

Serving on Groups that Make Decisions: A Guide for Families

Trainer Manual

2nd Edition

Developed as part of the
Center for Parent Information and Resource

by the Wisconsin Family Assistance Center for
Education, Training, and Support, LLC

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Disclaimer Information

This publication was produced under a subcontract from the National Center for Systemic Improvement at WestEd, a technical assistance and dissemination center funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent the positions or policies of the U.S. Department of Education. No official endorsement by the U.S. Department of Education of any product, commodity, service, or enterprise mentioned on this website is intended or should be inferred.



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Foreword

Family engagement and participation in decision-making is central to school improvement and student achievement. Studies show that children perform better at school, have fewer absences and behavioral concerns, and graduate at higher rates when families are engaged. In addition, school efforts are more effective when positive family-school relationships are established and parent voices are heard. State Superintendent Tony Evers shared, “We have seen, through our work to close Wisconsin’s achievement gaps, that involving parents in the educational process creates an environment where students thrive culturally as well as academically.”

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WDPI) is pleased to bring you the updated and dynamic resource, *Serving on Groups That Make Decisions: A Guide for Families* (Guidebook). If you are using the Guidebook for the first time, it will serve as a useful introduction to the opportunities for your participation, along with the types of groups commonly used in decision-making. The Guidebook is designed to help prepare and empower you to successfully serve on a group. You will have access to practical tools, tips, and strategies often used by decision-makers. The Guidebook will be beneficial in defining your role as you represent your family and others on decision-making groups. Finally, the Guidebook will assist you in developing new skills or refreshing acquired skills essential for active and meaningful participation.

The highlight of the revised Guidebook is a section entitled *Understanding Data as Information*. We live in a world with more available data than ever before. In education, using data is a powerful tool to determine if schools efforts are working and if students are meeting their goals. This section provides eight steps to assist you and other group members in making well-informed data-based decisions to improve the experiences of children. It also contains numerous resources for you to access and explore relevant data for your family and community.

On behalf of WDPI, I hope you enjoy your journey as a true contributor in decision-making groups. Thank you for making a difference in the lives of your child and other children in Wisconsin.

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Acknowledgements

This Guidebook is a collaborative effort between statewide agencies, school representatives and family members. We would like to recognize the following individuals for their contributions to the development of *Serving on Groups That Make Decisions: A Guide for Families*. Thank you!

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