

Chatham Central School District

Shared Decision Making Plan Revised April 2012

Introduction

The Chatham Central School District superintendent and Board of Education value and welcome the participation of all constituencies in the decision making process. The goal of the decision making process is to define goals and implement and assess activities to help students reach standards of excellence. The District operates under a long term Strategic Plan that is developed and monitored by a representative Strategic Planning Committee, which meets several times each year. Annually, representatives of each of the following constituencies are invited and encouraged to join and participate in the Strategic Planning Committee:

- Teachers
- Administrators
- Support Staff
- Parents
- Students
- Community Members
- Board of Education Members

Invitations to participate are communicated via such means as letters of invitation, news releases, postings on the District web site, District newsletters, mailings home, etc. Invitations are also sent through designated representative groups such as collective bargaining units, parent booster organizations, and student leadership groups.

The Strategic Plan is based on goals adopted by the Board of Education. Various representative task forces, work groups, and/or committees work on the various building and district level activities within the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Planning Committee itself engages in the following types of activities:

1. The group provides input on the development of long term goals for the District and on the development of the Strategic Plan.
2. The group receives updates on various activities within the plan and monitors the plan's execution.
3. The group provides input and feedback to the Board, administration and various work groups as they carry out their activities.

Manner and Extent of Involvement of All Parties

All Parties

Chatham Central school District makes a concerted effort to communicate the issues and decisions facing the District. Through such communication efforts, all parties are made aware of opportunities for input. These communication methods include:

- District Web Page
- District Newsletters
- Press Releases
- Town Hall Meetings

Key Communicator List
Automated Calling and Email
Mailings

Representation on the Strategic Planning Committee includes all constituency groups. Work groups, committees, and task forces are open to all impacted constituents. The composition of each such group is determined by the charge of the group. For example, the Anti-Bullying Committee has a high level of student and parent involvement, but the Professional Development Committee is composed of teachers, teaching assistants, and administrators.

Teachers

Teachers have opportunities to volunteer for various committees and work groups. Most of these groups are chaired or co-chaired by teachers. In addition, teachers provide input through formal teacher leader positions—Instructional Study Team Leader and Grade Level Leader. Teachers are also regularly surveyed on various issues impacting instruction and school climate.

Support Staff

Support staff members are invited to participate in committees and work groups. They are also surveyed on a variety of topics.

Parents

In addition to participating in committees and work groups, parents have the opportunity for input through their established parent and booster organizations. In addition, they are invited to topic-specific meetings. Parents are also surveyed on specific issues.

Students

In addition to participating in committees and work groups, students have the opportunity to provide input through appropriate student organizations, such as student government. Students are also surveyed on a variety of topics. There is a student representative on the Board of Education.

Community Members

In addition to participating in committees and work groups, community members have the opportunity to address the Board during the Public Comment portion of Board meetings. The Board holds “Town Hall” meetings on major issues. The District has also recently launched a Face Book page on which community members can comment. Community members also have the ability of input through their vote.

Parameters for Involvement

Any work group, task force, or committee will be informed of the level of their involvement in decision making as part of its initial charge. There are three possible levels of involvement:

- Provide input.
- Make recommendation.
- Make decision.

The level of involvement will be determined by the administration and/or Board based on the nature of the decision. In general, input and/or recommendations are sought from as many

sources as possible prior to a decision being made. The authority for making the ultimate decision typically rests at the level of the individual responsible for overseeing its implementation (i.e. The principal typically makes the ultimate decision regarding building level issues.)

Educational Issues Subject to Shared Decision Making

All parties have input into the following educational decisions:

Budget

Budget is aligned with District and program goals. Budget proposals emerge from the work of the various work groups and committees. Budget is discussed at public Board meetings and at community forums.

Program Goals

Through participation in the Program Review cycle, parties have input into the future direction of individual programs.

District Goals

The Board of Education considers input from various work groups and committees, including the Strategic Planning Committee, when setting District goals.

Major Initiatives

The input of all constituencies is sought regarding major initiatives, such as changing the transportation system, grade level configuration, etc.

In addition to the above, teachers have input into the following educational decisions:

Curriculum Development

Teachers develop curriculum for approval by the Board of Education.

Program Proposals

Teachers may submit proposals for new or changed program to building administrators, and potentially to the Superintendent and Board.

Textbook Selection

Teachers nominate textbooks for adoption by the Board.

Professional Development

Teachers compose a majority of the Professional Development Committee, which creates the Professional Development Plan each year. Input from other teachers is sought via survey.

Scheduling

Teachers make requests for scheduling and assignment preferences. At the high school, the Instructional Study Team Leaders provide input into scheduling for consideration by the principal.

Common Assessments

Teachers collaborate and provide input on common assessments for their department and grade level.

Means and Standards by Which All Parties Will Evaluate Improvement in Student Achievement

The parties will review student achievement data to evaluate performance. This data includes, but is not limited to, state testing results, other standardized testing, results of common assessments, post-graduation data, etc. For some topics, other data may be available, such as survey data or program evaluations. When possible, it is always best to use multiple measures of achievement.

Manner in which Parties Will be Accountable for Decisions

Members of work groups, committees, and/or task forces are expected to communicate with and seek input and feedback from their constituency groups. When members represent specific organizations (i.e. parent or student groups) those members may be accountable to the group's by-laws or charters.

Reports and proposals that are advanced for action contain the names of the committee participants. If there is a concern or an issue, the matter is often referred back to the committee for review. Committees are also encouraged to review data and/or evaluation information to evaluate the impact of their decision.

Because authority for making the ultimate decision typically rests at the level of the individual responsible for overseeing its implementation, that person has individual accountability.

Process by Which Disputes Regarding Decisions about Educational Issues Will Be Resolved

Whenever possible, disputes regarding educational decisions will be resolved within the committee or task force. It is the expectation that committee representatives will seek input and reaction from their various constituencies as a part of their process.

As with all other education disputes, those that cannot be resolved informally through collegial discussion will follow the following dispute resolution process:

Step 1: Discussion with the appropriate administrator or department supervisor.

Step 2: Discussion with the Superintendent.

Step 3: Discussion with the Board of Education

As Education Law and regulation permit, disputes not resolved successfully by the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education.

Manner in Which State and Federal Requirements for Involvement of Parents in Decision Making Will Be Met

All committees, task forces, and work groups will ensure that parents are involved in the planning and evaluation of all federally funded programs. They shall also take into account Board policy, District regulation, available resources, and student needs in making recommendations and/or decisions.