

Millbrook Central School District
Millbrook, New York 12545



Shared Decision-Making Plan

Approved by the Board of Education: September 24, 2019

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Millbrook Central School District

MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Millbrook Central Schools is to provide positive and successful learning experiences for *all* students.

The schools will also strive to provide students with knowledge and problem-solving skills necessary to contribute and adapt to an ever-changing world. Within a caring and student-centered environment, the schools will offer a balanced educational program with high expectations to challenge and motivate each student.

The school staff, students, parents, Board of Education and community share the responsibility for this mission.

SHARED DECISION-MAKING

As of February 1, 1994, all school districts and BOCES had to develop and adopt a plan for the participation of parents and teachers with administrators in school-based planning and shared decision-making. Commissioner's Regulation 100.11 is intended to provide opportunities for parents, teachers and other stakeholders to participate in making decisions about educational issues.

Shared decision-making is a process by which representative members of the educational community of the Millbrook Central School District cooperate in identifying educational issues, defining goals and objectives, and implementing and assessing activities to help students reach standards of excellence. Shared decision-making can encompass both the making of final decisions on issues within a group's exclusive control, and the making of recommendations when the ultimate decision rests with another individual or group.

The Millbrook Central School District has long believed that communication and involvement are essential to a successful school district with successful students. Parents, teachers, students, and others have been involved in planning and decision-making at the building and district levels on a variety of committees and task forces.

The Millbrook Central School District plans on utilizing a District Leadership Team (DLT) and Building Leadership Teams (BLTs) as components to support the Shared Decision-Making model in our District.

STAKEHOLDERS

In order to determine who should be included in shared decision-making groups, stakeholders were identified. Stakeholders are those groups who have a stake in the Millbrook School District and its students.

The Stakeholders of the Millbrook School District are identified as:

- Board of Education member(s)
- Administrators/Directors

- Faculty
- Support Staff
- Students
- Parents
- Community/Business members

When decision-making groups are formed, consideration should be given to inclusion of representatives from the appropriate stakeholder groups. As defined by the State Education Department, the primary stakeholders are parents, teachers and administrators, to be included in all decision-making groups. Other stakeholders can also be included through membership, or can be included through consultation on relevant issues.

All Stakeholders are to receive communication and information about school-related issues and decisions.

LIMITATIONS OF SHARED DECISION-MAKING

The Board of Education and Superintendent of Schools are given certain statutory duties and powers.

Education Law §1709 gives the following powers and duties to Boards of Education of Union Free and Central School Districts:

- To establish rules and regulations concerning the order and discipline of the schools (§1709 [2]);
- To prescribe course of study (§1709[3]);
- To regulate the admission of pupils and their transfer from one class to another, as their scholarship shall warrant (Id);
- To prescribe the textbooks to be used in the schools and to compel a uniformity in the use of the same;
- To have in all respects the superintendence, management and control of the schools;
- To determine the number of teachers to be employed;
- To provide, in its discretion, in-service training for teachers;
- To have in all respects the superintendence, management and control of the educational affairs on the district, and, therefore, to have all the powers reasonably necessary to exercise powers granted expressly or by implication and to discharge duties imposed expressly or by implication by this or other statutes.

Education Law §1711 gives the following powers and duties to Superintendents of Schools of Central School Districts:

- To prepare the content of each course of study authorized by the Board of Education, subject to approval by the Board.
- To recommend to the Board suitable lists of textbooks.

With certain exceptions, a Board of Education or Superintendent may delegate powers and duties.

Through collective bargaining agreements, the Board of Education may delineate certain terms

and conditions of employment which may not be changed through a shared decision-making model. Such agreements may exist with the instructional staff, the non-instructional staff, the administrators, and/or the superintendent of schools.

The Board of Education has obligations to adhere to State and Federal laws and regulations which may not be changed through a shared decision-making model.

ACCOUNTABILITY IN SHARED DECISION-MAKING

Shared decision-making groups require an accountability component in order to be effective. The following is a checklist of the areas necessary for written documentation in this component. While each area needs to be addressed, the specific detail for each plan may vary depending on the group.

Membership

- Implement established guidelines for group membership.
- Develop additional rules for the determination of membership, as needed.
- Provide knowledge and skills relevant to the group and its purpose.
- Adequately orient and train new members.

Educational Issues

- Understand the educational issues about which the group can make decisions.
- Understand any constraints, such as State or Federal laws or regulations that may limit the ability to make decisions on given issues.

Goals

- Understand the District Mission.
- Clearly delineate the group's goals, based on the District's Mission.

Manner and Extent of Involvement in Decision-Making

- Determine, understand and use the appropriate method for decision-making (e.g. consensus, majority rule, minority rule, authority, veto power).
- Channel recommendations/decisions to appropriate group according to established district flow chart.

Action Plan

- Develop Action Plan to achieve goals which include:
 - strategies to achieve the goal
 - specific activities
 - timelines and target dates
 - designated personnel responsible
 - method for evaluation of effectiveness

Communication

- Determine what is to be communicated.
- Determine who communicates to whom
 - member to member

- subgroup to group by established district flow chart
- representatives to constituencies to general public
- Determine methods of communication such as reports, flyers, newsletters, minutes, meetings, bulletins, press, etc.
- Determine frequency of communication.
- Determine vehicle for feedback from all stakeholder groups.

Evaluation of Effectiveness

- Evaluate effectiveness in achieving goals and accomplishing activities, utilizing measures of teaching and learning gathered from internal and external sources.
- Analyze and report on effectiveness of group to appropriate groups according to established district flow chart.

DISTRICT LEADERSHIP TEAM (DLT)

Membership of District Leadership Team

- Board of Education member(s) (1 to 3)
- Superintendent of Schools (1)
- Assistant Superintendents (2)
- Director of Technology (1)
- Principals (4)
- Eight (8) teachers (two (2) from each building)
- Three (3) specialty area teachers
- One (1) school counselor
- Four (4) support staff members (one (1) from each building)
- Four (4) parents (one (1) representing each building)
- Two (2) High School students (11th and/or 12th Graders).
- Two (2) community/business members

The Team may decide at any time to invite representatives of other groups or other individuals to participate in certain discussions because of particular expertise or interest.

Membership Terms

Membership terms run from the beginning to the end of the school year with terms of membership as follows:

- Board of Education member – one to three (1 to 3) annual member(s)(designation at July Organization Meeting)
- Superintendent of Schools – one (1) permanent member
- Assistant Superintendents – two (2) permanent members
- Director of Technology – one (1) permanent member
- Principals – four (4) permanent members
- Teachers – eleven (11) members (three (3) year term - no term limit)
- School Counselor – one (1) member (three (3) year term - no term limit)
- Support staff – four (4) members (three (3) year term (no term limit)
- Parents – four (4) members (three (3) year terms - no term limit)
- Students – two (2) members (up to a four (4) year term)
- Community/business members – two (2) members (three (3) year terms - no term limit)

Membership Expectations

Members are expected to attend meetings, become knowledgeable about the issues being discussed, participate in discussions and voice their opinions, and work in the best interests of the Team and the School District. Members must be aware of the importance of the District Leadership Team, and be prepared to invest the necessary time and effort into their role on the team.

New members will participate in a training session on group process, decision-making, and problem-solving, to be held every year for all new team members. In addition, all members will be given information and training about any issues under discussion.

Educational Issues

In acknowledgment of the need for continuous improvement as we prepare all students to be successful in an ever-changing world, the District Leadership Team will deal with the following educational issues:

- Mission Statement
- Objective/Strategies/Goals
- Commencement Expectations for all students
- Shared Decision-Making Plan
- Communication and community involvement
- Curriculum & Instruction
- Professional Development
- Resource Deployment
- Organization

This team is one of the most important groups in the school district. The issues that the team discusses are vital issues which affect every aspect of the school district and its programs.

Goals

The District Leadership Team will develop District Objectives and Strategies based on internal and external data and derives from the Mission of the District. These Objectives and Strategies will provide direction for the District Leadership Team and the rest of the District. They will focus on enhancing the teaching and learning process. They will be presented as part of the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan.

Manner and Extent of Involvement

The District Leadership Team involves all members in its deliberations. Decisions are reached by consensus, understanding the parameters of accountability. Members are charged with representing their constituent groups and the best interests of the District as they strive to fulfill their goals. Decisions involving the mission, goals, commencement expectations and other areas, and shared decision-making must be approved by the Board of Education.

Action Plan

Each year the District Leadership Team may develop Action Plans based on its objectives. These Action Plans will outline expectations, responsibilities, deadlines, and methods.

Communication

The District Leadership Team will communicate its work to stakeholders as appropriate. Each member is to develop a method to communicate with their constituents.

Evaluation of Effectiveness

Each Spring, the District Leadership Team will evaluate its effectiveness and this analysis will be used to determine changes for the coming year.

MISCELLANEOUS SUBCOMMITTEES

Any standing committee in the District may need to develop a subcommittee or subcommittees to address certain issues. The subcommittee by its nature is temporary and is called into existence and governed by the standing or original committee. The task of the subcommittee involves a specific assignment which could include a product, research or acting in an advisory capacity.

Membership of the subcommittee is determined by the original committee and is based on the task to be accomplished. The membership should be representative of the relevant stakeholders and may contain other expert support people.

Issues to be discussed will be assigned by and be within the jurisdiction of the original committee. The charge will be determined by the original committee.

The subcommittees will involve all members in their deliberations. Decisions are reached by consensus, understanding the parameters of accountability. All decisions are in the form of recommendations to the original committee.

Each subcommittee will gather whatever input and information it needs to accomplish its tasks.

Each subcommittee will report to the original committee and the original committee will evaluate the effectiveness of the subcommittee in meeting its assigned task.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Definition

Dispute resolution is the process of resolving differences within or among shared decision-making groups.

Dispute resolution applies when a particular group or team:

- is unable to come to a decision
- questions its authority to make a particular decision

Dispute resolution shall not apply to issues that involve:

- district policy
- student or personnel issues
- collective bargaining agreements
- state and federal law

- Commissioner's regulations and Regents rules
- the expenditure of funds beyond that which is available to a particular group or team

Strategies

The following steps may be used to resolve differences:

- clarify issues
- identify options
- analyze options
- achieve consensus on choice of options
- implement option
- monitor and evaluate

Other alternatives to further assist the group or team in the dispute resolution are:

- bring in an outside facilitator
- get more training
- do more research
- identify and remove constraints
- decide on a compromise solution that might involve a trial period, a pilot program or a staggered implementation

If the above strategies do not bring resolution, the group or team may elect to:

- reach a decision in a way other than consensus
- defer the decision to a future time
- present the dispute to the next team or group on the organizational chart for resolution

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AS IT PERTAINS TO STATE & FEDERAL REGULATIONS

The Millbrook School District will meet all state and federal requirements for parental involvement, and will coordinate them with this plan. The Administration will ensure responsibility that these requirements are met.