

## School Based Decision Making





## School Leadership Team Myths

	True or False
Every New York City Public School must have a School Leadership Team.	
The team should only discuss the educational issues that are expressly outlined in Chancellor's Regulation A-655	
The SLT assists in the evaluation and assessment of the school's educational programs and their effect on student achievement.	
All vote tallies should be recorded in the Team's minutes indicating the majority and minority votes.	
If an SLT is unable to reach consensus on developing a CEP that aligns with the school-based budget, the SLT shall seek assistance from the District Leadership Team.	
Teams <u>must</u> use the consensus model recommended by the Chancellor and FACE.	
The SLT must have balance between staff and parents; this is not inclusive of the mandatory members of the SLT.	

## School Based Shared Decision Making

100.11 PLAN	PARTICIPATION OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS IN SCHOOL-BASED PLANNING AND SHARED DECISION MAKING.
PURPOSE	The purpose of school-based planning and shared decision making is to <u>improve the educational performance of all students</u> in the school, regardless of such factors as socioeconomic status, race, sex, language background, or disability.
BACKGROUND	February 1, 1994, each public school district board of education and each board of cooperative educational services (BOCES) shall develop and adopt a district plan for the participation by teachers and parents with administrators and school board members in school-based planning and shared decision making.

<b>Governance</b>		
<b>Bylaws</b>	Provide operating guidelines for the team. Bylaws give the team structure and serve as an important reference when discussing procedural rules.	
<b>Team Composition</b>	<p>The SLT must have between 10 and 17 members.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an equal number of parents and staff members</li> <li>Constituent group must ensure that SLT elections are open to all members of the constituent group.</li> </ol>	<p>3 mandatory members</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal</li> <li>UFT Chapter Leader</li> <li>Parent Association President</li> </ol> <p>Mandatory members are included when determining if an SLT is balanced.</p>
<b>Officers</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Chairperson/Co-Chairpersons</li> <li>Secretary</li> </ol>	<p>Other Team Positions</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time Keeper</li> <li>Facilitator,</li> <li>Financial Liaison</li> </ol>
<b>Quorum</b>	Minimum number of members that must be present for a meeting to be valid.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>bylaws may state a specific quorum number</li> <li>include a majority clause</li> </ol>
<b>Term</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CR A-655 does not dictate a required term length for elected SLT members.</li> <li>The most common term length is two years.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>CR A-655 does not require term limits for elected SLT members.</li> <li>Most SLT bylaws have set term limits at two terms and include a provision that allows an individual to seek a third term if there are no other interested members of the constituent group.</li> </ol>
<b>Order of Business</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>must specify the order of business for SLT meetings</li> <li>Provides a framework for each meeting's agenda.</li> </ol>	The Order of Business provision can be amended by consensus of the team.
<b>Meetings</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SLT should meet at least once a month during the school year</li> <li>Meetings must be scheduled at a time convenient for the parent members.</li> <li>Meetings must be scheduled at a time convenient for the parent members.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The SLT should develop ways to ensure that the school community is notified of upcoming meetings.</li> </ol> <p>There are 4 key documents that all SLT members should have at each meeting:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The CEP</li> <li>The school-based budget</li> <li>The SLT bylaws</li> <li>CR A-655</li> </ol>
<b>Remuneration</b>	SLT members are eligible to receive an annual \$300 remuneration for their service, provided they complete at least 30 hours of service on the SLT and attend a mandatory training session.	Team members who complete less than 30 hours of service may request remuneration on a pro-rata basis.



**Department of  
Education**

*Carmen Fariña, Chancellor*

**How has school based shared-decision-making benefitted your school?**

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## Common Decision Making Practices

Process	How Decisions are Made
Unanimous	Occur when all agree without reservation. They are easier for trivial matters, but very difficult for important and/or higher-pressure situations. Be careful not to confuse unanimity with consensus.
Majority rule	Decisions are made when more than half the group votes in favor. This process is used frequently in democracies, and rarely in organizations. Majority decisions, as with any voting situation, risk that you won't have full support and that those not in agreement with the majority may do something less than helpful later. It also carries the possibility of establishing an "us" versus "them" mentality.
Expert	The group delegates the decision-making responsibility to an expert or small subgroup. This type of process is good for situations that do not require the entire group's participation.
Executive Decision	The leader makes the call. Most decisions are executive, and should be. The big mistake is that often the kind and amount of participation leading up to this kind of decision-making isn't what it should be. The best decision-making is typically a highly participative executive decision. This approach is critical when dealing with issues such as team vision and mission.
Default	A decision is made by action, or more likely, inaction that forces a conclusion. It is a powerless form of decision-making and is best avoided.

## Problem Solving Techniques

Process	Definition
Negotiation:	A discussion designed to result in an agreement
Conflict Resolution:	A process designed to bring together people or groups who have disagreed and have been hostile.
Mediation:	To work with opposing sides to bring about a settlement
Group Dynamics:	The way group members deal with one
Consensus:	another A collective / group opinion or agreement

## The Principles of Consensus Decision Making

Process	How Decisions are Made
<b>Inclusive:</b>	As many stakeholders as possible are involved in group discussions
<b>Participatory:</b>	All participants are allowed a chance to contribute to the discussion.
<b>Collaborative:</b>	The group constructs proposals with input from all interested group members. Any individual authorship of a proposal is subsumed as the group modifies it to include the concerns of all group members.
<b>Agreement Seeking:</b>	The goal is to generate as much agreement as possible. Regardless of how much agreement is required to finalize a decision, a group using a consensus process makes a concerted attempt to reach full agreement.
<b>Cooperative:</b>	Participants are encouraged to keep the good of the whole group in mind. Each individual's preferences should be voiced so that the group can incorporate all concerns into an emerging proposal. Individual preferences should not, however, obstructively impede the progress of the group.

## The Process of Consensus Decision Making

There are multiple models of how to make decisions by consensus that vary the number of steps the group will employ to reach consensus and finalize decisions.

The basic model involves collaboratively generating a proposal, identifying unsatisfied concerns, and then modifying the proposal to generate as much agreement as possible.

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Discussion	Identify Emerging Proposal	Identify Any Unsatisfied Concerns	Collaboratively Modify the Proposal	Assess the Degree of Support	Finalize the Decision OR Circle Back to Steps 1 thru 3

## Pitfalls

If consensus-based decision-making is not working for your team, consider whether the team has fallen victim to one of the common challenges below:

1. Poorly Defined Issues
2. Vested Interests
3. Disparity of Power
4. Intimidation

Place a corresponding number next to the described pitfall	
When discussing issues at a team meeting, three of the four parents on the team are usually very quiet and tend to sit back and listen to the principal and the staff team members discuss issues that impact students. Two parents have poor English skills and the third parent does not speak English at all. The PA/PTA President does his best to translate, but little input comes from parents in these discussions. However the parents do contribute greatly, when discussing the end of the year trip for the graduating class.	
The number of students who seemingly are losing focus before lunch is beginning to manifest itself in a few classrooms, in different ways.	
During most discussions one team member can usually be heard saying under her breath how stupid or ridiculous something is, or arrives very late for the team meeting in very disruptive manner.	
While the team is in agreement that students are in need of additional support in areas such as math and science, different members of the team or lobbying for specific programs and or vendors.	
The agenda is made available 24 hours before the team meets.	

## Group Activity I - Seeking Solutions

In the past week, students have been given suspensions for fighting and or bullying.. In total, nearly 8 students were suspended. The suspended students cannot be stereotyped as “At Risk” or “High Need” students.

As members of your School leadership Team you are tasked with offering solutions and recommendations to bring back to your constituent groups (administrators, staff and parents).

You must address three aspects of activities:

1. Possible reason for why the activity is occurring?
2. What Solutions and strategies can be offered? (Be innovative and imaginative)
3. How can the solutions be implemented? What is your implementation plan?

One person will act as scribe.

You will record a summary of your team’s ideas for presentation to the group.

One team member will act as an observer.

You will note aspects about the way your team worked (how decision were made? How was consensus reached?

When completed, a member of your team will present a summary of ideas to the larger group. All three aspects must be presented.

## Group Activity II - Lost on the Moon

You are a member of a space crew. You were scheduled to rendezvous with your mother ship on the lighted side of the moon. Due to mechanical difficulties, your ship was forced to land at a spot on the moon 62 miles from the rendezvous point. During landing, most of your equipment was damaged. Your survival depends on reaching the mother ship. Working by yourself, you must choose the most important items for your 62 mile trek.

A list of 15 items left undamaged after landing are noted. Your task is to rank them in order of their importance to your crew in allowing them to reach the rendezvous point. Place a number 1 by the most important item and provide a statement of your rationale.

Place a number 2 beside the next most important item and provide your Statement of rationale. Continue until each item has a number ranking with number 15 being the least important.

Item	Rank	Rationale
Box of Matches		
Food Concentrate		
50 Feet of Nylon Rope		
Parachute Silk		
Portable Heating Unit		
Two .45 caliber Pistols		
One Case of Dehydrated Milk		
Two Tanks of Oxygen		
Stellar Map (of the Moon's Constellation)		
Life Raft		
Magnetic Compass		
Five Liters of Water		
Signal Flares		
First Aid Kit		
Solar Powered FM Receiver-Transmitter		



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