Binghamton City School District

Steps to Guide Shared Leadership Team and Planning Process

July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2023

2020-2021 Excellence in Academics Expansion Committee
Tim Ames, Board of Education Representative
Thomas Anschtz, Social Studies Teacher, West MS
Ann Marie Bogart, Grade 4 Teacher, Calvin Coolidge
Megan Brockett, Community Representative
Marianne Carangelo, PTA Council President
Kristie Cluck, Kindergarten Teacher, Thomas Jefferson
Kayla Cobb, Special Education Teacher, West MS
Larry Dake, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction & Budget
Eugenie Johnston, Music Teacher, Benjamin Franklin
Ariana Koniuto, Theater Teacher, Binghamton HS
Amy Nugent, Special Education Teacher, Theodore Roosevelt
Kevin Pendergast, Math Teacher, Binghamton HS
Cynthia Raymond, Special Education Teacher, West MS
Michele Rozen, Kindergarten Teacher, Woodrow Wilson, BTA President
Jacqueline Scallan, Department Chair for ELA, ENL, and World Languages
Aubrie Smith, Grade 2 Teacher, Woodrow Wilson
Wendi Stetson, Music Teacher, MacArthur
Peter Stewart, Principal, Horace Mann
Sherri Tucker, English Teacher, East MS
Paul Vesci, Associate Principal, Binghamton HS

Binghamton City School District

Plan for School-based Planning and Shared Decision-making
Rationale

The district is committed to collaboration on a broader scale which decentralizes decision-making and places each school building as the locus of decision-making and change. Involvement of parents, teachers, support staff, administrators, board of education members, students and community ensures a broader view of what students should know and accomplish as they learn and grow in our schools. The Board of Education will inform and support the district’s compliance with state and federal guidelines. The following plan regarding shared decision-making in our district addresses the requirements of Commissioner’s Regulation 100.11 as developed by the Binghamton City School District’s Excellence in Academics Committee and adopted by the Board of Education.

Historical Perspective

In 1991, the Binghamton City School District’s Excellence in Academics Committee (EIA) began working in cooperation with the school districts’ 10 buildings to establish the implementation of shared decision-making in accordance with the Commissioner’s regulation. The committee believed a truly collaborative document could not be created without allowing each individual building the opportunity to establish its own working document. Furthermore, it was apparent all of the buildings desired training in consensus decision-making, in group functioning, and in creating working visions. Training was initiated with Ann Martin from the School of Labor Relations at Cornell University, and from NEW, Broome-Tioga BOCES, and other sources.

Each building shared-decision making team was charged to develop a site-based decision making building plan which identified its vision, organizational structure, decision making method, conflict resolution procedures, and the scope of the educational issues subject to cooperative planning and shared decision-making. Each plan was reviewed by the EIA Committee as to its compliance with the Commissioner’s regulation. The EIA committee proceeded to develop the district plan, which encompasses all school buildings plans, and is based on the collaborative efforts of each school.

During the late 1990’s through 2012, training and facilitating continued through Sean Brady and his company, Prism Decision-making, were engaged in providing an annual opportunity in consensus building and school improvement plan development. These plans were tied to other state requirements aligned to state and federal accountability rules. In 2014, training continued through a consultant from the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory on Shared Leadership Team framework, that incorporated current research based practices on the roles and responsibilities of members of a team leading the work around school improvement.
In 2016, the district endeavored to align its current shared decision making practices with the requirements of Commissioner's Regulations 100.11. The Excellence in Academics Committee (EIA) chartered a focus group, an “EIA Expansion” group, for this purpose. As for the portions of the plan that relate to parental or community stakeholder involvement, it was the EIA Expansion Group, consisting of the interim superintendent of schools, administrators selected by the district's administrative bargaining association, teachers selected by the teacher's collective bargaining association, parents selected by school-related parent organizations, and board of education members who met during the 2016-2017 school year and discussed components of the plan and its implementation throughout the district. The portions of the district plan that provide for participation of teachers and/or administrators are developed with consideration given to their respective collective bargaining contracts with the board of education, which have been incorporated into this plan.

Overview

In accordance with Commissioner's Regulations 100.11, the Binghamton City School District shared-decision making plan will address the following:

- The manner and extent of the involvement of all parties.
- The educational issues subject to cooperative planning and shared decision-making at the building level.
- The means by which all parties are held accountable for their decisions.
- The process by which disputes about educational issues being decided are resolved at the local level.
- The means and standards by which the parties evaluate improvement in student achievement.
- The manner by which all State and Federal requirements for the involvement of parents in planning and decision-making are coordinated with the overall plan.

This plan shall be adopted by Board of Education resolution after consultation with and full participation by the designated representatives of the administrators, teachers, and parents, and after seeking endorsement of the plan by such designated representatives. This plan shall be made available to the public and reviewed biennially by the Excellence in Academics Committee and submitted to the Board of Education for approval prior to reaffirming the plan to the Commissioner. Each building shall establish a site specific shared decision making plan (Attachment A) that identifies the process by which issues are addressed and decisions relevant to the school are made.

Definitions and Roles

Key terms and roles relevant to this plan are defined as follows:

- Excellence in Academics Committee: The district's team charged to promote School-Based Planning and Shared Decision-Making in compliance with Commissioner's
Regulations 100.11, responsible to monitor and support the work of the individual Building Teams.

- Building Team: A school-based decision-making team. Each school will establish and maintain such a team. Team structure, participants, and selection process are further discussed in the selection below titled “The Manner and Extent of the Involvement of All Parties.”
- Students: Students who are in attendance in the building, as deemed appropriate.
- Parents: A parent or guardian that is not a member of another constituent group and has a child attending the school.
- Community Stakeholder: A community representative that has an existing relationship with the building.
- Teachers: Teaching and teaching assistant faculty currently assigned to the building.
- Support Staff: Clerical, custodians, aides and monitors, and food service staff currently assigned to the building.
- Administrators: Administrators assigned to the building.

The Manner and Extent of the Involvement of All Parties

The Excellence in Academics Committee (EIA) is a district team charged to promote School-Based Planning and Shared Decision-Making in compliance with Commissioner’s Regulations 100.11, responsible to monitor and support the work of the individual Building Teams. The Excellence in Academics Committee consists of eight (8) members: Central Office, Building Principal, two teachers (identified by the Binghamton Teachers Association), two parents, one Board of Education member, and one Community member. The EIA Committee will resolve disputes or conflicts that cannot be resolved by the Building Team.

The following represents the district committee’s guidelines for Building Team.

Each Building team must include teachers, administrators, and parents/guardians. In addition to, membership may come from the constituent groups listed below:

- Board of Education
- EIA (District Committee)
- Community Members
- CSEA (Civil Service Employees Association)
- Paraprofessional CSEA
- Students (as deemed appropriate)

Each team, through its building shared decision making plan (Attachment A), has identified the number of people representing each constituency, how these people are chosen, length of terms, participation requirements and the replacement procedures. The membership of the committee should reflect a balanced composition of the school community. Each constituent group in the building should have voice and representation in the process. As outlined in the Planning
Template, each SLT member has specific stakeholder groups from which to solicit input and gather feedback.

Individuals employed by the district or a collective bargaining group representing teachers or administrators in the district may not serve on school committees as the only parent member. At least one parent member must not qualify under any other constituent group.

Restructuring schools involves not just the schools, the students, the staff, and the Board of Education, but the larger school community of parents, community members, and business leaders. Each member needs to be cognizant of the level of participation which is necessary to produce productive shared decision-making teams. Open communication and the discussion of undiscussables is necessary to facilitate organizational change. Committees should use each other as resources, be constructive, and be hard on issues and easy on people. Effective communication from each building team is essential. Therefore, a mechanism for effective communication, including distribution of minutes and the posting of agendas, meeting dates, and locations, should be delineated in each building.

The scheduling of meetings should be flexible to accommodate the concerns of each constituent group. The district committee recommends that each team meet at least once per month. More frequent meetings are encouraged.

**Educational Issues Subject to Cooperative Planning**

These areas shall include but may not be limited to:
- Curriculum implementation
- Classroom practices
- Resource allocation
- Staff development
- Budget development
- Waivers to teacher contract
- School Climate
- Extended Day programming
- School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP)

Each Building Team will prioritize issues consistent with Board of Education goals and the district’s mission and philosophy statement. Teams will analyze the situation, plan for work to be done, and complete a yearly self-assessment.

It is recognized that when an item is brought to the Shared Leadership Team, the item should be allowed to follow the discussion and feedback process. SLT items are subject to the shared-decision making process. At times, this may mean that items need to be brought back to staff for feedback, and then discussed further at future meetings. It may not be possible for all SLT items to be resolved within the course of a single meeting. Buildings should provide the requisite time
for full staff feedback to be gathered and brought back to a future SLT meeting for discussion before a collaborative decision is reached.

The following areas are NOT subject to shared-decision making by the Building Teams:

- Issues relating to law, rule, or regulation
- Personnel issues
- Health issues
- Emergency response and safety issues
- Ethical issues
- Civil Rights issues
- Issues covered by negotiated agreements, unless there is a sign-off by all parties such as length of school day, salary and compensation, or personnel matters
- Issues requiring financial resources in excess of the amount approved by the Board of Education
- Issues affecting other buildings

The Process by which Disputes about Education Issues Will be Resolved at the Local Level

Each building team has developed a process by which disputes centering on educational issues will be resolved. Various approaches include the following:

- Gather more information which would increase knowledge about a subject enabling them to make a decision.
- Table the decision and choose to revisit the subject at a later time.
- Bring in a neutral mediator and try again to achieve consensus.
- Brainstorm alternative solutions.
- Share the problem with the individual school community for alternate solutions, input, or a majority vote.
- Choose, by consensus, to take a vote with 2/3 of the building team needed to resolve the dispute.
- Decide to have each constituent group vote. The majority of each consistent group will determine the one vote for their group, thereby determining if a decision can be reached.

Any dispute that cannot be resolved by the Building Team is brought to the EIA Committee. The EIA Committee will discuss and provide recommendations to the Building Team who will then reconvene to resolve. If the Building Team cannot arrive at a resolution, the EIA Committee will make the final decision.

The Means and Standards by which the Parties Will Evaluate Improvement in Student Achievement

The EIA Committee and the Building Teams will continue to evaluate and monitor student instructional progress on the basis of a nationally recognized and proven local process. This process will include student learning outcomes and standards of excellence, identified by district
administrators and teachers. To the extent required, the process will also include measures as articulated under New York State Education Department’s Accountability System.

**Academic Standard and Targeting Process**

The Academic Profile/Academic Targeting process which has been in use in the District since 1981 has successfully helped in monitoring and improving student achievement. The Profile measures outcomes based on both local and State standards. The entire Profile flows from two major elements:

1. **State-identified education goals and learning outcomes.**

   Included here are such things as Regents Examination, State Competency Tests, and State Program Evaluation Tests.

2. **Locally identified education goals and learning outcomes.**

   Included here are locally determined standards such as the expectation that 95% of students will pass State competency Tests as well as meet other locally established mastery levels. Stanford Achievement Test results are also included. In addition, other student descriptors are also to be found here: student retention, graduation data, post-graduate student plans, Scholastic Aptitude Test results, and data on student suspensions and student disciplinary hearings.

   A District Planning Team composed of at least 20 will be established and serve as a group of representative stakeholders from the community. This team will be composed of community members from Higher Education and local business, Board members, the Superintendent, Administrators, Teachers, Aides/Clerks/Monitors, parents, and secondary students. The District Planning Team will be responsible for reviewing performance data, survey results, and/or feedback received by focus groups, resulting in time-bound goals. These goals will move forward to the Board of Education for review and/or revision and adoption as district goals.

   Academic target setting takes place at the building level in the form of an improvement plan. The goals that are identified in each building’s plan are to be aligned to the district goals as adopted by the Board of Education. Each building team will be responsible for the creation of the school’s improvement plan, also known as the School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP) under Title I regulations. The plan will outline the building’s measurable goals, strategies, and activities that will be used to achieve the goals.

   **Manner in which all State and Federal requirements for the involvement of parents in planning and decision-making will be coordinated**

   There are a variety of State and Federal requirements for the involvement of parents in planning and decision-making. This includes such areas as: compensatory education, occupational education, health education, and special education.
It is the district’s intent to maintain existing parental involvement efforts mandated by State and Federal regulations. In order that each Building Team and the EIA Committee is kept apprised of progress in each area, reports will be periodically made to the ELA Committee:

- Parental involvement programs being planned, implemented or currently underway.
- Activities being undertaken through these initiatives
- Dates of planned meetings
- Copies of meeting notices and minutes
- Recommendations developed by participants of such initiatives

In order to ensure adequate communication between parent involvement efforts and Building Teams, Building Teams should regularly place on their agenda opportunities for parent representatives to share planned parent events.

Parents are encouraged to be active participants of Building Teams via School PTA’s, Booster Clubs, community announcements, school newsletters and personal invitations. Parent representatives on building and district teams are chosen by their organization to serve designated terms.

Summary

The district, with the full support of the Board of Education, believes the local school is where excellence must be achieved. In accordance with this belief, our shared decision-making plan involves those closest to the children in making the educational decisions for the school. Because we feel individuals responsible for implementing decisions should have a voice in determining those decisions, the parents, school staff and the community have been charged with this responsibility through the creation of this district plan. The district is confident, through this process, that the goals for the students of the Binghamton City School District will be achieved.

Attachment A - Building Team Shared Decision Making Process Template

Steps to Guide Shared Leadership Team and Planning Process

1. Who is on the team? List your team members:
2. Additionally, indicate how members were solicited. Consider fair representation to serve on the committee.

3. What processes are in place for SLT members to provide agenda items for meetings?
   a. District-Wide Norms:
      i. Agendas are communicated at least one week in advance to SLT members.
      ii. SLT members have the opportunity to review agenda and add items based on feedback from their stakeholder groups.
      iii. Topics that require time and attention are provided opportunity for staff feedback through SLT members; feedback brought back to future SLT meetings.
      iv. Meeting minutes are disseminated to full staff as soon as possible, recognizing constraints in work day and week.

4. What leadership traits will we collectively represent? List below.

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<tr>
<th>Leadership Trait</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Establishes strong lines of communication with stakeholders.</td>
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<td>Culture</td>
<td>Fosters shared beliefs and a sense of community and cooperation.</td>
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<td>Relationships</td>
<td>Demonstrates awareness of personal aspects of students, teachers, and staff</td>
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<td>Focus</td>
<td>Establishes clear goals and keeps those goals in the forefront of the school's attention. Establishes a set of standard operating procedures and routines.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment</td>
<td>Involved in the design and implementation of curriculum, instruction, and assessment.</td>
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5. List your norms that will guide each of your Shared Leadership Meetings below:

**Procedural Norms:**
1. We will establish a structured agenda, including defined roles, outcomes, next steps, public comment and meeting dates.
2. We will begin meetings on time and end on time.
3. We will make decisions collaboratively.
4. We will communicate with and make minutes available to all stakeholders through email, hard copies posted in the staff room and above copiers, in the SLT shared drive, direct discussion at PLC’s or during common planning time.

**Behavioral Norms:**
1. We will keep students and student achievement at the forefront of all decisions.
2. We will be prepared for meetings (reading, materials, data, etc.) and commit to attend all meetings.
3. We will respect others’ ideas and examine all points of view before reaching consensus.
4. We will leave each meeting supporting each other on the decisions that were reached through consensus.
5. We will stay focused on the speaker and topic.

6. Set dates for Leadership Team meetings at least once a month but twice a month may be needed depending on the building’s plan and need. List the planned dates for the year below. Dates for monthly substitute release will be provided by the district. In the event a building needs to hold an SLT meeting after school, time that exceeds one hour per month shall be compensated at the committee rate of pay.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date of Meeting</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Recorder</th>
<th>Time-keeper</th>
<th>Process Observer</th>
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Establish roles for each meeting: facilitator, time keeper, recorder, and process observer.

The definition of each roles is as follows:
Facilitator
- Manages activities & discussions
- Summarizes decisions and discussions
- Clarifies issues
- Ensures all participate
- Monitors progress toward meeting outcomes

Time Keeper
- Monitors time of each agenda item
- Informs of time remaining
- Helps team revise times allotted on the agenda as necessary

Recorder
- Captures the key ideas, decisions, assignments of the meeting
- Distributes the minutes
- Minutes include who should do what by when

Process Observer
- Provides feedback on how the members followed the norms
- What did we do well?
- What do we need to improve next time?
  - Did everyone participate?
  - Did we stay on task?
  - Were the roles carried out efficiently?
  - Did we follow our norms?

7. **Agenda and Meeting Minute format** – Each building will use the district-wide adopted templates, which includes: the team’s norms, outcomes for the meeting, the team’s responsibilities, the meeting roles, and communication chain message. (See attached template and example.) **Indicate here how the agenda and minutes will be communicated to stakeholders and determine the message:** (Think key ideas, decisions, strategies, improvement initiative etc.) Some meeting information is time-sensitive; meeting minutes should be sent as quickly as possible within the constraints of the work week.

8. **Use a timed agenda:** timed agendas move a group forward and keep a group from getting off track. If the time is not enough, the team has to reach consensus to extend the time. (See example.)

Sample

Agenda for Weekly LT Meeting
8:00-8:05 Review Norms
8:05-8:15 Connecting Activity/Celebrations

8:15-8:30 Item#1________________________________
8:30-8:45 Item#2________________________________

8:45-9:00 Closing
Next Steps:
Communication Chain Message:
Process Observer Report on Norms
9. Set up a communication chain: Each team member is responsible for communicating to a certain group of stakeholders all the decisions made in the meeting and for seeking input from that same group for future agenda items. All stakeholder groups (Administration, Teacher, Aides/Monitors/Clerical/Custodians, Parent/Community members, and if applicable, students) shall be represented and communicated with through the communication chain.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leadership Team Member</th>
<th>Staff you communicate with and gather input from</th>
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10. Following is a list of how decisions may be made as a team and with the staff. When a decision is made, how it was made should be noted in the minutes of the meeting by including the name of the method used.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Making Decision Methods</th>
<th>When Used</th>
<th>Who is Involved in Making the Decision</th>
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<td>Command</td>
<td>The issue is seen as “low-stakes” and staff prefers to let someone else make the decision OR the staff has high levels of trust in the person or group (e.g., the principal, the implementation team) making the decision. Additional people would not add to the quality of the decision. OR An “outside force” (e.g., the state education agency, the district) that has authority over the school makes the decision.</td>
<td>One person or group without input from others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult</td>
<td>The person or group making the decision seeks input from experts or representatives of the population in order to gain ideas and support for the decision. Use this method when many people will be affected, when you can gather information from various groups relatively easily, when people care about the decision, and when there are many options, some of them controversial.</td>
<td>One person or group with input from others. This is not consensus.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consensus*</td>
<td>This method is used when unity and high-quality decisions are desired. Use this method when the issues are high stakes, have a great impact, are complex or when everyone must support the final choice.</td>
<td>A group (representative or inclusive); everyone comes to an agreement and then supports the final decision</td>
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<td>Vote</td>
<td>People do not want to spend too much time making the decision or the issue is not that “weighty.” (This is not a good method if the stakes are high in a school because it leads to division.) There are a number of good options from which to choose and people agree to support the final choice.</td>
<td>A group of people (representative or inclusive); an agreed-upon percentage swings the decision</td>
</tr>
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Adapted from These four types of decision making and their explanations are drawn from Patterson, Grenny, McMillan and Switzer’s Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High. See pages 165-166.

The following are the SLT members who contributed to the development of this 10 Steps Planning Document: