

SHARED DECISION MAKING COMMITTEE

The Houston Independent School District (HISD) Board of Education established and approved the campus-level planning and decision-making process in 1992. This process includes the creation and maintenance of a Shared Decision-Making Committee (SDMC) at each school to review the district's educational goals, objectives, and major district wide classroom instructional programs. Each committee shall be designed to involve professional and non-professional staff, parents, community members, and business representatives in establishing academic and other performance objectives of the school for each academic excellence indicator adopted in the Texas Education Code (TEC).

Definitions

For the purposes of this memorandum, the following definitions shall apply. See Reference (c).

- a. Parent - Parent means a person residing in the district who is a parent of or who is standing in parental relation to a student enrolled at a district school and who is not an employee of the school or the district.
- b. Community Representative - Community representative means a person 18 years of age or older residing in the district but does not include a person who is a parent of a student in a district school or a person who is an employee of the school or district.
- c. Business Representative - Business representative means a person who operates a business, without regard to the location of the business or the residence of the person.

Membership

The school principal determines the size of the committee. Membership must include parents, community representatives, and no more than one business representative. Professional staff members must include at least two-thirds classroom teachers and one-third other campus-level professional staff. The TEC stipulates the ratio between the number of classroom teachers and other school-based staff members. The number of classroom teachers should be at least twice the number of school-based professionals (2:1). This ratio does not apply to non-instructional staff members, parents, or business and community members. No more than one non-instructional staff member should be elected to the SDMC. Other SDMC members must include at least two parents of students currently enrolled within the district selected by the campus's parent organization; two community members; and one business representative. The principal has the authority to appoint additional parents, community representatives, and business representatives to the SDMC. See References (a), (e), and (f).

Election

The school-based professional staff representatives to the SDMC are elected according to rules established by the HISD Board of Education. For more detailed information see Reference (c). The principal serves as chairperson of the committee and as a member; a co-chairperson is elected from the school professional staff. Each May an election is held by secret ballot to determine the school-based members of the SDMC. Each member serves a two-year staggered term. Schools may identify first and second runner-ups that would fill vacancies during the first nine weeks of school only. When a vacancy occurs after that time

period, an election is held by secret ballot to select a new representative to complete the term.

Responsibilities

The SDMC must be involved in decisions related to areas specified by the TEC. See References (e) and (f). The areas that require involvement of the SDMC are:

- Implementing all pertinent campus-level planning processes;
- Developing recommendations for the school budget;
- Submitting recommendations for the school curriculum;
- Recommending changes in the school's staffing patterns;
- Developing and approving the campus staff development plans;
- Developing, reviewing, and revising the School Improvement Plan (SIP) for the purpose of improving student performance for all student populations. After the principal approves the SIP, the SDMC will present the plan to the school-based professional staff for a vote of approval. See Reference (d);
- Reviewing and making recommendations regarding the school's organizational structure; and
- Establishing procedures to periodically obtain broad-based community, parent, and staff input.

Operating Procedures

The operating procedures for the committee are as follows:

- a. Meetings In addition to regularly scheduled meetings (approximately once a month), the committee must hold at least one public meeting each year after receipt of the annual campus rating from the Texas Education Agency to discuss the performance of the school and the school's objectives.
- b. Agenda The committee shall establish procedures for school personnel, parents, and business and community representatives to submit agenda items for meetings.
- c. Minutes A record of all decisions and significant discussion items shall be maintained by the committee. Copies of the SDMC minutes shall be distributed to members of the committee, school-based personnel, and the appropriate district superintendent, and shall be available to the general public upon request.
- d. Decisions - The committee is an advisory group to the school principal except for campus staff development. The committee must outline procedures for addressing the areas of involvement listed in paragraph 8 and for decision making. The principal shall consult the SDMC in matters relating to the school educational program, but the principal has the final authority in fiduciary and financial decisions.