. **This includes itinerant staff.**
 - f) Proposed plans should be as specific as possible, so that there is no need for interpretation of the plans in order to implement the plan. **Please note, it is strongly encouraged that each plan includes a reserve to allow for unforeseen expenditures. If the reserves are not used, it can be expended for educational equipment or supplies.**

3. The principal and/or assistant principal should review the proposals. If two or more proposals are very similar, those plans may be combined into one plan for purposes of voting. The principal should be careful not to circumvent the intent of a proposal as it is combined with others. Proposals that do not comply with the statutory language should not be presented to the staff and SAC for a vote.

Adequate notification of the voting period must be communicated to all staff members and SAC members. Proposals should be presented to the staff and SAC for vote. Principals will need to work with the SAC chair to assure that each SAC member has an opportunity to vote at a SAC meeting during the voting period. The SAC does not vote on the plans as a whole, rather each individual SAC member votes individually.

4. ***Each*** staff member and ***each*** SAC member must be afforded an opportunity to cast one individual vote by secret ballot. Any employee who is assigned to the school's cost center for payroll purposes is considered to be a staff member of that school. No staff member or SAC member may be required to sign a ballot; however, a list of eligible voters should be maintained and each person checked off (or the staff may sign the list) as the vote is placed in a ballot box.
5. The votes must be counted by two staff/SAC members and a tally prepared, recording the number of votes received by each plan. The tally must be signed by the two individuals counting the votes. The school should maintain the ballots on file for audit.
6. The SAC and staff must agree upon a plan by **February 1, 2025. This is a required date.** Every effort should be made to reach an agreement by that date. If there are obstacles to that agreement, the principal should contact the Elementary, Middle or High School Director for assistance in resolving the conflict as soon as the conflict becomes apparent. Any deviation from these guidelines must be approved by the appropriate level director. Note: If no agreement is reached by the February 1 deadline, the funds must be distributed evenly to classroom teachers.
7. Please see the School Recognition Submission Checklist by navigating to <https://www.escambiaschools.org/>, click on Departments and select Budgeting. Next, click on School Recognition Program (A+ Funds) on the left side of the page and scroll down to School Recognition Forms.
8. **School Recognition plans will be processed for payroll on a “first in, first out” basis. Therefore, the earlier the plans are presented to budgeting for review, the earlier the employees will be paid.**
9. If there are any questions please contact Mellisa Jones in the Budgeting Department by email at mjones6@ecsdfi.us.