



## **Supported Decision Making in DCPS**

### **What is the role of the Adult Student in the Supported Decision Making (SDM) process?**

Students who are the age of majority have the ability to determine the people who make up their educational support network. As an element of postsecondary transition planning, students are taught to make educational decisions on their own. However, students who are more cognitively impaired have the ability to appoint individuals whom they trust to become members of their Supported Decision Making network. The student's role is to identify these individuals and seek their guidance regarding educational matters, as needed.

### **Is the Supported Decision Making process the same as Guardianship?**

No, the supported decision making process is an alternative to guardianship. Students seek guidance from adults they trust to guide them through key decisions in their lives. Guardians are appointed by the court to make decisions on behalf of the student. If a student enters into a Supported Decision Making agreement but is found incapable of making decisions and a guardian is appointed, the Supported Decision Making agreement will be nullified.

### **Who can be a member of the Supported Decision Making network?**

Members of the Supported Decision Making network must be over the age of 18. Students can choose people to support them in the educational decision making process. Students choose the members of their SDM network based on their trust in that individual. Students can utilize their SDM members to guide them in making or communicating the student's own decisions.

### **What does a member of a Supported Decision Making network do?**

Adult network members are able to assist students in making educational decisions. Network members must have a copy of the signed agreement before accessing the student's educational records.

### **What documents are needed to begin a Supported Decision Making process?**

The District of Columbia Public Schools created a form necessary for the Supported Decision Making process. Students choose their adult network members based on trust and comfort. The student and network member(s) complete and sign the agreement. It is important to note that students must determine the members of their network. Adults may not act on the student's behalf without the student's written consent.

### **How do I become involved in the Supported Decision Making process?**

There is no formal court process to become a member of the supported decision making network. Between the adult student and the supportive network member, an agreement is signed granting access to educational documents. The network member uses the documents to assist the student in making the best educational decisions possible. Both parties should retain a copy of the agreement, and a copy should be uploaded to the student file in SEDS using a miscellaneous cover sheet titled "Supported Decision Making Agreement". The agreement can be terminated at any time from either party based on a determined need.

**Questions? Contact [DCPS.Transition@k12.dc.gov](mailto:DCPS.Transition@k12.dc.gov).**



## Supported Decision Making Form

Adult Student: \_\_\_\_\_  
Cell Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Washington, DC \_\_\_\_\_  
Street \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that I may create a network of individuals to help me inform my educational decisions related to my Individualized Education Program (IEP) once I reach the age of majority. I would like the following individual(s) to assist me with making educational decisions. I understand that my parent or other individuals may support me in the decision making process and may have access to the documents listed below.

| NAME | RELATIONSHIP | HOME ADDRESS | EMAIL ADDRESS | PHONE NUMBER |
|------|--------------|--------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1.   |              |              |               |              |
| 2.   |              |              |               |              |

Members in my network may have access to the following educational documents if I have checked the box next to it:

| DOCUMENT                             | ACCESS |
|--------------------------------------|--------|
| IEP meeting invitations, and agendas |        |
| Requests for assessments             |        |
| Requests for changes in placement    |        |
| Requests for changes in services     |        |
| Exit requests                        |        |
| Progress reports                     |        |
| Report cards                         |        |
| Attendance information               |        |
| Assessment results                   |        |
| Other                                |        |

It is my understanding that I make the final decisions about my educational future after communicating with members in my network, and can remove a member from my network, or their access to my educational documents at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Adult Student Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Network Member Signature Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Network Member Signature Date