

Hamilton Central School

Shared Decision-Making Plan for
Steering Committees

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Introduction

Since 1993 Hamilton Central School teachers, non-instructional staff, administrators and parents have worked together. In 1994 a regulation was passed by the New York Board of Education requiring schools to allow for collaboration between the aforementioned groups ([Section 100.11](#)). This regulation called for the sharing of responsibility and accountability for decision-making about school policy and management.

Shared Decision-Making is a process by which all stakeholders in the Hamilton Central School District have the opportunity to participate fully and equally. This process will be used to identify education issues; define goals; formulate and/or implement procedures; and assess, re-evaluate, and modify activities to challenge each student to reach for and achieve standards of excellence and their full potential (Baldwinsville, 5).

Background and History

Originally, HCS participated as a pilot school in the Excellence and Accountability Plan (EAP) established by the Board of Regents. As part of that process, HCS teachers, non-instructional staff, administrators, and parents worked together to develop district mission statements, district goal statements, and exit outcomes for the students. In September 1993 a Shared Decision-Making Plan was created and adopted by the board of the Hamilton Central Schools. This plan is updated biannually by the New York State Department of Education Law.

Beliefs

Student learning and welfare must be at the center of every decision.

Our students' education is a shared responsibility of the students, families, school, and community; therefore, a culture of collaboration is essential.

A trusting relationship with the school fosters growth, and increases the students' potential for success.

The learning environment must be challenging, supportive, and engaging.

Physical, emotional, academic, and social development deserve equal support to ensure a holistic education.

Learning is for all; it is continuous and lifelong.

Classroom practices and student achievement are improved through continuous professional growth and development.

Everyone is important, everyone matters, and diversity of people and thought must be embraced.

Goals

1. To support Hamilton Central School's current and ongoing goals: (a) academic, (b) social/emotional, (c) health and safety, and (d) technology and infrastructure.
2. To facilitate ongoing communication among the groups represented on the committee, encouraging collaborative partnerships.
3. To ensure that all stakeholders have an equal voice in the discussion stage of the decision-making process.
4. Ensure that there is community awareness of and involvement in the shared decision-making process.
5. There is to be a biennial assessment and review of the district Shared Decision-Making Plan by the district committee.
6. The committee will reflect on the goals as needed.

Means to Attaining Goals

Annually the building team will:

- Broadly review building initiatives to determine building improvements or program improvements that will enhance student achievement.
- Develop goals and expectations, and implement action plans (Appendix A) compatible with the mission of the school.
- Develop and apply appropriate evaluation means to measure success of the action plan.
- Report results to stakeholder groups.
- Reflect and prioritize suggested topics for the following school year.
- Consider long-range building plans in discussions.

Participation: Building Team Structure and Operation

Composition and Manner of Selection

1. Composition
 - 1.1 Teachers – Up to (5) teachers per committee are chosen by the HTA.
 - 1.2 Parents – Up to (3). No one may serve in the “parent” role who is an employee or Board of Education member of the District.
 - 1.3 Administration – 1
 - 1.4 Board of Education member – 1
 - 1.5 Students – 2-4 for the Secondary Steering. These should be from the junior and senior classes. For elementary – advisory via Student Council.
 - 1.6 Support staff – 1 – chosen by the non-instructional unit (SEIU).
 - 1.7 Other members – At the discretion of the committees, the group may expand to include additional members or constituencies such as senior citizen, business, and community groups. The total of the group should not exceed 13 members.

The length of service for members of these groups shall be determined by the group.

2. Manner of Selection

2.1 Each group will select its representative(s) through its own democratic process unless required to serve by virtue of position. (New, 3)

2.2 Interested students will apply to the Student Council for approval by the committee, ensuring a diverse representation of the student body.

2.3 Parents will be selected by the PTO where all interested parties are given equal opportunity for consideration.

2.4 In the event of a member resignation, the affected constituent group should replace the member who resigned as rapidly as possible.

Term of Office

1. Length of service will be two years for all members except the administrator, who may serve in perpetuity and teachers, who will have three-year terms. Each constituent group may renew the term of the member(s) only after reasonable efforts have been made to obtain a replacement for the position. (School, 6)
2. Effort should be made by the steering teams to stagger the terms of service.
3. A representative may opt to serve only one year, in which case the representative's group would select a replacement for a two-year term.

Meetings

The frequency and dates of meetings will be determined by the building teams and will take place at a date and time that ensures the greatest participation from all constituency groups. The meeting dates should be placed on the district online calendar. Minutes should be shared with each group's constituency and copies should be sent to the district office. Meetings are open to anyone interested in attending. Interested attendees may request time to speak at the meetings by making this request known to the administrator. (Niskayuna, 4).

Decision-Making

A quorum of 50% plus one must be present when decisions of the committee are made (School, 7). It is the responsibility of all members of the Shared Decision-Making Committee to uphold the HCS Civility Policy (Appendix B). **If a quorum of 50% plus one is not met, the item can be added to the next meeting agenda.**

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Analyze building academic needs.
2. Develop one or more long term goals. These goals should be consistent with building needs, school mission, and district standards of excellence.
3. Review research and gather data on their building's academic achievement.

4. All stakeholders are asked to inform their constituent group and provide input to the committee.
5. Prepare and distribute to the school community, District, and Board of Education minutes of the meetings and a report covering the accomplishments of the group in its efforts to improve the educational achievement of students.
6. Some of the issues that may be discussed by the committee include, but are not limited to, the following (CR 100.11, 5)
 - 6.1 Educational issues
 - 6.1.1 Scheduling: building instruction, special events
 - 6.1.2 Politics: student grading, discipline practices, recognition/awards
 - 6.1.3 Professional Development
 - 6.1.4 Facilities
 - 6.1.5 Fiscal: utilization of funds, long-term planning.
 - 6.1.6 Extracurricular: extended day programs and athletics
 - 6.1.7 School climate: factors affecting student learning, interaction between students and teachers, orderliness of the environment, the clarity of rules, fairness, trust, and respect. Prevention of acts of bullying, use of conflict resolution, family, and parent involvement.
 - 6.1.8 School culture: school's shared beliefs, customs and behavior, rituals, relationships, expectations, codes of conduct.
 - 6.1.9 Technology: utilizing technology to be most effective for student learning.
 - 6.2 Student Achievement
 - 6.2.1 School report card
 - 6.2.2 Standardized tests
 - 6.2.3 Behavior and attendance records
 - 6.2.4 Post high school studies and surveys
 - 6.2.5 Grading system
 - 6.2.6 Honors, recognition
 - 6.2.7 Teacher and parent communication.

Dispute Resolution

Every effort will be made to decide issues by consensus. An issue may be tabled at any time. An issue may be brought to the Superintendent for resolution with the members offering views and recommendations (Niskayuna, 10).

Appendix A: Action Plan Outline (School, 13)

Identify up to two major priorities and describe the approach, implementation and how you would determine the effectiveness of the project.

Approach:

- What is the process or plan to address each improvement priority?
- Who is responsible?
- How will decisions be made?
- How will progress toward each improvement priority be measured?
- How will the plan be refined as needed along the way?
- How will progress measured be established to measure results?

Implementation:

- How will the plan be communicated to all stakeholders?
- What steps will be taken to ensure understanding of and an ability to implement the plan?
- How will resources be allocated to support it?
- Who is responsible for implementation?
- How many active participants will be engaged in the plan?

Results:

- Identify measures you will use to determine the plan's effectiveness.
- Is the plan making a difference in student performance?
- For whom and over what period of time?
- How do teachers/administrators know that student learning has improved?
- Did participation rates meet or exceed expectations?

Priority #1

Approach:
Implementation:
Assessment:

Appendix B: Civility Policy

HAMILTON CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

CIVILITY POLICY

We believe that effective dialogue can occur only in an atmosphere of mutual respect; therefore,

It is the policy of the Hamilton Central School Board of Education to conduct its business at meetings and in all communications, written and oral, in a manner that models respect and civility. We invite and expect members of the public to share this commitment with us. Further, we expect that the District's students, faculty and staff members, parent and student organizations, committees, and members of the community will, in their written communications and while participating in meetings, school activities and other school related interactions, be guided by this policy, and will conduct themselves with civility and respect.

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