

Decision-Making Guide

Staff in the district makes thousands of decisions every day. Individuals make many decisions; groups make other decisions. The principles of the Decision-making Guide are intended to guide both individual and group decision-making during the planning, implementation and evaluation of all that we do.

Ideal decision-making occurs in a positive environment, in an inclusive organization, where teamwork is essential, using effective processes with continuous evaluation and adjustment. It focuses on student learning through improvement of programs, services and products within the framework of the district goal.

Principles of Decision Making

I. A positive environment

- A. Inspires openness and trust.
- B. Encourages interdisciplinary teams to work and lead decision-making processes.
- C. Discourages hidden agendas/surprises.
- D. Presumes others are well intentioned.
- E. Encourages participation of staff, students, families and all constituents.
- F. Values diversity.
- G. Encourages innovation and creativity.
- H. Allows change with purpose.

II. An inclusive organization

- A. Invites and facilitates participation by those effected by the action, where possible (e.g. engagement and/or representation and/or active consultation of students, families, staff, and community members.)
- B. Includes consensus building as part of the group decision-making process when appropriate.
- C. Provides an opportunity at the outset to discuss and identify parameters of the decision and asks:
 - i. What is the scope of the decision?
 - ii. Who will be affected and how will they be engaged?
 - iii. Who will make the decision?
 - iv. When does the decision need to be made?

III. An effective process

- A. Should be clear at the outset and may vary depending on the issue and could change during the process if necessary and so communicated.
- B. Identifies the decision-making method to be used (e.g., consensus, voting, group input – leader decision, leader only decision.)
- C. Identifies communication and engagement strategies.
- D. Identifies options to meet diverse needs where possible.
- E. Focuses on major questions:
 - i. What is the issue? (Question, concern)
 - ii. What do we believe? (Values, philosophy, beliefs, guiding principles)
 - iii. What do we know? (Research, expert opinion, experience, best practice)
 - iv. What is the desired result? (Ideal/ultimate goal)
 - v. Who will be affected?

- vi. What are the possible barriers to implementation?
- vii. What are the resources needed and available? (Human, time, fiscal, physical)
- viii. What do we do? (action, responsibility, implementation, evaluation)
- ix. What do we want others to do?
- x. What is the timeline?

IV. Continuous evaluation

- A. Takes place throughout the decision-making process and after implementation, assessing both process and content.
- B. Involves all those affected by a decision, whether or not involved in making the decision, and asks:
 - i. Is the decision contributing to student learning by improving the quality of the program, service or product?
 - ii. How does this decision support the District goal?
 - iii. What is the decision-making climate? (Section I)
 - iv. Were parameters discussed and identified at the beginning of the process? (Section II, C)
 - v. Is decision making organized to include all who should be engaged? (Section II, A)
 - vi. How is the process working? (Section III)
- C. Considers questions, which arise during the process.
- D. Reviews options, choices and alternatives.
- E. Identifies indicators of success.
- F. Identifies the next step in the decision-making process.