

Requirements for Meaningful Stakeholder Participation

An essential component of improvement planning is creating an inclusive space that allows members of the school and district community to openly share their perspectives and work together to determine ways to promote their shared values. It is with this understanding that the New York State Education Department has developed the parameters below to promote perspective sharing and collaboration through the improvement planning process.

2021-22 School Comprehensive Education Plan (SCEP)

Under the New York Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) plan and Commissioner’s Regulations, all School Comprehensive Education Plans (SCEPs) must show evidence that parents, instructional staff, and in secondary schools, students, “meaningfully participated” in the development of the plan. NYSED will not approve any SCEP from a school identified as Comprehensive Support and Improvement (CSI) until the plan demonstrates evidence that stakeholders have meaningfully participated in the development of the SCEP. The purpose of this document is to outline the Department’s expectations for stakeholder meaningful participation in the development of 2021-22 SCEPs.

Meaningful Participation

The NYSED expectation for meaningful participation involves three components:

1. Ensuring that the participating stakeholders are fully representative of the school
2. Ensuring the stakeholders are involved in meaningful and significant work related to improvement planning
3. Ensuring that the final plan accounts for the perspectives of the stakeholders involved in the process

Each of these standards is outlined below. Failure to meet any of the expectations will result in the rejection of the SCEP.

Expectation 1: Ensuring that the Participating Stakeholders are Fully Representative of the School

All SCEPs should be developed by a team representing multiple constituencies within the school. Local Education Agencies (LEAs) should use current local agreements concerning shared-decision making to determine participation on each team. Schools can determine the size of the team, including the minimum and maximum numbers, that will develop the SCEP; however, certain constituencies must be involved in the development of the SCEP:

- School leaders
- A minimum of two Teachers
- A minimum of two Parents/Persons in Parental Relation. The Parent representatives should not be employees of the school.

Additional Guidance

- The SCEP Development Team composition should allow for maximum participation among stakeholder groups.
- All team meetings should have a majority of the members of the team present for that meeting and at least one parent and teacher representative present for each meeting.
- In instances in which the district's 100.11 shared-decision making plan does not include representation from each of the stakeholders identified above, the district must involve the stakeholders not represented by including them in the SCEP development meetings as non-voting members and providing them opportunities to share their perspectives during these meetings.
- Meetings should be scheduled at times and locations accessible for team members.
- Meetings should incorporate childcare and translation services when applicable. Title I 1003 BASIC funds can be used for this purpose.

Expectation 2: Ensuring The Stakeholders Are Involved In Meaningful And Significant Work Related To Improvement Planning

- All SCEP Development Teams must meet to engage in six different processes that are part of developing an SCEP:
 1. Completing the Equity Self-Assessment
 2. Interviewing Students
 3. Reviewing Multiple Sources of Data and Feedback
 4. Clarifying Priorities and Considering How They Connect to School Values
 5. Writing the Plan
 6. Completing the Leveraging Resources Document

Additional Guidance

- There will need to be a minimum of one parent and one teacher present at the meetings in which each of these six processes occur.
- Though there is not a minimum number of SCEP Development Meetings that teams must conduct, teams should plan to meet several times to cover the different steps involved in the planning process.
- NYSED will provide separate guidance regarding Student Interviews that will need to be followed as part of the "Interviewing Students" process.

Expectation 3: Ensuring That the Final Plan Accounts for the Perspectives of The Stakeholders Involved In The Process

Schools must ensure that the final plan accounts for the perspectives of stakeholders that have been involved in the development of the SCEP. As part of the SCEP template, schools will include the following information:

1. The names and titles/roles of the individuals serving as part of the SCEP Development Team.

2. The meeting dates when these individuals met to develop the SCEP.
3. The meeting dates when each of the following six processes were covered by the team developing the SCEP:
 - a. Completing the Equity Self-Assessment
 - b. Interviewing Students
 - c. Reviewing Multiple Sources of Data and Feedback
 - d. Clarifying Priorities and Considering How They Connect to School Values
 - e. Writing the Plan
 - f. Completing the Leveraging Resources Document
4. The signatures from SCEP Development Team members, including non-voting constituent representatives. All members of the SCEP Development Team must sign the finalized SCEP asserting that they participated in the development of the SCEP. If a school is unable to secure the signature of an SCEP Development Team member, the school must explain why it was unable to secure the member's signature, and the member must be offered the opportunity by the school to submit in writing the reason the person did not sign or the Department will reach out to the person and give them an opportunity to explain why he or she failed to sign.
5. Any objections or concerns from SCEP Development Team members. While the SCEP development process is intended to be collaborative, should SCEP Development Teams struggle to reach consensus, the team may decide to resolve any disagreement in accordance with the process specified in the required district plan for participation in school-based planning and shared decision-making. As part of every SCEP, there will be a section for any team member to identify any part of the plan that is deemed to not be satisfactory to that team member.
6. The district will need to approve the final plan. CSI plans will also need to be approved by NYSED; these schools should submit their plans electronically to: scep@nysed.gov.

TSI-Specific Guidance

TSI schools will not be required to submit their plans to NYSED for approval; instead, these plans will be approved by the district and must be kept on file by the district and provided to NYSED upon its request.

TSI schools are expected to follow a process similar to CSI schools and ensure that stakeholders meaningfully participate in the development of the SCEP. In addition, TSI schools must have a means of incorporating the perspectives of the identified subgroup(s). As part of the TSI SCEP plan template, TSI schools will be required to identify how they have included parents of students from each identified subgroup and teachers responsible for students from each identified subgroup. Districts should not approve any TSI plan until there is evidence of sufficient outreach with the consistency groups representing the identified subgroup(s).