

EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

May 25, 2010

TO: Board of Trustees

FROM: E. Schmidt, Superintendent of Schools

ORIGINATOR: J. Bidulock, Assistant Superintendent

SUBJECT: Framework for Involvement in Site-Based Decision Making

RESOURCE

STAFF: Donna Barrett, Ed Butler, Julia Cerisano-Niven, Susen Fischer, David Fraser, Patrick Johner, Catherine LeBlanc, Mark Liguori, Kent Pharis

INFORMATION

This report is being presented to Board by the District and ATA Local 37 joint committee reviewing the current status and application of the Framework for Involvement in Site-Based Decision Making. The report will be presented to the Edmonton Public Teachers' Council of School Representatives on June 2, 2010.

Background

The committee was originally formed in 1998 to review teacher involvement in site-based decision making. The committee published the Framework for Involvement in Site-Based Decision Making in 2000. In 2007, a survey of all District staff was conducted to determine the level of awareness with respect to the document, as well as the current status of staff involvement in decision making. The results were presented to Board February 26, 2008 and to the Council of School Representatives March 5, 2008.

The 2007 – 2012 Teachers' Collective Agreement provided for a new standing committee charged with monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Framework for Involvement in Site-Based Decision Making. The committee was also to provide recommendations regarding future use of the Framework. The committee provided an update to Board May 26, 2009 and to the Council of School Representatives May 27, 2009. One of the highlights of the report was an amended Letter of Intent which was ratified by both parties in the fall of 2009:

“Framework for Involvement in Site-Based Decision Making”

The parties hereby agree that the joint committee (maximum of 10 members) consisting of an equal number of representatives from the Board and the Local, shall continue. The committee working on the Framework for Involvement in Site-Based Decision Making (May 2000) shall expand its focus to investigate and report on developing a culture that engages, values and respects staff, fosters their well being and enables them to be involved in decision making processes resulting in staff satisfaction. The committee will explore strategies

and best practices that can be used by schools to achieve these ends. The committee shall issue a written report to the Superintendent of Schools and the President of the ATA Local at least once within each school year.

Committee Activities for 2009-2010

The committee examined themes in the values and behaviours found in relevant District and ATA documents (e.g. the District Basic Beliefs, Commitments and Expectations, Roles and Responsibilities Statements, policies and regulations, the profession's vision, the ATA definition of the Collegial Role, the ATA Long Range Policy, and the Teachers' Rights and Responsibilities). Bearing in mind the revised Letter of Intent, priorities of the District and Local, recommendations of the previous committee, and considering the common values, the committee decided to broaden its focus. Initiatives were undertaken to explore how involvement and engagement might best be supported. The group's work led to a conclusion that positive, trusting and strong communications are fundamental to fostering staff involvement. Throughout the year, the committee:

- supported and reflected on staff involvement in the context of District and Local initiatives, such as the Superintendent's review of Central Services, New Teacher Induction Program, the employee engagement survey and other initiatives that involve collaboration between the District and Local;
- participated in the Healthy Interactions Facilitator Workshop presented by the ATA in August, with the purpose of exploring this program as a potential source of professional development for District staff in the area of relationship strengthening and conflict resolution;
- participated in the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) training in December with the purpose of determining whether the strategies involved in this training have direct application to teacher involvement, engagement and participation;
- reviewed and revised a draft "Engage for Education: Edmonton Public Schools Framework for Staff Engagement", with the purpose of developing a guiding framework which would align future committee activities with any future district policy (Attachment I).

The committee believes that its work has positively influenced the relationship between the Local and the District, and suggests that a cultural shift is occurring in how the Local and the District collaborate. Examples of this include or have included joint committees or consultation involving:

- staff professional development
- development of AISI round four
- staff orientation program
- district occupational health and safety
- coordination of the delivery of services from ASEBP
- development, review and revision of Human Resources policies and regulations, e.g., District Staff Code of Conduct and Respectful Learning and Working Environment;
- return to work committee
- medical management committee
- consultation with the substitute teachers' committee
- inclusion of topics for discussion as part of the ATA Liaison agenda

Future Directions

The committee will continue to seek out opportunities for the District and the Local to involve each other in matters of mutual interest. Specific goals include:

1. Using the results of the District employee engagement survey to inform the committee's work;
2. Examining the use of the Healthy Interactions training program and the IAP2 program as tools to foster staff engagement;
3. Examining the possible development of best practices and tools to support the use of "Engage for Education: Edmonton Public Schools Framework for Staff Engagement";
4. Encouraging the use of joint committees and collaborative processes in areas of mutual interest and importance.

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ATTACHMENT I - Engage for Education: Edmonton Public Schools Framework for Staff Engagement (pages 4 – 8)

“Engage for Education: Edmonton Public Schools Framework for Staff Engagement”

I. CONTEXT

A. Framework for Staff Engagement in Decision Making

Edmonton Public Schools recognizes the value of its long standing relationships with its staff as being a vital foundation for its consultative efforts.

Effective staff engagement is about building and sustaining trusting relationships. By intentionally creating the space to speak and hear a range of staff perspectives based on their different experiences and knowledge, school and district leadership is able to make better, sustainable decisions that impact the education of children.

School leaders are committed to engaging staff in appropriate and respectful ways through clear processes and consistent approaches that are inclusive, transparent, adaptable and accountable. In particular, the school leaders need to make a concerted effort to connect with those staff who for a variety of reasons, have been disenfranchised from the engagement process. School and district leaders need to make all reasonable efforts to connect with the full range of staff. These connections are vital for building and maintaining relationships, as well as ensuring that engagement in decision making includes all, not just the majority of, staff.

Through sound processes and approaches:

- staff know what to expect, how to participate, and how their involvement and input will contribute to the decision;
- everyone’s time and input, and the available resources, are respected and factored in;
- staff gain confidence and trust, knowing that genuine involvement aligned with the continuum of staff engagement is practiced; and
- credible data results.

The framework for staff engagement in decision making is consistent with and aligned to the Framework for Site Based Decision Making.

B. Framework For Engaging Staffs in Decision Making

Use of the framework will ensure that:

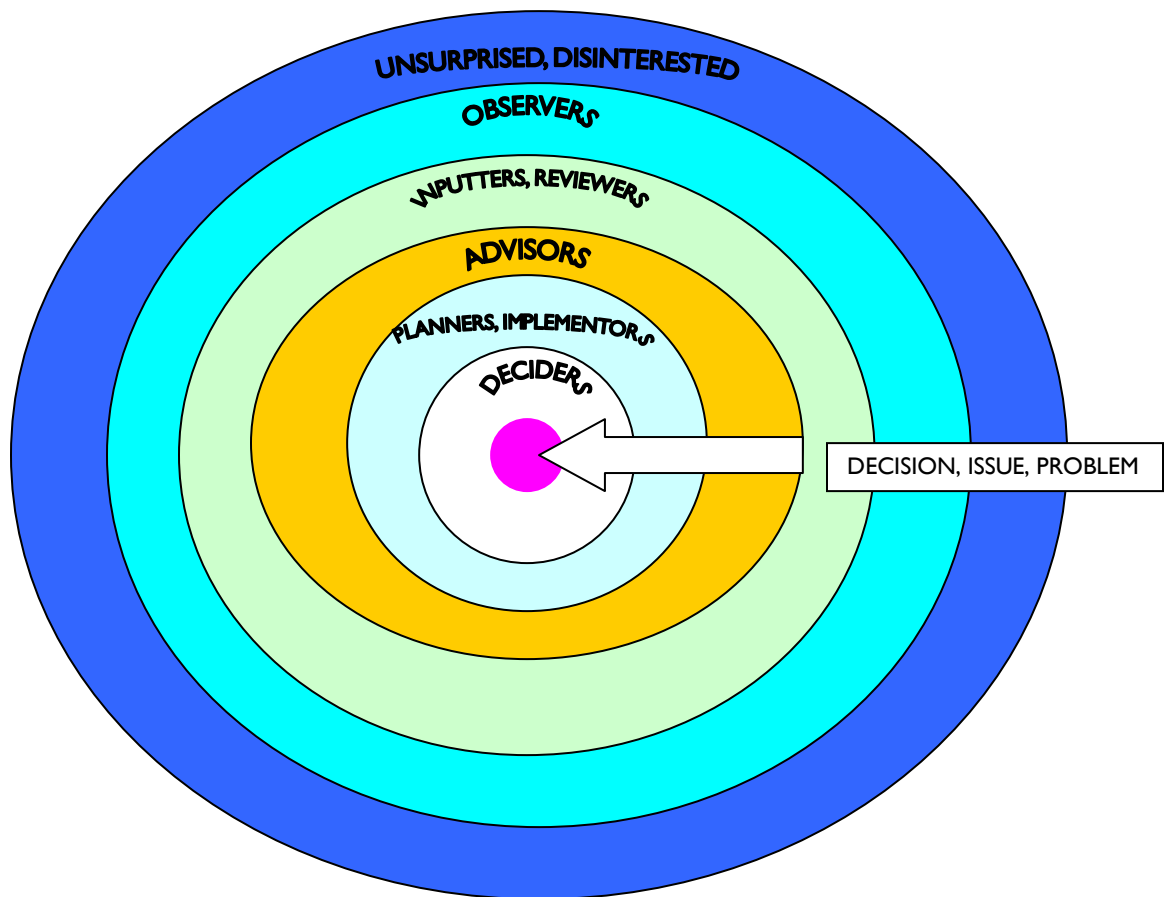
- The scope of engagement process appropriately responds to and aligns with the size and complexity of the decisions being made.
- All staffs and decision makers will understand what information is being sought and how it will inform the decision making process.
- The people who need to be involved have been invited to participate.

- Effort is made to hear the voices of the disenfranchised and the “hard to reach.”
- Time taken, budgets, and other resources respond to the scope of the decision.
- The process clearly adds value to the quality of the decision.
- Shared solutions, recommendations, or decisions are credible, defensible and sustainable.

C. Definition of Terms

Staff: Refers to individuals or groups of Edmonton Public School employees who have direct interest, involvement or investment in the initiatives, activities, and decisions of Edmonton schools.

The diagram below, ***Orbits of Participation in Staff Engagement**, depicts the level of staff interest and perceived distance from the impacts of the decision, helping to visualize the need for varying degrees of engagement by staff by different techniques in different steps of the process.



* Adapted from the IAP 2 (International Association for Staff Participation), Planning for Public Participation, Orbits of Public Participation.

Engagement: The term used to cover the continuum of purpose or phases for involving staffs in discussions about education matters that affect them, e.g. staff/community/citizen - participation/involvement /consultation. This continuum includes sharing information, consulting, collaborating and possibly empowering staff during a decision-making process.

Community: A community is a set of people with some shared element - location, situation, culture, common interests, or values.

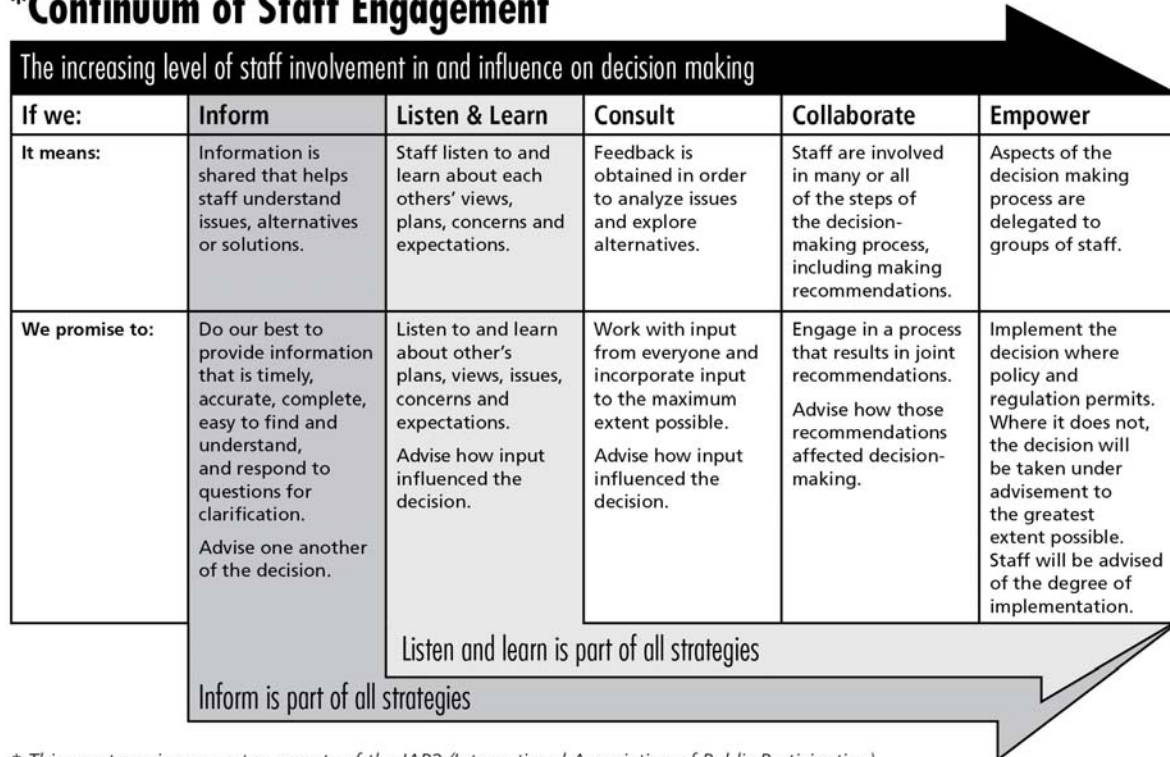
II. PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE FOR STAFF ENGAGEMENT

Edmonton Public Schools is committed to staff engagement practices that:

- treat everyone with respect, honesty and integrity;
- have a clear purpose, as determined by the Continuum of Staff Engagement; and
- seeks to include all perspectives.

A. *Continuum of Staff Engagement:

*Continuum of Staff Engagement



* This spectrum incorporates aspects of the IAP2 (International Association of Public Participation) Public Participation Spectrum and the City of Calgary Engage! Spectrum of Strategies and Promises.

The Continuum of Staff Engagement is one of the most critical components of the engagement plan, as it specifies, at each of the five distinct levels:

- the role staff are being asked to play in engagement;
 - how their input will be used; and
 - the promise made as a result of that engagement.
1. **INFORM** – the most basic of all levels AND a component of each of the other 4 levels of engagement includes reaching out to staff to build awareness and understanding. It is least likely to influence decision making. Engagement strategies at every level promise to inform staffs with timely, accurate, balanced, objective, highly accessible and easily understood information.

2. **LISTEN AND LEARN** – a component of each of the other 3 levels of engagement provides opportunities for staff at the school to listen and learn about each other's issues, concerns, plans, opinions and expectations. Feedback on if and how staff input influences decisions is promised.
3. **CONSULT** - staff input and feedback is actively sought to surface, analyze and understand concerns and issues, and develop alternative recommendations. Staffs are promised they will be advised on how their input affected the decision.
4. **COLLABORATE** - as active partners in shaping recommendations and formulating solutions, staffs' input and feedback are given throughout the engagement process.
5. **EMPOWER**- staffs are given authority for all or some components of the decision making process, with the school administrator most typically, retaining its ultimate decision making power, but abiding by the outcomes.

The school's adherence to the promises in the continuum, through consistent application by all staff involved in engagement processes, is a significant way to build and sustain trust with all involved. Equally, staffs are expected to honour these same promises when they participate. Over time it is hoped that staff respect, trust and are active participants in the decision making process, and that their satisfaction will be enhanced when they see the consistent use of the continuum as it is incorporated into engagement processes.