EDMONDS SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 15
LYNNWOOD, WASHINGTON

IDEAL DECISION-MAKING GUIDE
Draft 5

OUR MISSION: To advocate for all students by PROVIDING a learning environment which EMPOWERS students, staff and the community to MAXIMIZE their personal, creative and academic potential in order to BECOME lifelong learners and responsible world citizens.

Staff in the District make thousands of decisions every day. Many decisions are made by individuals, other decisions are made by groups. The principles of the Ideal Decision-Making Process are intended to guide both individual and group decision making during the planning, implementation and evaluation of all that we do.

Ideal decision making occurs in a positive climate, in an inclusive organization, using an effective process with continuous evaluation and adjustment. It focuses on student learning through improvement of programs, services and products within the District mission.

PRINCIPLES OF DECISION MAKING

I. **A positive climate**
    - A.   Inspires openness and trust
    - B.   Discourages hidden agendas/surprises
    - C.   Presumes others are well intentioned
    - D.   Encourages participation and collaboration
    - E.   Values diversity
    - F.   Encourages innovation and creativity
    - G.   Allows change with purpose

II. **An inclusive organization**
    - A.   Invites and facilitates voluntary participation by those affected by the action, where possible (e.g. involvement and/or representation and/or active consultation of students, parents, classified and certificated staff and community members)
    - B.   Includes consensus-building as part of group decision-making processes when appropriate
    - C.   Provides an opportunity at the outset to discuss and identify parameters of the decision, and asks:
        1. What is the scope of the decision?
        2. Who will be affected and how they will be involved?
        3. Who will make the decision?
        4. When does the decision need to be made?

III. **An effective process**
    - A.   Should be clear at the outset, may vary depending on the issue, and could change during the process if necessary and so communicated
    - B.   Identifies the decision-making method to be used (e.g., consensus, voting, group input-leader decision, leader only decision)
    - C.   Identifies a communication strategy
    - D.   Identifies options to meet diverse needs where possible
    - E.   Focuses on major questions
        1. What is the issue? (question, concern)
        2. What do we believe? (values, philosophy, beliefs, guiding principles)
        3. What do we know? (research, expert opinion, experience, best practice)
        4. What is the desired result? (ideal/ultimate goal)
        5. What resources are needed and available? (human, time, fiscal, physical)
        6. What do we do? (action, responsibility, implementation, evaluation)
    - F.   Trusts that all will take responsibility for positively implementing a decision once made, including those who choose not to participate in the group decision-making process
    - G.   Ensures that decisions are within legal and contractual parameters

IV. **Continuous evaluation**
    - A.   Takes place throughout the decision-making process and after implementation, assessing both process and content
    - B.   Can involve all those affected by a decision, whether or not involved in making the decision, and asks:
        1. Is the decision contributing to student learning by improving the quality of the program, service or product?
        2. How does this decision support the District and site missions?
        3. What is the decision-making climate (Section I)?
        4. Were parameters discussed and identified at the beginning of the process (Section II, C)?
        5. Is decision making organized to include all who should be involved (Section II, A)?
        6. How is the process working (Section III)?
    - C.   Considers questions which arise during the process
    - D.   Reviews options, choices and alternatives
    - E.   Identifies the next step in the decision-making process