

ARTICLE 24

24. CREATING AND SUSTAINING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

24.1 Statement of Intent

The District and the Association agree to take responsibility and be held accountable for the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning which represents an expanded role in public education. It is in the best interest of the San Juan Schools that the District and the Association cooperatively engage in activities and communication which demonstrates mutual respect for all stakeholders and results in the improvement of student achievement through the development of common goals, a cooperative, trusting environment and teamwork. It is the belief that actively and constructively involving all relevant stakeholders contributes significantly toward achieving these goals.

Shared responsibility and accountability for results are at the core of a continuous improvement model. Joint responsibility for student success means that educators share in celebrating what works and share in identifying together areas that are not working and are in need of improvement.

24.2 Commitments to Collaboration

The District and the Association are responsible for sustaining a culture to support the continuous improvement model. They must continually articulate core values, reinforce the vision, and demonstrate their commitment to a new way of doing business. The continuous improvement process requires that the District and Association support the needs of students, those who work in classrooms and principals by providing the resources required for the planning, critiquing, and assessment of the work of teaching and learning. It is the shared responsibility of the District and the Association to build the capacity of each school to function as a learning community in which professional development is job-embedded and is supported with sufficient time and resources.

At the school level, administrators and the staff as a whole are accountable for establishing a learning community conducive to the best teaching practices and success for every student. They have a responsibility for managing time and creating opportunities that allow for collaborative problem-solving and for using a wide range of data so that an environment conducive to analysis and improvement is created.

At the classroom level, teachers are accountable for the instruction they deliver and the classroom environment they create within which every student can succeed. Teachers implement the curriculum aligned with established measures of performance, state, and local standards, and where appropriate, international and national standards. The individual teacher will continue to receive training in obtaining and interpreting student data and will have the responsibility to use this data to examine his or her classroom strategies and systems.

24.3 Site-based Decision-making

24.301 Site Teams

The purpose of the SBMT is to work with all the stakeholders at each site in designing the site plan. The bargaining unit members at each site are recognized as key stakeholders within the site-based process and as such shall be provided an opportunity to be active participants on the team.

The composition of the SBMT shall be determined by the stakeholders at each site, but in no case shall less than 50% of the SBMT be bargaining unit members. Each stakeholder group shall be responsible for selecting their representative(s) on the SBMT. Although consensus is the preferred decision making process of the SBMT, if consensus cannot be reached, an 80% majority is required.

24.302 Site Plans

The approval of the site plan by the stakeholders shall follow the guidelines developed at each site by the SBMT. Although consensus is the preferred decision making process, if consensus cannot be reached, an alternative process requiring 70% of the identified stakeholders voting in each group shall be required for approval of the plan prior to submission to the Board of Education for final approval.

24.303 Site Specific Amendments

It is not the intent of the site-based management process to violate the contractual rights of unit members. If any aspect of a proposed plan is contrary to the terms of the collective bargaining agreement, an approval must be obtained from the Association and the Board of Education. If such an amendment is recommended by the SBMT and approved as part of the site plan, and if approved by the District and the Association, it shall be part of the collective bargaining agreement for a specific period of time, for a specific work site and applies to all certificated members at the site.

24.4 School Leadership Teams

The purpose of the School Leadership Team is to focus on the continuous improvement of teaching and learning and the quality of instruction.

Every School Leadership Team should operate collaboratively, model-effective communication, be representative of and accountable to staff, involve staff in decision-making and support staff in the implementation of decision about instructional practice (including curriculum and assessment consistent with Board policy), school initiatives, and professional development.

24.5 Establishing Leadership Teams

Selection of the Leadership Team and the subsequent organizational structure for collaboration shall be developed jointly by administration and staff. To support the sites, the District and Association agree to adopt guidelines that include but are not limited to process, leadership criteria, responsibilities, and timelines. Such guidelines shall be consistent with feedback instruments and promising practices in current research. The District and the Association shall provide support, such as district-wide training and individual school site intervention.

24.6 Collaborative Decision-Making

School Leadership Teams are encouraged to consider the nature of decision-making in their school and to explore research-based approaches to collaboration in decision-making that involves all stakeholders.

A feedback instrument developed jointly by the District and the Association shall be used at each school on a regular basis to self-assess the collaborative culture of the school and the progress of the School Leadership Teams in the area of participative decision-making, trust, teamwork, communication, conflict management, efficacy of meetings, accountability, and results.

Substantive issues, policies, programs and decisions that arise from Article 24 are not subject to the grievance procedure unless they are alleged to violate other terms of the collective bargaining agreement. It is in the best interest of all parties that disputes are resolved at the school level; however, the District and Association recognize that there may be occasions in which members of the School Leadership Teams, or entire school staffs, may require assistance and/or additional training in dispute resolution. Challenges and/or disputes that may occur within the purview for the School Leadership Teams will be resolved through a process of mediation that is conducted jointly by the District and Association and/or outside mediation.

24.7 Leadership Compensation

The District and the Association agree that bargaining unit members who serve on the leadership team shall be compensated for their time and leadership skills consistent with the intent of Article 11.4. Due to the current financial crisis, leadership compensation can only be funded from existing resources which may include partial redesign of the existing leadership stipend schedules. Therefore, a subgroup of the current bargaining teams shall make a recommendation that must be ratified by the membership and the school board before implementation.

24.8 Implementation and Review

The provisions of Article 24 shall be evaluated at least semi-annually consistent with the provisions of Article 24.6 and other relevant data and staff input. The purpose of the implementation and evaluation process is to continue to analyze areas within this Article that requires modification, identify additional training needs, and to continue to improve the collaborative culture focused on improving teaching and student learning and student achievement.