GREAT NECK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

DISTRICT PLAN FOR SCHOOL-BASED PLANNING AND SHARED DECISION MAKING

Section 100.11 of the Commissioner's Regulations:

> *The purpose of school-based planning and shared decision making shall be to improve the educational performance of all students in the school, regardless of such factors as socioeconomic status, race, sex, language background, or disability.*

The Great Neck school community believes that students, their well-being, and their achievements are the sole reason that schools exist. They should pervade every decision, every action, and every moment in the school organization. The Compact for Learning sets forth a philosophy that such decisions and actions should be the product of shared decision making, because "no one part of the system can achieve satisfactory results without the cooperation of other parts of the whole."

Our district belongs to an increasingly complex society and an increasingly diverse community and as a result, our teams should make every effort to reflect that diversity. "Student achievement" is similarly complex and diverse. It is, therefore, essential that we listen to multiple voices as we identify goals and seek input from multiple sources in attempting to meet these goals. By doing so, we recognize the shared responsibility of all members of the school community for our students; we increase the commitment of all "parts of the whole" to the decisions that we make together in our effort to meet this responsibility.

THE CHARGE: In an effort to ensure broad participation in educational matters in all school districts in New York State, the Commissioner of Education established regulation 100.11, which was adopted by the Board of Regents. This regulation directs school districts to adopt a plan for the participation of parents, teachers, administrators and school board members in school-based planning and shared decision making.

THE IMPLEMENTATION: In order to develop a plan for school-based planning and shared decision making, the Board of Education is directed to appoint a committee whose responsibility it will be to present to the Board of Education its suggestion for a plan complying with the regulations. The original plan was developed and adopted by the Board of Education not later than February 1, 1994, as required by the State. The committee will then reconvene every two years to review and/or revise the plan before it is submitted to the Board for recertification.

THE BIENNIAL COMMITTEE: The committee must be composed of at least:

- the superintendent of schools
- administrators selected by the district's administrative bargaining organization
- teachers selected by the teachers' collective bargaining organization

- parents selected by school-related parent organizations
  (Note: a parent who is employed by the district cannot represent parents on the committee.)

This is the minimum composition of the committee. The Board of Education may add members from any other group it deems appropriate.

In order to ensure broad representation in our district, the following membership is suggested:

- the superintendent of schools
- an administrator from each level of education
- a teacher from each school
- a parent from each school's PTO/PTA and SEPTA
- a representative of UPTC
- a student from each high school
- a student from each middle school
- a member of the Board of Education

An updated list of district committee members should be prepared in the fall of each review year and submitted to the Board of Education for appointment.

It is suggested that parent members utilize the services of the UPTC Committee on Shared Decision Making as a training and informational resource for their service on the committee. Early each Fall, on a date designated on the school district calendar, a district-wide training session shall be held for the members of all building Shared Decision Making Committees.

CHARGE BY THE BOARD TO THE BIENNIAL COMMITTEE: Published material states: "provision for effective participation of parents, teachers, and administrators in school-based planning and decision making is the touchstone for the commissioner's approval. Within this parameter, there is substantial leeway." It has been suggested that practices that work should not be discarded. It is within the scope of the regulation for the Board of Education to ask the committee to consider making existing programs for school-based planning and shared decision making, in place for many years in Great Neck, the foundation for compliance with the Commissioner's regulations.

The committee should also review all shared decision making procedures that are followed in the district as a result of any current collective bargaining agreements. These must be incorporated into the district plan.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION: After seeking endorsement of the plan from the committee, the Board of Education has the final responsibility and authority to adopt and amend the district plan.

THE PLAN: Under the regulation, the district plan must specify:

A. The educational topics which will be subject to cooperative planning and shared decision making at the building level;

The educational issues may include, **but are not limited to**, the following:

1. Program evaluation
2. Curriculum/Curricular activities
3. Student life
4. Food services
5. Facilities
6. Building maintenance
7. Assessment practices
8. Safety and security
9. Technology
10. Home-school communication
11. Environmental awareness
12. Health and wellness
13. Academic achievement
14. Community partnerships
15. School climate and culture

The exceptions to the Shared Decision Making Committee prerogatives are teacher hiring and dismissal, tenure and salary decisions based on GNTA and SAGES contracts, and other areas established by contract (class size, staff evaluation, etc.) or by State regulations. Items regarding safety, security, or emergency procedures and notifications should be referred to the School Safety Committee for further study.

B. The manner and extent of the expected involvement of all parties;

1. Name - Each school's committee will be named the Shared Decision Making Committee.

2. Selection - Each school will develop the selection process for its Shared Decision Making Committee members.

    a. The selection process for Shared Decision Making Committee members will be publicized in writing to the entire school community each year.

    b. GNTA will determine the method for selecting faculty at each school. A teacher who currently has a child in that building cannot represent teachers on that building committee.

c. The parent members of the PTO/PTA will determine the method for selecting parents at each school. An effort will be made to represent special education. A parent who is an employee or officer of the district cannot represent parents on the committee.

d. The principal will determine the method for selecting administrators at each school.

e. The student government will work collaboratively with stakeholders to determine the method for selecting students at each secondary school.

   1) At least three students will be on the Shared Decision Making Committees at each middle school, the grade level to be determined by the Committee.

   2) North High School and South High School will have at least eight students on its Shared Decision Making Committee.

   3) The Village School will have at least three students on its Shared Decision Making Committee.

   4) At the elementary level each school is encouraged to involve students in a way that allows their voices to be heard.

f. Immediate family members may not serve on the same Shared Decision Making Committee except when student siblings are democratically elected by the student body.

g. The time of day for meetings will be left to individual schools. Each Shared Decision Making Committee should be sensitive to the needs of the entire school population.

h. Observers from the school community may attend the Shared Decision Making Committee meetings and speak as non-voting participants.

   * "School community" is defined as the parents/guardians of students, students, teachers, administrators, and other employees of the district.

i. Procedural conduct of the meetings will be at the discretion of each Shared Decision Making Committee.

3. Shared Decision Making Committee Chairs - It is recommended that a teacher and/or parent, not currently the PTA president, serve as chairperson(s) of the shared decision making committees.

4. The committee chairs shall ensure that each member of the committee receives a copy of this plan prior to the first meeting each year.

5. Decision Making

    a. Consensus shall be used as the primary mechanism for decision making. (Consensus is a general agreement resulting from a systematic group decision-making process. This means that all participants support the decision, although one or more participants may have reservations, but the committee as a whole can "live with" the decision.)

    b. If consensus cannot be reached, a school should choose to defer an issue to a subsequent meeting.

    c. If, after reasonable efforts, the chairpersons and the committee agree that consensus cannot be reached, and in an effort to come to closure on the issue, each school may choose to take a vote on the issue.

        1) Procedures for this eventuality should be determined at the beginning of the school year.

        2) It was agreed to maintain voting parity between teachers and parents (and students on SDM committees at the high school level). Each school may select any number of teachers and parents on the Shared Decision Making Committee. For purposes of voting, however, numerical parity will be maintained (e.g., if a committee has 20 parent members and 10 teacher members, each parent will receive 1/2 vote). The principal and/or his/her designee will have one vote representing administration.

        3) Middle school students will have at least three votes. The value of middle school students' votes will be determined at the building level. Village School students will have at least one vote.

C. The means and standards by which all parties shall evaluate improvement in student achievement;

Each school's Shared Decision Making Committee will review and comment on data provided through the New York State Education Department.

D. The means by which all parties will be held accountable for the decision which they share in making;

After approval by its members, every Shared Decision Making Committee will forward its annual Shared Decision Making Committee Report to the UPTC and the Board of

Education. It will subsequently be made available to all interested parties. The report will address all areas deemed important enough in the school year to have been raised as building goals. It will include progress toward accomplishment of goals not yet realized.

E. The process whereby disputes presented by the participating parties about the educational issues being decided upon will be resolved at the local level;

1. The dispute resolution process agreed upon was that each Shared Decision Making Committee will “strive for consensus,” as described above.

2. Voting and dispute resolution procedures will be publicized in writing to the entire school community.

3. It is suggested that any party aggrieved by the actions of a school's Shared Decision Making Committee may bring in writing her/his grievances to the Board of Education only after requesting reconsideration by the Committee.

F. The manner in which all State and Federal requirements for the involvement of parents in planning and decision making will be coordinated with and met by the overall plan.

Current or subsequent parental involvement required by State or Federal planning and decision making pursuant to Federal grants or programs will continue to function through the District’s current UPTC and PTO/PTA participation. When required by State and Federal requirements and not a UPTC or PTO/PTA issue for involvement, the school-based Shared Decision Making Committees will be made aware of any required committees.

Adopted: 1/10/94
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