

**GOUVERNEUR CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
SHARED DECISION MAKING PLAN**



Committee Members:

Jen Ashcraft
Adrienne Cox
Clara Cummings
Mary Dixon
David Fenlong
Carrie Hartle
Ashley Hogle
Amber Ormasen
Jerrilyn Patton
Stephanie Plaisted
Donna Runner
Ellie Simmons
Pat Williams
Charity Zawatski

GOUVERNEUR CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT'S SHARED DECISION MAKING PLAN Revised: Spring 2017

PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

In a word, shared decision making is empowerment. The people that are closest to the implementation of a decision are empowered to have a voice in that decision.

WHAT IS SHARED DECISION MAKING?

Shared decision making is sharing of authority or the decentralization of authority which involves representatives from all constituencies in the decision-making process. It enables participants to energize their schools.

The research on shared decision making indicates that the school is the unit of change and those related to the school setting should be involved in the process of implementing instructional programs, deciding instructional issues or resolving instructional challenges with the focus on the student and what is best for all the students at that school site.

PURPOSE OF THE DISTRICT SHARED DECISION MAKING COMMITTEE

The purpose of the District Shared Decision -Making Committee is to establish a framework, share processes and norms, and model collaboration based on trust and communication. Driven by a shared vision, we will ensure the best course of action on issues that affect student achievement now and for the future. We will make informed decisions and recommendations that promote student success. We share the goal of academic competence and the pursuit of mastery and excellence.

SHARED DECISION MAKING COMMITTEES

Shared Decision Making Committees will operate at two levels, at the school site and at the district level. School site teams will be referred to as Building Shared Decision Making Teams and will operate at the Gouverneur Elementary School, Gouverneur Middle School and Gouverneur High School. The district level team will be referred to as the District Shared Decision Making Committee.

COMMITTEE STRUCTURE

It is the intent of this plan that the Gouverneur Teachers Association President (GTA), Gouverneur School Related Personnel Union (GSRPU) President, Gouverneur Administrators Association (GAA) President, and the Superintendent are involved in the selection process of every building team's representation.

To ensure that Gouverneur Central School District is in compliance with New York State regulations, the following Shared Decision Making Building Teams must include:

Elementary Shared Decision Making Building Teams' membership includes: Principal, maximum of six (6) teachers and five (5) other members (i.e. a combination but not exceeding two (2) from any of the following groups - students, parents, and non-teaching staff).

Middle School Shared Decision Making Building Team membership includes: Principal, maximum of six (6) teachers and five (5) other members (i.e. a combination but not exceeding two (2) from any of the following groups - students, parents, and non-teaching staff).

High School Shared Decision Making Building Team membership includes: Principal, maximum of six (6) teachers and five (5) other members (i.e. a combination but not exceeding two (2) from any of the following groups - students, parents, and non-teaching staff).

The District Shared Decision-Making Team membership includes: GTA President or designee and three (3) or fewer appointees, GAA President or designee, GSRPU President or designee, Superintendent or designee and two (2) or fewer appointees, Managerial/Confidential designee, Parent/Teacher Organization President or designee and (3) appointees, MS Student Council President or designee and (1) appointee, HS Student Council President or designee and (1) appointee, Board of Education President or designee, and three (3) external stakeholders (i.e. Community, Business/Industry, Government/Military).

A bi-annual audit (January/May) conducted by the District Shared Decision Making Team (January/May) will ensure that all building teams are in compliance with state regulations.

Maximum participation for each stakeholder group is as noted below.

Composition/Method of Selection for District Shared Decision Making Team

1	Board of Education Appointee
1	Superintendent of School/Designee
1	Managerial/Confidential Appointee
3	External Stakeholders (Community, Business/Industry/Government/Military)
4	GTA President/Designee and (3) Appointees
1	GAA President/Designee
4	Parent/Teacher Organization President/Designee and (3) Appointees
4	GSRPU President/Designee and (3) Appointees
4	Students

Composition/Method of Selection for District Building SDM Teams

The following are recommended building level school improvement committee formats for each instructional level within the district. It is recommended that teacher membership represent the diversity of the teaching staff. Maximum participation for each stakeholder group is as noted below.

Elementary (Grades Pre-Kindergarten-Fourth)

1	Building Principal
2	Parents (elected by building level group if possible – otherwise the committee itself will seek volunteers)
2	Support Staff (non-teaching)
6	Teachers (elected by building level teachers)

Middle School: (Grades Fifth-Eighth)

1	Building Principal
2	Parents (elected by building level group if possible – otherwise the committee itself will seek volunteers)
2	Support Staff (non-teaching)
6	Teachers (elected by building level teachers)
2	Students (one from seventh grade and one from eighth grade). At midyear, the building school improvement committee will actively seek a sixth-grade student to be on the committee as an observer.

High School: (Grades Ninth-Twelfth)

1	Building Principal
2	Parents (elected by building level group if possible – otherwise the committee itself will seek volunteers)
2	Support Staff (non-teaching)
6	Teachers (elected by building level teachers)
2	Students (elected by Student Council)

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

When a SDM Building Team selects an educational issue whose resolution may intersect with the legal rights and responsibility granted to parents regarding the education of their children, the administrator on the team will be responsible for researching whether a State or Federal program (i.e., CSE, CPSE, or Title 1, etc.) is involved and, if so, identifying the director of the program responsible for this issue. The SDM Building Team is encouraged to coordinate its subsequent decision-making with program directors where relevant.

If no program director is available, the SDM Building Team will forward questions to the Superintendent. The SDM Building Team members and Superintendent will be responsible for ensuring that the requirements for the involvement of parents in planning and decision-making are met.

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

“...the educational issues which will be subject to cooperative planning and shared decision making at the building level by teachers, parents, administrators and, at the discretion of the Board of Education or BOCES, other parties such as students, school district support staff and community members...”

Commissioner’s Regulations Regulation 100.11

The following are examples of educational issues that could be addressed by the District Shared Decision-Making Committee:

- Communication Issues – internal, external, social media, website
- The process for serving as an input/feedback team for other district teams
- Assist with aligning, implementing and supporting the District Strategic Plan
- Embracing the District Vision and putting it into action
- Collecting data from SDM Building Teams and using best practices to ensure student achievement
- Constructing a strong foundation for utilization of virtual technology for student learning
- Keeping the focus on students and results
- Use of District Facilities

Members of the District Shared Decision Making Committee will continue to work with District and union leaders, building staff, and the District Strategic Plan Team to identify issues which impact student success in the learning environment.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Should a team be at impasse on an issue or experience conflict, the facilitator shall seek the services of an unbiased external mediator that is not a regular participant of the team nor directly involved in the specific issue.

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

The SDM Building Teams will identify educational issues, select those it deems appropriate and prioritize the issues selected. The SDMBT will align its work with the District Strategic Plan as approved by the Board of Education. The SDMBT will identify issues through student data reports, surveys, constituent representatives or other data gathering means. The Chief Information Officer (CIO) will be utilized as appropriate to provide data for the SDMBT.

- A. The administrator of the SDM Building Level Team is responsible for any research necessary for the SDMBT to decide whether the issue falls under the definition of an appropriate issue, as defined in the issues section of this plan.
- B. Decisions made by the team will honor the following six principles:
 - a. All children can learn.
 - b. Aim for mastery.
 - c. Focus on results.
 - d. Provide the means.
 - e. Provide authority with accountability.
 - f. Reward success and remedy failure.
- C. Throughout the decision-making process, teams are encouraged to communicate and consult with those affected by the issue under consideration and to seek advice from those with expertise on the issue.
- D. The SDMBT will determine the decision-making process that is appropriate for each issue. The team will work to ensure that all group members have an equal opportunity to influence a decision, understand the decision and agree to support the decision.
- E. Decisions will be recorded in the following format:
 - a. State the issue concerned.
 - b. State student outcomes it is intended to facilitate.
 - c. Describe research undertaken (pros and cons), when applicable.
 - d. Identify necessary resources.
 - e. Contain a timeline and plan implementation.
 - f. State contemplated assessment method, when applicable.
- F. Shared Decision Making Team's Operational Guidelines
 - All SDMBT members will receive decision-making and team training.
 - SDMBT's will establish additional operating procedures, group norms, and other organizational guidelines as needed.
 - SDMBTs will meet regularly during the year and as needed during the summer.
 - A written agenda will be prepared and distributed at least one day prior to the scheduled meeting date.
 - Members of the public or other non-team members may request an opportunity to speak, under the guidelines established by each SDMBT.

- Minutes will be taken at each SDMBT meeting. All minutes and reports will be made available to staff via district staff resource webpage and to the community upon request. Minutes will be available prior to the next meeting.
- Each SDMBT will prepare an annual report at the end of the school year. Reports will be provided to the Superintendent of Schools.

G. Timeframes

- The first SDMBT meeting will take place each school year by September 30.
- The SDMBT annual report will be published by July 1 each year.
- Each SDMBT will establish a preliminary agenda by October 1 for issues to be addressed in the upcoming year.
- When a SDMBT requests an internal report on a subject under consideration by the team, such reports will be completed by the next meeting date.
- Any SDMBT issue awaiting action by the Superintendent or Board of Education shall be addressed within 60 days.
- The SDMBT will address any action requested by the Superintendent or Board of Education within 30 days.

ACCOUNTABILITY

"...the means by which all parties shall be held accountable for the decisions which they share in making...."

Commissioner's Regulations Regulation 100.11

The Share Decision Making Building Level Teams, in collaboration with the Board of Education, may demonstrate accountability through a variety of assessment techniques. Team reports, responses by individual members, constituency surveys, and student achievement results as derived from the CIO (Chief Information Officer) will be used to show progress toward achieving the identified goals.

Teams will be held accountable in the following ways:

Constituency Representation and Accountability

Shared Decision Making Building Level Teams should be prepared to show that they have maintained communication with their constituencies regarding the status of school-based planning and shared decision-making. Methods might include:

- Providing regular reports of the team's activities to constituencies.
- Soliciting reactions, concerns, and opinions from constituent groups.
- Bringing the concerns and opinions of individual constituents, as conveyed to team members, back to the full team for reaction and reflection.
- Periodically evaluate to what extent its constituents know about its work and are involved in its activities.

Team Member Accountability

Members of the Shared Decision Making Building Level Team can demonstrate their accountability to shared decision making through their:

- Election of members according to the established guidelines.
- Attendance and participation in meetings.
- Willingness to share the workload.
- Agreement to support the decisions of the team.

Overall Team Accountability

Each Shared Decision Making Building Level Team can demonstrate its adherence to the principles of shared decision-making by:

- Following operational guidelines.
- Achieving a decision.
- Maintaining communication in the district and in the community.

Accountability is providing evidence for the outcome of the decision made at the team level. Accountability is the degree to which an individual or team carries out its responsibilities at their level of authority. Ultimately, accountability means that every decision, and the successes and consequences of that decision, must become the responsibility of the Shared Decision Making Committee that made the decision.

Accountability translates to student outcomes in the areas of performance, behavior, critical and creative thinking skills, and self-esteem. Accountability demonstrates that trust has been placed in people at the building site. It is with a clear understanding in terms of the operating principles of accountability that:

- ✓ The Board is ultimately responsible for all decisions.
- ✓ The Superintendent is ultimately responsible for providing the Board with information and making recommendations for the best possible decision that the Board may make.
- ✓ The process infers that each decision will be made within the legal, fiscal, and ethical constraints that establish the boundaries for the decision.
- ✓ The team or individual that makes the decision is accountable for that decision.
- ✓ At the onset of the decision-making process, the individuals or team need to know that they are responsible and accountable for their decision.

DECISION MAKING PROCESS

This team will strive to make decisions by consensus. If consensus cannot be achieved within time constraints, the District Shared Decision Making Committee will use the Will of the Group. Building consensus means that the team will work together collaboratively toward the achievement of shared goals within an atmosphere of trust. It means that every person on the team has the opportunity to express his or her opinion and also agrees to support the decision. The “will of the group” means that the group strives to achieve consensus but will move forward if there is a deadline and when the “will of the group” is evident even to those who most oppose the idea.

Revised May 2017

OPERATING PRINCIPLES OF THE BUILDING TEAMS

Shared Decision Making Building Teams will make decisions by consensus and may implement any decision that does not negatively impact upon other building sites and that does not require the expenditure of more funds than are currently available to the Shared Decision Making Building Team and which do not conflict with district policy, the contract, Education Law or the Commissioner's Regulations.

The operating principles of the Building Team include:

- ✓ The building principal is the leader at the school site and sets the tone and assumes the responsibility for developing and maintaining the necessary climate of trust and respect.
- ✓ The types of decisions and the degree of participation must be communicated by the building principal to the membership of the SDM Building Team in advance of the decision-making process.
- ✓ It is understood that not everybody is involved in every decision, some decisions must be management decisions because of the confidentiality or time constraints and in these instances, these decisions will be communicated to personnel at the school site.
- ✓ All participants at the SDM Building Team level will support the final decision of the SDM Building Team that results from the group process.
- ✓ Continual staff training will be available to teach the skills necessary to support the process of shared decision making.
- ✓ The building principal has the responsibility for establishing a trusting work environment to reduce the possibility of any misperceptions.
- ✓ The staff and SDM Building Team members have the responsibility to communicate directly to the building principal.
- ✓ Loyalty bonds the group together after a decision has been reached.
- ✓ Given the best knowledge and information available, the decision made by the SDM Building Team will be the "best one" possible.
- ✓ Trusting for risk taking and encouraging same is demonstrated through the organizations' support as well as the allocation of available resources.

The Shared Decision Making Committee will operate under the same principles outlined above for the Shared Decision Making Building Teams where applicable. The Shared Decision Making Committee's main responsibility is the coordination of the shared decision making processes that takes place at all school sites through the shared decision making process utilizing the Shared Decision Making Building Team format and organization.

The Shared Decision Making Committee may implement any decisions which do not require expenditure of monies unavailable to the committee or which do not conflict with Education Law, Commissioner's Regulations, district policy or the contract.

BOARD, DISTRICT, AND SCHOOL GOALS

It is the responsibility of both the District Shared Decision Making Committee and the Shared Decision Making Building Teams to use as the guiding force for implementing all decisions, the established annual Board and District-wide goals in developing individual school and classroom goals to ensure that the district's mission and standards of excellence will be incorporated in all that we do to improve opportunities for our students and to provide a student-centered learning environment.

REVISION OF THIS DOCUMENT

Any of the language within this document may be changed by consensus of the District Shared Decision Making Committee after consultation with both the elementary and secondary Shared Decision Making Building Teams. Any changes will be made after the District Shared Decision Making Committee reaches consensus on items of revision.

APPENDIX

Shared Decision-Making Committee Operating System and Norms

At the annual convening of the Shared Decision-Making Committee, the group will establish protocols for the team's operation. Meeting dates for the year will be established in accordance with the needs of the group.

At present, and until such time as a Committee recommends changes, operational norms are as follows:

1. Listen with intent to learn.
2. Share relevant thoughts and ideas.
3. Ask questions.
4. Balance listening and participation.
5. Take care of learning needs.
6. Manage personal needs.
7. Contribute to the learning of others.
8. Start on time and end on time.
9. During comment periods, share out as needed.
10. Meeting agendas must include an item for Old Business with opportunities for questions and clarifying discussion.
11. If the school has an unscheduled closing, the meeting will be rescheduled for one week following the regularly scheduled meeting date.