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## **HEALTH AND SAFETY SHARED DECISION MAKING TEAM**

### **Rush-Henrietta Central School District**

#### **Rush-Henrietta, New York**

In spring 1997, Rush-Henrietta Central School District began its Health and Safety Shared Decision Making Team. The team focused on having parents, district staff, and community members work together to ensure the health and safety of the district's youth at school and on the way to and from school.

The team included school district custodians, bus drivers, day care workers, and others. In addition, there were community members from the town youth bureau, the sheriff's department, and others. Over the years, additional people have joined the team, including the fire chief, code enforcement, the director of physical education, and high school security staff.

The Health and Safety SDM Team handles concerns from parents, staff, and community members regarding the safety of children. The Team created a referral brochure that is widely distributed to the schools in the district. Referrals are sent to one central location and may be made by anyone involved with children.

The Team meets monthly, or more often if needed, to review referrals. The group discusses the problem and makes a decision about which agency or school district department should handle it. One team member volunteers to contact the agency or department and to send a copy of the referral. The next SDM Team meeting requests feedback on the referral – by which time the problems are often already resolved.

The Health and Safety Shared Decision Making Team had many successes. They made it possible for all custodians, bus drivers, and administrator to have ID badges. They arranged for the sports buses to have reserved parking, creating drop-off and pick-up for the players. They purchased two-way radios for the district's childcare program, and pagers for bus drivers on the evening sports runs.

The team has a budget of \$2000.00 per year, which is often spent on projects like ID badges and two-way radios. However, most of the measures implemented are actually carried out by the

departments to which referrals are made. For example, the Team instituted a procedure that requires schools to provide latex gloves to children who clean cafeteria tables. Some items are no cost at all, and some are covered by the agencies the Team contacts.

During the past three years the Health and Safety SDM Team has become well known in the district. The meetings are well attended and very productive. The Health and Safety SDM Team is considered the most successful team in the district.

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