

**MEDICINE HAT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 76**

**SHARED DECISION-MAKING RESPONSIBILITIES**

**BACKGROUND**

This policy is designed to clarify the decision-making roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees, administrators, staff, students and community members and to promote harmonious and effective working relationships among them that will result in excellent service to our students.

**POLICY**

The Board of Trustees believes that shared decision making will result in a strong educational program for students by ensuring that all decisions are made for the good of students.

**GUIDELINES**

1. The Board is primarily responsible for establishing the broad goals of education and adopting appropriate policies and programs to attain them.
2. The Education Plan and the Policy Handbook are the main documents that provide direction to the entire District and its components for the benefit of our students.
3. In the preparation of the Education Plan and the Policy Handbook the Board recognizes the potential for improving decisions through consultation with stakeholders.
4. The Board expects that decision-making at all levels of the District's operation will be conducted in a manner that makes provision for input and feedback from those affected by the decision.
5. The individual who will be held accountable for the outcomes of any decision will be responsible for making the final decision.
6. The staff is primarily responsible for carrying out programs and policies adopted by the Board.

**STAKEHOLDERS**

1. **Role of the Board of Trustees**
  - 1.1. Roles and responsibilities as per Policy 200
2. **Role of the Superintendent of Schools and Executive**
  - 2.1. Roles and responsibilities as per Policy 210
3. **Role of School Personnel & Administration**
  - 3.1. Roles and responsibilities as per Policy 300 and 500

4. **Role of Coordinating Committee**

- 4.1. To draft policies for the District as directed by the Board through the Superintendent of Schools.
- 4.2. To recommend to the Board, through the Superintendent of Schools, new policies to respond to emerging issues, problems or concerns.
- 4.3. To review existing policy for current applicability, and recommend to the Board any changes, revisions or deletions of such policy.

5. **Role of Teacher Board Advisory Committee**

- 5.1. To provide an interchange among District administration, the Board and teachers of ideas, issues, concerns or problems affecting teachers.
- 5.2. To determine the best process for dealing with these issues, concerns or problems.
- 5.3. To provide guidance on teacher views of proposed recommended policies.

6. **Role of Community Members and Parents**

- 6.1. To provide information and other input to trustees and staff members and to be actively involved with respect to what they think is best for the students of the community.
- 6.2. To participate in activities in which they have appropriate decision-making responsibilities in co-operation with the school community.

7. **Role of School Councils**

- 7.1. Roles and responsibilities as per Policy 901

8. **Role of District Council of School Councils**

- 8.1. Roles and responsibilities as per Policy 207

9. **Role of Students**

- 9.1. To participate in activities in which they provide input and feedback appropriate to their level of maturity.

**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.

## Essential Characteristics of Shared Decision-Making

### 1. **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.

### 2. **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.

### 3. **RESPONSIBILITY/OWNERSHIP**

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

### 4. **CHANGE**

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

### 5. **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.

### 6. **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.

### 7. **COMMUNICATIONS AND INTERDEPENDENCE**

Through on-going 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.

### 8. **VALUES ORIENTATION**

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

9. **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.

10. **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, district and school direction, policies and guidelines, or attention must be given to adjusting those areas that can be changed to accommodate shared decision-making.

**Approved:  
January 20, 2004**

**Revised:  
September 20, 2016**

**REFERENCES**

[Policy 350: Healthy Interactions](#)