



Research Brief

Site-Based Management

Question: What are components of successful site-based management programs?

Summary of Findings: The concept of site-based management was taken from the Japanese car manufacturer's model in the mid-1980s and the concept found its way into education. Researcher, Larry Cuban, wrote about first and second order change. First order change is when the current structure is reworked. Second order change requires starting over fresh to solve problems. He stated that schools have been stuck in the rut of making first order changes and site-based management is second order change.

In the literature, site-based management was defined as authority for decisions on programs is in the hands of those who are directly affected and it involves all stakeholders (students, parents, teachers, principal, superintendent, Board of Education, and community members). It is not seen as a means to an end, but as an on-going process to encourage growth in a school's programs and curriculum to promote and improve student achievement.

Research has not been abundant on the effects of student improvement. However, research has indicated that a sense of professional fulfillment from teachers has highly contributed to improved school culture, climate, and collegiality. Five states have some type of mandated and legislated site-based management process: Colorado, Florida, Kentucky, North Carolina, and Texas. There are some districts in other states and Canada that have programs, such as in Los Angeles, New York City, Chicago, and Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

Major Findings and Conclusions:

What clearly emerged from the research was that the elements of successful site-based management programs must:

1. concentrate on improving student achievement
2. be systemic
3. have autonomy at the local site
4. have a high level of involvement from all stakeholders
5. have clear alignment of the vision and goals to the given academic standards
6. have the power to make meaningful decisions
7. have a prevalent culture of shared-decision making at the site

The following components should be in place when planning and implementing site-based management.

1. Appropriate, and on-going training for all stakeholders, including training in conflict management, change process, and different decision-making models.
2. Adequate time to meet, plan, implement, and evaluate the decisions. Initially, this requires a great deal of time commitment and resources to get it put into action.
3. Appropriate site leadership team.
4. Networks of decision-making teams, who deal with the real issues of budget, curriculum, and personnel.



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5. Communication is thorough and done with all stakeholders through several channels, i.e. Web, newsletters, and school pre-recorded phone messages.
6. Concurrently, the principal leads and shares power.
7. All who make the decisions are accountable and responsible.
8. Build in some type of monetary and non-monetary rewards for moving forward and meeting goals.
9. Develop and maintain resources from the parents and community.
10. Have technical assistance available when needed.

Some pitfalls of which to be aware:

1. The limits of decision-making and power are unclear and undefined.
2. The principal directs and tells, rather than guides.
3. When only the superintendent and principal are held accountable for decisions.
4. When decision-making groups do not have the power to make the real decisions and may get mired in unimportant details.

Online Resources:

- School-Based Management: Rhetoric vs. Reality
An overview of the research especially, especially from Kentucky and Chicago are given in this article. It also provides a list of the eight critical factors that are included in successful site-based management programs.
<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/26/58/2658.htm>
- Site-based decision-making: Its potential for enhancing learner outcomes
Items to consider when determining whether or not to utilize site-based management as well as how the roles of participants need to change are included in this piece. Although it is an older article, the information is still valid.
<http://www.sedl.org/change/issues/issues14.html>
- Site-Based Management: Boon or Boondoggle?
An overview of the components that need to be in place in order for site-based management to be successful are highlighted. It also lists problems that can occur if the implementation is not done thoroughly.
http://www.education-world.com/a_admin/admin176.shtml
- Thinking Differently: Recommendations for 21st Century School Board/Superintendent Leadership, Governance, and Teamwork for High Student Achievement
This article describes ways in which the superintendent and Board of Education can work in concert in order to help students achieve at higher levels.
http://www.nesdec.org/Thinking_Differently.htm



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