

School Improvement Through Shared Decision-Making

The Dubuque Community School District is committed to the philosophy that school improvement is best achieved through the process of shared decision-making. Shared decision-making has its focus in the collaborative efforts of instructional and administrative support staff along with parents, community, and, when appropriate, student representatives. This planning and decision-making process shall be outlined annually in district and school improvement plans.

The purpose of school improvement is to keep both the school district and individual schools continually adapting in a positive manner to changes so that all students succeed at the highest level possible. School improvement is an ongoing process that may reaffirm existing policies and/or include major restructuring of schools and of approaches to teaching, learning and support services in order to assure the highest possible student performance.

The shared decision-making process provides for decisions concerning improvement to be made (1) close to where the students are educated, (2) through the participation of those most directly concerned with the students, and (3) within the context of district, state, and federal parameters. The shared decision-making process must occur within the framework of the district's comprehensive improvement plan and shall be organized and directed by the accompanying administrative guidelines.

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Revised: May 11, 2009
Revised: June 11, 2018
Reviewed: August 14, 2023

Administrative Guidelines: School Improvement through Shared Decision-Making

INTRODUCTION

At the district level, the focus of improvement efforts will be outlined in the District Strategic Plan with input from District and School Improvement Leadership Team (D/SILT). At the school level, the focus of improvement efforts will be outlined in the School Improvement Plan, developed collaboratively by the school's advisory committee, under the direction of the principal.

The district Strategic Plan will align with and contribute to the accomplishment of the district's mission. The district Strategic Plan will align with state and federal initiatives, as well as local goals as indicated through the continuous school improvement process. The district Strategic Plan will detail the school's yearly improvement goals and objectives, action plans, anticipated timelines, needed resources, and methods for evaluating the degree to which the intended goals were met and resulted in improved student achievement or other intended gains.

The school plan will align with and contribute to the accomplishment of district improvement goals and will detail the school's yearly improvement goals and objectives, action plans, anticipated timelines, needed resources, and methods for evaluating the degree to which the intended goals were met and resulted in improved student achievement or other intended gains. School plans will be submitted to the Superintendent by June 15.

I. DISTRICT AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT LEADERSHIP TEAM (D/SILT)

The D/SILT shall fulfill the responsibilities of the School Improvement Advisory Council (SIAC) required by Iowa law. Based on the team's analysis of needs assessment data, they shall make recommendations to the board about the following components:

1. major educational needs
2. student learning goals
3. long-range goals that include, but are not limited to, the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science achievement; and
4. harassment or bullying prevention goals, programs, training, and other initiatives.

At least annually, the D/SILT shall also make recommendations to the board with regard to, but not limited to, the following:

1. progress achieved with the annual improvement goals for the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science;
 2. progress achieved with other locally determined core indicators; and
 3. annual improvement goals for the state indicators that address reading, mathematics, and science achievement.
- A. Membership and representation – Membership on the district and school improvement leadership team is by invitation and voluntary, and shall include representation from every school. A rotation of members will be created to include principals, instructional staff, support staff, parents, community, and students when appropriate. All groups should be represented in a ratio sufficient to guarantee authentic participation.
- B. Meeting schedule – Meetings should be scheduled when they are most convenient for all members.

II. FUNCTIONS OF THE SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

At the school level the advisory committee is charged with providing feedback for the annual school plan. The focus of advisory committee work should be on those issues most closely associated with improving teaching and student learning.

III. STRUCTURE OF THE SCHOOL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Each school shall develop a plan for the advisory committee and this plan shall be reviewed annually and be part of the school plan submitted to the district. The plan will contain:

- A. Statement of purpose
- B. Membership and representation
- C. Officers (if organized with them)
- D. Meeting schedule
- E. Agenda (where posted, how to add an item)
- F. Minutes (where posted)
- G. Procedure for Settling Differences