

Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District

Site Based Management
and
Shared Decision Making Plan
Committee Members

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Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District

Site Based Management and Shared Decision Making Plan

PREAMBLE:

In compliance with Section 100.11 of the Commissioner's Regulations for Site-Based Planning and Shared Decision Making (SDM), the Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School District SDM Committee proposes the following District Plan. The Committee believes that the Plan is necessary for the District to achieve its Mission and that the plan reinforces the District Core Values and Beliefs.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this District plan is to improve student performance by:

- Providing a structure for shared decision making in Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School.
- Determining the types of educational issues subject to SDM.
- Outlining the means and standards for accountability of involved parties in SDM.
- Providing a method for achieving a consensus for action which all members can support.
- Providing for a biennial review of this plan.

PRECEPTS:

The SDM Committee recognizes that for this plan to be successful, the parties involved believe and support the following precepts:

- Responsibility for student achievement is shared and accepted by the entire community.
- People most closely affected by an issue should be empowered to help resolve the issue in an atmosphere of mutual trust.
- Students, parents and other community members should help the school board, faculty and staff to determine the goals and priorities of the school
- How school goals /priorities are achieved is primarily the work of the school staff.

I. STRUCTURE OF BUILDING COUNCILS:

The primary organization for conducting SDM in Cobleskill-Richmondville Central School is the "Building Council." The district will have the following councils:

- George D. Ryder Elementary School Building Council
- Joseph B. Radez Elementary School Building Council
- William H. Golding Elementary School Building Council
- William H. Golding Middle School Building Council
- Cobleskill-Richmondville High School Building Council

The purpose of the Building Council is to identify and determine issues related to improving student achievement that should be subject to SDM, and to ensure that these issues are resolved.

A. Membership:

The Building Councils shall consist of teachers, administrators, parents, support staff, elementary, middle and high school students and members of the community at large. Following is the Building Councils specific structure at the elementary, middle and high school.

Group	Elem.	MS	HS
Teachers	3	8	5
Parents	2	6	3
Administrators	1	1	1
Student(s)	when and where appropriate	when and where appropriate	2
Support Staff	1	1	2
Community Member(s)	2	2	2

Note: These numbers may change, subject to biennial review by the Board of Education

B. Membership Selection

Building Council membership will be determined by the appropriate constituency organization through a thorough canvas of their entire constituency. In the absence of an established constituency organization, the members will be selected by the Board of Education. The Board will solicit members through a press release and school newsletter and select members from this pool of candidates. If press release /newsletter advertisements do not attract candidates, the Board will conduct outreach efforts to solicit volunteers.

C. Membership Rotation:

It is recommended that the membership be appointed, selected or elected and rotated so that the majority of the committee does not rotate off at the same time, To achieve this, original appointments shall be for 1 2 and 3 year terms.

D. Parameters for Decision Making

Councils shall be empowered to take action to resolve educational issues, in accordance with the following:

- The decision must have a positive impact on student achievement.
- The issue must be aligned with the priorities of the District's Mission and Goals.
- Issues must be within the Council's authority to implement that decision.
- The Councils must operate within the resources available to them.
- Council must accept accountability for the decision.

E. Addressing Council Issues

Once a Building Council has identified a priority issue it must determine the best approach to solving it. (see Diagram A) The Council may decide to:

- Resolve the Issue Itself
- Utilize an Expert
- Refer the Issue to the Building Principal
- Commission a Project Team

A Project Team:

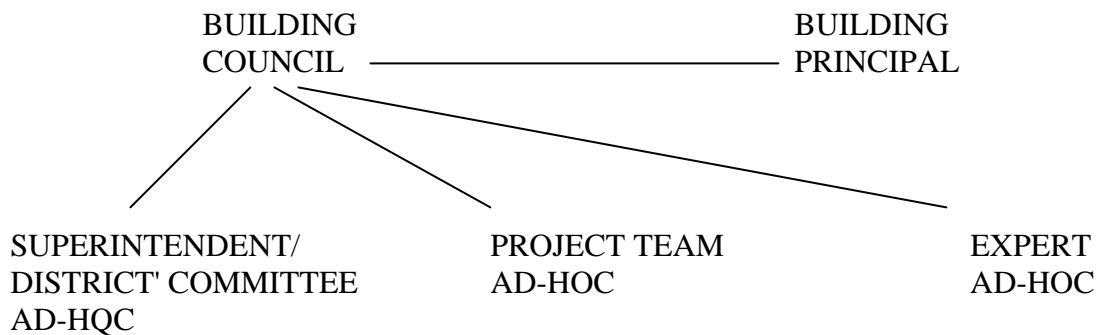
- Must be appointed by a Council
- Will have ad-hoc status
- Will be charged by a Council to study an issue and to recommend a solution/action to the Council
- Will be comprised of members chosen for their knowledge of and expertise on the issue. The intent is to have those people "most clearly affected" to be part of the solution (Recommended Size: 5 - 8 members).
- Must work within available resources to complete its charge

F. District Committee:

Issues will occasionally arise which involve more than one Building Council. When they do, a Building Council may meet with another council or request that the Superintendent convene an ad-hoc District Committee (if a standing committee does not exist) to address the issue.

This ad-hoc committee will be comprised of experts and members of stakeholder groups, and will be of a manageable size. The Superintendent will appoint a chairperson(s) and members based upon Council recommendations, expertise, and interest, The Superintendent will also appoint a chairperson to lead the group's effort. Building Council chairperson(s) will assist the Superintendent in developing a specific mission, timeline, and other relevant parameters for the committee. The committee will report its findings in the form of a recommendation to the Superintendent, for consideration and action. The Superintendent will then notify all Building Councils of the recommendation and actions to be taken.

Diagram A:



II. GUIDELINES FOR BUILDING COUNCIL OPERATIONS:

A. Roles and Responsibilities:

- The Chairperson(s) shall be elected by the majority of the Council membership, shall serve from 1-3 years, (determined by the Council) and be responsible for the following:

- Facilitating meetings
 - Setting agendas (to include length) with provisions for adding agenda items with approval of council
 - Setting meeting dates, times and duration of meetings with approval of council
- The Recorder shall be a member of the council who takes notes during council meetings and prepares a summary for future distribution. This role could be rotated among council membership.

B. Meetings and Group Process:

- The quorum shall be a simple majority.
- Meetings should be held monthly at minimum, and may include summers.
- Meetings are subject to open meeting law: Visitors are welcome at meetings and the Council may elect to gather input from them. Visitors, however, cannot take part in Council decision-making.
- Council members are responsible for attending and participating in all council meetings. Each council should decide upon a policy for handling absenteeism.
- Council members should adopt a set of "ground rules" to govern behavior at meetings. (sample in Appendix B)
- Councils should conduct short "debriefs" at the end of every meeting to check group process. A debrief is a verbal evaluation of how well the meeting was conducted, and how well the group attended to its task.
- Councils should periodically set aside time on meeting agendas to discuss ways to improve their work habits.

C. Decision Making Procedures:

- A full discussion/debate on all agenda items should be encouraged.
- Decisions should be made by consensus with a quorum present. Consensus, simply defined, means that all members can actively support a decision even though it may not be their top choice. Consensus involves putting aside some preferences for the good of the Council without compromising convictions
- Councils can opt to employ other decision making procedures on those occasions when using an alternative method to address an issue makes sense. A decision to "decide differently", however, should be reached via consensus of Council members.

D. Communications:

- After each meeting minutes should be sent to the District Office, all Building Councils, and be posted on the bulletin boards in Building Offices.
- Minutes should be taken in "summary form;" that is, only the highlights of discussion and decisions surrounding agenda items should be recorded. Such as "give and take" between council members should not be made part of the official record unless requested as such by the members questions.
- The chairperson(s) should be designated in the minutes as the official recipient of "feedback" from constituents and other councils.

E. Conflict Resolution:

Councils should make use of the following strategies when attempting to resolve conflicts among members:

- Agree to work out disagreements
- Identify and clarify issues
- Reach consensus through use of :
 - small groups
 - large groups
 - task force
- Ground rules for proper conduct at meetings should be adopted by each council as an "ounce of prevention."
- A standard strategy for managing disagreements should be invoked by the chairperson(s) if they believe a situation warrants.
- Councils have the option of seeking assistance if other attempts to reach consensus fail.
- Councils may appeal to the Superintendent for a ruling on an issue if all other methods fail.

F. Training:

Councils should ensure that members receive training in order to effectively carry out their responsibilities individually and collectively. The following types of training are recommended for all participants, beginning with:

- Facilitator training for chairperson or co-chairpersons
- Meeting management training for council members
- Training for all in consensus decision making and conflict resolution

III. MEANS AND STANDARDS FOR EVALUATION OF STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Building Councils should create an annual plan to prioritize student achievement issues, and should use appropriate methods that will allow ideas to be gathered by the Council (i.e. forms, suggestion box, surveys, etc.).

The Building Council is broadly defined to promote and improve student achievement. The Council will use the following means and standards to evaluate improvement in student achievement:

1. Assess individual building student needs ("state of the building" – conduct research, collect data, compare to other schools that are the same size, etc.)
2. Prioritize needs
3. Set short and long range achievement goals
4. Develop criteria for assessing whether or not goals are met
5. Identify measurement tools to measure success of goals
6. Design changes or strategies to move toward goals
7. Implement a "change plan" that includes specific strategies to attain goals
8. Evaluate the success of changes or strategies
9. Adjust the plan based upon evaluation

Some examples of student achievement measures that will be monitored by the Building Council include: portfolios, standardized tests, other academic assessments, attendance, drop-out rate, parent perception, social/emotional development, self-esteem, Regents results, and disciplinary assessment.

IV. EXAMPLES OF EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

The following are examples of SDM issues - not meant to be limiting, but given to provide guidance on issues. The Council should determine if an issue is a concern of an existing committee or other structure prior to taking action. If so, it should consult with the structure and act accordingly.

A. Examples of Educational Issues Subject to Shared Decision Making.

- Curriculum*
- Staff development*
- Transportation*
- Mentoring new hires
- Parent involvement
- Short/long range building goals
- Improving student achievement
- Monitoring and rewarding student progress
- Assessing building and student needs
- Extra curricular issues
- School climate and morale
- Setting conduct standards

* As it affects the building level

B. Examples of Issues the Council can examine, but will not have sale authority to address:

- Curriculum change/curriculum strategies
- Staff development
- Transportation
- Grading policies
- Personnel selection
- Recommending building budget priorities to the Principal

C. Examples of Educational Issues Subject to Shared Decision Making:

- Contractual
- State and federal laws
- New York State Commissioner's Regulations
- Board of Education policy
- Evaluation of staff
- Personnel – appointment

V. ACCOUNTABILITY:

Accountability can be broadly defined as "taking responsibility," both individually and collectively, for improving student performance.

A. Building Councils are specifically accountable for:

- Adhering to the parameters for Council action that are set forth on page 2.
- Using the means and standards for following the nine steps that are set forth on page 5.
- Measuring Council progress against the precepts; set forth on page 1.
- Insuring that all members of the school community are acquainted with the Plan.
- Submit an annual report to the Superintendent and Board on student performance as a result of Council activities.

B. Individual Council Members are specifically accountable for:

- Becoming familiar with an issue and seeking input from their constituencies prior to Council decisions.
- Working within an agreed upon decision making model to arrive at a Council decision.
- Sharing information concerning Council decisions with their constituents.
- Receiving and applying training for Shared Decision Making

C. Experts and Project Teams are specifically accountable for:

- Clearly understanding their charge.
- Investigating issues thoroughly including research where available before making recommendations for action and evaluation.
- Following a team process, when appropriate.
- Completing their charge.

D. The Board of Education is specifically accountable for:

- Conducting a biennial review of the Plan, in accordance with the Commissioner's Regulations and its impact on student achievement.

E. The Superintendent is specifically accountable for:

- Offering additional or taking corrective action if a Building Council is not reaching goals or adhering to responsibilities set forth in the Plan.

VI. INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS

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.

- No decision at the building level can supersede a mandated decision.

- Parent involvement in Building Councils will attempt at all times to enhance, and not supplant such involvement in CSE and Chapter I Committees, and any other mandated parent involvement efforts.