



Developing School Decision-Making Teams

"Never believe that a few caring people can't change the world. For indeed, that's all who ever have." —**Margaret Mead**

Why go this route?

- Because better decisions will be made for your students if your school has effective decision-making teams in place. On the other hand, where decision-making is confused or not well-shared, people have a hard time concentrating on teaching and learning.
- Because good school based decision-making has a direct effect on student achievement.
- Because time and effort will be used more effectively if carefully chosen teams are working on a well-defined project and know how they relate to other decision-makers.
- Because pre-established teams assure that all stakeholders have input where appropriate.

You'll know you've arrived when...

- You have task and decision-making teams set up for identified areas of need in your school.
- Issues and concerns flow through the team process.
- All stakeholders have enough input that they don't need to be a part of every decision.
- Teams are using a clear decision-making process.
- You have a way of testing the effectiveness of your action plans.

Construction Zone



It's about TIME

- Initial set-up meeting (1–2 hours)
- Next meeting to establish guidelines and expectations (1–2 hours)
- First team meeting (1–2 hours)



Potential COSTS

- Minimal funds involved. Mainly time and materials.
- Staff time
 - Snacks (if desired)



The Process

A step-by-step guide
to developing school
decision-making teams

NOTE: Steps marked with a  are accompanied by one or more inserts, included in this packet.

1 Consider common school-based decision-making teams

to see which ones seem most important in your situation.

- School Improvement Team/Steering Committee
See INSERT A for Step 1 for guidelines.
- Child Study Team
See INSERT B for Step 1 for guidelines adapted from Grand Rapids Public Schools.
- Parent Involvement/Parent & Teacher Organization/Association
Refer to MI-Map Packet 1:2 *“Organizing Family Involvement”* or connect with North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL) for more information on parent involvement at: <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/timely/upiover.htm>. PTA and PTO links are also available from that site.
- Curriculum Team (specific areas)
See INSERT C for Step 1 for guidelines.
- Behavior Management Team
Refer to MI-Map Packet 3:4 *“Developing a School-wide Behavior Management Plan.”*
- School Climate/Culture Team
Refer to MI-Map Packet 3:1 *“Developing a Climate/Culture Committee.”*

2 Develop a “charge” for the team.

See INSERT A for Step 2 for an agenda for a planning meeting which will lead you through being clear about what the purpose of the team will be, who the stakeholders are that need to be members of the team and if this group will be long-standing or temporary. Record your decisions in a “charge” that the team can refer to over the term of its work. INSERT B for Step 2 is a blank “charge” for you to follow or to adapt.

3 Prepare for the first meeting.

Determine who will chair or initially chair this team. Work with this person (or designate a person from the planning team) to write the agenda for the first team meeting and invite the participants. Build the agenda by choosing from and assigning time to activities in Step 4. Allocate time to your chosen activities, using INSERT for Step 3.

4 Hold the first meeting.

- Review the purpose with the group.
- Develop a timeline for when the decision/goal of the group will be met.
- Establish meeting procedures and roles. See MI-Map Packet 8:2 *“Strengthening Your Team Capacity.”*
- Decide on the decision-making process that the team will use. See MI-Map Packet 8:2.
- Agree on a calendar—how often and when the group will meet.
- Determine (or explain if it’s already in the “charter”) if the group will be permanent or will only meet for a specified period of time and who the group will report to.
- Decide on a process for reporting to stakeholders. See INSERT for Step 4.



Getting more mileage from setting up decision-making teams

How developing decision-making teams benefits your school in regard to the following initiatives:

Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA)

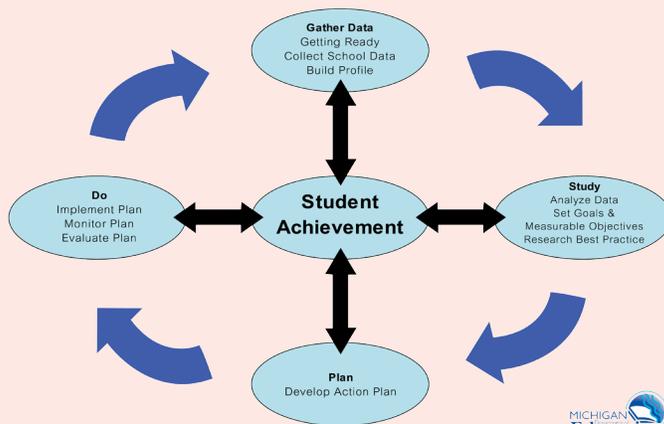
- In order to make Adequate Yearly Progress as specified by ESEA, a school will need to have effective decision-making teams in place to evaluate student data and make effective plans for improvement.

State Accreditation System

- The State Accreditation System focuses on the processes the school uses to improve the quality of instruction provided to its students.
- Schools will need to demonstrate that they involved families in a meaningful way at their school.

Michigan Continuous School Improvement Process (Mi-CSI)

Michigan School Improvement Framework



The Michigan School Improvement Framework (SIF) requires that Michigan schools create involved School Improvement Teams that include representatives from all stakeholder groups, to be used throughout the continuous school improvement process. This packet will help schools effectively develop and use school-based decision-making teams.



Resources

Books, Articles, Websites

101 Ways to Make Meetings Active

Mel Selberman, Kathy Clark.
Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer, 1999.

Say good-bye to boring meetings. These ideas introduce fun and energy, and will have team members looking forward to getting together.

Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In

Roger Fisher and William Ury.
New York: Viking Press, 1991.

This practical, positive book is about how to look below seeming disagreements to find what shared interests exist, so that the two sides can cooperate in finding creative ways past their disagreement.

The Wisdom of Teams

Jon Katzenbach and Douglas Smith.
New York: HarperCollings Publishers, Inc, 1993.

The authors dismiss touchy-feely “pseudo-teams” in favor of productive, focused ones which “gel” because they face together a specific, out-come-defined challenge.

“Making Teams Productive”

Gordon J. Myers. Pinnacle.
June-July, 1995.

“Teams in the Age of Systems”

Peter Scholtes. The Handbook of Best Team Practices. Amherst, MA: HRD Press, 1996.

People

Intermediate School Districts/RESAs can serve as a resource.

For more information, contact:

Michigan Department of Education

Office of Education
Improvement and Innovation
517-241-3147

School Improvement Unit
517-373-8480

Curriculum and Instruction Unit
517-241-4285

Office of Assessment
and Accountability
517-373-0048

Office of Early Childhood
and Family Services
517-241-3592

Office of Field Services
517-373-3921

Office of Professional Preparation
and Teacher Certification
517-373-6505

Office of Special Education
and Early Intervention Services
517-373-9433

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