

Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery BOCES

Mission Statement

The Hamilton-Fulton-Montgomery Counties Board of Cooperative Educational Services strives to enhance education through leadership, services and programs enabling individuals, school districts and the community to achieve their standards of excellence.

Shared Decision Making Plan

Adopted – 2/27/2008

Draft Update
March 22, 2010

SHARED DECISION MAKING PLAN

Background

As required by Section 100.11 of the Commissioner's Regulations, by February 1, 1994, the HFM BOCES Board of Education developed and adopted a plan for the participation by teachers and parents with administrators and school board members in school-based planning and shared decision making

The district plan is required to include:

1. The educational issues subject to cooperative planning and shared decision making
2. The manner and extent of the expected involvement of all parties
3. Means and standards to evaluate improvement in student achievement
4. Means for accountability for decision makers
5. A process for resolution of disputes about educational issues
6. The manner in which state and federal requirements for parent involvement will be coordinated and met by the plan

A team consisting of teachers, parents, administrators, and a board member representing the Board of Education was convened in 1993. Each of the participants was selected by the respective constituent groups:

- Teachers were selected by HFM BOCES Teachers' Association.
- Parents were selected by respective divisions in lieu of a parent organization.
- An administrator was selected by the administrators.
- A Board of Education member was selected by the BOE.

With full participation and consultation, the team developed a plan that was adopted in 1994. In August of 2006, the HFM BOCES organization moved into a new facility located in Johnstown, NY. All divisions are now housed in this single facility; special education classrooms, however, are still located in multiple district buildings. It was determined in 2008 that our 1994 approved plan no longer met our organizational needs. A new plan has been developed which calls for one shared decision making team for the entire BOCES, the membership of which is comprised of staff members from multiple divisions.

Introduction

Shared decision making is a process designed to involve individuals responsible for implementing decisions in actually making those decisions. The focus of this process at HFM BOCES is on education. Its purpose is to improve education in a framework of trust and collaboration among staff, parents, students, and the community. The main goal is to improve student achievement. A secondary goal is to strengthen community support for the BOCES by fostering greater public involvement in and "ownership" of the educational process.

Shared decision making is a partnership. Administrators, teachers and other staff members, students, parents, and community members are involved in significant decisions about the education of children. The process provides for collaboration in decision making and for shared responsibility for educational improvements. At the same time, the sharing of responsibility in this plan shall not diminish the ability of the Board of Education, District Superintendent, or Director/Principals, and staff to fulfill their legal responsibilities for the supervision and management of the BOCES.

Team Structure and Operation

The team shall consist of teachers, administrators, parents, support staff, students, and members of the community at large. Following is the team's structure:

Group:	# of members	Term:	Selected by:
Teachers – includes classroom teachers, psychologists, guidance counselors, certified speech therapists & certified nurses	3-5	2 years	Teachers' Association
Parent(s) (not BOCES employees)	1-2	1 or 2 years*	SDM Team based upon staff recommendation
Administrator(s)	1-2	2 years	Administrators' Association
Student(s)	1-3	1 year	SDM Team based upon staff recommendation
OT/PTs	1-2	2 years	OT/PT Association
CSEA	2-3	2 years	CSEA
Aides/Nurses/Interpreters	2-3	2 years	A/N/I Association
Community (not BOCES employee and no other group representation)	1-2	1 year	SDM Team based upon staff recommendation
Non-represented	1-2	2 years	Volunteer

* 1 year if child is in last year at BOCES

Meetings

Notice of all SDM meetings shall be disseminated to team members via email and by posting on the BOCES' web site. A majority of the SDM team members shall constitute a quorum. The team is encouraged to have all stakeholder groups represented in decisions. Team agendas and minutes will be publicized via the BOCES web site. The facilitator will assemble all minutes in a binder for recordkeeping purposes.

The SDM meetings are open to anyone interested in attending. Interested attendees may request time to speak at the open forum portion of the meeting by making this request known to the team chair(s). The requestor will follow these guidelines:

1. Each person shall stand, give name and address
2. Each person shall the opportunity to address the team for a total of three minutes
3. No person shall speak a second time until all persons interested in addressing the team have had an opportunity to do so
4. The team is not required to respond to individuals during the open forum segment
5. The minutes shall reflect only the essence of the comments made by person addressing the team during the open forum segment
6. Issues brought to the team may not be brought to the team a second time within one year unless the consensus is for the topic to be raised
7. The open forum segment of the meeting will last no longer than a total of 15 minutes.

The essence of SDM is group input and consensus which does not allow any member of the team to make individual, immediate responses because of the team process.

Educational Issues

The goal of the shared decision making process is to empower the team to develop creative methods of improving the BOCES' programs and services that lead to greater student learning. The team will be given freedom to select other issues which correspond to BOCES' goals, in addition to mandatory issues, which will be approved by the team.

- No decision can be made by a group if no member of the group has the authority to implement the decision. Persons directly affected will be consulted/included.
- No resources can be expended or allocated by a group if the group does not have the resources at its disposal.
- Decisions on expenditures or other issues exceeding the group's authority can be formulated into a recommendation to be submitted to the person(s) with the authority to implement them.
- The BOCES Board and the administrative team will remain supportive of and will responsibly facilitate the shared decision making process.
- These guidelines are not meant to limit planners/decision makers. The team is encouraged to be innovative and consider first and foremost what they believe will improve educational programs.
- The team should determine ways to consult with individuals directly affected by an issue.
- Decisions shall be made by consensus. Consensus means that all members agree to the decision even if with some reservation. The team should have no secrets from one another. Before disagreeing with someone, the person must restate the other person's view to make sure both are seeing the issue in the same way. Those not in agreement must give an alternative solution which can then be discussed by the group. Consensus does not mean that all of the group must completely agree, but all of the group must minimally agree. This means all members can state, "I can live with the decision, I understand the decision, I contributed to the decision, and I will support the decision."

The team is responsible for focusing on the following issues:

- Student attainment of NYS learning standards
- Programs and Services
- Organizational Communication
- Community and public relations

These issues are not all inclusive. These examples are not meant to limit the team, but are given to provide some guidance on issues that must be or which can be addressed. Issues should be selected based upon the BOCES' annual goals.

Examples of issues beyond the realm of the team are:

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| 1) Contractual issues | 5) Seniority |
| 2) Evaluation of staff | 6) Commissioner's Regulations |
| 3) Appointment & placement of staff | 7) State & Federal Laws |
| 4) Grievances | |

Means and Standards to Evaluate Improvement in Student Achievement

Student achievement is defined as those issues that affect students' intellectual, creative, social, emotional and physical growth and development. Annually the team will:

- Assess student achievement needs broadly
- Support and promote division and BOE goals
- Develop and implement plans in support of student success

Manner and Extent of Expected Involvement

Minimally, bi-monthly meetings will be established during the school year. Meeting times will be decided upon by the team members. Other "roles" may be developed by the team.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Team

- To ensure cooperation and mutual respect, the team will establish ground rules (e.g., time limits for meetings, shared responsibilities, etc.)
- To facilitate the development of plans to support and promote division and board of education goals.
- To assure that all stakeholders are informed of team activities and are afforded the opportunity to provide input into the shared decision making process through their respective representative(s).
- To refer questions of authority to the district superintendent for clarification or referral by the district superintendent to the Board.
- To evaluate the shared decision making process of the team on an ongoing basis and recommend changes.
- To periodically survey constituent groups represented by team members to identify key issues/concerns.
- To monitor the progress of the plan.
- To prepare by July 31 of each school year, a report covering the accomplishments of the team in its efforts to improve the educational achievement of students, such report to be distributed to the Board of Education at the August meeting.

Roles and Responsibilities of Individual Members

The BOCES facilitator will be in attendance to provide direction to the team. Meetings are convened by the co-chairs. Chair, recorder, timekeeper, etc., are to be determined by consensus of the team. Members are

- To attend each meeting.
- To develop lines of communication with constituent groups evidenced by reporting on the work of the team, gaining feedback from constituents on topics and issues discussed, and representing and reflecting the views of respective constituents.

Roles of the Chair(s)

- Schedule the time of the meeting
- Convene meetings and facilitate the meeting unless otherwise decided
- Provide notice of team meetings to all team members
- Establish meeting agenda with team

Roles of the Recorder

- Take minutes
- Submit minutes for web site posting.

Dispute Resolution Process

Every effort will be made to decide issues by team consensus.

Failing to reach consensus, one or more of the following actions will be employed (not listed in sequential order):

1. Seek additional input from constituent groups to bring back to the team.
2. Seek mediation/facilitation from and/or empower the team to develop a recommendation. (Any member of the team who is part of the dispute cannot participate on the team to resolve the issue.)
3. Table the decision.

All dispute resolution decisions may be appealed to and resolved by the district superintendent. The district superintendent is encouraged to give all parties to the SDM process an opportunity to present fully their views and recommendations.

Coordination of Parent Involvement

Various federal programs and state programs require parental involvement in decision making. These programs are separate from this plan and are not bound by the SDM process. Any conflict between decisions by the SDM team and federal or state mandated programs will be referred to the district superintendent who will decide on the appropriate resolution process.

Process of Altering this Document

- Recommendations in writing from any constituent group will be presented to the team.
- The document can be altered by consensus of the team provided that all constituent groups are informed and provided an opportunity to comment.
- Changes to the document will become effective upon approval of the Board of Education.