

**MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC BOARD OF EDUCATION OPERATES AS MEDICINE HAT PUBLIC SCHOOL DIVISION,
AND FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT WILL BE REFERRED TO AS "MHPSD" AND/OR "DIVISION"**

SECTION 100 – Division Philosophy and Commitment

**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE: SHARED DECISION-MAKING
FRAMEWORK**

<i>PROCEDURE CODE:</i>	<i>102 AP 001</i>
Policy Reference: 102- Shared Decision-Making Responsibilities	

SHARED DECISION-MAKING BELIEFS AND PRINCIPLES

The intended audience of this document are the members of the educational stakeholder groups in Medicine Hat. The preparation of this document has been guided by the principles listed below and agreed to by the contributing partners:

1. We believe in striving to provide the best quality of public education to the students in Medicine Hat.
2. We believe in democracy and its application to the governance of education. We further believe that all decisions about education should be complementary and within legislative and administrative frameworks.
3. We believe that decisions should be made as close as possible to those affected by those decisions, and must be made on the basis of pertinent and timely information.
4. We believe that meaningful parental involvement is vital.
5. We believe that professional educators possess the necessary expertise and commitment to provide educational services to students.
6. We believe that decisions regarding the operational management of schools should be made by people who have the necessary knowledge, skills, information and resources to carry out those decisions.
7. We believe authority should not be delegated to an individual or group who cannot be held accountable for the results.
8. We believe the preferred relationship and mode of decision-making for the partners in education should be one of collaboration and co-operation.
9. We believe that an important purpose of education is the preservation and advancement of society.

The partners are concerned that although the introduction of shared decision-making depends on certain necessary conditions for successful implementation, such as time, types of decisions, resources and ample in-service, the limits on their availability makes the job of implementation extremely difficult. The implementation process is assisted by common understandings of the concept of shared decision-making and its role in decentralized management.

DEFINITIONS

Shared Decision-Making:

Shared decision-making is a process in which a variety of members of the school community collaborate, where appropriate, in identifying problems, defining goals, formulating policy, shaping direction, and ensuring implementation of decisions. People who are responsible for the implementation of a decision at the building or unit level are actively and legitimately involved in making the decision.

Site-Based Management:

Site-based Management is a process of governing that enhances decision making at individual schools or sites. It moves the process of creating solutions from the boardroom and Division office to personnel in the local school. Those affected by the outcome of a decision and those who are closest to the source of the problem will be the best ones to allocate resources in resolving issues. Major decisions about programs, personnel, school policies, and school planning should be shared by school-based administration with site staff, parents, school community, and students (where appropriate) within the parameters of provincial and Divisional government. This method of governance is a combination of centralized and decentralized decision-making which strives to promote effectiveness and efficiency by creating a learning organization through focusing on goals for teaching and learning, strategies for achieving those goals, and measures for success.

THE ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF SHARED DECISION-MAKING

Collaboration:

Shared decision-making requires the presence of a high degree of collaboration of those affected by the decision, regardless of their relationship to the organization or to each other. Evidence of true dialogue, debate, conflict and attention to multiple perspectives will be visible if genuine rather than if pseudo-collaboration exists. People have an opportunity to be involved or represented, but if they choose not to be involved, they also choose to support the decision once it is made.

Trust:

People will trust each other and will feel as if all the information is available to them. One factor that indicates the presence of trust in an organization is people's perception of the availability of information to those who need or want it. When people feel that information is being withheld, they become naturally suspicious.



Responsibility/Ownership:

With shared decision-making, people accept responsibility and ownership for their actions, rather than blaming or finding fault.

Change:

People accept change as a natural part of the growth process and continuously seek ways of improving both themselves and the organization.

Evolutionary:

Those engaged in shared decision-making recognize that the process is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Implementing shared decision-making, shifting mental models, restructuring practices, changing policy and procedures, and redesigning roles and responsibilities takes time and is a slow steady process that often requires careful inspection to determine the visible signs of progress.

Input from All:

Shared decision-making requires input from all affected stakeholders. Those involved listen to differing perspectives with respect, honouring the ideas of others as valid as their own.

Communications and Interdependence:

Through ongoing communication and the recognition that together the group is better than any one individual member, teams are able to make a more informed decision that will accommodate the needs of all parties.

Values Orientation:

Shared decision-making recognizes and employs the Division's clearly enunciated values of Excellence, Respect, Caring and Compassion, Learning, Integrity and Innovation.

Evaluation:

Shared decision-making requires that specific decision-making methodologies are determined, rather than automatically assuming that all shared decisions are decisions made by consensus.

Framework:

Shared decision-making requires continuous evaluation that examines the achievement of the goals or purpose of shared decision-making, as well as the processes and decisions themselves. This type of constant inquiry will assist decision makers in knowing if they are achieving their outcome [e.g. improved student achievement]; if the processes they are using are effective and efficient, allowing for widespread involvement of those affected; and if the decisions made are valid and appropriate. Undertaking shared decision-making before giving careful attention to the evaluation process is ill advised.



Shared decision-making needs to be aligned with Provincial, Division and school direction, policies and guidelines, or attention must be given to adjusting those areas that can be changed to accommodate shared decision-making.

NINE REASONS FOR SHARED DECISION-MAKING

1. Shared decision-making formally recognizes the expertise and competence of those who work in individual schools to make decisions to improve learning.
2. Shared decision-making gives teachers, other staff members, and the community increased input into decisions.
3. Shared decision-making improves morale of teachers, because staff members see they can have an immediate impact on their environment.
4. Shared decision-making shifts the emphasis in staff development. Teachers are more directly involved in determining what they need.
5. Shared decision-making focuses accountability for decisions.
6. Shared decision-making brings both financial and instructional resources in line with the instructional goals developed in each school.
7. Shared decision-making helps provide better services and programs to students.
8. Shared decision-making nurtures and stimulates new leaders at all levels.
9. Shared decision-making increases both the quantity and quality of communication.

THINKING STRATEGIES FOR SHARED DECISION-MAKING

Successful implementation of shared decision-making requires a shift:

FROM:		TO:
Autocratic	→	Collaborative
Ultimate responsibility	→	Shared responsibility
Control	→	Teamwork
Hierarchical Relationships	→	Equal relationships
Roles = Titles and Position	→	Roles = Capabilities
Manipulation	→	Facilitation
Scrutiny	→	Risk Taking

GOVERNANCE

This framework of shared decision-making is constructed on the basic understanding that while certain individuals or groups have primary responsibility for arriving at a decision, the essential elements of shared decision-making are observed. This means that primary decision makers dedicate themselves to: a high degree of collaboration; establishing and maintaining trust; accepting responsibility and ownership; clear, open communication; and an openness to have decisions challenged and evaluated.



1. Students:
 - 1.1. attend school regularly and punctually
 - 1.2. comply with school rules
 - 1.3. respect the rights of others
 - 1.4. account to the teacher for the student's conduct
 - 1.5. accept primary responsibility for learning
 - 1.6. complete school work assigned
2. Board:
 - 2.1. establish organizational structure
 - 2.2. approve policies and administrative procedures
 - 2.3. approve the school year
 - 2.4. approve Education Plan and Business Plan
 - 2.5. establish contractual agreements with employee groups
 - 2.6. approve contract services
 - 2.7. approve mission and purposes for the Division
 - 2.8. reflect community standards and desires
 - 2.9. delegate duties and responsibilities
 - 2.10. approve school attendance areas
 - 2.11. evaluate School Division operations
 - 2.12. represent interests of public school constituents
 - 2.13. communicate with a broad range of public school constituents
3. Central Office:
 - 3.1. develop administrative procedures
 - 3.2. implement approved policies
 - 3.3. develop Education Plan and Business Plan
 - 3.4. conduct satisfaction surveys
 - 3.5. Superintendent is the Chief Executive Officer of the Board
 - 3.6. draft policies, programs and alternative courses of action
 - 3.7. prepare Board agendas
 - 3.8. provide Trustees with sufficient information to make decisions
 - 3.9. evaluation functions of programs and schools and the preparation of reports
 - 3.10. approve Division-wide advertising in the schools
 - 3.11. consider requests for advertising material to be distributed to each child
 - 3.12. implement school attendance areas
 - 3.13. keep minutes of all meetings of the Board and its Committee(s)
 - 3.14. execute contracts, leases and agreement
 - 3.15. arrange for the election of Trustee representatives



- 3.16. monitor school-based activities
- 3.17. organize and implement an appropriate student transportation system
- 3.18. conduct appeals to school-based decisions
- 3.19. revise and/or develop Division programs as required
- 3.20. coordinate Division implementation of programs

4. Principal:

- 4.1. lead and manage school affairs in a manner which demonstrates the school is a part of a larger system
- 4.2. develop leadership model for the school
- 4.3. evaluate school programs
- 4.4. conduct appeals to classroom-based decisions
- 4.5. include staff, parents and students [where applicable] in decision-making
- 4.6. consider advertising material for staff rooms, bulletin boards and distribution through school office
- 4.7. protect school property and keep it in a good state of repair/cleanliness
- 4.8. maintain adequate records regarding school affairs
- 4.9. arrange for the establishment of a school council
- 4.10. registration of students
- 4.11. ensure personal safety and welfare of students
- 4.12. revise and/or develop school programs
- 4.13. co-ordinate implementation of all school programs and activities
- 4.14. recruit and evaluate staff
- 4.15. establish and participate on school council
- 4.16. resolve school conflicts, i.e., teacher-teacher, parent-teacher, teacher-student, student-student
- 4.17. prepare agendas, newsletters
- 4.18. serve on Division committees
- 4.19. establish school goals
- 4.20. monitor students' progress
- 4.21. communicate to students, parents and staff activities of the school and Division
- 4.22. develop strategies "Game Plan" for achieving the school goals
- 4.23. participate in "Division Level" decision-making

5. Teacher:

- 5.1. maintain student discipline in the classroom, school, school grounds and while students participate in approved activities
- 5.2. carry out those duties assigned by the principal
- 5.3. participate on committees, groups, etc.



- 5.4. participate on the school council
 - 5.5. administer student medication as per Policy 626 – Administration of Medication and Personal Care
 - 5.6. supervise the loading and unloading of school buses
 - 5.7. implement the Alberta Program of Studies
 - 5.8. evaluate school programs in conjunction with the principal
 - 5.9. revise programs as required
 - 5.10. teach approved courses of study
 - 5.11. develop plans for instruction
 - 5.12. develop professional growth plans
 - 5.13. foster student learning
 - 5.14. evaluate school programs
 - 5.15. establish school goals
 - 5.16. monitor and evaluate student learning
 - 5.17. supervise students
 - 5.18. participate in the development of school goals in conjunction with the principal
 - 5.19. develop strategies, “Game Plan”, for achieving the school goals
6. Parents:
- 6.1. establish a school council constitution and bylaws
 - 6.2. participate on the school council
 - 6.3. maintain communication links with the school
 - 6.4. ensure child attends school regularly
 - 6.5. accept responsibility for child’s education
 - 6.6. provide home support for the child’s education
 - 6.7. monitors child’s learning
 - 6.8. support school programs and initiatives of the school and school council
 - 6.9. communicate relevant information to the school
 - 6.10. participate in the development of school goals

HUMAN RESOURCES

This framework for shared decision-making is constructed on the basic understanding that while certain individuals or groups have primary responsibility for arriving at a decision, the essential elements of shared decision-making are observed. This means that primary decision makers dedicate themselves to: a high degree of collaboration; establishing and maintaining trust; accepting responsibility and ownership; clear, open communication; and an openness to have decisions challenged and evaluated.



1. Students:
 - 1.1. advise on staffing criteria (where appropriate)
2. Board:
 - 2.1. establish enabling policies
 - 2.2. hear personnel appeals
 - 2.3. expel students
 - 2.4. conduct contract negotiations with employees
 - 2.5. select and assign executive officers (Superintendent and Secretary-Treasurer)
 - 2.6. evaluate the superintendent
 - 2.7. terminate personnel contracts
 - 2.8. communicate personnel decisions as appropriate
 - 2.9. organize and assign duties/responsibilities to Trustees
 - 2.10. engage in employee recognition
 - 2.11. provide opportunities for professional growth [improvement] of all employees and Trustees
3. Central Office:
 - 3.1. recruit, train, evaluate principals
 - 3.2. recruit, shortlist, hire teachers and teacher assistants
 - 3.3. establish substitute teacher and substitute teacher assistant lists
 - 3.4. transfer staff as required
 - 3.5. interpret and administer personnel policies, regulations and contracts
 - 3.6. maintain personnel records
 - 3.7. communicate with employees
 - 3.8. hear parental and student appeals beyond the school level
 - 3.9. provide required in-service
 - 3.10. encourage professional development
 - 3.11. evaluate the Division-wide leadership functions
 - 3.12. implement Board strategies for employee recognition
4. Principal:
 - 4.1. predict student enrolment
 - 4.2. identify personnel needs and develop job descriptions
 - 4.3. identify redundant staff
 - 4.4. recommend for hire, assign, train, evaluate and recommend for transfer, teachers and teacher assistants
 - 4.5. design and request approval for school-based leadership structure
 - 4.6. approval of the engagement of substitute teachers and teacher assistants



- 4.7. abide by personnel policies, regulations and contracts
 - 4.8. decide on level of staffing for teachers and teacher assistants
 - 4.9. communicate with all employees
 - 4.10. suspend and reinstate students as appropriate
 - 4.11. recommend students for expulsion
 - 4.12. assign students to class
 - 4.13. establish appropriate leadership structures
 - 4.14. approve staff participation in Professional Development
 - 4.15. general staff improvement opportunities
 - 4.16. design and implement a staff recognition program
 - 4.17. hear appeals from teachers, students, parents
 - 4.18. resolve work related problems for staff
 - 4.19. provide recognition for deserving employees, students and parents
 - 4.20. resolve student and/or parental school-based conflict
 - 4.21. provide for the organization and co-ordination of special non-curriculum specific programs, e.g. before/after school programs, snack/nutrition programs, extra-curricular programs
5. Teachers:
- 5.1. suspend student from class as per School Act
 - 5.2. decide on Professional Development activity
 - 5.3. provide recognition for students
 - 5.4. request substitute teachers and teacher assistants
 - 5.5. provide job descriptions for teacher assistants
 - 5.6. resolve student conflict
 - 5.7. assure safety and well-being of students
 - 5.8. evaluate teacher assistants
6. Parents:
- 6.1. advise on staffing needs (where appropriate)
 - 6.2. advise the principal on staff utilization

STUDENT AND PROGRAM SERVICES

This framework for shared decision-making is constructed on the basic understanding that while certain individuals or groups have primary responsibility for arriving at a decision, the essential elements of shared decision-making are observed. This means that primary decision makers dedicate themselves to: a high degree of collaboration; establishing and maintaining trust; accepting responsibility and ownership; clear, open communication; and an openness to have decisions challenged and evaluated.



1. Students:
 - 1.1. pursue studies diligently
 - 1.2. co-operate fully with everyone authorized by the Board to provide education programs and services

2. Board:
 - 2.1. approve locally developed courses
 - 2.2. approve/consider non-authorized (provincial) textual material
 - 2.3. approve non-education program care
 - 2.4. authorize non Alberta Education approved resource material
 - 2.5. approve programs
 - 2.6. establish standards for acceptable performance – strong input by staff
 - 2.7. approve out-of-province field trips
 - 2.8. promote Division programs (advertise)

3. Central Office:
 - 3.1. approve out-of-city but in-Canada field trips
 - 3.2. facilitate the review and identification of appropriate learning resources
 - 3.3. manage the operations of Division's Instructional Centre as well as the Curriculum Centre
 - 3.4. supervise the assessment and placement of special needs students
 - 3.5. supervise programs identified as Division level special needs programs
 - 3.6. provide consultative service to schools and parents
 - 3.7. act as the chief attendance officer
 - 3.8. evaluate the operation of special needs programs
 - 3.9. liaise with community agencies regarding special needs programming
 - 3.10. provide for parental services in the kindergarten program
 - 3.11. approve individual schools' student assessment procedures
 - 3.12. liaise with health services regarding speech therapy
 - 3.13. establish school-based resource teams, as may be appropriate

4. Principal:
 - 4.1. ensure the provincially prescribed or locally approved curriculum is implemented
 - 4.2. supervise evaluation of students
 - 4.3. supervise advancement of students
 - 4.4. establish school-wide discipline and ensure consistency of application
 - 4.5. responsible for school day organization and general school timetable
 - 4.6. responsible for extracurricular program of the school
 - 4.7. implement Program of Studies



- 4.8. approve in-city field trips
 - 4.9. lead the development of the school's philosophy, policies and rules. This is a "keeper of the vision" function
 - 4.10. develop and maintain a guidance/counselling program (where feasible)
 - 4.11. develop and maintain a resource room program (where feasible)
 - 4.12. establish "resource teams" to assist in providing support for teachers and students
 - 4.13. provide for parental services in the kindergarten program
5. Teachers:
- 5.1. teach courses as prescribed or approved by Alberta Education or the Board of Trustees
 - 5.2. provide instruction in a competent manner
 - 5.3. encourage and foster learning in students
 - 5.4. implement provincially prescribed curriculum
 - 5.5. develop local curriculum to meet unique local needs
 - 5.6. identify the strengths and unique needs of each student
 - 5.7. implement Program of Studies
 - 5.8. evaluate student progress and report progress to parents
 - 5.9. prepare IPP's where appropriate and necessary
 - 5.10. recommend students for special needs programs, testing, etc.
 - 5.11. participate in "school-based resource teams"
6. Parents:
- 6.1. provide an environment to meet the educational needs of their children
 - 6.2. provide the home support necessary to help their child meet the demands of the program provided for them
 - 6.3. maintain confidentiality

BUDGET AND FINANCE

This framework for shared decision-making is constructed on the basic understanding that while certain individuals or groups have primary responsibility for arriving at a decision, the essential elements of shared decision-making are observed. This means that primary decision makers dedicate themselves to: a high degree of collaboration; establishing and maintaining trust; accepting responsibility and ownership; clear, open communication; and an openness to have decisions challenged and evaluated.

1. Students:
- 1.1. use resources in a judicious, efficient manner
 - 1.2. supplement the cost of "extras" through fees and/or fundraising



2. Board:
 - 2.1. determine budget direction and allocation
 - 2.2. approve joint use agreement
 - 2.3. approve tenders for items or services valued at \$10,000 or more
 - 2.4. audit the financial operations of the Division
 - 2.5. approve school fees
 - 2.6. set clear Division operational directions and approve a Division budget to implement those operational directions
 - 2.7. establish agreements with employee groups and agreements or contracts with other individuals or groups
3. Central Office:
 - 3.1. implement joint use agreement
 - 3.2. approve use of equipment outside school hours
 - 3.3. approve use of school facilities
 - 3.4. establish acceptable accounting procedures
 - 3.5. operate a central warehouse for bulk purchase of supplies
 - 3.6. send approved purchase orders to suppliers of goods and services
 - 3.7. pay the suppliers of goods and services upon receipt of said goods and services
 - 3.8. monitor school budgets
 - 3.9. maintain proper business records
 - 3.10. operate within the statutes and regulations of the Province, the confines of employee agreements and the provisions of any other contract or agreement established by the Board
 - 3.11. facilitate the establishment of such contracts or agreements
 - 3.12. operate employee payroll system
 - 3.13. operate financial aspect of professional development program
 - 3.14. present a clearer picture as to each budget's balance and how much is left at any given time
 - 3.15. streamline the practice of sending purchase orders from the school to central office for approval and payment
 - 3.16. provide authority to schools to approve expenditures from its own mini budget
4. Principal
 - 4.1. facilitate community use of school facilities as per joint use agreement
 - 4.2. establish and implement the school's budget
 - 4.3. approve all purchase requests for the school
 - 4.4. verify the receipt of purchased goods and services



- 4.5. operate within the statutes and regulations of the province of Alberta, the confines of employee agreements with the Division and any other contract or agreement established by the Board
 - 4.6. monitor fund raising activities of school council
 - 4.7. monitor the financial transactions of school council
5. Teachers:
- 5.1. assist in the school budgeting process
 - 5.2. identify appropriate materials needed to provide quality education
 - 5.3. initiate purchase orders
 - 5.4. be aware of the extent of the mini budget for an individual department and school and provide access to information on how it is expended
6. Parents:
- 6.1. advise the principal regarding the school budget
 - 6.2. supplement the school's budget
 - 6.3. make parents aware of the extent of the mini budget for an individual department and school and allow access to information on how it is expended

REFERENCES

[Policy 626 – Administration of Medication and Personal Care](#)

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