

**Watervliet City School District**  
**Site Based Planning and Shared-Decision Making**



**January 2010**

**Shared Decision Making Committee Members**

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**K. DeMento, Director of Curriculum & Instruction**

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**M. Brown, Elementary Teacher**

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**D. Shevy, Elementary Teacher Assistant & President of WASA**

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**Proposed to BOE: February 22, 2010**

**Approved on: February 22, 2010**

**Reviewed by committee: April 19, 2012**

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## *I. Biennial Review Committee 2010*

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## **II. A SYSTEMIC APPROACH TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

The Watervliet City School District accepts as its **Mission: *to inspire, educate and challenge every student, everyday!***

**Shared values and beliefs:**

**Success of all students:** All staff members are focused on student success. Students have many avenues and opportunities to learn, achieve and celebrate academic, personal and employment success. All students will leave WCSD prepared for college, career and citizenship.

**Continuous improvement:** Staff, parents and students collaboratively evaluate progress using multiple, reliable measures and make adjustments when needed to improve student achievement.

**High expectations:** Expectations for students, parents and staff are clearly defined, understood and communicated. Students, parents and staff are empowered, supported and trained to meet high expectations.

**Respect and integrity:** Communication and interaction amongst school and community members is defined by mutual respect and support.

**Teamwork and community:** The WCSD works collaboratively and creatively to ensure student success in a safe supportive environment. The WCSD encourages community input and participation in the decision making process. Successes are recognized and celebrated.

The **New York State Standard's** at each program level (elementary school, middle school, and high school) identifies, in broad terms, what all students should know and be able to demonstrate upon completion of each level.

The district's **Strategic Goals and Objectives** serve to combine the expertise of staff with community involvement in partnership to yield continuous achievement by all students. The organizational structure and corresponding roles and responsibilities serve to provide the capacity to effectively plan and monitor the gamut of programs and services and ensure that the accountability for results is everyone's responsibility.

The purpose of shared decision making is to encourage shared responsibility and accountability for student success, regardless of such factors as socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, gender, language background, and/or disability. The Watervliet City School District exists as an organization to ensure that every student recognizes and develops the essential skills, knowledge, and personal character needed for each to live a useful, productive and satisfying life. All students can achieve these expectations, but in different ways and over different periods of time.

### **III. SITE BASED PLANNING AND SHARED-DECISION MAKING**

In New York State public schools, decision making authority is vested, by law, in the Board of Education and the Superintendent of Schools, the Board's chief administrative officer. Because information is often incomplete and time insufficient for reasonable fact finding and analysis, making all decisions at this level can be difficult and not as effective.

To improve decision making, the Board of Education and the Superintendent may delegate or "decentralize" decision making authority. This means that the Superintendent and Board empower other members of the organization to make certain decisions. Decision makers are held accountable for the results of their choices.

When decision making authority is delegated to a limited number of individuals within an organization, the organization is said to be "centralized." When many people representing different levels of an organization possess decision making authority, an organization is said to be "decentralized." No organization is totally centralized or decentralized. Instead, organizations exhibit a tendency toward one of these patterns or the other.

School Based Planning is a strategy for encouraging decentralized decision making and school based accountability. It involves giving schools the authority to make decisions that shape and determine student learning, that are consistent with and supportive of the broader district goals that are annually adopted by the Board of Education. By having this authority, schools can create and support learning environments that best meet different student needs, while yet communicating and collaborating with each other so as to ensure relative consistency and uniformity in the provision of certain fundamental programs and services.

From the perspective of a Board of Education, School Based Planning means being a policy board instead of a collective management team. As a policy board, the Board of Education sets direction by deciding "what" the school district must accomplish to fulfill its mission or purpose. When this direction has been set, the school board delegates to schools, through the Superintendent, the authority to decide "how" these things get done. The School Board and Superintendent then monitor progress and provide staff with the support that they need to achieve the expectations.

The challenge is to achieve an appropriate balance between centralized and decentralized decision making (i.e., school based decision making). Additionally, there must be a constant effort toward maintaining this balance over time as forces that shape the need for centralized and decentralized decision making change.

### **Compliance with Commissioner's Regulation 100.11**

Commissioner's Regulation 100.11 (Appendix A.) requires that every public school district in New York State develop and adopt a plan for assuring participation by parents and teachers with administrators and school board members in school based planning and shared decision making.

In March of 2008, the District's Shared Decision Making Team was established and charged with developing this updated plan. The Team is a representative group of stakeholders within the Watervliet City School District community that develops, clarifies, and communicates expectations and guidelines for school based planning and shared decision making; provides guidance and support for achieving these expectations; and monitors and assesses progress. All required constituents were asked to bring forth participants to fill the team; this includes the Watervliet Teacher's Association, Watervliet Administrators Association, Watervliet Association of Support Staff, PTA, Community and the Board of Education.

To help ensure the effective and efficient utilization of the time and expertise of the individual members of each partnership team in fulfilling the responsibilities listed above, each School Partnership Team shall select a representative from their Team to serve as a member of the District Shared Decision Making Team. That representative shall be responsible to attend both School and District Shared Decision Making Team meetings. They will keep the District Shared Decision Making Team informed of the activities of their school teams, and be a part of discussions supporting and coordinating of efforts to satisfy the District's Long Range Goals. They will also inform their School Partnership Team of the activities of the District Shared Decision Making Team.

In addition to the school representatives, the District Shared Decision Making Team shall include representatives from other stakeholder groups, such as the Board of Education, PTA, student body and the collective bargaining groups. This shall serve to ensure that each partner has representation, and that the necessary lines of communication are open and clear. The interconnections of the various Partnership Teams will help to ensure a systematic progression toward the achievement of excellence in all facets of the school district, guiding and shaping decisions that may be district-wide and / or school specific.

The District Shared Decision Making team is also expected to serve as a sounding board for the Superintendent, being a think tank on new initiatives, and a forum for collection and sharing of best practices. The Shared Decision Making Team will meet at least once annually. The agendas, meeting dates, and minutes of each meeting shall be shared with the respective school level teams so as to ensure timely and complete communication. Similarly, said items shall be shared with the Shared Decision Making Team by school level teams.

### **What Is Shared Decision Making And School Based Planning?**

School based planning and shared decision making complement one another. Shared decision making provides opportunities for parents, community residents, teachers, administrators, support staff, and students to participate in the decision making process. School based planning provides opportunities for this participation to be meaningful.

### **School Based Planning**

School based planning empowers schools by providing the flexibility to create instructional environments that meet the needs of students and accomplish the district's Strategic Goals and Objectives. School based planning is a process which decentralizes authority for decision making and school based accountability for student outcomes. By decentralizing authority, decision making can occur at the level in the

organization where information concerning the decision is most available, where the decision is to be implemented, and where accountability for the results of the decision will be assumed.

School or department level decisions shall however be consistent with the district's *Strategic Goals and Objectives* that serve to combine the expertise of staff with community involvement in partnership to yield continuous achievement by all students. School based planning does not preclude or supersede the responsibility of the superintendent or his/her designee to oversee instructional planning, which shall be consistent with and in support of the *New York State Standard's and NYS educational regulations and laws*.

### **Shared Decision Making**

The key to the district's success is the effective planning and monitoring of the gamut of programs and services. The district's organizational structure and corresponding roles and responsibilities ensure that the accountability for results is everyone's task. Rigorous and viable curriculum combined with high quality instruction stands at the core of the organizational structure.

Shared decision making is driven by the belief that the most effective choices are made when those affected by the decision are involved in the decision making process. It is a process by which members of an educational community cooperate in identifying and implementing activities to advance and improve student learning. This process is used to assist with the realization of programs and services, collaboratively deciding on issues, and resolving problems. The goal is to utilize the expertise and perspective of the representatives to guide and shape decisions that positively impact student outcomes.

### **The Requirements for Success**

To be successful, school based planning and shared decision making requires commitment, time, and hard work. Success requires that trust be established and communication be maintained. The key to a successful shared decision making team is having all members committed to working together in a positive way to solve the issues of the school, lending to greater success for all students. School based planning is a process, not a "quick fix." See **APPENDIX B** for an overview of the characteristics of a successful and dynamic shared decision making team.

## **IV. EXPECTATIONS FOR STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT**

Shared decision making is collaboration in decision making, shared responsibility, and shared accountability for student success. It is a partnership that includes administrators, teachers and other school staff, students, parents and community members. These stakeholders are involved in significant decisions about their school and they collaborate in decision making because each is affected to some degree.

In the Watervliet City School District, stakeholders shall have an opportunity to participate in decisions that shape school and district operations. At the same time, sharing of authority and responsibility must not diminish the ability of the Board of Education, Superintendent of Schools, or school building administration to fulfill their legal responsibilities for the supervision and management of the school district or school.

For every decision, consideration must be given to the expected nature of stakeholder involvement. Two forms of involvement that should be considered are:

- Advisor (Makes recommendations to the decision maker)
- Decision Maker (Makes the decision)

For every decision, consideration must also be given to the expected range or extent of stakeholder involvement. Levels of involvement that should be considered are:

- Individual Participation (All interested parties participate)
- Representation (Interested parties ask one or more persons to participate on their behalf)

The expected nature and extent of stakeholder involvement must be determined and communicated to stakeholders. School level partnership teams shall develop and publicize mechanisms or ways in which feedback or suggestions can be readily garnered from and provided to the various building constituents (parents, students, and staff). Such modes of communications may range from a comprehensive website to the simple provision of comment sheets located in a designated area in the respective offices.

Additionally, processes must be designed to encourage and support this involvement. These processes can range from a single meeting of a few individuals to a complex process involving many meetings of different individuals over long periods of time.

## School Partnership Team

Here at Watervliet, stakeholder involvement will be fostered through "**School Partnership Teams.**" The Partnership team is charged with guiding and shaping shared decision making within the school to create and support a learning environment that best meets the needs of students in accordance with establishing district goals by doing the following:

- To develop, clarify, and communicate expectations described in this plan for shared decision making and school based planning within the school.
- To provide guidance and support for achieving these expectations. This includes developing and maintaining team operating procedures, working with Staff Development to provide necessary training, facilitating communication among all stakeholders, and serving as an information resource.
- To monitor and assess progress and, when necessary, initiate change. This includes evaluating the performance of the school based planning and shared decision making process and initiating improvement.

The building Principal is responsible for providing leadership and guidance for the team, with the clear recognition that as the official administrative representative at the school building he/she is ultimately accountable for the final decision. Each school will develop a Partnership Team composed of the following partners:

• Principal
• Parent / Community members
• Student (High School/Middle School)
• Faculty (Certified staff)
• Staff (all other staff assigned to the school)
• Designated Board of Education Liaison (s)

The School Partnership Team shall be composed of equal partners. That is, each partner will share equally in discussions and planning and no one partner can control or veto the team's directions. The composition of team shall be annually assessed to insure a balance the representatives on the Team, allowing for the possibility that each stakeholder group may be represented by more than one representative.

## **Charge & Operating Expectations for Team**

It is a clear expectation that:

- Partnership Teams will seek the active participation of parties affected by the decision.
- All Team members should be viewed as equals when the group is seeking support for a course of action.
- Members can choose to express varying levels of support using a variety of methods or approaches.
- Those not supporting the direction must offer another alternative.

Once a course of action has been resolved, all members of the School Partnership Team are expected to support the Team's directions and the course of action will be actively communicated to key stakeholders.

## **Selection of Members**

The stakeholders representing each partner will determine the process for selecting its members.

- The school-based Teams must ensure that a process is in place so that all interested parents/guardians with children in the school are given equal and fair consideration, and that PTA membership is not a requirement. It is extremely important that membership in PTA is not a prerequisite to being a member of the partnership. The PTA however, is not precluded from recruiting parent members, and informing parents about the Shared Decision Making plan for the respective schools and district. A common practice is to canvass the parents of the respective schools and randomly select the name of an interested parent member (s) to fill a vacancy.
- WTA should assume responsibility for identifying and selecting faculty (members).
- Support staff represented by WASSA should assume responsibility for identifying and selecting staff members for the Partnership Team from all staff members in the school.
- Student Government should assume responsibility for recruiting and selecting members. Membership in Student Government is not a prerequisite to be a member of the partnership.

## **Membership Terms**

In order to provide more continuity, Teams shall develop procedures which will ensure overlapping member terms. Individual term limits should be set, at least 2 years in duration.

## **Team Member Roles and Responsibilities**

Roles and responsibilities for members of School Partnership Teams shall be determined by each Team. Team roles may include but are not limited to: leader, facilitator, recorder, time keeper, coach, and chart recorder. The “leader” is typically the Principal or designee, someone who is keenly aware of relevant policies, processes and protocols, to provide guidance and insure compliance and appropriateness of deliberations.

Responsibilities for the Partnership Team shall include:

- Establish and adhere to a Code of Conduct.
- Attend each meeting.
- Establish meeting agendas.
- Develop lines of communication with stakeholder groups evidenced by reporting on the work of the team, gaining feedback on topics and issues discussed, and representing and reflecting the views of respective stakeholders.
- Schedule meetings.
- Provide notice of team meetings.
- Convene meetings.
- Facilitate meetings.
- Maintain and distribute minutes of the meeting.

## **Team Meetings**

School Partnership Team meeting times shall be selected to assure genuine participation by all team members. Commitment is needed to a schedule which provides an opportunity for members to participate on a regular basis.

Advance notice of School Partnership Team meetings shall be given to all members and shall be prominently displayed in the school. Team members shall receive a meeting agenda prior to the meeting.

School Partnership Team meetings shall be open to interested parties. Interested attendees may request time to speak at the meeting by making their request known to a Team Facilitator prior to the meeting. Everyone in attendance is expected to follow the Code of Conduct.

Minutes of School Partnership Team meetings shall be taken. These minutes will be kept on file in the office of the school Principal. They will also be posted on the District website. Meeting minutes shall be available upon request to any interested party.

### **Compliance with Requirements**

Decisions and recommendations stemming from School Partnership Team deliberations may not supersede or violate state or federal law and regulations, district policies or regulations, or provisions of collective bargaining agreements, nor may be inconsistent or contrary to established district strategic goals and objectives.

### **Training**

Every year, each team shall provide an orientation for all new School Partnership Team members. This should include history and procedures for the team. There shall be periodic training for the entire School Partnership Team members, which shall be the provided by the district and participation is required. Each school Partnership team shall coordinate the scheduling of said training with the Superintendent's Office. The District Shared Decision Making Team has determined that the topics for training at a minimum will include: how to develop a code of conduct/ground rules, roles of team members and decision making with a team approach.

## **V. ACCOUNTABILITY FOR STUDENT OUTCOMES**

First and foremost, members of School Partnership Teams are accountable for the effect collaborative decisions have on student outcomes. Hence, as individuals, and as a group, the School Partnership Team has accountability for student outcomes. This means recognition of the legitimacy of a request by any stakeholder to explain their rationale for a specific recommendation. The Principal, as the official representative of the district at the school level, is responsible for providing leadership and guidance for the Team so as to ensure that all decisions are within the purview of his/her authority and in accordance with applicable district policies, goals, and federal and state laws and regulations.

To be accountable, members of a School Partnership Team shall adhere to the following practices:

- Representatives must actively seek input from their constituents.
- Representatives must communicate proposals and decisions of the team to their constituency in a timely manner.
- Decisions with a wide range of impact must be communicated through district and school newsletters, web site and other media.

- All meetings must be open to anyone who wishes to attend.
- Each School Partnership Team must develop a uniform format for agenda and minutes of their meetings. These agendas and minutes shall be distributed to all team members in a timely manner.
- Minutes of team meetings must be a matter of public record and be available to the public on request.
- Once every other year, School Partnership Teams must assess the success of their shared decision making and school based management process. This assessment must be based on data pertaining to improvements in student achievement and stakeholder beliefs about their level of involvement in school and district decision making.

Members of School Partnership Teams are also accountable to each other:

- After establishing ground rules, it is the responsibility of all members to assure that members adhere to the ground rules.
- Each member must respect the opinions and perspective of other members.
- Team members must actively support consensus decisions. (Support is defined as working to fully and successfully implement the team's decision and to be available to explain the decision and its implications, in a positive manner, to stakeholders. This support is expected even in situations where the decision was not the first choice of the individual team member.)

Accountability also extends the right of stakeholders to replace their representatives on Partnership Teams and to establish procedures for this purpose.

## **VI. TYPES OF DECISIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Any issues brought before a school level Partnership Team for consideration must:

- Focus on student learning and continuous improvement;
- Relate to the district and school mission, goals and objectives, and
- Positively impact the overall learning community.

The school partnership team model will be largely applied to issues, activities, or initiatives that impact the environment and culture of a school. While there is a clear recognition that issues or decisions impacting the environment and culture of the school should be facilitated through the respective partnership teams, school buildings often utilize ad-hoc committees such as those associated with the respective school level (high school, middle school, and elementary), Vision initiatives, school safety teams, scheduling committees, and budget committees,--- to research, plan, and implement various initiatives. In all instances, the school Principal is responsible for providing the leadership and guidance,

with he / she being ultimately accountable for the final decision. It is important to note that the charge of an ad-hoc committee may change and can be revised over time. Subsequently, the accountability for the outcome of the ad-hoc committee may vary with the change in charge. In every instance however, the role of the school level partnership team should be to objectively review the respective proposal (s), complete a thorough assessment of the strengths and weaknesses thereof, and provide the applicable ad-hoc committee with specific feedback or recommendation(s) as to how the proposal or recommendation can be enhanced or modified to be effectively implemented and meet the needs of students. All proposals and subsequent implementations should lead to a more positive learning environment, positive working environment, and increased cooperation among stakeholders.

### **Categories of Decision - Role of Partnership Team**

The following categories serve to illustrate the differences between types of decision and the involvement or interplay with the school partnership team. School partnership teams must develop appropriate decision making matrices to determine the types of decisions and the responsible parties, in accordance with the scope and content of the Shared Decision Making Plan.

**Category 1** – Issues which are typically within the purview of the Partnership team include those which are specific to that school and have an impact on student achievement. The team shall deliberate and come to a collaborative decision. The authority and accountability for execution rests with the school principal, but the team shall be accountable for communicating and ensuring ownership amongst the school community.

Examples:

- Building environment issues
- Discipline Code
- Expectations and guidelines for volunteer projects
- Developing building goals
- School climate
- Communication within the building
- Report card design

**Category 2** – Issues which the Partnership team may consider for comments via the appropriate channels, but which have broader district implications that may affect multiple schools, programs or Board policy. School team input will be advisory to district committees or administrators.

Examples:

- Inter-school/district staff development
- Grading policies
- Student/Teacher Assignments
- Class size and Classroom utilization
- Evaluation of Personnel
- Safety/Crisis response procedure

**Category 3** – Issues outside of the authority of Partnership Teams. School teams would not consider issues that are governed by state or federal law or regulation, board policy, or contractual issues. The principal or district administration may, however, review these with the team to help shape or enhance decisions or implementation of outcomes.

Examples:

- Board of Education Policies
- Curriculum/Course Offerings
- School Calendar
- Public Referendums
- Emergency Closings
- Contractual Obligations
- State laws and regulations

## **VII. Continuum of Shared Decision Making Processes**

### **Matrix of Administrative and Partnership Team Responsibilities**

This matrix framework calls attention to critical responsibilities of the administration and school level partnership teams, grouping them into related areas: Leadership, Instruction, Students, Staffing, Partnerships and Community Relations, and Budget and Resources. The continuum is not meant to be all inclusive, recognizing that there are numerous critical responsibilities and decisions that rest with the Board of Education. It is recognized, however, that in many instances, the Board and / or the Superintendent may request participation and involvement of others to assure the effectiveness of said decisions and the ultimate outcome for students.

By articulating these critical aspects of school and district operations and corresponding accountability, it clarifies the responsibilities of the school level administration and partnership teams. The framework clearly recognizes that each school will probably create different learning environments, knowing that there is no one right way of achieving excellence for all students. School level administrative teams and partnership teams are expected to “assure” desired outcomes in the respective areas, as well as be responsible for “supporting” the direction and/or decisions that have been made to achieve the most desirable outcome in the designated aspects of the school or district operation.

**Administrative:** The District will be responsible for providing the leadership to assure the implementation of decisions or procedures with the goal of positively impacting the outcome for students. This shall encompass the scope of authority vested in the Board of Education, District Leadership and Support Staff Team, Principals, and Academic Administrators.

**Partnership Team:** The partnership team is charged with guiding and shaping shared decision making within the school to create and support a learning environment and school culture that best meets the needs of students. Such participation and involvement is grounded in the belief that the most effective choices are made when those affected by the decision are involved in the decision making process. It is a process by which members of an educational community cooperate in identifying and implementing activities to advance and improve student learning. This process is used to assist with the realization of programs and services, collaboratively decide on issues, and resolve problems. The goal is utilize the expertise and perspective of the representatives and key stakeholders to develop recommendations for improving student outcomes.

## **LEADERSHIP**

<b><u>Administrative Responsibility</u></b>	<b><u>Partnership Team Responsibility</u></b>
Provide leadership and support for the District and school mission and vision.	Provide guidance and support to develop a School mission that supports the District mission and vision
Provide leadership and support for compliance with District policies and regulations.	Provide guidance and support that assures school practices and procedures are consistent with applicable policies and regulations.
Provide leadership and support for achievement of District goals and priorities.	Provide guidance and support that assures school goals and priorities are consistent with and support the district strategic goals.
Provide leadership and support to assure the effectiveness of the District and school level plans for School Based Planning and Shared Decision Making.	Provide guidance and support that assures the school's shared decision making processes are in accordance with regulations and positively impact outcomes for students.
Provide leadership and support to assure the use of effective communication processes.	Provide guidance and support that assures that school and classroom communication processes are comprehensive and effectively reach all impacted or interested parties.

## INSTRUCTION

<b><u>Administrative Responsibility</u></b>	<b><u>Partnership Team Responsibility</u></b>
<b><u>Program/Service Development</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure the development and communication of district expectations for student outcomes, instructional programs and student support services.	Provide guidance and support that assures the development and communication of district and school level expectations for student outcomes, instructional programs and student support services.
<b><u>Program/Service Delivery</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure the effective delivery of instructional programs and student support services.	Provide guidance and support that assures the effective delivery of instructional programs and student support services.

Examples of initiatives include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Exploration of alternative student assessment procedures.
2. Processes for assessing student achievement such as grading practices / standardized testing.
3. Pedagogy (teaching strategies) / Classroom instructional materials and activities.
4. Academic support service offerings.
5. Special education services implementation.
6. Instructional Support Services implementation.
7. Processes for assessing programs and services offerings.
8. Effective use of assessment information.

## **STUDENTS**

<b><u>Administrative Responsibility</u></b>	<b><u>Partnership Team Responsibility</u></b>
<b><u>Student Placement</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure the placement of students into appropriate instructional programs and support services.	Provide guidance and support that assures the development of guidelines and procedures for assigning students to schools and special programs, and provide guidance and support that assures appropriate student placement into instructional programs and support services.
<b><u>Student Safety and Conduct</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure a safe and orderly environment for all students.	Provide guidance and support that assures safe and orderly school environments for all students, and assure safe and timely transportation services for students.
<b><u>Student Life</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure a positive and supportive school environment.	Provide guidance and support that assures a positive and supportive school environment and school.

Examples of initiatives include, but are not limited to the following:

1. Special program placements.
2. Safety procedures and drills.
3. School attendance.
4. Student supervision procedures.
5. Expectations for student conduct that are consistent with the Code of Conduct.
6. Guidance/counseling offerings.
7. Student recognition procedures and activities.
8. Student participation in activities and organizations.

## STAFF

<u>Administrative Responsibility</u>	<u>Partnership Team Responsibility</u>
<p><b><u>Selection and Placement</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure that staff is appropriately assigned.</p>	Provide guidance and support that assures the appropriate employment and assignment of staff.
<p><b><u>Guidance and Support</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure communication of performance expectations and effective use of evaluation processes for staff.</p>	Provide guidance and support that assures the development of clear performance expectations and evaluation processes which support continuous assessment, personal accountability and growth in performance for all staff.
<p><b><u>Staff Development</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure the development of procedures and opportunities for staff to advance their understanding of current research, methodology, trends and critical issues in education.</p>	Provide guidance and support that assures that staff has opportunities to advance their understanding of current research, methodology, trends and critical issues in education.

Examples of initiatives include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Recruiting (district selection criteria) / Hiring.
2. Interviewing/Recommendation process.
3. Enrollment in staff development opportunities.
4. Performance appraisals.
5. Participate in the development of intra-school assignments.
6. Staff recognition awards and honors.

## **PARTNERSHIPS & COMMUNITY RELATIONS**

<b><u>Administrative Responsibility</u></b>	<b><u>Partnership Team Responsibility</u></b>
<p><b><u>Parent Support</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure a school environment which encourages parent involvement in and support of schools and the district.</p>	<p>Provide guidance and support that assures a school environment which encourages parent involvement in and support of schools and the district.</p>
<p><b><u>Community Support</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure a school environment which encourages community involvement in and support of the school.</p>	<p>Provide guidance and support that assures a school environment which encourages community involvement in and support of schools and the district. (Community includes district residents, facility users, local businesses and service organizations.)</p>
<p><b><u>Institutional Support</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure a school environment which encourages institutional involvement in and support of the school and the district</p>	<p>Provide guidance and support that assures a school environment which encourages institutional involvement in and support of schools and the district. (Institutions include organizations that regulate and support the district, professional organizations, colleges and universities, foundations, and employee associations which represent district staff.)</p>

Examples of initiatives include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Home/school communication practices.
2. School to school to communication practices.
3. Parent communication practices.
4. Parent involvement in school activities.
5. Community involvement in school activities.
6. Community services.

## **BUDGET & RESOURCES**

<b><u>Administrative Responsibility</u></b>	<b><u>Partnership Team Responsibility</u></b>
<b><u>Financial Management</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure the effective use of allocated funds.	Provide guidance and support that assures the effective use of funds required to support planned school and district goals and operations.
<b><u>Facility Management</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure that assigned facilities support school, district and community use.	Provide guidance and support that assures proper maintenance of adequate and appropriate facilities for school, district and community use.
<b><u>Information Management</u></b> Provide leadership and support to assure the development and effective use of available information systems.	Provide guidance and support that assures the effective use of information systems needed to support school and district directions and operations

Examples of initiatives include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. School plans for allocated funds and staff.
2. Use and assignment of available space.
3. School maintenance and repairs / Compliance with health and safety requirements.
4. Technology standards (hardware and software).
5. Identify sources of grants for district and schools (or other funding).
6. Information systems and procedures

## **VIII. MEANS AND STANDARDS FOR ASSESSING SUCCESS**

The primary intent of shared decision making and school based planning is to improve student achievement. Consequently, schools shall use student achievement data as their basis to assess the success of shared decision making and school based planning, and for initiating improvements. Such improvement planning is now required of all New York public schools.

Presently, the Watervliet City School District has a comprehensive system of evaluation for all grade levels. This system includes a wide range of national and state tests. Schools shall continue to use this system of assessment as their means and standards for evaluating improvement in student achievement.

A second intent of shared decision making and school based planning is to strengthen community support for schools by fostering greater public involvement in and "ownership" of the schools. See Commissioner's Regulation 100.11 (Appendix A.)

Watervliet City School District will periodically (no less than every five years) administer independently constructed surveys to be used to assess parent and student satisfaction with their schools. These surveys will also assess parent and student satisfaction with their opportunity for involvement in school planning and decision making. Similar professionally prepared, reliable surveys may also be prepared for other stakeholders, including staff and community members.

Each school based partnership team should also complete an annual assessment of their effectiveness as a team. The assessment tool, outlined in APPENDIX C, is a recommended instrument for teams to use to evaluate their effectiveness. Teams may use other means, but must ensure that the characteristics outlined in APPENDIX B are taken into consideration.

## **IX. DECISION-MAKING AND PROCESS RESOLUTION**

School Partnership Team decision making shall be reached by consensus. Consensus decision making is a process used to ensure that every individual has involvement in a decision. It requires everyone's participation. Listening, sharing, trust, and respect are values inherent in the process. All members must agree to support or, at least, not undermine a decision. Reaching consensus **does not** mean the vote is unanimous, the result is everyone's first choice, or everyone agrees. Consensus lends to the development of the commitment and ownership necessary in collaborative decision making. Said in another way, consensus is reached when all members agree to one of the following statements:

- "I'm all for this decision and I will be a leader."
- "I'm all for this decision and I will give a lot of support."
- "I can live with this decision; I will be supportive."
- "I don't agree with this decision, but I will trust the opinion of the group."

Any team member has the authority to shape a recommendation. Those opposing a decision must present alternative solutions and ideas that have not yet been considered by the group. The team shall establish procedures for considering such alternative solutions and ideas. If no alternative can be offered after the team member has been given a period of time to develop and propose alternatives, the team member is

expected to support the opinion of the group. (i.e., “I don’t agree or I’m not sure, but I will trust the opinion of the group.”) When presented, the group is obligated to consider the alternative presented.

### ***What if consensus is not achieved?***

Situations may arise when a team cannot reach consensus. In the unlikely case that this should occur, the issue shall be resolved by using the Partnership Resolution Process (PRP) as follows:

1. Each stakeholder group will identify one individual to participate in representing their views.
2. The School Partnership Team will work with the District Shared Decision Making Team in order to determine the appropriate course of action, recognizing the existence of dissenting views. (See Charge and Operating Expectations, pg 10).

### **Appeals Process**

Shared decision making means broad representation in the decision making process, ample communication, and using input from affected stakeholders. If this is done correctly, decisions will be accepted and beneficial to concerned stakeholders. However, it is possible that a grievance or dispute may arise concerning a decision making process. Two examples of such a dispute are:

- My/our view was not adequately considered in the decision making process.
- I/we were not given sufficient time to propose alternative decisions.

Disputes about a decision making process (not the decision) can be appealed. The appeals procedure shall be as follows:

1. Grieving stakeholders shall request, in writing, that the District Shared Decision Making Team review the decision-making process (not the decision). The written request must state the reason for the stakeholders concern and a possible alternative.
2. Within 15 days of receiving the request, representatives of the District Shared Decision Making Team will meet with grieving stakeholder(s) to discuss the issue. If a change in process is agreed upon, the revised process will be recommended to the School Partnership Team for action. The School Partnership Team will need to use the revised process to review the decision that was a product of the faulty process. If no change is agreed on, the decision stands.

## **X. REVISIONS TO THIS PLAN**

This revised plan will be approved by the Board of Education and the Commissioner in 2010. At a minimum, the District Shared Decision Making Team is required to review and update this plan every two years. However, it shall be the intent to review the document on an annual basis to ensure consistency of and with practices and protocols. Any substantive modification of the document must be approved by the Board of Education at regularly scheduled Business meeting. The District Shared Decision Making Team is responsible for completing this review. All revisions are subject to the Board of Education approval.

All revisions to the plan will be made available to the public. The amended plan, or recertification of the previous plan, together with a statement of the plan's success in achieving its objectives, shall be filed with the Superintendent of Schools and submitted to the Commissioner of Education for review.

## **APPENDIX A**

### **REGULATIONS OF THE COMMISSIONER OF EDUCATION**

(a) *Purpose.* The purpose of school-based planning and shared decision making shall be to improve the educational performance of all students in the school, regardless of such factors as socio-economic status, race, sex, language background, or disability.

(b) By February 1, 1994, each public school district Board of Education and each board of cooperative educational services (BOCES) shall develop and adopt a district plan for the participation by teachers and parents with administrators and school board members in school-based planning and shared decision making. Such district plan shall be developed in collaboration with a committee composed of the superintendent of schools, administrators selected by the district's administrative bargaining organization(s), teachers selected by the teachers' collective bargaining organization(s), and parents (not employed by the district or a collective bargaining organization representing teachers or administrators in the district) selected by school-related parent organizations, provided that those portions of the district plan that provide for participation of teachers or administrators in school-based planning and shared decision making may be developed through collective negotiations between the Board of Education or BOCES and local collective bargaining organizations representing administrators and teachers. For the purpose of this subdivision, "school-related parent organization" means a nonprofit organization of parents of children attending the schools of the school district whose purposes include the promotion of parental involvement in public education and that is chartered or incorporated under the laws of New York, or is affiliated with a statewide or regional parent organization that is so chartered or incorporated, or is an unincorporated association authorized to do business under an assumed name in New York. In districts in which teachers or administrators are not represented by a collective bargaining organization or there are no school-related parent organizations, teachers, administrators and/or parents shall be selected by their peers in the manner prescribed by the Board of Education or BOCES to participate in the development of such district plan. In the City School District of the City of New York, each Board of Education of each community school district and each high school superintendency shall develop a plan in the manner prescribed by this subdivision, and each such plan shall be incorporated into a plan by the central Board of Education, which plan shall comply with this section.

(c) The plan for participation in school-based planning and shared decision making shall specify:

1. the educational issues which will be subject to cooperative planning and shared decision making at the school level by teachers, parents, administrators, and at the discretion of the Board of Education or BOCES, other parties such as students, school district support staff, and community members;
2. the manner and extent of the expected involvement of all parties;
3. the means and standards by which all parties shall evaluate improvement in student achievement;
4. the means by which all parties will be held accountable for the decisions which they share in making;
5. the process whereby disputes presented by the participating parties about the educational issues being decided upon will be resolved at the local level; and
6. the manner in which all State and Federal requirements for the involvement of parents in planning and decision making will be coordinated with and met by the overall plan.

(d)(1) The district's plan shall be adopted by the Board of Education or BOCES at a public meeting after consultation with and full participation by the designated representatives of the administrators, teachers, and parents, and after seeking endorsement of the plan by such designated representatives. The plan shall be made available to the public. Each Board of Education or BOCES shall file such plan with the district Superintendent or, in the case of city school districts having a population of 125,000 inhabitants or more or a BOCES, with the commissioner within 30 days of adoption.

(2) Each Board of Education or BOCES shall submit its district plan to the commissioner for approval within 30 days of adoption of the plan. The commissioner shall approve such district plan upon a finding that it complies with the requirements of this section and makes provision for effective participation of parents, teachers, and administrators in school-based planning and decision making.

## **APPENDIX B**

# Dynamic Teams

### **Clearly states its missions and goals:**

A team requires a clearly stated purpose and goal: not just an understanding of what needs to be done at the moment, but an understanding of the overall focus of the team. Shared goals and objectives lead to commitment. Team members involved in the goal setting process will feel ownership and be better involved in carrying out what is needed to be done.

### **Operates creatively:**

Experimentation and creativity are vital signs of a dynamic team. Such teams take calculated risks by trying different ways of doing things. They don't let a fear of failure stop them from trying new processes or techniques. They are flexible and creative when dealing with problems and making decisions.

### **Focuses on results:**

The ability to produce what is required, when it is required, is the true test. A dynamic team is capable of achieving results beyond the sum of its individual members. Team members continually meet time, budget and quality commitments. "Optimum productivity" is a shared goal.

### **Clarifies roles and responsibilities:**

A dynamic team member clarifies the roles and responsibilities for its members. Each member knows what is expected of him or her and knows the roles of fellow team members. A dynamic team updates its roles and responsibilities to keep up with changing demands, objectives and technology.

### **Is well organized:**

A dynamic team defines protocol, procedures and policies from the beginning. Structure allows a team to meet the demands of any task it must handle.

### **Builds upon individual strengths:**

Coaches of sports teams constantly inventory their player's skills. Likewise, leaders of dynamic business teams regularly catalog their team's knowledge, skills and talent. Team leaders are aware of their members' strengths and weaknesses, so they can effectively draw upon individual competencies.

### **Supports leadership and each other:**

Dynamic teams share leadership roles among members. Such teams give every member the opportunity to "shine" as a leader. The team members also appreciate formal supervisory roles because formal leaders of a dynamic team support team efforts and respect individual uniqueness.

### **Develops team climate:**

A high performance team has members who enthusiastically work well together with high degrees of involvement and group energy. Collectively, individual members feel more productive and find that team activities renew their interest and spirit. Such a team develops a distinct character of its own.

### **Resolves disagreement:**

Disagreements occur in all teams. It's not necessarily bad or destructive. A dynamic team openly deals with conflict when it occurs. The team members recognize conflict and try to resolve it through honest discussions tempered by mutual trust.

### **Communicates openly:**

Members of a dynamic team talk to each other directly and honestly. Each person solicits suggestions from other members, fully considers what they say, and builds on their ideas.

### **Make objective decisions:**

Dynamic teams have well-established, proactive approaches to solving problems and making decisions. Decisions are reached through consensus; everybody must be able to "live with" and willingly support the decisions. Members feel free to express their feelings about any decision. The team members clearly understand and accept all decisions, and they come up with contingency plans.

### **Evaluates its own effectiveness:**

A team needs to routinely evaluate itself to see how it is doing. "Continuous improvement" and "proactive management" are operating philosophies of dynamic teams. If performance problems arise, they can be resolved before they become serious.

## APPENDIX C

# Dynamic Team Assessment

Rating your team:      7 = Exceptional      1 = Deficient

1. Clearly states its mission and goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. Operates creatively.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. Focuses on results.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Clarifies roles and responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Is well organized.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. Builds upon individual strengths.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. Supports leadership and each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Develops team climate.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. Resolves disagreements.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Communicates openly.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Makes objective decisions.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. Evaluates its own effectiveness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

TOTAL SCORE \_\_\_\_\_

### INTERPRETING YOUR SCORE

75 – 84: Congratulations! Your team is at or near optimum performance. Maintaining your team at this level should be your goal.

65 – 74: Not bad! Your team's in pretty good shape, although there is room for improvement.

55 – 64: Your team has some problems, some of which may be serious. To rectify them, your team needs to focus on improving its lowest-scoring characteristics.

Below 54: Your members are not functioning as a team. Your team needs to work on the basics of team building.