

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT TEAMS

School Improvement Teams

Student learning is at the core of the school district's mission. Since students' learning needs vary and learning is most successful in a highly supportive environment in which teachers, students, parents and others work closely and harmoniously together, it is essential to focus attention on plans for improving student learning at each school. In developing and implementing those plans school staff must work closely with parents, community members and, where appropriate, students.

School Improvement Team Responsibility

A School Improvement Team (SIT) shall be established and maintained at each school building in the district. The charge of each team is to develop a plan for its school by specifying the activities, necessary human and material resources and budget that will improve student learning in the school. Each team is also charged with adopting bylaws, subject to board approval, for its operation. Teams may opt to go by a name other than School Improvement Team. The teams shall operate within the district's policies, unless waived by the board; budget parameters established by the board, the requirements of contracts to which the district is a party and all other legal constraints. The teams' activities, decisions and recommendations shall be consistent with the district's strategic plan and shall contribute to achieving district goals.

Once a school's School Improvement Plan has been approved by the board, the team shall meet at regular intervals to review progress toward the plan's goals, to develop actions and strategies which may contribute to the plan's success, and annually to evaluate and report to the board on the progress of the student learning improvement plan.

School Improvement Plan Approval

The School Improvement Plan developed by each team shall be reviewed, seconded and approved by the building principal before being submitted to the school board. If the principal does not approve the plan, he or she shall work with the SIT until consensus is achieved. The board shall conduct a public hearing on the plan and may refer a plan back to a School Improvement Team with recommendations for change. When approved by the board the plan shall be submitted to the superintendent of public instruction as part of the district's application for student learning improvement grants.

School Improvement Team Operations

Each School Improvement Team shall develop its own bylaws to govern its operations. The bylaws shall be submitted to the board for review and approval. As a minimum the bylaws shall:

1. Identify the membership of the team and, as a minimum, include the principal, non-administrative certificated staff, classified staff, parents, members of the community served by the school, and students (in middle and high schools); provided that, members of any one of the foregoing groups shall not constitute a majority of the team;
2. Assure that the school's diversity is adequately reflected on the team with particular reference to ethnic minorities, disabled students, exceptionally talented students, and (in high school) non-college bound students;
3. Provide that, whenever practicable, team members shall be elected by the group they represent. In the absence of an election an open process for application and appointment by the school administration shall be established;
4. Emphasize decision by consensus in order to encourage the development of decisions which have the support of most of the school community. Voted decisions shall be acceptable, but the decision making practices of a team shall be one factor in the team's annual evaluation;
5. Provide for annual self-evaluation of the work of the team as part of its report to the board; and
6. Identify the communication responsibilities of the team and its members for the purpose of keeping informed all people with an interest in the work of the school.

The superintendent shall establish the interim procedures for identifying the members of the initial School Improvement Teams. Such procedures shall be consistent with the above criteria and effective until the bylaws are developed and approved.

School Improvement Team Training

The School Improvement Plan shall be amended annually to identify training activities for both staff and team members. Training for team members shall provide for understanding the role of the team, for developing the skills to be effective on the team, and for understanding the various educational issues which affect student learning.

School Improvement Team Accountability

The superintendent, in collaboration with the School Improvement Teams, shall develop evaluation instruments and procedures for the teams which include the following criteria:

- What are the specific results from the School Improvement Plan and other team activities?
- Is there evidence of improved student performance, improved school climate, or improved support for the school among parents, students and the community?
- Has the team operated within its delegated authority by focusing on plans and strategies to improve learning? Has the team avoided micro-management?
- Has the team effectively used consensus decision making?
- Is there trust among team members, within the school and with the district?
- Does the team act in the best interest of all students?
- Are team decisions objectively reached?
- Do the teams' decisions reflect consideration of the need for consistency and compatibility among schools in the district?
- When considering its options does the team take into account general community reaction and satisfaction?

Annually each team shall assess its own performance and include its conclusions in its report to the board. This annual report will state recommendations for School Improvement Plan revisions based on the data reviewed.

Since the School Improvement Teams are the agents of the school board, the board remains liable for their actions which are reasonably within the authority granted to them. Therefore, the board reserves the right to review the work of a team at any time.

Communications

The School Improvement Plan shall identify specific communications activities that will keep the general community informed about efforts to improve learning as well as keep specific audiences, such as parents, students, and staff, informed about the work of the teams. The communications responsibilities of members of the SIT shall be identified in the team's bylaws.

Implementation

The annual reports from the School Improvement Teams shall be considered by the board in conjunction with its annual review of the district's Strategic Plan. The superintendent shall develop procedures or guidelines to implement the provisions of this policy and assist both the board and the teams. The principals shall be both members of their respective teams and technical advisors to their teams and shall assist the superintendent in achieving the purposes of this policy.

Cross Reference:

Policy No. 0510	Vision Statements
Policy No. 0520	Beliefs
Policy No. 0530	Mission
Policy No. 0550	Goals, Target Objectives and Strategies
Policy No. 0560	Strategic Action Plans

Policy No. 0700
Policy No. 5021

Strategic Plan Evaluation
Applicability of Personnel Policies

Legal Reference:

RCW 28A.150.210
RCW 28A.300.130

Basic Education Act – Goals
Educational improvements and research – Center for the improvement
of student learning – Clearinghouse for commission on student
learning and for information regarding education restructuring and
parental involvement programs

RCW 28A.655
RCW 70.190.040
Ch. 180-18 WAC
WAC 392-140-800 to 836

Academic Achievement and Accountability
Funding – Grants to improve readiness to learn
Waivers for restructuring purposes
Local Enhancement Funds