

TACONIC HILLS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT



Shared Decision Making Plan

Board Approved December 22, 2010

Table of Contents

Stakeholder groups to be represented on the site-based committees	2
Stakeholder group involvement in selecting site-based committee members	2
Member terms and rotation	3
Regulatory issues	3
Topics identified as subject to shared decision making	3
Involvement of parents in regards to State and federal requirements	3
Site-based committee operations	4
Roles and responsibilities of site-based committee members	5
Dispute resolution	6
Focus on student achievement	6
Shared accountability	7
District Council	8

I. Stakeholder Groups to be represented on the Site-Based Committee

There will be one elementary, middle school and high school site-based committee, subject to the provisions of this plan. The **middle school** and **high school** site-based committees will have: 3 parents; 2 teachers; the school's principal; 1 support staff; 2 students. The **elementary** committee will have 5 parents; 2 teachers; 1 support staff; 1 Principal..

Requests by site-based committees to include additional member(s) are to be forwarded to the Board of Education, through the Superintendent.

Additional representatives are encouraged to advise the site-based committee, regarding a particular issue, by invitation of the site-based committee chairperson, in consultation with the site-based committee. Final decisions by the site-based committee in regards to such issues will be made only after such additional representatives have completed their direct interaction(s) with the site-based committee. The agenda for each site-based committee meeting will include an opportunity for public comment.

The site-based committees are encouraged to establish sub-committees or task forces, charged with clearly defined purpose(s), membership, duration, expectations and desired outcomes, to generate dialogue, data, suggestions, ideas, assessments and communications between and among stakeholder group representatives, to assist the site-based committee with its work.

The results of such sub-committees and task forces are intended to supplement, not supplant, the shared decision making process as outlined in this plan.

II. Stakeholder Group Involvement in Selecting Site-Based Committee Members

- **Parent members** will be selected through that school's Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO). Parents will be informed of opportunities to serve on the site-based committee through written materials at least annually. Parent members will be selected through the PTO from a list of parents who have expressed interest in serving as a site-based committee member.
- **Teacher members** will be selected from among those teachers who are members of that school's faculty, by their bargaining unit, in consultation with the school's faculty. Teacher members must be tenured and at least .6 FTE as per NYSED regulations.
- **The Principal** will be a member of the site-based committee.
- **Support Staff members** will be selected by their bargaining unit, in consultation with the support staff who work at the school.

- **Student members** will be selected from the student body by the Student Council. A third student will be selected by the student council to serve as an alternate, in the event that one of the two student members is unable to attend a committee meeting. All students will be informed of opportunities to serve on the site-based committee through written materials and school announcements. Student members will be selected by the Student Council from a list of students who have expressed an interest in serving as a site-based committee member.

III. Member Terms and Rotation

All terms (other than for students) will be for two years. Student terms will be for one year. The year is defined as the Board of Education fiscal year, July 1st through June 30th. Vacant seats on site-based committees will be filled by the end of the next quarter, by the appropriate constituent group. Site-based committees may set term limits.

IV. Regulatory Issues

- **Context of Shared Decisions**
Issues which are impacted by State, Federal or local laws and regulations, Commissioner's regulations, collective bargaining agreements, Board policy and/or administrative regulations are not subject to site-based decision making. However, site-based committees are welcome to offer suggestions for the Board and administration in regards to such issues.
- **Expenditure of Funds**
Site-based committee recommendations which would exceed allocations for that site will not necessarily be approved.
- **Topics Identified as Subject to Shared Decision Making**
Safety & security; involvement (parent, student, business, community, etc.); school environment; curriculum; staff development; communications; facilities (buildings & grounds); enrichment; transportation; assessment (student, teacher, program, etc.).
- **Involvement of Parents in Regards to State and Federal Requirements**
Existing State and Federal education laws and regulations require consultation with and/or involvement of parents as part of the planning process to determine use of particular State and Federal program funds. The guidelines and procedures detailed in this plan are intended to strengthen district compliance with laws and regulations pertaining to coordination of parental involvement.

V. Site-Based Committee Operations

- Decision making will be by consensus. Consensus is defined as a recommended plan which each site-based committee member can "live with" and support.
- Orientation for District Council members and site-based committee members will be provided. Such orientation will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the mission

and organization of our school district, as well as roles and responsibilities of site-based committee members.

- Site-based committee responsibilities include, but are not limited to:
 - Developing agendas and forwarding them to committee members in advance of the meeting.
 - Facilitating site-based committee meetings;
 - Recording minutes of committee attendance, deliberations and decisions, as well as generating written reports as needed.
 - Sending agendas and minutes to site-based committee members and the Director of Instruction and Staff Development.
 - The chairperson will be determined by consensus of the site-based committee and shall be selected from the group of people comprising the site-based committee.
 - Representatives of the site-based committee may be invited on a periodic basis to share information about site-based committee decisions and work in process with the District Council.

- Site-based committee meeting dates and times

The site-based committee is expected to meet at least four times per year with at least one meeting during each ten week “quarter” of the school calendar, scheduled at times when attendance by all members is likely. Each site-based committee is expected to formulate an attendance policy for that committee’s members.

Specific dates and times are to be decided by the site-based committee. The initial meeting date and time for the site-based committee will be set by the Principal, in consultation with other site-based committee members. A quorum consists of at least one representative from four of the five stakeholder groups [parents, teachers, Principal, support staff, student council]. In the case of the elementary committee, a quorum consists of at least one representative from three of the four stakeholder groups [parents, teachers, Principal, support staff].

- Interested Others

Any interested person who would otherwise be allowed on school property may attend shared decision making site-based committee meetings.

- Individuals requesting consideration of a particular issue by the site-based committee. Any interested individual whether that individual serves on the site-based committee or not, may request the site-based committee consider a particular issue. However, such a request will be presented, preferably in writing and in advance, to any site-based committee member.

- Placing issues on the site-based committee’s agenda.

Before an issue can become an agenda item, each of the specific criteria outlined in section VI, parts 1, 2 and 3 of these guidelines must be addressed.

VI. Roles and Responsibilities of Site-Based Committee Members

- Ensure that site-based committee efforts and plans are:
 - focused on improving student learning and success.
 - consistent with the school district mission.
 - directly related to that site.
 - focused on issues generated by and/or submitted to the site-based committee in a manner which identifies and explains how they are pertinent.
- Review:
 - a history of the particular issue and what has been done to date in an effort to address the issue;
 - Board policy and administrative procedures and past practice;
 - all relevant federal and State laws and regulations;
 - all pertinent bargaining agreements.
- Recommend what might be done to address the issue;
- Interaction a productive and encouraging manner with other site-based committee members;
- Assess the impact of site-based committee decisions on student success;
- Encourage communication and involvement between and among site-based committees and stakeholder groups.

VII. Dispute Resolution

The intent of this dispute resolution process is to offer any site-based committee member with concern(s) about the site-based committee's implementation of this plan a course of action to follow. It is expected, however, that every good faith effort will be made to reach consensus prior to employing this process.

• First level

Present the concern, in writing, to the Superintendent. Any such concern should offer a general statement describing the disagreement and the resolution sought by the member submitting the request. The Superintendent or Superintendent's designee will serve as facilitator for the site-based committee to assist the group in reading consensus. If no consensus is reached, the member may choose to proceed to the next level.

• Second level

Present the concern, in writing, to the District Council, through the Council's facilitator. The dispute resolution sub-committee of the District Council will respond, in

writing, with a proposed resolution, within thirty (30) school days after receipt of the request. If the proposed resolution is not acceptable to either side of the dispute that might mean that no resolution is reached.

VIII. Focus on Student Achievement

The New Compact for Learning pledges "...the State defines more precisely "what" is to be learned, and local teachers, administrators and boards of education have more freedom to decide "how" such learning is to occur. The State spells out goals and desired learning outcomes, provides resources, incentives and support, assesses progress, rewards success and remedies failure."

The site-based committees will then focus their efforts on developing strategies (i.e. the "how") for moving students steadily toward full attainment of each measured outcome.

It is the responsibility of each site-based committee to maintain a focus on issues directly related to student learning and success. Ideas and practices which can help set conditions for improved student learning and successes which are within the direct control of that school and do not violate the necessary level of consistency across the school district will be encouraged and the focus of site-based committee shared decision making. Shared decision making by the site-based committees should include discussion of student performance expectations related but not limited to:

- course and/or program goals
- commencement goals and standards of excellence established by the District
- presentation of student accomplishments
- Regents Goals and Bill of Rights for Children
- community and marketplace expectations
- perceptions of quality work and quality education
- regional, State and/or national benchmarks
- collaborative efforts with:
 - students
 - parents/guardians
 - other school districts and the BOCES
 - higher education
 - business, industry and labor
 - other members of our school community
- national, State and local tests

IX. Shared Accountability

- Spirit of Collaboration

In the spirit of collaboration and shared decision making, site-based committee members are charged with:

- basing recommendations and actions on improved student learning and increased student success.
- sharing with the site-based committee, school staff and/or others from among that member's stakeholder group, how that member's recommendation(s) and/or action(s) support improved student learning and increased student success.
- making recommendations with needs and interests of students in mind, while being sensitive to the needs and interests of the various other stakeholder groups involved.
- working toward successful implementation of final decisions.
- Assisting with periodic review of this plan, in particular, and our shared decision making efforts, in general.

• Communications

- generating ideas and suggestions for the site-based committee.
- generating feedback on issues and proposals under study to allow stakeholder group members to offer ideas, refinements and/or alternatives before the site-based committee completes the decision making process.
- Sharing site-based committee recommendations, final decisions, and implications of those decisions with that member's stakeholder group.
- Providing minutes of site-based committee meetings to any stakeholder group member(s) requesting such information.

X. District Council

• The District Council is charged with:

- Reviewing the implementation of our plan for shared decision making and the effectiveness of the plan in regards to its impact on student learning and success;
- Reviewing requests submitted by building committees regarding proposed changes to the district's plan for shared decision making and/or proposed initiatives involving more than one site.
- Enhancing communications between and among the staff, students, parents, Board of Education and other stakeholders associated with our district's schools, programs and services, and
- Serving as one step in the dispute resolution process.

• District Council Membership

Up to four members of the elementary, middle and high school committee [and the Superintendent of Schools] serve as the District Council. The Director of Instruction and Staff Development will serve as the facilitator for the District Council.

• District Council Operations

- Decision making will be by consensus. Consensus is defined as what each district council member can “live with” and support.
- The District Council will meet annually and more often as needed.
- Any interested person who would otherwise be allowed on school property may attend district committee meetings. The agenda for each district committee meeting will include an opportunity for public comment.

• Roles and Responsibilities for District Council Members

- Interact in a productive and encouraging manner with other district council members.
- Help the site-based committees assess the impact of site-based shared decision making on student learning and success, across the school district.
- Encourage communication and involvement between and among site-based committees and stakeholder groups.
- Provide at least 48 hours notice of anticipated absence to the council’s facilitator whenever possible. A quorum consists of at least one representative from each stakeholder group.
- Appoint one representative [and one alternate] from each stakeholder group to serve as members of the dispute resolution sub-committee. Sub-committee members who are directly involved with a site-based committee dispute must exempt themselves.