

**North Dakota Department of Public Instruction
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Six Types of Parental Involvement

Decision Making

Decision Making: Including parents in the school's decisions and developing parent leaders and representatives in the school.

Decision Making – Type 5

The fifth type of parental involvement is decision making. Parents' voices must be heard when it comes to decision making at the school. This enables families to participate in decisions about the school's programs and activities that will impact their own and other children's educational experiences. All parents must be given opportunities to offer ideas and suggestions on ways to improve their schools. Having families as true stakeholders in the school creates feelings of ownership of the school's programs and activities.

Sample Activities

Examples of activities schools could conduct to promote decision making include, but are not limited to:

- Encouraging parents to attend school improvement team meetings.
- Assigning staff members to help parents address concerns or complaints.
- Inviting staff and parent groups to meet collaboratively, providing space and time to do so.
- Helping families advocate for each other.
- Involving parents in:
 - o planning orientation programs for new families,
 - o developing parenting skills programs, and
 - o hiring staff members.

Problems and Solutions

Schools need to be aware of the input they receive from parents so that it reflects ideas and opinions from all racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups in the school. Another factor influencing junior high and high school programs is the ideas and opinions of students. Schools are encouraged to seek out student representatives along with parents in the decision making process. The thoughts and ideas of all those participating must be trusted, respected, and heard.

Documentation and Evaluation

No matter the number or type of activities a school is implementing to assist with decision making, it is crucial that these activities are adequately documented and evaluated. Documenting activities may include obtaining signatures from decision makers or retaining meeting agendas and minutes. Each decision making opportunity should be evaluated by the school. The evaluation should also seek input from all those involved. Evaluation is crucial as this is often the determining factor of whether or not the activity should be continued, be revised, or be dismissed all together.

Resources

Resources used to develop this document include:

- © Epstein, J., Sanders, M., Simon, B., Salinas, K., Jansorn, N., and Voorhis, F. (2002). *School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action* (2nd ed.). California: Corwin Press, Inc.
- © National Network of Partnership Schools. (n.d.). *Epstein's Six Types of Parent Involvement*. Retrieved August 21, 2007 from www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/sixtypes.htm.