

THE PELHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS PLAN
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
A NEW COMPACT FOR LEARNING

APPROVED BY THE
PELHAM BOARD OF EDUCATION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	Introduction	2
II.	Acknowledgement	2
III.	Guiding Principles	3
IV.	Parameters for School-Site Councils	4
V.	Educational Issues Subject to Shared-Decision Making and Site-Based Planning	6
VI.	School-Site Councils	10
	Structure	10
	Composition	10
	Selection	10
	Roles and Responsibilities of Members	12
	Length of Term	12
	Meetings	13
	Communications	13
VII.	Decision-Making Process	14
	Consensus Building	14
	Community Resources	14
	Means and Standards	14
	Appeal Process	15
VIII.	Accountability	15
IX.	Evaluation	15
X.	School-Site Council Training	15
XI.	Assurances	16
XII.	Conclusion	16
XIII.	Appendix A: Frequently Asked Questions about Shared Decision Making	17
	Appendix B: Parent Teachers Associations	19

Section I

INTRODUCTION

In 1990 the New York State Board of Regents adopted A New Compact for Learning. An important provision of the Compact is the mandate to provide opportunities for parents and teachers to participate in making decisions about educational issues. Under the provisions of the Compact each district is required to develop a plan for parents, teachers, administrators and support staff to participate in shared decision-making and site-based planning.

The Compact has tremendous potential to help guide our schools forward throughout the 21st century. In order to capitalize on this potential, the Pelham Board of Education formed a District Planning Committee composed of parents, administrators, support staff, Board members and community members. The District Planning Committee was charged with the task of developing an implementation plan based on the belief that it is essential that the Compact be implemented in a well planned, carefully designed manner which builds on the existing strengths of the school district. This plan is based on an approach which is incremental, builds on established as well as new success and allows time for thorough implementation and evaluation.

The District Plan builds on the teacher and parent participation that we already have in a wide range of important district decisions. Pelham's PTAs have played an essential role in the development of school programs and long-range planning; the Site Based Team stands as a model for shared decision-making and collaborative planning. This structure served our students well and is maintained in the District Plan. It not only assures a role for all our stakeholders but also provides a mechanism for providing a common core of quality curricular and instructional experiences across all six of our school buildings.

The District Plan for the implementation of the Compact protects the equity among schools, adheres to the policies and goals and objectives of the District, and strives to serve the needs of everyone in the community: students, parents, teachers, administrators and support staff. These councils have been created in the spirit of the Compact; they exist for the purpose of improving education for each student.

Section II

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The implementation plan for shared-decision making and site-based planning was developed by the District Planning Committee. This committee began its work in October 1992. It was composed of parents, teachers, a community member, administrators, and members of the Board of Education. The District Planning Committee was reactivated in May 2025 to conduct a Review of the plan. A revision was submitted to the Board of Education on June 11, 2025.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Role</u>
Kristen Cerreto	Teacher, Pelham Memorial High School
Dr. Cheryl Champ	Superintendent of Schools
James Marcotullio	Teacher, President of the Teachers Association of
Lynn Sabia	Principal, Pelham Middle School
Dave Sparano	Parent Representative, Pelham Memorial High School
Dr. Kerri Titone	Assistant Principal, Pelham Memorial High School
Kristen Whalen	Parent Representative, PTA Council

Members of this committee have played a vital role in determining the future direction of Pelham Schools. Their contributions of time, effort and ideas are greatly appreciated.

Section III

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The District Strategic Planning Committee developed a vision statement that captures the aspirations of the educational community and sets the course for the future direction of the Pelham Public Schools. This vision statement contains the guiding principles for shared decision-making and school-site councils.

Vision Statement

The Pelham school community challenges and inspires our students to become knowledgeable, creative and critical thinkers who make ethical choices. We empower students to explore and pursue their own paths to excellence. We embrace diversity, foster belonging for all, and emphasize service and citizenship. We promote well-being and provide a supportive academic environment district wide. Our goal is to prepare students with skills to adapt and flourish in a changing world.

Section IV

PARAMETERS FOR SCHOOL-SITE COUNCILS

To provide an operational framework for school-site councils, the following parameters were developed:

1. School-site councils will make decisions that are consistent with Board of Education policy.
2. School-site councils will make decisions that are in compliance with all state and federal laws.
3. School-site councils' decisions will be consistent with employee contracts.
4. School-site councils will make decisions within the constraints of their building budgets and may make requests for funding of appropriate projects from District committees including the Personal Growth and Achievement Committee and other specific curriculum area committees.
5. School-site councils will develop a vision and goals for their schools that are consistent with the District's vision and goals.
6. School-site councils will coordinate all of their activities with existing decision-making structures.
7. School-site councils will meet together, at the request of the Superintendent, to assure district-wide coordination.
8. School-site councils will make decisions that are consistent with the buildings' vision and goals.
9. School-site councils will make decisions only on those educational issues explicitly stated in the District Plan.
10. School-site councils are decision-making structures and are not involved in the actual implementation of decisions unless explicitly stated.
11. School-site councils will confine their decisions to those issues that will improve school culture and student performance.
12. School-site councils will make decisions utilizing relevant information and data.
13. School-site councils will not have access to individual student data.
14. School-site councils will evaluate their decisions based on student achievement and other relevant data.

15. School-site councils will implement a communication plan to effectively disseminate and elicit information to and from their stakeholders.
16. School-site councils will coordinate their public relations efforts with those of the district.
17. School-site council members will serve voluntarily and will not be remunerated for their participation.
18. School-site councils will appoint sub - committees to report back to the council when an issue requires further investigation.

Section V

EDUCATIONAL ISSUES SUBJECT TO SHARED-DECISION MAKING AND SITE-BASED PLANNING

School-site councils will make decisions only on those issues explicitly stated in the District Plan. All decisions of the councils should be based on the goal of improving student performance and school culture. The educational issues subject to shared-decision making and site-based planning are:

Staffing

School-site councils, in conjunction with the Superintendent or their designee, will establish the criteria for selecting administrators, teachers and teaching assistants for vacant positions.

School-site councils will select individuals, with departmental representation at the secondary level, to serve on interview committees which will interview candidates and recommend finalists to the Superintendent for all administrative, teaching, and teaching assistant positions.

Time

School-site councils may recommend scheduling priorities.

Students

School-site councils will establish practices that foster a positive school climate and promote the health and well-being of students.

School-site councils, with the active involvement of students at the secondary level, will identify the issues related to school culture, wellness and belonging.

Curriculum/Instruction

School-site councils may identify school-wide initiatives that enrich curriculum and instruction.

School-site councils will make recommendations concerning any aspect of curriculum and instruction to the appropriate district-wide decision-making committee(s).

Assessment

School-site councils, using assessment data, (see pg. 12 – Means/Standards) may make recommendations to the appropriate district decision-making committee(s) for programmatic and structural improvements.

Staff Development

School-site councils may identify staff development needs and make recommendations to the appropriate district-wide committee(s).

School-site councils may evaluate staff development programs and make recommendations to the appropriate district-wide committee(s).

Communication

School-site councils will determine the communication plan to be utilized to obtain input from their stakeholders.

School-site councils will determine the communication plan to be utilized to disseminate to their stakeholders information regarding the council's actions.

Section VI

SCHOOL-SITE COUNCILS

Structure

There will be one council for each school.

Definitions

Stakeholder - Administrative, faculty, and Civil Service stakeholders are those who are assigned to the respective school at least half time. Parents/guardian stakeholders for purposes of serving on and/or electing representatives to the Site Based Team are those with children attending the respective school with the exception of the seat that will be designated for a parent/guardian who has had a child graduate recently from Pelham Memorial High School. While PTAs oversee Site Based Council elections, parents/guardians are not required to be members of the PTA to be eligible to serve or vote.

Composition

The composition of school-site councils will be:

<u>Elementary School</u>	<u>Middle School</u>	<u>High School</u>
<u>Member</u>	<u>Member</u>	<u>Member</u>
Principal (1)	Principal (1)	Principal (1)
Faculty (3)	Faculty (4)	Faculty (5)
Parent/Guardian (3)	Parent/Guardian(3)	**Parent/Guardian (4)
*Civil Service (1)	*Civil Service (1)	*Civil Service (1)
Personnel/ Teaching Assistant	Personnel/ Teaching Assistant	Personnel/ Teaching Assistant Student (2)
Total Members (8)	Total Members (9)	Total Members (13)

All members may serve on only one school-site council.

*Civil Service Personnel/Teaching Assistants include nurses, custodians, secretaries and teaching assistants.

**One seat will be designated for a parent/guardian who has had a child graduate recently from Pelham Memorial High School.

Selection

There will be open elections for school-site council members. An open election is defined as one in which all stakeholders currently associated with the respective school

may vote and any stakeholder currently associated with the respective school may run for a council seat. These elections will take place on or before June 15th each year or the first business day thereafter if June 15 falls on a weekend.

Organizations representing each stakeholder group (Teachers' Association of Pelham representing all faculty, PTAs from each school representing all parents, CSEA representing all nurses, custodians, secretaries and teaching assistants, Student Government Organization representing all high school students) will be responsible for devising a plan for open elections to fill seats on the school-site council which are designated for that stakeholder group. The PTA's are responsible for hosting and coordinating the vote for parent/guardian members. The plan will include a means of soliciting nominations from all stakeholders currently associated with the school, for disseminating information about the candidates and for ensuring open elections. Only those individuals who nominate themselves will be considered as candidates for school-site councils. The plan will be approved by the members of the organizations representing each stakeholder group.

Each stakeholder group will present a separate slate of candidates made up of all nominees. Each faculty member, parent, civil service personnel/teaching assistant and student currently associated with the school will have one vote to cast for each seat designated for their stakeholder group. Only parents/guardians with students currently enrolled in the respective school may be run for an open seat and vote for a stakeholder seat on the Site Based Council

Member seats will be filled based on the number of votes received.

Example

Parent Election Results

*Mr. Jones	187
*Mrs. Smith	123
Ms. Gray	72

*Mr. Jones and Mrs. Smith would have been elected to the two available seats.

In case of a tie, a run-off election will be held for the last seat.

If a seat on the school-site council becomes vacant during the term with less than six months remaining, the organization representing the stakeholder group will appoint a replacement from the appropriate stakeholder group. This appointment will be in effect until the next scheduled election.

If a seat is vacated with six (6) months or more remaining on the term, the seat shall be filled via a special election.

If there is a failure to obtain enough nominations to fill all of the seats for a stakeholder group, the seat(s) will remain vacant until at least one nomination is obtained so that a special election can be held.

Roles and Responsibilities of Members

Each school-site council member is expected to have ongoing two-way communications with their stakeholder group to elicit input and direction prior to decisions being made and to share council activities, discussions and final decisions and their implications.

Each school-site council will monitor the attendance of all its members to ensure the effective functioning of the council. Council members may be removed from the council, if their absences are deemed to be a detriment.

Length of Term

All seats for school-site council members will be two year terms, with each seat designated as commencing and ending in an even or odd numbered year.

Elementary School

2	Faculty seats	<u>odd</u> year terms
1	Faculty seat	<u>even</u> year term
2	Parent seats	<u>1 odd</u> year term, <u>1 even</u> year term
1	Parent seat	<u>even</u> year term
1	Civil Service Personnel/Teaching Assistant seat	<u>even</u> year term

Middle School

2	Faculty seats	<u>odd</u> year terms
2	Faculty seats	<u>even</u> year term
2	Parent seats	<u>1 odd</u> year term, <u>1 even</u> year term
1	Parent seat	<u>odd</u> year term
1	Civil Service Personnel/Teaching Assistant seat	<u>even</u> year term

High School

3	Faculty seats	<u>odd</u> year terms
2	Faculty seats	<u>even</u> year terms
4	Parent seats	<u>2 even</u> year terms, <u>2 odd</u> year terms
1	Civil Service Personnel/Teaching Assistant seat	<u>even</u> year term
1	Student seat	<u>even</u> year term
1	Student seat	<u>odd</u> year term

The odd and even year designation for each term is designed to have approximately one half of the council composed of experienced members at all times.

No individual may serve more than two consecutive terms on a school-site council. A term of office begins on September 1st.

Meetings

School-site councils will meet a minimum of quarterly from September through June. The time and length of meetings will be determined by each school-site council; however, councils will meet only during non-instructional times. Agendas for school-site council meetings shall be posted for public viewing in advance of each meeting.

School-site council meetings will be open to the public. To ensure that the meetings are conducted in an efficient manner, visitor participation will be limited to the first part of the meeting. In order to assure the opportunity for participation of the school community who are unable to attend a school-site meeting, each council will accept written communication from the public. The building principal will serve as a co-facilitator of the school-site council. Each school-site council will select another member to serve as the other co-facilitator.

Communications

It is the responsibility of each member of a school-site council to serve as the liaison between their stakeholder group and the council. (Parents to PTA's, Teachers to the Teachers Association of Pelham, Civil Service Personnel/Teaching Assistants to CSEA, Students to Student Government Organization). School site based council facilitators should provide a short time at each meeting to review and assess the communication taking place with stakeholder groups.

Minutes will be recorded at all school-site council meetings by one of the co-facilitators. The minutes of council meetings will be posted on the district website via Google Doc for stakeholder viewing.

Each school site council will develop priorities of the school-site council for the year at their first meeting, and will summarize the school site council's accomplishments and evaluate its work for the year at the last meeting of the year. These will be noted in the minutes of the meetings that will be made available to the public on the district website.

Section VII

DECISION-MAKING PROCESS

Consensus Building

In order for a school-site council to make a decision, a quorum (two-thirds of the members) must be present. School-site councils will use consensus to arrive at decisions. Consensus is reached when all members can support a decision to some degree. While the decision reached through consensus may not be the first choice of all members, the decision is still acceptable as long as no one member blocks the decision. To assist in consensus building, school-site councils will use district-wide resources.

Community Resources

All school-site councils will make use of available community groups, members and resources to aid in the decision-making process. If a school-site council encounters serious difficulty in making appropriate progress, a request for assistance may be addressed to the Superintendent.

Means and Standards

The ability to improve student performance and school culture is the standard by which all school-site council decisions will be evaluated. School-site councils will not have access to individual student data, however, they will make use of summarized data. The means by which improvement in student performance will be evaluated may include:

- Performance assessment
- Portfolios
- Standardized norm-referenced tests (individual and group)
- Criterion-referenced tests
- Report cards
- Surveys
- Attendance data
- Teacher anecdotal records of programs
- Discipline patterns
- Other valid and reliable data

Appeal Process

Stakeholders may appeal the decisions of their school-site council. These appeals must be in writing and the school-site council must respond in writing within five (5) school days of the next regularly scheduled meeting. Only those decisions made by the school-site council can be appealed to the school-site council. If an appeal is not resolved to the satisfaction of the stakeholder, the stakeholder may continue the appeal process with the Superintendent.

Section VIII

ACCOUNTABILITY

There are several mechanisms for ensuring accountability of the school-site councils for the decisions they make:

- Meetings will be open
- Agendas will be posted before each meeting
- Minutes will be published and distributed
- Progress and evaluation will be reported in minutes

Section IX

EVALUATION

The Board of Education will establish a process to evaluate the effectiveness of the District Plan. Based on that evaluation, the Board of Education may make recommendations to amend the Plan.

Section X

SCHOOL-SITE COUNCIL TRAINING

Shared decision making and site-based planning require the development of new skills and access to new knowledge. Therefore, in order for the successful implementation of the District Plan, the district requires and will provide training for new council members. This training in consensus building training should be completed by each school's Principal by September 30th of each school year. The Executive Director for HR and Leadership will provide fairness in hiring practices training annually.

Section XI

ASSURANCES

All decisions made by school site councils must be in compliance with state and federal laws. Parental participation is required under Titles I and III. The building principal is responsible for these state and federal mandates. Since the principal also serves on each school site council, they will assure that all decisions made by the school-site councils are consistent with these programs.

Section XII

CONCLUSION

A New Compact for Learning is an opportunity for The Pelham Public Schools to reaffirm its commitment to excellence. This District Plan provides an opportunity for teachers, parents, students, administrators and support staff to participate in shared decision-making on critical educational issues. All of these efforts reflect Pelham's dedication to the continuous improvement of our schools.

Appendix A

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT SHARED DECISION MAKING

Q. What is the purpose of these school site councils?

A. The goal of these councils is to improve student achievement and school culture by involving parents, teachers and principals in planning and making decisions on specific educational issues.

Q. Will each building have their own council?

A. Yes. The councils will be making decisions about issues that are best dealt with at the building level.

Q. What safeguards exist to insure that these councils will not make decisions that result in inequities in the elementary school or inconsistencies from elementary to middle school or middle school to high school?

A. The councils can only make decisions on issues which are explicitly stated in the District Plan. All of these decisions must be consistent with Board of Education policy and administrative regulation, both of which deal specifically with issues of equity and consistency. According to the District Plan, decisions by the councils that will have district-wide implications will be only advisory in nature and must be referred to district-wide decision-making bodies. For example, school site councils may not make changes in the core curriculum. They may, however, make recommendations to district-wide committees for changes in curriculum or instruction.

Q. Who will be on these councils?

A. Each elementary school council will consist of three parents/guardians currently associated with the respective school, the principal, three faculty members, and one civil service personnel/teaching assistant. The middle school council will include one additional faculty member and the high school council will include two additional faculty members as well as two students.

Q. How will members be selected?

A. Each stakeholder group will be responsible for the selection of its representatives. To obtain nominations for membership on school site councils, organizations representing each stakeholder group (The Teachers' Association of Pelham, PTA's from each school, CSEA, student government organization) will distribute nomination forms to all of its stakeholders. Only those individuals who nominate themselves will be considered as candidates for school-site councils. Student nominations to the councils are only open to freshmen and sophomores. Each stakeholder group will present a

separate slate of candidates made up of all nominees. Each faculty member, parent, civil service personnel, teaching assistant and student associated with the respective school will have one vote to cast for each seat designated for their stakeholder group.

Q. Will the role of the PTA change with the establishment of school-site councils?

A. No. The PTAs will continue in all of their traditional roles such as supporting district educational initiatives, assisting with important school events (open house, book fairs) serving as essential communication links between school and home (newsletters, flyers, organization of class parents). In order to accomplish these tasks, the PTA's will be working with both the principal and the school site council. The PTA's will be conducting the elections of the parent representatives to school site councils.

Q. Will the majority rule all decisions on these councils?

A. No. A consensus decision-making process will be used. Consensus is reached when all members can support a decision to some degree. While the decision may not be the first choice of all members, consensus is reached when no one member will block the decision.

Q. When will these councils be implemented?

A. According to A New Compact for Learning, all districts must submit plans for these councils by February 1994. It is anticipated that these councils will be functional by September 1994.

Appendix B

PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS

The PTAs of the Pelham Public Schools are:

Colonial School PTA

Hutchinson School PTA

Pelham Memorial High School PTA

Pelham Middle School PTA

Prospect Hill School PTA

Siwanoy School PTA

Special Education PTA