

STUDENT INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION MAKING

JIB-R

General

Students are encouraged to become involved in areas of decision making appropriate for such involvement but with the understanding that they have a choice to not be involved in decision making thereby leaving decision making to others.

It is understood that a given area, topic, or problem requiring a decision may include shared or advisory decision making. It is also understood that there are some areas, topics, or problems that will not involve students because of the nature of the area, topic, or problem or because of timing and/or availability of students.

At the outset of any activity or process that affords an opportunity for student involvement in decision making, those students who are to be involved are to be apprised as to whether their involvement will be shared or advisory.

To be involved in making a particular decision, each individual needs to have the necessary knowledge, skills, and experiences (or be capable of obtaining them quickly) that will contribute to good decision making.

Definitions

There are different degrees of involvement in decision making and levels of decision making. For the purposes of this policy and accompanying regulation, the levels of involvement in decision making shall be defined as follows:

1. “Shared” Decision Making: These are decisions made by a representative group in which all members of the group participate as equals and share equal accountability for those decisions.
2. “Advisory” Decision Making: These are decisions that, after soliciting comments and suggestions from people who will be affected by the decision, are made by the individual(s) responsible and accountable for the students, or staff, or facilities, or equipment.

Examples of Areas for Involvement in Decision Making

1. Shared
 - a. School improvement priorities
 - b. School level student attendance and student disciplinary guidelines, rules, and procedures
2. Shared and/or Advisory
 - a. Staff hiring processes, as appropriate
 - b. Board of Education policies and regulations, as appropriate

Expectations of Those Involved in Decision Making

1. To commit the time necessary
2. To become familiar with relevant issues, laws, policies, and regulations
3. To actively and constructively work toward attaining the goals stated in the policy
4. To accept the responsibilities for implementing, communicating, supporting, and evaluating decisions
5. To accept accountability for decisions made

Qualities of School Community Members Involved in Decision Making

1. Is a person of good will

JIB-R

2. Is honest
3. Actively supports the mission and governing values of the district
4. Has pride in the school and the school district
5. Believes in consensus
6. Values differences
7. Is sensitive to others
8. Is prompt and organized
9. Is a critical thinker
10. Trusts people

Guidelines

1. Identify and clearly articulate the problem or issue requiring a decision
2. Determine a timeline for decision making
3. Maintain open lines of communication with those affected by the decision
4. Review and discuss relevant information (including, as appropriate, relevant laws, policies, and regulations)
5. Consider alternative solutions, including the pros and cons of such alternatives, the impact on educational improvement, and the resources (i.e., time, money, people, etc.) needed
6. Develop an implementation plan for the decision
7. Establish a time frame in which to implement the decision
8. Establish procedures for effectively handling negative reactions to the decision
9. Communicate the decision and the rationale
10. Implement, monitor, support, and evaluate the decision

School Leadership Teams

Each principal is responsible for establishing a school leadership team in accordance with the following:

1. The school leadership team shall consist of up to fifteen representatives of the school community (i.e., staff, parents, community members, and, as appropriate, students) and shall strive to reflect the diversity within the school community.
 - a. Representatives from the professional staff may include grade level and/or department chairpersons to a maximum of six. If more than six volunteer to serve, then selection shall be by lottery, conducted in their presence by the principal. Grade level and/or department chairpersons are not elected members.

- b. Additional representatives from the professional staff, to a maximum of three, shall be selected annually via a nomination and voting process by their peers. Representatives so selected shall not serve more than three consecutive years.
 - c. The principal will coordinate the selection of parent(s), community member(s), support staff member(s), and, as appropriate, student(s). This, too, shall be done annually.
 2. The school leadership team shall act in accordance with the Board's policies and regulations for community, staff, student, and parent involvement in decision making.
 3. The school leadership team shall follow the guidelines for the shared decision making process in which all members shall participate as equals, endeavoring to arrive at decisions via consensus.
 4. Unless another similar group has been empowered, the school leadership team shall be the decision maker for:
 - a. the establishment of school improvement priorities and the development of action plans and the implementation of those plans to achieve the priorities;
 - b. School level rules and procedures that may complement but not conflict with district-wide student attendance and disciplinary guidelines; and
 - c. the establishment of school level staff development priorities and programs.
 5. Some members of the school leadership team (as well as other professional staff members), in accordance with established Board policies, regulations, and exhibits, may be involved in the following areas of decision making:
 - a. Board of Education policies and regulations, as appropriate (Final decision maker: Board of Education);
 - b. school schedules (Final decision maker: Principal);
 - c. school staff allocation and hiring process (Final decision maker: Superintendent and Board of Education);
 - d. District-wide student attendance and disciplinary guidelines (Final decision maker: Superintendent)
 - e. School budget development and allocation (Final decision maker: Principal)
 - f. school district budget development, allocation, and implementation (Final decision makers: Director of Administrative Services, Superintendent and Board of Education)
 - g. textbook selection (Final decision maker[s]: Director of Elementary Education and/or Director of Secondary Education);
 - h. Curriculum implementation (Final decision maker[s]: Principals and Directors of Elementary and Secondary Education, as appropriate)
 - i. facilities/space usage (Final decision maker: Superintendent);
 - j. establishment of district-wide staff development priorities and programs (Final decision maker[s]: Director of Elementary Education and/or Director of Secondary Education and/or Director of Special Programs and Services)
 - k. school/district calendar (Final decision maker: Superintendent and Board of Education)

Advisory Councils

1. The Board supports the establishment and utilization of advisory councils to the Superintendent. Efforts are to be made to ensure that such councils be given an opportunity to:
 - a. react to existing policies and policies under consideration or review;
 - b. suggest potential new policies; and
 - c. discuss issues which should be brought to the attention of the Board of Education, and/or the Superintendent.

The Superintendent shall develop plans for citizen involvement in such advisory councils.

JIB-R

2. The Board supports the establishment and utilization of advisory councils in such specialized areas as vocational and career awareness, academically talented education, Title I, special education, multicultural education, and as a need arises, as determined by the Board and/or the Superintendent, as appropriate.

Student Representation on the Board of Education

Selection of the Student Representative and Alternate Representative

1. Selection of the student school board representative and student alternate will be conducted by the Senior High School Student Government with the assistance and guidance of the principal or his/her designee and that of the Student Government advisor.
2. The selection process is to be determined at the school level and could consist of either a general, school-wide election, or an election among just the officers and representatives of the Student Government.
3. Selection is to be in the spring of the year so that the elected student representative will be able to take his/her seat with the Board as early as July but no later than the September workshop.

Term of Office

The student representative and alternate representative will serve a one-year term of office, from July through June.

Responsibilities and Duties

1. The student representative is expected to attend every workshop and regular meeting of the Board. If the representative cannot attend, then the alternate representative is expected to attend.
2. The student representative is expected to communicate to the alternate representative in a timely fashion when he/she is unable to attend a workshop or regular meeting of the Board. Furthermore, the student representative is expected to share with the alternate representative in a timely fashion relevant agenda-related information.
3. The student representative and alternate representative are expected to be prepared to discuss agenda items.
4. The student representative and alternate representative are encouraged to communicate with the Superintendent relative to improving their understandings of agenda items and related matters.
5. When useful and appropriate, the student representative and alternate representative should acquire comments and perspectives of their respective constituents.
6. The student representative or alternate representative, as appropriate, has the responsibility to report to his/her constituents within a reasonable period of time.

Authority

1. The student representative or alternate representative is authorized to sit with the five (5) publicly elected board members at public workshop sessions and public portions of the regular business meetings of the Board as well as at the public portions of the annual Board-Administrator Retreat.
2. The student representative and alternate representative are limited to participation during the regular public Board workshop session as well as the regular public monthly business meetings of the Board and at the annual Board-Administrator Retreat.
3. The student representative will:

- a. Adhere to the policies and regulations of the Board in the operation and conduct of business.
 - b. Receive mailings of agendas and minutes for all meetings, information, and selected documents provided to all other Board members.
 - c. Be able to request an item (or items) be placed on Board workshop or regular meeting agendas. (Such requests are to be made in accordance with Board policies and regulations.)
4. Limitations of authority include:
- a. Items related to executive sessions will not be provided to student representatives.
 - b. The student representative does not function as a publicly elected school board member. Consequently, the student representative may not vote or participate in executive sessions.

EFFECTIVE: 6/15/95

REVISED: 7/1/98, 10/27/06, 7/1/07

SEAFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT
Seaford, Delaware