

Decision-Making Procedures, 2014-2015

As a staff-run school, we share responsibility for making and implementing decisions about programs, practices, and policies at SF Community School. The principal, however, is responsible for holding the perspectives of families, students, and all of the various leadership teams and committees, as well as district/state needs, mandates, and initiatives. The principal has the whole-school perspective needed to make strategic, informed decisions and thus has final authority in all matters that the contract allows her/him to. The principal is trusted to use this authority with discretion and must provide justification for any decision going against the wishes of the staff majority. SFC maintains its own checks-and-balances on this power by determining collectively who we consent to as our principal, and for how long s/he will remain in the role.

Whole Staff Decisions

Three-Quarters Vote: Major decisions that impact teaching and learning or school culture, vision, and philosophy are made by 3/4 vote by the whole staff. (Examples: project rotation, DLT configuration, principal selection, Commitments)

- The Operations Team determines what is a major decision.
- The lens for making these decisions is “what is best for our students?”
- When possible, written information about the decision is distributed before the discussion.
- When possible, discussions about major decisions occur at meetings before the decision needs to be made; Alternate proposals are drafted and discussed.
- Process check is explicit (including who did and did not speak) and votes are tallied and disaggregated before any decision is finalized.
- If a decision is voted no, default is previous practice/Commitments

Majority Vote: Systems, scheduling, and budget decisions are made by majority votes.

- There is time for discussion before majority votes.
- When possible, written information about the issue is distributed before the meeting.

Decisions to extend meetings:

- If we are extending a meeting by 5 or fewer minutes, we vote.
- If we are extending a meeting by more than 5 minutes, we ask for $\frac{3}{4}$ vote.

**If a staff member is going to miss a meeting, it is his/her responsibility to meet with the Principal or another staff member beforehand and give opinion/vote to be shared.*

Team or Principal Decisions

Principal:

- The Principal maintains a big-picture lens and drafts proposals to bring to teams/staff as needed to facilitate decision-making processes.
- The Principal makes decisions that need to be made in the moment, consulting colleagues when possible.
- The Principal makes any lingering, stalemated or time-sensitive decisions. Once an issue has been in the “Issue Bin” for 2 months, the principal may choose to make a final decision on that issue.
- The Principal holds accountability for implementation of all decisions made and makes decisions as needed to ensure follow-through (Example: implementing accountability systems)
- The Principal holds final authority in all matters that the contract allows her to and can make decisions accordingly

Operations Team:

- Decisions/concerns about school operations, including schedules, fundraising, physical resources, space, and procedures are all brought to the Operations Team.
- Operations Team reviews requests from researchers and decides whether to make the decision or to take it to the whole staff.
- Operations Team makes decisions about decisions—about what the Principal should decide alone, what each team should decide, and what needs to go to the whole staff.

Professional Development Team:

- PD Team makes decisions about the sequence, scope, and delivery of professional development.
- PD Team makes decisions about pedagogy, instruction, curriculum, and assessment.
- PD Team makes decisions about accessing and allocating resources to support PD.
- PD Team makes decisions about focused efforts.
- PD Team makes decisions about whether to defer PD Team responsibilities to an individual or group of individuals (Equity Leadership Facilitators for example)

Where decisions get made:

- DLTs make DLT-specific decisions about systems and curriculum, in line with school-wide initiatives determined by PD or Operations Team. (examples: project theme, social studies focus, beautification, etc.)
- Support/Specialist staff makes decisions about systems and curriculum. (examples: P.E. curriculum, library rules, yard games)
- Decisions which impact school-wide systems (example: recess times) are brought to the Principal who decides if it conflicts with other programs or where the decision needs to be made (Operations Team, whole staff, etc.).
- Decisions particular to specific events are made by committees planning those events, with input from whole staff and/or DLT/SAP. (Example: location of camping trip, games for the Whole School Picnic)