

EXHIBIT III

SHARED DECISION MAKING GUIDE

This document has been jointly developed by the Riverview Education Association and the District, and reflects the expectations of both. It is the intent of both parties that this is a working document that will be reviewed, revised, and enhanced on an on-going basis.

Staff in the District make innumerable decisions every day. Many decisions are made by individuals, other decisions are made by groups.

Ideal decision-making occurs in a positive climate, in an inclusive organization, using effective process with continuous evaluation and adjustment. It focuses on student learning through improvement of programs, services and products within the District mission.

The following decision-making information is intended to guide both individual and group decision-making during the planning, implementation and evaluation of all that we do.

I. DECISION-MAKING PRINCIPLES

A. A Positive Climate:

1. Inspires openness and trust
2. Discourages hidden agendas/surprises
3. Presumes others are well intentioned
4. Encourages participation and collaboration
5. Values diversity
6. Encourages innovation and creativity
7. Allows change with purpose

B. An Inclusive Organization:

1. Invites and facilitates voluntary participation by those affected by the action, where possible (e.g. involvement and/or representation and/or active consultation of students, parents, classified and certified staff and community members).
2. Includes consensus-building as part of group decision-making processes when appropriate.
3. Provides an opportunity at the outset to discuss and identify parameters of the decision, and asks:
 - a. What is the scope of the decision

- b. Who will be affected and how will they be involved?
- c. Who will make the decision?
- d. When does the decision need to be made?

C. An Effective Process:

1. Should be clear at the outset, may vary depending on the issue, and could change during the process if necessary and so communicated
2. Identifies the decision-making method to be used (e.g., consensus, voting, group input-leader decision, leader only decision)
3. Identifies a communication strategy
4. Identifies options to meet diverse needs where possible
5. Focuses on major questions:
 - a. What is the issue? (question, concern)
 - b. What do we believe? (values, philosophy, beliefs, guiding principles)
 - c. What do we know? (research, expert opinion, experience, best practice)
 - d. What is the desired result? (ideal/ultimate goal)
 - e. What resources are needed and available? (human, time, fiscal, physical)
 - f. What do we do? (action, responsibility, implementation, evaluation)
6. Trusts that all will take responsibility for positively implementing a decision once made, including those who choose not to participate in the group decision-making process
7. Ensures that decisions are within legal and contractual parameters

D. Continuous Evaluation

1. Takes place throughout the decision-making process and after implementation, assessing both process and content
2. Can involve all those affected by a decision, whether or not involved in making the decision, and asks:
 - a. Is the decision contributing to student learning by improving the quality of the program, service, or product?

- b. How does this decision support the District and site missions?
 - c. What is the decision-making climate (Section I)?
 - d. Were the parameters discussed and identified at the beginning of the process (Section II, C)?
 - e. Is decision-making organized to include all who should be involved (Section II, A)?
 - f. How is the process working (Section III)?
- 3. Considers questions which arise during the process
 - 4. Reviews options, choices, alternatives.
 - 5. Identifies the next step in the decision-making process

II. DECISION MAKING GUIDELINES

The following guidelines are embedded in ideal decision-making:

- A. Decision making at the schools should focus on teaching, learning, student achievement and behavior management, and should support the District's Mission.
- B. In making decisions staff should utilize data to identify areas needing improvement.
- C. Parameters and time lines for each decision should be identified at the outset.
- D. Opportunities should exist at each site for active involvement of other building staff, students, parents, and community members in decision-making.
- E. The requirements of statutes, regulations, Board Policy and collective bargaining agreements must be met unless there are approved waivers in place.
- F. Shared decision making balances site autonomy with the responsibility to be knowledgeable about and consider the impact of decisions on others; buildings must sometimes yield their specific desires to the greater good of all.

III. SHARED DECISION MAKING PARAMETERS

- A. School staffs are expected to operationalize the ideal decision-making guidelines at their sites, and document and assess their shared decision-making processes.
- B. Opportunities will be available for those affected to be involved in school-based decision-making processes. All will take responsibility for positively implementing a decision once made, including those who choose not to participate in the group decision-making process.
- C. Shared decision making at the site level can be time-consuming. In developing decision-making processes, schools staffs should address how effective decision-making will occur if it cannot be accomplished within the normal meeting schedules.
- D. Questions can be raised about decisions made at any level. Decision makers need to be prepared to explain the reasons for decisions that they make.
- E. If a decision cannot be reached within the time line, and extension of the time line is not feasible, an interim decision will be made by the principal. The interim decision will be in effect until such time as a final decision can be reached, or shall stand if the decision cannot be reversed.
- F. REA and District staff will assist buildings with shared decision-making upon request from the principal and staff.

IV. SHARED DECISION MAKING OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

- A. There are many ways by which a group can make a decision. Each decision-making method has value and is appropriate in certain situations. It is imperative the building staff is given the opportunity to participate in choosing the method.
- B. A group that is effective in decision-making understands all of the basic methods of decision making well enough to choose that method which is best for:
 - 1. The amount of time and resources available.
 - 2. The type of decision to be made.
 - 3. The skill and experience of the group in using different decision-making methods.
 - 4. The kind of climate the group wishes to establish in decision-making.
 - 5. The type of setting in which the group is working.

V. METHODS OF DECISION MAKING

A. Decision by Authority without Group Discussion

The designated leader makes the decision without consulting the group members in any way. This is a very efficient method because it takes very little time to accomplish. However, it is usually not a very effective method if others are required to implement the decision.

B. Decision by Expert

The designated expert makes the decision. This can be another efficient decision-making method if time is limited. It is usually not an effective method if others are going to be required to implement the decision, or if the members of the group disagree on whether or not the designated decision maker is an expert.

C. Decision by Formal Authority

A power structure/committee is given authority by the group to make the decision. This is a highly efficient method. The effectiveness of this method is very dependent on whether the right information and/or input has been retrieved and used by the authority in making the decision. If this method does not sufficiently involve the members of the group, implementation will be difficult.

D. Decision by Minority

A small number of people employ tactics that produce action and therefore must be considered decisions, but which are taken without the consent of the majority. This method, while appearing to be efficient, often results in a feeling that is that is referred to as "being railroaded." This method will result in implementation difficulties.

E. Decision by Majority Rule: Voting and/or Polling

A procedure where a decision is usually based upon 50% + 1 of the people in a group deciding the course of action for the whole group. This can be an effective method if all members feel they have been given their opportunity to influence the group, and if the whole group has agreed to follow the norm (established prior to the decision-making process) that all agree to implement majority vote decisions.

F. Decision by Super Majority Vote

A decision is based upon a percentage greater than 50% (usually between 70-90%) of the people in a group deciding the course of action for the whole group. This can be an effective method where successful

implementation of a decision clearly requires more than a simple majority vote of the group. Effective implementation will also depend on the extent to which members feel they have been given a chance to influence the group and if the group has agreed to follow the norm (established prior to the decision-making process) that all agree to implement super majority vote decisions.

G. Decision by Consensus

A collective opinion arrived at by a group of individuals working under conditions that permit open communication in a sufficiently supportive climate where members feel that they have individually been given the chance to influence the decision. When a decision is made by consensus, members understand the decision and are committed to supporting it.

Consensus is the best method for producing a decision that:

1. all members will be committed to implementing
2. uses the resources of all group members; and
3. increases the future decision-making effectiveness of the group.

Decisions by consensus take a great deal of time and member motivation, and prove to be very frustrating to group leaders. Group training and practice in consensus decision-making skills are necessary for groups to be effective in using this method. Therefore, the use of consensus should be limited to significant decisions that require everyone's commitment for successful implementation.

H. Decision by Unanimous Consent

A perfect, but least attainable method where everyone truly agrees on the course of action to be taken. For obvious reasons, this method may be a highly inefficient way to make decisions.