

PORT JERVIS CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT

PLAN
FOR
PARTICIPATION



1994

Revised 1996

Revised 1998

Revised 2000

Revised 2004

Revised 2008

Revised 2010

Revised 2012

Revised 2014

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CHARTER COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Patrick J. Hamill, Superintendent of Schools
John R. Connelly, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Dr. Harrison Murray, Board of Education
Martin T. DeMond, Board of Education
John Latini, Port Jervis High School Principal
Kevin Birmingham, Port Jervis High School Teacher
Linda Fedorick, Port Jervis High School Parent
Robert Witherow, Port Jervis Middle School Principal
A. David Bird, Port Jervis Middle School Teacher
Janet Banks, Port Jervis Middle School Parent
Mary Jane Haley, Anna S. Kuhl Elementary Principal
Susan Onofry, Anna S. Kuhl Elementary Teacher
Judy Thollot, Anna S. Kuhl Elementary Teacher
Jill Mason, Anna S. Kuhl Elementary Parent
Sharon Dickstein, Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary Principal
M. Theresa Wieboldt, Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary Principal
Jerry Turner, Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary Parent
William Montgomery, Sullivan Avenue Elementary Principal
Dawn Buzzelli, Sullivan Avenue Elementary Teacher
John Gillinder, Sullivan Avenue Elementary Parent
Mitchell Schulman, Special Education Director
Francine Parker, Montague School District Representative

2014 BIENNIAL REVIEW COMMITTEE

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Jean Lain, Administration DLT Representative
Valerie Ricciardi, Teacher DLT Representative
Robert Witherow, Board of Education DLT Representative
Cathy Sadaghiani, Community DLT Representative
Genny Cornell, Parent DLT Representative
Andrew Marotta, Port Jervis High School Principal
Julie Balogh, Port Jervis High School Counselor
Tracy West-Barnes, Port Jervis High School Teacher
Ashley Kaufmann, Port Jervis High School Teacher
Nancy Dunn, Port Jervis High School Parent
Christine Piscitelli, Port Jervis High School Parent
Reenie Nicolette, Port Jervis High School Community Member
Keegan Dunn, Port Jervis High School Student
Jack Piscitelli, Port Jervis High School Student
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Jenn Elston, Port Jervis Middle School Teacher
Megan Wieboldt, Port Jervis Middle School Teacher
Jennifer Centauro, Port Jervis Middle School Parent
Nicole VanBenschoten, Port Jervis Middle School Community Member
Chasity Spearman, Port Jervis Middle School Student
Jack Decker, Port Jervis Middle School Student
Nicole Ey, Anna S. Kuhl Elementary Assistant Principal
Eric Hartmann, Anna S. Kuhl Elementary Teacher
Craig Fisher, Anna S. Kuhl Elementary Teacher
Lindsay Wylie, Anna S. Kuhl Elementary Teacher
Lori Sexton, Anna S. Kuhl Elementary Community Member
Melissa Kinman, Anna S. Kuhl Elementary Parent
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Lynda Valentine, Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary Teacher
Megan Rudden, Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary Teacher
Lynn Felix, Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary Teacher
Marie Kalantgis, Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary Community
Mary Rodriguez, Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary Parent
Crystal Gadson, Hamilton Bicentennial Elementary Parent

INTRODUCTION

The following is the Port Jervis City School District mission statement adopted in 2001. This continues to recognize the importance of partnerships in meeting the District's goals for our students. This was reviewed and amended in 2011.

The Port Jervis City School District, in partnership with our community, has an uncompromising commitment to measurably improve student achievement and prepare students to be productive and responsible life-long learners, ready to meet the challenges of citizenship in our ever-changing global society.

This document will serve as a framework for the participation of parents, teachers, students and community members with administrators and School Board members in the planning and decision making processes regarding building level issues in each of the district's four schools.

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

In each of the District's school buildings there are a variety of issues which directly or indirectly impact student achievement. The Port Jervis School District continues to seek input from parents and teachers regarding these issues by encouraging such entities as: PTAs, faculty cabinets, and building planning committees. Traditionally the planning and decision making processes concerning these educational issues have been the responsibility of the District's administrators and Board of Education. Recognizing these situations, and the District's Mission Statement's emphasis on partnership, this Plan for Participation specifies eighteen building-level educational issues which shall be subject to cooperative planning and shared decision making by parents, teachers, students, and community members with administrators in the Port Jervis City School District.

The following building level educational issues will be subject to cooperative planning and shared decision making by parties named above. These issues are listed and are separated into five clusters, based on their impact on specific areas related to students' educational performance. The rationale behind their selection is also given.

CLUSTER 1 – ATTENDANCE

Rationale: Students must be physically present to fully benefit from instruction.

1. Student attendance/punctuality;

CLUSTER 2 – CLIMATE

Rationale: A safe, healthy, orderly, manageable, and positive building environment is essential for maximizing student achievement.

2. Student discipline;
3. Incentive programs for students and staff;
4. Student/Staff health and safety concerns;
5. Programs related to good physical, mental and social well-being;
6. Modifications to the physical plant;

CLUSTER 3 – CONTENT

Rationale: In order to succeed in an increasingly complex and changing society, students' educational experiences must be made more challenging and relevant.

7. Academic goals;
8. Technology utilization;
9. Programs to develop parenting skills related to education and/or inservice programs for staff development;

CLUSTER 4 – EXTRACURRICULAR

Rationale: While content mastery is certainly a necessary part of a student's education, that education must include more. Exposure to out-of-classroom situations emphasizing self- confidence, teamwork, competition, socialization skills, and a broadening of experiences are valuable for building self-esteem and for preparing students to be productive citizens.

10. Extracurricular offerings;
11. Academic eligibility for extracurricular participants;
12. Field and class trips;
13. Student assembly programs;

CLUSTER 5 – COMMUNITY

Rationale: Students' educational performance is enhanced when they believe their education is supported by and relevant to the community in which they live. Likewise, a community which feels it has access to and impact upon its educational institutions will be more likely to support programs which foster student achievement.

14. Programs to increase community involvement;
15. Public relations;
16. Career mentorship programs;
17. Work study programs.

MANNER AND EXTENT

Recognizing the value of increased participation by parents, teachers, secondary students and community members in the planning and decision making process and specifying those educational issues subject to this increased participation, it is necessary to clarify the manner and extent of this increased involvement.

MANNER

"Building Education Planning Teams" (BEPTs) in each of the District's four buildings are to be the participation structures for the eighteen issues deemed subject to cooperative planning and shared decision making. Each BEPT at the elementary level will consist of: two parents of students in the building, one community member who may or may not also be a parent, three building teachers, and the building principal or designee for a maximum of seven voting members. At the secondary level, each BEPT will consist of: one district parent of a student in the building, one parent of a student in the building from the Montague, New Jersey School District when available, one community member, three building teachers, student members who will only have one vote between them, and the building principal or designee, for a maximum of eight voting members. If no Montague secondary parent is provided by their District, then that slot shall be filled by a Port Jervis District parent.

The process for selecting the Port Jervis district parents to the BEPT is to be coordinated by the building's PTA or PTSA. The PTAs should have a procedure in place for advertising for and voting upon the members they select as parental representation on the BEPT. Said parents should also solicit concerns from their respective group and regularly report back to them.

The selection of teachers to a BEPT is to be made by a building's faculty. Teachers' Union building representatives will seek volunteers and a vote is to be taken by the full membership to determine the teachers who are to serve on the BEPT. The decision to select alternates is to be determined by the teaching staff of the individual buildings. Said selected teachers should solicit concerns from their respective group and regularly report back to them.

The selection of a Montague, New Jersey parent member is to be made by the Chief School Officer of the Montague School District. Said parent must have a student in the respective building to which they are appointed. Names are to be given to the building principals of the Port Jervis Middle School and High School. If necessary, the Port Jervis Assistant Superintendent for Instruction may coordinate such activity.

The process for the selection of secondary students to the BEPTs is to be coordinated by the respective building principal, in conjunction with the building's Student Council officers and advisor. The Student Councils should have a procedure in place for soliciting volunteers and voting upon the members they select as student representation on the BEPT. Said student(s) should solicit concerns from their respective group and regularly report back to them. All student representatives will be given an opportunity to fully present student concerns, but collectively they will only be allowed one vote.

At the elementary level, the building Principal is directed to regularly seek input from students regarding educational issues. The Principal is to express student concerns at each BEPT meeting.

The selection of the representative from the community is to be coordinated by the individual BEPT. A process will be established to advertise for volunteers and an application form will be developed. The selection of the community member will be by majority vote of that BEPT.

Each BEPT is to set its own schedule of meetings per school year, with a minimum of one meeting per quarterly marking period. Minutes need to be kept and submitted to the DLT in a timely fashion. Internal policies and procedures of the BEPTs, such as term of membership, selection of chair, determination of whether or not BEPT meetings are open to the public, and methods of seeking input from and reporting to constituency groups, are to be determined by the individual BEPTs. It is recommended that terms of membership be staggered to insure some continuity on the committee. Each individual BEPT can decide by majority vote which building level issue(s) they wish to address for the year. They are also responsible for developing a plan to use any funds allotted them by the district.

A District Leadership Team (DLT) will serve as an integral part of the Port Jervis School District's Plan for Participation, and for implementing a Compact for Learning.

Role:

The role of the DLT shall be to:

- act as a review board for matters of conflict resolution arising from BEPTS;
- act as a clearinghouse for information to, from, and between BEPTS;
- review BEPT action plans;
- approve expenditure of BEPT allocated funds;
- review any suggested policy changes made by BEPTs and recommend approval to the Board of Education;
- perform a biennial review of the District's Plan for Participation.

Composition:

The District Leadership Team will include:

- one Board of Education member;
- the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction;
- one building principal;
- one community member;
- one member of the Port Jervis Teachers' Association;
- one parent of a student in the District.

Selection:

Selection of DLT members will be as follows:

- the Board of Education will appoint a member to the DLT;
- the Principal's bargaining unit will choose a principal representative to the DLT;
- the Port Jervis Teachers' Association will choose a teacher representative to the DLT;
- a parent member to the DLT will be chosen by the District's PTAs
- a community member chosen from applicants by a majority vote of the DLT.

The Assistant Superintendent for Instruction is responsible for initiating the selection process every two years.

Term of Membership:

With the exception of the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, each DLT member will serve a two-year term commencing September 1st, and ending August 31st.

Meeting Schedule and Minutes:

The District Leadership Team is to meet a minimum of once per marking period quarter (four times per year) at a time and place to be determined by the team members. Minutes are to be kept for each DLT meeting, and will be available from the Office of the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

Decision making:

Decisions of the District Leadership Team will be made at DLT meetings by a majority vote of the members present, with each member receiving one vote.

EXTENT

It is recognized that the Board of Education sets policy in the Port Jervis City School District. Furthermore, issues dealt with and decisions made through the increased participation of parents, teachers, secondary students and community in the planning and decision making process are limited by: government regulations, civil rights, health and safety standards, district budgets and tax rates, collective bargaining agreements, existing Board of Education policies, and those issues and decisions which are the responsibility and/or authority of personnel outside of an individual school building.

Nevertheless, Building Education Planning Teams (BEPTs) are to play a vital role in building level planning and decision making. The function of BEPTs shall be to improve student achievement relative to District goals, by engaging in cooperative planning and shared decision making. BEPTs are to accomplish this function by:

- Reviewing, analyzing, and synthesizing information;
- Making recommendations for changes to building procedures, content, requirements, and programs;
- Making recommendations for policy change to the Board of Education through the District Leadership Team.

Participation by BEPT Committee members in planning and decision making relative to the eighteen educational issues specified is to be realized by an open, free, and full exchange of ideas. Consensus is to be sought. However, if consensus cannot be reached within a reasonable time period, decisions are to be made by a majority vote of the BEPT Committee members present with each parent, teacher, community member and administrator having one vote. The student representatives to the secondary level BEPTs will collectively receive one vote. The Building Principal, as the legally responsible Chief Building Administrator, is obligated to make the final determination regarding changes or recommendations.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Each of the stake-holder groups bear some responsibility for the success of this Plan and the ultimate goal of meeting the educational needs of all of the students of the Port Jervis City School District.

The Board of Education will be responsible for ensuring adequacy and equity in the distribution of school resources and for creating communication and feedback processes that make members responsive to the needs and concerns of parents, students, and school-level staff. The Board will direct District Administration to develop systems for evaluating programs (or may choose to adopt State assessments for this purpose) and should support schools' development of assessment systems for individual students.

The District and Building Administrators will be accountable for operating in ways that reflect professional knowledge and the interests of children. They will establish professional development opportunities; create processes for communication, problem identification, and problem-solving; and create methods for involving and responding to the concerns and ideas of parents, students and staff. Furthermore, the above groups are to evaluate and develop programs which address the Port Jervis School District's Mission and goals, and State Standards.

Teachers and other staff will be accountable for identifying and meeting the needs of individual students responsibly and knowledgeably, based on professional standards of practice; for meeting the district's and/or building's Mission, goals and expectations as well as State Standards; for continually evaluating the effectiveness of their own practices; for seeking new knowledge and information; and for revising their strategies to better meet the needs of students.

The local community and businesses will be encouraged to promote student achievement by supporting the schools' efforts to meet district goals, and by keeping the schools informed concerning the values, attitudes, skills, and knowledge needed for employment and effective citizenship.

Parents/caregivers will be accountable for their children's education by: being aware of their child's academic and behavioral progress, and the expectations of their child's school and class; holding their child responsible for his/her schoolwork, homework, attendance/punctuality, and behavior; and taking part in programs which empower parents to participate in educational decision making.

Students have the ultimate responsibility for their educational achievement. They will be accountable for: attending school regularly and striving to meet academic and behavioral goals and expectations; working with their teachers to become curious, questioning, self-directed, and self-disciplined; and participating in opportunities for decision making regarding their educational achievement.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Disputes arising from Building Education Planning Teams concerning the issues subject to cooperative planning and shared decision making are to be resolved at the local level. The first step in the process for such conflict resolution is to occur within the individual Building Education Planning Team.

In order to minimize conflict and facilitate problem-solving by BEPT members, the process which follows is to be used:

1. Define the problem in terms of needs, not solutions.
2. Brainstorm possible solutions.
3. Select the solutions which will best meet all parties' needs and check consequences.
4. Plan who will do what, where, and by when.
5. Implement the plan.
6. Evaluate the problem-solving process, and the solution.

Despite using the process above, conflicts may still arise. Participants are to then use a "Conflict Resolution Method" adapted from the book People Skills by Robert Bolton. This method includes: treating those with whom you disagree with respect; listening until you experience the other side; stating your views, needs and feelings clearly; and working at trying to resolve the conflict. If, after using this method, a conflict remains unresolved, it is to be submitted to the District Leadership Team.

STATE AND FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

The increased involvement of parents in school planning and decision making, as evidenced in this Plan, is not to countermand any state and federal requirements addressing the same. The regulations for parent involvement in Special Education, Title One, and other programs will be adhered to as in the past. The Port Jervis District's Plan enhances the parent's role in school-based decision making by going beyond existing mandates.

Parents are to continue to be active participants of district and school teams, and special task forces set up as needed. The District is to encourage this participation through school PTAs, district website, community announcements, school newsletters, public forums, surveys, and personal invitations.

The coordination of this increased parental involvement is seen as an opportunity to more effectively meet the needs of the entire District's students and is to be the responsibility of District Administration.