

Shared Decision Making at the School Level

(A Statement of "Agreement in Principle"
to be incorporated into the collective bargaining agreement)

The Boston Teachers Union, the Boston School Committee, and the Superintendent of Schools agree that shared decision making at the school level is a goal to be achieved in the Boston Public Schools during the implementation of this collective bargaining agreement.

Shared decision making is a process in which professional members at the school level collaborate in identifying problems, defining goals, formulating policy, and implementing programs.

The purpose of shared decision making is to create a climate in the schools where the faculty and administration working together share the responsibility for school improvement, better student performance, increased satisfaction among professional educators, and greater commitment to and communication with parents and the broader community.

The parties recognize that the most important interactions that affect student performance take place daily between teachers and students. Teachers, therefore, must be given the greatest voice in decisions about instructional matters. The parties further agree that the building administrator is the key person responsible for creating the environment necessary to bring about positive change. Principals and headmasters, therefore, must lead all employees in schools by encouraging collaboration, shared decision making, and teamwork.

The parties realize that in order to achieve shared decision making at the school level a significant restructuring of schools must occur; and the parties agree to work cooperatively in an effort to bring about these necessary changes. Significant changes in school organization, instructional practices, and staff roles will take time; they will not be accomplished in a single year; and the task will require a sustained commitment from the leadership of the Union and the School Committee, and the Superintendent of Schools.

To begin this effort, the parties agree to initiate six steps beginning in September, 1989. These six steps are addressed more specifically in other sections of this contract.

1. To expand the role of Faculty Senates.
2. To enable faculties and administration at the school level to develop more specific proposals for shared decision making.
3. To create a joint Union/Management committee to promote shared decision making at the school level and assist schools in their planning efforts.
4. To develop guidelines for shared decision making at the school level, including a process for granting waivers from School Department policies and collective bargaining agreements.
5. To provide leadership training for school administrators and Faculty Senate members.
6. To encourage individual schools to submit proposals for shared decision making at the school level, and, if approved, to allow such proposals to be implemented at the earliest possible date.