

Mohonasen

**A Blueprint
For**

**School-Based Planning
And
Shared Decision-Making**

June 2012

Mohonasen Central School District

2072 Curry Road, Schenectady, NY 12303

Dr. Kathleen A. Spring, Superintendent

***School-Based Planning and Shared Decision-Making
Biennial Review Committee – June 2012***

Dr. Kathleen A. Spring, Superintendent
Patrick McGrath, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Katria Hitrick, Elementary Teacher and District Wide Administrative Intern

Administration:

Diane McIver, Principal, Bradt Elementary School
Deborah Kavanaugh, Pinewood Interim Principal
Debra Male, Draper Middle School Principal
David Collins, Mohonasen High School Principal

Mohonasen High School:

Becky Pauley, Guidance
Ben Pierson (MTA Building Rep.)

Draper Middle School:

Tom Diacetis, Teacher
Deb Wood, Guidance

Pinewood Intermediate School:

Amy Christopher, Guidance
Heidi DiPiero, Teacher

Bradt Primary School:

Michelle Hackett, Teacher
Jum Huggins, Teacher (MTA Building Rep.)

Parents:

To Be Determined for 2012-13

A Systemic Approach to Continuous Improvement

The Mohonasen Central School District accepts the responsibility to prepare students to be contributing and responsible citizens, well educated for success in college, work or life. Mohonasen has embraced the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) as a guide to achieve the aforementioned mission. This approach will serve the district well, yielding new programmatic approaches, and enhanced course offerings that will serve our students well as we prepare them for success in today's global society.

The Mohonasen approach to continuous improvement is predicated on the firm belief, and corresponding practices, that students shall progress through a K-12 system in which the curriculum is vertically and horizontally aligned. Said alignment not only provides for seamless programmatic transitions, but also serves to aid in the achievement of the CCSS and the 2007 NYS Content Standards. In so doing, recognition is given to the increased emphasis on providing a solid learning foundation for primary aged pupils; and conversely, a continuum of options that promote college and career readiness within a rigorous curriculum for elementary and secondary aged pupils.

There is an increased focus on developmentally appropriate instruction such as early literacy and math readiness. There is a commitment to infusing literacy instruction across all curricular areas. Coupled with targeted supports under AIS (Academic Intervention Services) and RTI (Response to Intervention), and immersion opportunities outside the non-traditional setting, the Mohonasen Central School District is poised to help ensure learning in a developmental continuum for all students.

Additionally, a steadfast focus remains on completing curriculum maps and formulating parallel local assessments, so as to provide further continuity and effectiveness of pedagogy. In so doing, the Mohonasen Central School District will comply with the Race to the Top (RTTT) initiatives regarding Annual Professional Performance Review and infusion of the CCSS.

School-Based Planning and Shared Decision-Making: An Overview

In May 1992, the New York State Board of Regents adopted Commissioner's Regulation 100.11 requiring that every school district in the state adopt a district plan by February 1994 that calls for the participation of teachers and parents with administrators and school board members in school-based planning and shared decision-making. This regulation was adopted by the Regents to help implement the Compact for Learning, a strategy for improving public elementary, middle and secondary education results.

The shared decision-making strategy was built on the principle that school and community collaboration is the most effective way to ensure improved learning. Shared decision-making is generally thought of as a process through which individuals participate on a team to produce a collective wisdom to resolve certain issues by working together. Major gains

in quality and productivity most often result from teams who pool their skills, talents and knowledge.

Besides the pooling of skills and understandings, teams have another distinct advantage over solo efforts: the mutual support that arises between team members. Synergy is another benefit that comes from people working together productively on an important project. It sustains the enthusiasm and support, even through difficult times.

According to the State Education Department, shared decision-making is “an organizational strategy for the participation of parents, community representation, teachers, other members of a school’s staff and administration and often students, which decentralizes authority and the decision-making process” (*Compact for Learning*).

Along with school-based planning, shared decision-making emphasizes the delegation of responsibility and the authority for certain responsibilities in the school district, from the district level to the individual school. The rationale for this process is the belief that decisions are best made at the point of implementation. Educational issues should be addressed close to the student(s) served by the decision.

Using their understanding of the existing committee structures, the Steering Committee for School-Based Planning and Shared Decision-Making arrived at consensus on the development of this plan. It was implemented in 1994 and has been reviewed periodically since that time.

“Shared Decision-Making,” “School-Based Planning” and “consensus” are terms utilized through the deliberations of the Steering Committee. (See Glossary)

School-Based Planning Teams

❑ Implementation Date and Extent of Involvement

School-based planning teams were formulated and in operation per regulation in all district schools by September 1, 1994.

These teams determine the frequency and number of meetings necessary to accomplish the tasks identified in this document. However, it is expected that each building level team will meet a minimum of seven times per school year.

❑ Composition of School-Based Planning Teams

The school-based planning team composition specified by the Steering Committee provides an opportunity for each building to design a team that reflects the cultures of that school. Building teams will continue to address the issue of team composition, taking into consideration the

membership selection process, number of members for each constituent group, the inclusion of additional members and the following criteria.

Each resulting School-Based Planning Team will:

- Have a *maximum* of 15 members, two of which shall serve as co-chairs.
- Include the building principal as a member.
- Have a minimum of two teachers.
- Have a minimum of two parents.
- Assure that the teachers and parents on the team represent all members of their constituencies.

It should be noted that a team shall proceed with meeting and discussing issues even without minimum membership if reasonable attempts are being made to fill the position.

Additional School-Based Planning Team guidelines:

- All staff has the right to be represented on the team.
- Teams have the prerogative to include members from constituencies other than those noted, for example, students and support staff members.
- The building level committee can designate a Project Team for the specific implementation of a decision. A project team is considered a sub-committee formulated by the building planning team, comprising staff members closest to the point of implementation, that will use the identical problem solving model as the building planning team to recommend solutions to a problem presented to it by the building planning team.
- Project Team membership should include expertise germane to the issue at the site of implementation.

Responsibilities of the School-Based Planning Teams

- To develop, write and maintain school-based planning team operating procedures within the guidelines presented in this plan.
- To distribute the minutes of each meeting to constituency membership and the superintendent of schools. Parents will obtain a summary of activities of building planning teams in the parent newsletter.
- To develop and annually update building level goals for improved student achievement that includes the items listed under “Educational Issues Subject to Shared Decision-Making,” page 6 of this document. Annual reports will be written and formally presented to the Board of Education through the Superintendent.
- To collaborate when appropriate with the district office, academic administrators, and other buildings and committees to ensure K-12 alignment.

- The designated administrator will facilitate quarterly meetings of the building co-chairs.
- To communicate to and from constituencies through, as an example, faculty and PTO meetings, labor-management meetings, student senate and student assemblies, plus inclusion of “privilege of the floor” on planning team meeting agendas. An update on issues being deliberated by building planning teams will be provided to the Board of Education following each district-wide building co-chair meeting.
- To encourage attendance and participation at meetings by those with views needing to be expressed. Remind building staff that these are open meetings.
- Reasonable time frames will be established for the completion of the work of all building teams. Deadlines will be established for all project team activity.

☐ Length of terms for members

In order to ensure continuity on the School-Based Building Planning Teams so that information and the history of topics are transferred from year to year, the Steering Committee recommends staggered two-year terms for school based team members and for co-chairs. Terms will begin on July 1st of each year.

- Minimum of two representatives per stakeholder group in order to ensure continuity.
- Rotation on/off School-Based Building Planning Teams should be planned to ensure that members are staggered by stakeholder group. For example, one-half of the representatives should rotate off each year, but leave a representative of their stakeholder group on the Team.

Shared Decision-Making Process

To ensure meaningful participation, The school-based planning teams will:

- Use consensus to reach decisions.
- Ensure two-way communication between the School-Based Planning Team and their constituencies.
- Determine how a dispute may be resolved (page 9).

Effective Shared Decision-Making requires that all members have equal authority and responsibility in relation to the issues being addressed and decisions being made. To ensure involvement in the decisions by all members of the School-Based Planning Committee, **consensus is to be used.** Consensus results in a decision that all members can support.

Educational Issues Subject to Shared Decision-Making

❑ Developing Building Goals

The School-Based Planning Team is charged with focusing on federal, state and local educational priorities and obtainable goals that improve results for all students. They are responsible for the development of building goals that will be implemented the following school year. They should draw upon staff resources for the development of the goals.

The goals should ensure that staff and/or stakeholders have a degree of flexibility to creatively meet student needs, that there is latitude for individual professional judgment and that teachers may be innovative risk-takers.

Consistent with this responsibility, School-Based Planning Teams will:

- Review achievement of previous improvement plans including existing required Local Assistance Plans, and School Improvement Plans.
- Review federal, state and local learning outcomes, particularly specific learning outcomes adopted by the Board of Education.
- Specify the student learning outcomes that will be a focus for a particular planning year.
- Establish standards for those outcomes (see glossary).
- Evaluate the extent of student progress toward the standard on each learning outcome. Evaluation of individual student progress is the responsibility of the pupil study teams, teachers, guidance counselors, etc.
- Collaborate to identify the best practices, programs, resources and staff development that will improve progress toward the standard(s) based on research, data and fact. The staff members closest to the point of implementation should be involved.
- Facilitate the design of implementation steps, including target dates and identification of the responsible parties.
- Evaluate the extent of improvement after implementation.
- Activate a continuous improvement cycle for each learning outcome using the preceding steps.
- Update and modify the goals annually.

❑ Issues involving the School-Based Building Planning Teams

Examples of issues the School-Based Planning Team may include in its deliberations are:

- Expectations for pupil attendance standards as they relate to improved results and demonstration of responsibility.

- Expectations for student/staff conduct (standards).
- Methods for reporting student progress to parents, students, etc.
- Methods for assessing student progress.
- Issues consistent with district goals and outcomes.
- Factors related to student readiness to learn.
- Collaboration/involvement of parents to foster student success.
- Student Recognition
- Health, Wellness, and Safety of students and staff
- Technology and 21st Century Learners
- Character Education and Bullying Prevention

Determining what issues should be addressed

Recognizing that many issues or concerns may be brought to the School-Based Building Planning Team for consideration, the following criteria has been established to determine whether the issue is one the team should address. The following statements should be used as guidelines to determine the extent of team involvement:

- The issue/concern affects student progress toward attaining standards for student achievement.
- The team has the skills, knowledge and resources to carry out its role responsibly.
- The issue is not the purview of another committee, staff member or the Board of Education, such as contractual and personnel issues.
- The issue is meaningful as it relates to student achievement.
- The intended outcomes are realistic and attainable.

Delegation and involvement of others in the Building Goals

Developing a usable set of building goals is an involved process that requires many invested participants. The School-Based Building Planning Team should involve all staff by soliciting input, delegating tasks to committees/departments and utilizing other resources. When determining issues for team consideration, the team should:

- Determine who should facilitate resolution of the appropriate issues (the School-Based Planning Team or another group or committee).
- Involve anyone affected by the decision(s) and/or consult him or her during planning.

- Utilize project teams (staff members closest to the point of implementation) to investigate specific issues.
- Utilize other district committees and teams as appropriate.
- Acknowledge any superceding mandates or regulations from federal, state and local levels.

Means and Standards for Evaluating Improvement in Student Achievement

The purpose of the New York State Learning Standards and the Shared Decision-Making process is to improve student achievement. School-Based Planning Teams must determine, therefore, what level or degree of student achievement they deem desirable. This will be accomplished by setting a standard that measures what they want students to learn and evaluating student progress against this standard.

Then, school-based teams will be able to identify program strengths and areas in need of improvement. The Steering Committee developed the following statements by which to evaluate improvements in student achievement:

- Evaluation of student progress and mastery will be based on New York State Education Department's established learning standards (Content Standards and CCSS) as well as learning outcomes identified through local measures.
- The means for assessing student progress toward and mastery of identified student learning standards will be NYSED standardized assessments and those locally established by the district (pre-and post- tests, formative evaluations, 3rd party assessments, and Student Learning Objectives (SLOs)) as part of the RTTT APPR legislation.

This system will be designed to produce valid and reliable data about students that is used for curricular and instructional decisions in moving students through a continuum of learning (not to deny access to further learning opportunities).

Means by Which All parties will be Held Accountable

The co-chairs of the school-based planning teams will submit a Year End Report to the Superintendent annually, in June, to include:

- Identified areas for improvement/goals
- Degree to which attainment is made
- Names of current and following year's membership
- Recommended areas of focus for following year.

Dispute Resolution Process

The Steering Committee supports Shared Decision-Making and participation by those closest to the point of implementation. They have concluded that every attempt should be made to resolve disputes at the school planning team level.

- Every attempt will be made to reach consensus on educational issues.
- Other strategies will be employed to resolve disputes if consensus is unattainable (mediation, problem-solving models, etc.).
- The principal, superintendent or assistant superintendent for instruction may be requested to resolve the dispute if other strategies have failed.

Coordinating State and Federal Requirements

Various federal programs (Title I, Title II) and state specific programs and organizational structures (PSEN, Occ. Ed., CSE) require parental involvement in decision-making.

- Federal and state requirements for the involvement of parents in planning and decision-making have been considered in the development of this plan.
- To ensure continuity of programming for all students, regardless of the funding source from which they are served, school-based planning teams will seek input and share their year end report with each funded program where parent involvement is required, when asked.

Successful Implementation of the School-Based Planning and Shared Decision-Making Plan

Team building, using consensus, developing an effective building education plan and utilizing problem-solving models involves strategies and procedures. The Steering Committee advocates team development and training in these and other processes to assure adequate preparation for the participants. In order to enhance the team process, the district will arrange annual training for the co-chairs of the four building planning teams.

Continued Responsibility of the District Steering Committee

The superintendent will reconvene the District Steering Committee two years from Board of Education adoption of the plan revision for re-certification. Building teams may request the

reconvening of the Steering Committee at any time to address specific issues as they might occur.

A Glossary of Terms

Assessment – A measurement or other systematic evaluation of the quality and range of student accomplishment.

Consensus – Consensus is reached when all participants agree that they understand something or some issue, can live with a decision, will support it and will communicate it.

Common Core State Standards (CCSS)- On January 10th, 2011, the NYS Board of Regents approved the recommended additions to the Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy and Common Core Learning Standards for Mathematics, plus a new set of Prekindergarten Standards. Additional information about statewide implementation and the development of P-12 curriculum models using the CCSS can be found at www.NYSED.gov.

New York State Learning Standards – Levels or degree of expected student attainment, formalized at three levels (elementary, intermediate, commencement) by the state, across seven curricular areas: English Language Arts, Social Studies, Mathematics, Science and Technology, Languages Other Than English, The Arts, Career Development and Occupational Studies, and Physical Education, Health and Consumer Education.

Project Team – A sub-committee formulated by the building planning team, comprising staff members closest to the point of implementation, that will use the identical problem solving model as the building planning team to recommend solutions to a problem presented to it by the building planning team.

School-Based Planning Teams – Even though the district has utilized building teams for shared decision-making, it is obliged to comply with Commissioner’s Regulations 100.11. The Steering Committee has designed the blueprint to bring us into compliance. That plan is contained in this document.

Shared Decision-Making – “A process by which all members of the education community at the district and school levels cooperate in identifying educational issues, defining goals, formulating policy and implementing and assessing activities to help students reach standards of excellence” (*State Education Department, A New Lexicon, 1992*).

Standards – Statements of the level or degree of attainment students are expected to accomplish for a specified outcome as well as the methods used to assess that attainment.

State Assessments – Examinations required by New York State of all students to determine their academic achievement and that of the district toward the accomplishment of the New

York State Learning Standards. These include Regents exams at the high school level and discipline-specific measures in Grades 4, 5, and 8.

