

Leading a Team Through Group Decision-making



Georgia Leadership Institute
for School Improvement

**A Performance-based Learning Module
for Georgia's Educational Leaders**

Related Modules

Related GLISI Modules

Other modules related to this topic include:

- *Conducting Effective Meetings to Improve Student Achievement & Organizational Effectiveness*
 - *Leading a Team to Analyze and Display Data Using Quality Tools*
 - *Leading Tactical Meetings*
 - *Leading Team Discussions*
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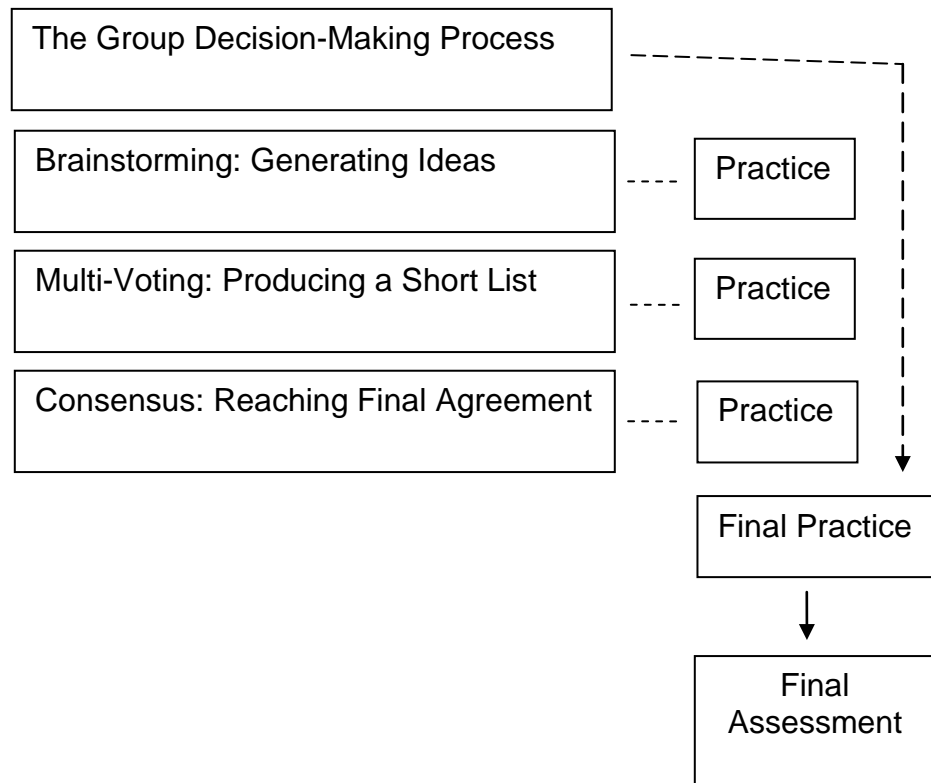
Performance Objective(s)

Given This...	Do This...	To Meet These Criteria...
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A decision to be made regarding a key problem or issue that concerns your team• A team of 3-5 people responsible for making the decision and carrying out its implementation• Basic office supplies such as flip charts, whiteboards, markers, pencils and paper• A meeting space conducive to group discussion	<p>Lead the team in implementation of each of the three key decision-making tools:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Brainstorming• Multi-Voting• Consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The detailed task performance criteria listed in the Performance Checklists in the Topic Practice(s), Final Practice, and Final Assessment• GLISI's criteria for how to work effectively as a team leader/facilitator, listed in the Performance Feedback Form(s) located in the Final Practice and Final Assessment

Module Introduction

Group Decision-Making

In this module, you will learn to lead your team through the process of making good decisions. The team will be involved in generating ideas, narrowing the list of ideas to a manageable few, and then agreeing to a final decision. You will learn to use tools that will help the team through this process. You will experience the following:



You will not need to use such a complete or formal process all the time. There are many day-to-day decisions that are best made by you, alone, or in consultation with just one or two of your team. But there are also key or major decisions that have impact on the whole team, your whole school or the whole district.

Why is Group Decision-Making Important?

The emphasis in this module will be on “group” decision-making. You need the best possible solutions to issues your team faces. By tapping the creative input of your team and involving them in the full process, you are much more likely to get the best possible results. You want the best decision.

This topic supports all of the other modules in the Leadership program. Nearly all of the leadership modules assume that the leader can help their team make decisions about the topic or task being considered.

What Is the Leader’s Role?

- Be prepared with the necessary materials and supplies
 - Schedule and communicate meeting times and locations to participants
 - Thank the participants, acknowledging everyone's worthwhile contribution to the group and commitment to future actions
-

Begin With The End in Mind

Research about effective assessment of performance tells us that the learner always performs better when they understand what they should know and be able to do. For this reason, you are encouraged to **review the Final Assessment in its entirety** in order to:

- Understand the knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are being taught and tested in this module
 - Understand the standards (performance criteria) by which your performance will be assessed
 - Gauge your current level of performance against what will be expected of you by the end of the module
 - Prioritize which areas to concentrate on as you work through the module
-

Topic 1: Overview of the Group Decision-making Process

The Group Decision-making Process

In this module you will learn three tools to aid group decision-making. But before considering specific tools, you need to think about the total process. There are several important steps you need to take to lead your team to make a major decision. Skipping any of these can weaken the decision that is finally made.

There are many tools that experts and practitioners use in the decision-making process. The four included in this module are the most widely used because they have been shown to be the most efficient to use and to produce the most consistent results. However, as you continue to grow as a leader, you will read about other tools and may find some more that suit your needs.

Situations and circumstances vary widely. Your decision-making process may need to be very formal because of a mandate from some authority, or because the decision is very important and has far reaching implications. Or, it may be informal and can be done with a shortened version of what is covered here.

Decision-making is an inexact process. No one can predict the future and know whether a particular solution or action plan will be the best.

Circumstances change. Once a decision has been implemented, you and your team need to continue to monitor the situation and make adjustments as necessary.

**Before You Begin:
Gather Data**

You should not attempt to make an important decision until you and/or your team have gathered appropriate information that will affect the results of any action you decide to take. Gather as much information before starting, but you may find that you also need to stop the process at key points and collect more information before your team can make a good decision.

Consider these examples of the types of data to collect and review:

- What has been done in the past about this situation?
- What have been the results?
- Why is it still an issue?
- Are there laws or other rules that affect it?
- Do we know the specifics such as what time of day or month the problem occurs the most often, etc.?

Do not confuse data collection with either of these other two steps in the process: Brainstorming or Multi-Voting. The outcome of Brainstorming is a creative list of ideas. These ideas may or may not reflect reality and feasibility. The outcome of Multi-Voting reflects the opinion of the team, but these opinions may or may not be based on facts.

What Does a Good Decision Look Like?

A good decision needs to:

- Be made in an accurate and timely manner
- Involve the entire team that is responsible for its implementation
- Be supported by team members, both verbally and by their actions
- Meet any other criteria that are important to your team and/or organization, such as: time, budget, players, approval, etc.

For best results, do not itemize your “good decision” criteria during the Brainstorming phase, because you do not want the criteria to impede the creative process of listing multiple alternatives. Rather, set your decision criteria after the Brainstorming phase, right before moving into the Multi-Voting phase.

Then, during the Multi-Voting and Consensus phases, refer to your decision criteria often, in order to investigate the consequences of each alternative as fully as possible to see how they match the criteria. Those options that do not match the criteria may be easy candidates for elimination.

When comparing options to the criteria, also consider each option’s probability of success. A great idea that would be the best solution may not be the best decision if it is very likely to fail. For example, if there is no, or limited, funding to implement the solution, it is not a good decision. Therefore, you need a decision that is a balance between risk and reward.

Narrowing the List of Options

This module presents a process called “Multi-Voting” as a way to narrow a list of many options (such as is generated by Brainstorming) into a “short list” of only a few of the best options from which to choose the final decision.

In addition to Multi-Voting, another popular process for this step is called Nominal Group Technique (NGT). For your convenience, more information about this alternative is provided in the Appendix at the end of this module.

NOTE: For the purposes of this module, you will perform Multi-Voting in your Practices and Final Assessment. You will not be expected to perform NGT; it is provided for your information only.

**Plan for
Contingencies**

Contingencies should be identified for your final solution. There are risks for any decision or plan to solve a problem. You need to plan for what you will do if one of your assumptions is not completely true or something you can't control happens.

Consider these examples and the contingency plans that might be appropriate for each:

- The board has been discussing the need for a 5 percent budget cut across all items. You need to plan for how this will affect your implementation of the solutions(s) the team chooses.
- Your solution is depending on another team completing an activity by a certain date. You need to plan for what your team will do if this team is late.

How Do I Do It?

- Read through the steps in the step-action table (see next page)

NOTE: This topic does not include a practice activity. The concepts presented are incorporated into the practice activities for the remaining topics, as well as the Final Practice.

Step-Action Table

Step	Action
1. Collect data and share with the team	Remember, once you begin the decision-making process, you will not be collecting data. You, the leader, should bring as much supporting evidence as you can gather to the decision-making session(s).
2. State the problem or issue as a question in the clearest possible way	<p>You will generate more creative ideas and reach a better final decision if you begin by stating the problem or issue as a question.</p> <p>Examples: Several of your neighboring districts have gone to a year-round calendar or at least an extended calendar. The issue has come up at PTA and board of education meetings.</p> <p>The question: What school calendar should our district use to meet the state mandated number of days of instruction and provide the best means of meeting the needs of the students?</p>
3. Generate alternative solutions	Use a process such as Brainstorming to do this.
4. Identify the decision criteria	As you begin to narrow down the options for how your team will solve the problem, you need criteria that the team agrees with. What does a good decision have to address, such as cost, feasibility effectiveness, acceptance, resource limitations, or culture. This is not a definitive list. The various factors and criteria will vary depending on the decision, the solution and the school environment.
5. Narrow the number of alternatives	Narrow the solutions down to the highest priority or probability of success, using a process such as Multi-Voting.
6. Lead the team to make the final decision	Use a process such as consensus to do this. Also generate contingency plans to help ensure that you can effectively implement your final decision, no matter what obstacles may arise.

Topic 2: Brainstorming

Brainstorming

Before you can decide on a solution for a problem or issue, you need to know your alternatives. Any solution may have a wide variety of unique, situation-specific facets that you need to consider. The solution that comes immediately to mind may not turn out to be the best one. You need to begin by getting as many creative ideas about potential solutions as possible.

The end result or outcome of Brainstorming should be a long list of ideas. It is from this creative list that you will eventually find the solution upon which your team will decide.

As you continue the process, you will lead your group to choose one of these, or a combination of 2 or more, that will be the best solution your team can find. This is the final goal of the decision-making process.

Tip(s)

Use a flipchart when Brainstorming and hang up each sheet as it is filled. Make sure you have plenty of wall space.

Repeat each idea as it is offered in order to support the person giving it. Avoid judging ideas as they are given. If you believe an idea needs to be rephrased, including any shortening or abbreviating, get the concurrence of the person who suggested the idea before writing it on the chart.

Rules for Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a very creative attempt to find as many different solutions for a problem as is possible. The team benefits from the collective participation of all members. In order for Brainstorming to be successful, you need to establish some key rules with your team:

- Help your team think in new ways --→ “outside of the box,” different mental sets, etc. Wild and humorous ideas help creativity. They may not be the final solution, but may help generate the best one.
- Generate as many ideas as possible. Quantity is more important than quality.
- Build on each other's ideas. Even if an idea is almost the same as a previous suggestion, just wording it differently may help add a dimension that might otherwise be overlooked.
- Avoid judging, arguing, criticizing or evaluating during the session. Even a slight groan or raised eyebrows can torpedo the process. You, as the team leader, must emphasize and enforce this expectation.
- Make sure everyone participates at least once, while honoring the comfort level of various participants.

How Do I Do It?

- Read through the steps in the step-action table (see next page)
 - Study any accompanying examples
 - Complete the practice exercise
 - Share the results with your Performance Coach
-

Step-Action Table

Step	Action
1. Gather materials and prepare the room	<p>Determine how you will record ideas. The most common is either a series of flipcharts or lots of whiteboard space. Make sure you have enough.</p> <p>Set up the room for maximum participation and so that everyone can see the charts or boards. Use a semi-circle seating arrangement.</p>
2. Explain the session to the team	<p>It is very important that you and your team are prepared to participate in a good Brainstorming session. Let the team know what the goal of this Brainstorming session is, how it will be conducted and why this approach is useful in helping them make a decision.</p>
3. State the rules	<p>Go over the rules of a Brainstorming session and make sure all of the participants understand. Let them know you will be enforcing the rules.</p> <p>The team will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seek maximum creativity 2. Strive for the maximum quantity of ideas 3. Build on existing ideas; look for a different slant 4. Avoid judging, criticizing or evaluation 5. Make sure everyone participates <p>TIP: Write these on a chart or board so you and the participants can readily refer to them if needed.</p>
4. Review the problem or issue question	<p>Remember from the earlier discussion of the process that you need to state the problem or issue as a question. Write the problem or issue on a flipchart or board, in the form of a question. Make sure everyone understands, and then agrees with, the way the question is stated.</p>
5. Provide for silent thinking	<p>Let the team think about the question for a few minutes (2-5) so that the creative ideas can begin to flow. This should be done silently.</p>
6. Elicit ideas	<p>It is usually useful to go around the room and get one idea from each individual (Referred to as a round robin.). Write these on the flipchart or white board. If there seems to be plenty of ideas, repeat the round robin.</p> <p>After that, you may take additional ideas from anyone. Continue the session until no one seems to have any more ideas.</p> <p>Monitor the participants to make sure that no one is breaking the rule of judging any of the ideas.</p>
7. Record ideas	<p>As participants share ideas, write them down so that everyone can see the new idea. Repeat ideas out loud to make sure that they are accurately recorded.</p>

Step	Action
8. Encourage full participation	Make sure that everyone is contributing ideas. Call on anyone who has not contributed as much as others.
9. Prepare the team to move on	Ask the team if all of the possible alternatives have been listed. If everyone says yes, it is time to move on to the next step in the decision-making process. If someone says no, then be sure to get that person's additional idea(s) before moving on. Let the team know that they now need to reduce the number of great ideas to just a few that are the most likely to be the best decision. You will learn to do this in the next two topics.

Practice Exercise

Instructions

- Follow the steps in the Step-Action Table for this topic
 - Complete the Practice Worksheet and/or forms, listing results that are realistic based on the information in the practice scenario below
 - Check your work
 - Meet with your Performance Coach to review the results and decide what to do next
-

Practice Scenario

You may choose from either of the following scenarios for this activity. The option you choose will be the scenario you apply to the remaining topic practice activities in this module.

- **Option #1:** The alternative school population serves students whose needs vary considerably from semester (term) to semester. Only one or a handful of students may need a particular course at any given time. But these students need highly qualified teachers. Your team has been asked to address the issue of how to best staff the alternative school(s) in your district.
 - **Option #2:** Your school has witnessed an increase in the number and severity of disciplinary infractions during the past academic year. Teachers, parents, students and the central office are all concerned. You have been selected to lead a team to determine what should be done.
-

Practice Worksheet

List the problem/issue statement in the form of a question, as stated in the Brainstorming session:

List the ideas that the team generated:

Note any transgressions from the “no judgment” rule, and how they were handled / resolved.

Note the number of ideas from each participant:

Topic Practice Performance Checklist

Select one: Performer's self-assessment Performance Coach's observations

Performer's Name: _____

Performance Coach's Name: _____

Date of Performance: _____

*Check off each criterion that is observed. If the performance meets criteria with satisfactory quality, mark Yes. If not, mark No and provide feedback (use the back of the page for more space). Enter this performance into your portfolio when **all** items are marked Yes.*

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
1. Prepare for the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring a sufficient number of flipcharts or have enough whiteboard space. Bring enough markers <input type="checkbox"/> Arrange the room for maximum participation	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Prepare the team for Brainstorming	<input type="checkbox"/> State the benefit of using this tool <input type="checkbox"/> State the rules and make sure the entire group agrees <input type="checkbox"/> State the problem or issue to be solved as a question	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
3. Facilitate the Brainstorming session	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide a time period for silent thinking <input type="checkbox"/> Write down solution ideas as stated. Repeat ideas out loud to make sure that they are accurately recorded <input type="checkbox"/> Prevent judging, grimaces, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure everyone contributes <input type="checkbox"/> Gain full concurrence for modifications or combinations	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
4. Close the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that all alternatives have been considered <input type="checkbox"/> State the next step(s) in the decision-making process	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Topic 3: Multi-Voting

Multi-voting

You now have this very long list of great ideas for solving your problem. You are proud of your team and congratulate them on the job they have done to generate this creative set of ideas. But now what?

Each team member is going to help reduce the list by voting for the item(s) on the list that he/she considers the best potential solution. Members should base their decision on the “good decision” criteria the team will establish at the beginning of this phase.

Why Use Multi-voting?

You now need to reduce the set of ideas to something more workable. Many were creative, and you encouraged wild and humorous ideas. Some of these helped the participants come up with a couple of new ideas that no one had thought of before, so they were useful. But do you really need to spend any more time on them?

The goal now is to reduce your list—maybe you have 20, 30, 40 or more. You need to reduce this down to just 3 or 4. You may be able to reduce the list somewhat by combining similar items, but usually you will also need to identify which items to eliminate from the list.

Of course, if your team has only 3 or 4 ideas from the Brainstorming session then this step in the decision-making process is unnecessary. This may happen, for example, when the issue has been addressed before but new circumstances are forcing the team to readdress this issue.

Tips

Be sure to combine only redundant ideas, not similar ones.

Before deleting an option, allow someone to make a case for keeping it. They may share additional information or insights that could help with the final decision. You may simply need to help the individual restate the idea.

How Do I Do It?

- Read through the steps in the step-action table (see next page)
 - Study any accompanying examples
 - Complete the practice exercise
 - Share the results with your Performance Coach
-

Step-Action Table

Step	Action
<p>1. Prepare for the session</p>	<p>You need to have the full list of ideas from the Brainstorming session. If you had a break in the process, you may need to place the charts back up on the wall, or rewrite the ideas onto the white board.</p> <p>Make sure the room is arranged in a way that is conducive to working as a team – for instance, a U-shape or sitting around a conference table.</p> <p>Provide paper and pencils for members to record their votes.</p>
<p>2. Determine the number of beginning votes</p>	<p>Each member votes for several items. Decide what number of votes each team member will have. (All members get the same number.) Various experts recommend you select as the number of votes somewhere between 25 percent (1/4th) and 33 percent (1/3rd) of the total number of items (alternative solutions).</p> <p><i>Example: If you have 30 items on your list, each member will cast votes for 7 to 10 items.</i></p>
<p>3. Explain the session to the team</p>	<p>Let the team know what the goal of this Multi-Voting session is, how it will be conducted and why this approach is useful in helping them make a decision.</p> <p>The goal will be to reduce the number of ideas to a workable number. In most cases this is from 3 to 5, but will depend on your situation.</p>
<p>4. Determine the selection criteria</p>	<p>You will recall from the topic, The Group Decision-Making Process that a key step is to determine the selection criteria. You did not want to do this before Brainstorming, because it could stymie creativity. Now you need to start making decisions about what will work.</p> <p>Lead your team in a discussion of what criteria apply to this problem or issue. Criteria may include items like the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time (ability to implement in a timely fashion) • Budget (affordability) • Stakeholders (impact on various groups; approval needed?) <p>Write down each criterion for all to see. Encourage discussion and then get agreement for each criterion. You should expect at least 3 criteria, but, depending on the problem, there may be more.</p> <p>Keep the final list visible for all to read during the next two major steps—Multi-Voting and Consensus.</p>

Step	Action
5. Combine and number the list	<p>Use the list of solution options generated in your Brainstorming session. Assign a number to each item on the list.</p> <p>You may combine two or more items on the list, IF the team agrees that they are the same. If there is hesitation, leave them as separate and let the voting add insight.</p>
6. Members vote	<p>Ask each member to write down, on a single sheet of paper, all of the items they are voting for. This is to be done privately, without discussion.</p>
7. Tally the votes	<p>Collect the votes. You can either ask for a show of hands as you go down the list, or have each member list the items chosen.</p> <p>Write down the number of votes each item received onto the flipchart or whiteboard so that everyone can see them. No item can score more votes than the number of participants. (If 6 people are voting, six is the highest any item can receive.)</p>
8. Provide the opportunity to defend an idea	<p>For items that received a low number of votes, ask if any team member would like to defend or champion the item. Someone may be able to offer new information or insights about it.</p>
9. Eliminate items with low votes	<p>Cross the items with the fewest votes off your list.</p> <p>If you have any items that received no or only one vote, you have a strong candidate for being removed from the list. You need to exercise some judgment here—if you have an item or two with two votes, or even three, and all the others have six or more, you can probably delete these also. But if you are in doubt, keep them on the list and do another round of voting.</p>
10. Repeat as necessary	<p>It may be necessary, with a long list and/or a relatively large team, to conduct two or three rounds of voting. In the second (and third) round, members vote only for the remaining items. Cross out any eliminated items and do not accept any further votes for these.</p> <p>At each round of voting, inform the participants how many votes they should cast – which should be roughly equal to 1/3 of the items remaining on the list.</p> <p><i>Example: If you have 15 items left on the list when you take your second round of voting, each person gets to vote for 5 items. Then, if you have 6 items left by the third round, each person gets to vote for 2 items.</i></p>
11. Stop	<p>When you have the list short enough, end the session. Make sure all of the participants agree that this is the list that will most likely produce the best decision.</p>
12. Prepare the team for the next step	<p>Close the session by stating the next step in the process, which will be to make the final decision. You will use Consensus to do this.</p>

Practice Exercise

Instructions

- Follow the steps in the Step-Action Table for this topic
 - Complete the Practice Worksheet and/or forms, listing results that are realistic based on the information in the practice scenario below
 - Check your work
 - Meet with your Performance Coach to review the results and decide what to do next
-

Practice Scenario

Continue with the scenario that you used in the Brainstorming session. Use the list of ideas that were generated as your starting point for this activity.

Practice Worksheet

The problem as stated in the Brainstorming session:

Use the list of ideas that the team generated during Brainstorming. Note any changes here, the item numbers and the first round votes:

Record the shortened list and the votes if a second round of voting was needed. Use the reverse side if a third round was necessary.

Topic Practice Performance Checklist

Select one: Performer's self-assessment Performance Coach's observations

Performer's Name: _____

Performance Coach's Name: _____

Date of Performance: _____

*Check off each criterion that is observed. If the performance meets criteria with satisfactory quality, mark Yes. If not, mark No and provide feedback (use the back of the page for more space). Enter this performance into your portfolio when **all** items are marked Yes.*

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
1. Prepare for the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Made sure the list of optional solutions were clearly visible to all	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that the seating is conducive to a good Multi-Voting session	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide paper and pencil for each	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Determine the number of beginning votes each member will cast	
2. Prepare the team for Multi-Voting	<input type="checkbox"/> State the benefit of using this tool and how the session will be conducted	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Review the problem or issue to be solved	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Determine the selection criteria to be used to select the final decision	
3. Conduct the Multi-Voting session	<input type="checkbox"/> Allow the members to vote silently	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tally the results	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide the opportunity to champion low vote items	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate items with low votes	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Repeat the process as necessary	

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
4. Close the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure everyone agrees that the alternative options that remain are the ones most likely to solve the problem <input type="checkbox"/> State the next step in the decision-making process	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Topic 4: Consensus

Consensus

Consensus is a decision made by a group or team during a working session.

The most effective teams are those that work together for a common goal. When members of a team feel that decisions are made that are not in their interest or the interests of the group as they see it, they are not going to work as hard to help the team succeed. Team ownership is important. Consensus means, we made the decision together.

Not every leader uses Consensus. It can be time consuming and can be especially difficult if there is someone who holds out and will not agree to the solution. But when Consensus can be reached, it is the most powerful team decision-making tool.

The Goal of Consensus

The goal is to decide upon a solution that everyone can live with and support, both verbally and by their actions.

The team should continue the process until all participants are able to accept and support a decision, even though some may not completely agree. All individual concerns should be heard. It should be used to avoid conflict.

Roadblocks to Consensus

There are several reasons why team members may disagree and be unable to come to consensus:

- Different goals, pressures, values, experiences
- “Hot button” issues that spark arguments
- “Labels” that lead to assumptions or “taking sides”

If necessary, review and discuss the reasons for disagreement. Once the issues are opened, team members may be willing to support the solution even though they partially disagree.

What to Do If There is No Consensus

If there are one or more members who cannot support the solution, you are in a quandary. It is NOT good team leadership to switch from a Consensus decision process to a majority vote unless the team agrees that this is the only way to continue.

One approach is to close the session and suggest that you reconvene later (next day, next week). This will give everyone a chance to consider additional ideas that may help support the solution. You may also want to meet privately with the person(s) who cannot support the team's decision. Perhaps there is an issue not related to the decision that needs to be addressed, or the person does not feel part of the team.

How Do I Do It?

- Read through the steps in the step-action table (see next page)
 - Study any accompanying examples
 - Complete the practice exercise
 - Share the results with your Performance Coach
-

What Consensus IS	What Consensus Is NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A way to search for the best decision by exploring the best of everyone's thinking • Possibly a synthesis of several options presented – "the best of the best" • A decision that everyone in the group can <u>live with</u> • A decision that everyone in the group can <u>support</u> by their words and actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A unanimous or majority vote • Everyone getting everything they want • Everyone finally coming around to the "right" solution • Compromise: I'll support (give in to) you on this issue, because you are going to support me on another • Giving in to maintain decorum

Step-Action Table

Step	Action
<p>1. Prepare for the session</p>	<p>You will need either a flip chart or a white board to write the exact wording of your final solution for everyone to readily see.</p> <p>Make sure the room is comfortable and supports maximum participation by all members of your team.</p> <p>Make sure there is enough time and that everyone in the group knows any time limits.</p>
<p>2. Explain the process</p>	<p>Let the team know what the goal of this Consensus session is, how it will be conducted and why this approach is useful in helping them make a decision.</p> <p>Explain what Consensus <u>is</u> (a decision that everyone can live with and support) and what it <u>is not</u> (a unanimous or majority vote). Clearly explain that Consensus is <u>not</u> a compromise.</p>
<p>3. List the options</p>	<p>Start from a very short list of options, such as the list generated from a Multi-Voting session. Generally, you want to have 5 or fewer solutions to consider.</p>
<p>4. Review the decision criteria</p>	<p>Review with your team the criteria for making this particular decision that they agreed to at the beginning of the Multi-Voting session. Ask if they still consider the criteria valid. If not, discuss how to modify the criteria in order to proceed without compromising the team's commitment to a "good decision" that each can live with and support.</p>
<p>5. Frame and Focus the discussion</p>	<p>Some of the details for how much and what kind of discussion will be determined by the number of options you have. If you have only one, you are seeking a way to word this in a way that is acceptable to all. If you have 2 or more options, you are looking for the best one by comparing advantages and disadvantages.</p>
<p>6. Lead a discussion of each option</p>	<p>Encourage the team to share insights and opinions about each of the options on the list and how that option meets or does not meet the decision criteria.</p>
<p>7. Take an informal poll or quick check</p>	<p>Frequently check to see how close the team is to Consensus. This avoids dragging out the discussions.</p> <p>First, write down or restate the solution clearly.</p> <p>Then take a poll. You may use a simple show of hands. "Everyone who feels we agree on xyz solution..." Or do a quick round robin with each participant stating a current position. "Do we all agree we can eliminate option 3?"</p> <p>There should be no discussion during the quick checks. Each person states an opinion and reasons for the opinion.</p>

Step	Action
8. Take a “Five to Fist” check	<p>A more formal form of quick check is called the “five-to-fist.” (Reference The Handbook for SMART School Teams, page 95). In this approach ask each member of the group to indicate the level of their support by raising from one to five fingers or a fist:</p> <p>5 fingers means: I am all for the solution and will serve as a leader for this.</p> <p>4 fingers means: I am all for the solution and can be counted on to support this no matter what.</p> <p>3 fingers means: I support the idea in concept, but may not be out in front of the group leading its implementation.</p> <p>2 fingers means: I am not sure, but I will trust the group’s opinion and will not publicly or privately fight against it.</p> <p>1 finger means: I really am not comfortable with the decision and would like to talk about it some more.</p> <p>A fist means: I am opposed to the solution and would like to try to find an alternative.</p>
9. Repeat the process	<p>If necessary, address concerns of those who cannot support the solution. Try making adjustments to the wording of the solution. Then, after more discussion, try taking the poll again.</p>
10. Tips and techniques for reaching Consensus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try these tips for reaching Consensus. Check the list from time to time during the session to make sure everything is considered. • If your team is struggling with reaching Consensus, try the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Where do we agree? ○ Where do we disagree? ○ Where do we have a Consensus? A majority? A “hung jury?” ○ What is the least amount of change that can be made to the solution to make it acceptable to you? • Avoid linking one solution to one or more individuals. Focus the discussion on the statement written on the board. Ask neutral team members to state the pros and cons. • Listen carefully. Seek out the assumptions behind statements. • Look for alternatives that meet the goals of all members. Sometimes it is just the elimination of a word or two that offends someone, or the addition of a word that modifies or clarifies something for someone. • Balance power! Don’t let those with greater authority dominate the discussion and pressure the team into their preferred solution.

Step	Action
11. Down to one	<p>During the discussion and through the quick checks, you will be eliminating solutions that are less likely to meet the team's criteria. You continue this process until you are at one solution and that one solution, with whatever modifications have been necessary, is the one that everyone will support.</p> <p>Often the best solution is one that is not listed. It is a combination of two or more.</p>
12. Finalize wording and Consensus	<p>Make final adjustments to the wording of the solution and make sure that everyone can support it.</p>
13. Generate contingency plans	<p>End your discussion by generating a list of contingency plans. These are ideas about how you, as a team, will "work around" any issues that threaten the implementation of your decision. First generate a short list of "what might go wrong" and then list one or two contingency approaches for each item.</p>
14. Close the session	<p>Thank the team for their participation. Remind the team how their decision will be used, and when they will hear an update on this topic. (The update may be a next meeting scheduled to begin implementation!)</p>

Practice Exercise

Instructions

- Follow the steps in the Step-Action Table for this topic
 - Complete the Practice Worksheet and/or forms, listing results that are realistic based on the information in the practice scenario below
 - Check your work
 - Meet with your Performance Coach to review the results and decide what to do next
-

Practice Scenario

Continue with the scenario that you used in the Brainstorming and Multi-Voting practices. Use the short list of options generated by Multi-Voting as your starting point for this activity.

Practice Worksheet

The problem as stated in the Brainstorming session:

List the key decision-making criteria:

Note how often you did a quick check, the technique(s) used, and the results:

List the final wording of the solution:

List 2 possible obstacles to this decision, and their related contingency plans:

Topic Practice Performance Checklist

Select one: Performer's self-assessment Performance Coach's observations

Performer's Name: _____

Performance Coach's Name: _____

Date of Performance: _____

*Check off each criterion that is observed. If the performance meets criteria with satisfactory quality, mark Yes. If not, mark No and provide feedback (use the back of the page for more space). Enter this performance into your portfolio when **all** items are marked Yes.*

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
1. Prepare for the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that you have a flip chart or white board and marker(s)	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that the room is set up for maximum participation	<input type="checkbox"/> No
2. Prepare the team for the Consensus session	<input type="checkbox"/> State the benefit of using this tool and how the session will be conducted	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Review the problem or issue to be solved	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Use the short list of options from previous steps in the decision-making process	
3. Conduct the Consensus session	<input type="checkbox"/> Review the decision criteria established by the team	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Discuss each of the options and how they might meet the decision criteria	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct an informal poll / quick check	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a Fist-to-Five check	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Address concerns and try to find common ground	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Narrow to one agreed to solution, including rewriting as necessary	

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
4. Close the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm the solution and that everyone agrees to support it <input type="checkbox"/> List 1-2 possible obstacles and their contingency plans	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Final Practice

Instructions

- Perform this practice, referring to the topic step-action tables as needed.
- Complete the Final Practice Worksheet, listing results that are realistic based on the information in the practice scenario.
- Check your work.
- Meet with your Performance Coach to review the results and decide what to do next.
- Completing this Final Practice requires meetings with a team of 2 - 4 peers. Prepare for these meetings by:
 - Communicating the time and location of the meeting to the participants in advance
 - Preparing and providing copies of a meeting agenda
 - Being prepared with all the necessary materials and resources

Practice Scenario

Assemble a team and lead them through each step of the group decision-making process for one of the options below.

- **Option #1:** Your school has witnessed an increase in the number and severity of disciplinary infractions during the past academic year. Teachers, parents, students and the central office are all concerned. You have been selected to lead a team to determine what should be done.
 - **Option #2:** Your school has been contacted about a \$10,000 grant to enhance the learning experience of the students in your school. Your school has already been fully funded for the next year to meet all state and federal requirements. You have been asked to lead a team to determine how to best spend this extra, one-time funding.
-

Final Practice Worksheet

What data did you collect and share with the team in order to inform this decision-making process?

List the problem, as stated in the form of a question, as used in the Brainstorming session:

List the ideas that the team generated in the Brainstorming phase:

List the criteria for a “good decision” as decided upon by the team:

Final Practice Worksheet

List the "short list" of options that was generated by the Multi-Voting process, and then used in the Consensus session:

State the final decision in the wording that was agreed to by the team in the Consensus session.
Also list 2 possible obstacles, and their contingency plans:

Final Practice Performance Checklist

Select one: Performer's self-assessment Performance Coach's observations

Performer's Name: _____

Performance Coach's Name: _____

Date of Performance: _____

*Check off each criterion that is observed. If the performance meets criteria with satisfactory quality, mark Yes. If not, mark No and provide feedback (use the back of the page for more space). Enter this performance into your portfolio when **all** items are marked Yes and **all** Feedback Form (next form) items are marked 3 or 4 (or Not Applicable).*

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
1. Prepare for the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Gather relevant data, bring to session	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring a sufficient number of flipcharts or have enough whiteboard space. Bring enough markers	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring paper and pencils for participants	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange the room for maximum participation	
2. Prepare the team for the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Briefly explain the 3 processes to be used (Brainstorming, Multi-Voting, and Consensus) and their benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> State the issue and present it as a question	

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
3. Conduct a Brainstorming session	<input type="checkbox"/> State the rules for Brainstorming	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide a time for silent thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Write down solution ideas as stated, repeating out loud to make sure that they are accurately recorded	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prevent judging, grimaces, etc.	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure everyone contributes	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Gain full concurrence for modifications or combinations	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that all known alternatives have been considered	
4. Identify the decision criteria	<input type="checkbox"/> Lead the team in establishing the criteria for this issue	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm with the team that this is appropriate criteria for this situation	
5. Conduct a Multi-Voting session	<input type="checkbox"/> Explain the Multi-Voting process	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Determine the number of votes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Allow the members to vote silently	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tally the results	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide the opportunity to champion low vote items	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate items with low votes	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Repeat the process as necessary	
	<input type="checkbox"/> End result is a short list of options	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed that the items that remain are the ones most likely to solve the problem	

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
6. Conduct a Consensus session	<input type="checkbox"/> Frame and focus the discussion, including review of the decision criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss each option <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct an informal poll / quick check <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a “Five to Fist” check <input type="checkbox"/> Narrow to one choice <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm the solution and that everyone agrees with the wording	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7. Close the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Thank participants for their work <input type="checkbox"/> Inform them of the next steps, communications to expect, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Final Practice Feedback Form (page 1 of 2)

Performer's Name: _____

Performance Coach's Name: _____

Date of Performance: _____

*Use the rubric below to rate **only** the cross-cutting leadership skills on this page (including write-ins). Enter this performance into your portfolio when **all** Performance Checklist (previous form) items are marked Yes and **all** Feedback Form (this form) items are marked 3 or 4 (or Not Applicable).*

Performance Levels			
1	2	3	4
<p>Emerging Needs Study and Practice <i>Few/none of desired behaviors were adequately displayed.</i></p>	<p>Developing Needs Practice <i>Some but not all of the desired behaviors were adequately displayed.</i></p>	<p>Proficient Meets Criteria and Expectations <i>All desired behaviors were displayed and performed correctly.</i></p>	<p>Distinguished Could be Used as a Model to Teach Others</p>

Eligible for Portfolio

How effective was the performer in these Cross-Cutting Skills?		Rating				
1.	Facilitating group interaction and managing participation	1	2	3	4	n/a
2.	Assisting the group to meet task criteria	1	2	3	4	n/a
3.	Modeling appropriate leadership behaviors	1	2	3	4	n/a
4.	Teaching others how to perform the tasks	1	2	3	4	n/a
5.	Presenting information clearly and concisely	1	2	3	4	n/a
6.	Leveraging technology to increase effectiveness	1	2	3	4	n/a
7.	Motivating others to achieve success	1	2	3	4	n/a
8.	Using group processes to achieve desired results	1	2	3	4	n/a
9.	Other:	1	2	3	4	n/a

Turn the page to provide additional written feedback (required).

Final Practice Feedback Form (page 1 of 2)

Performer's Name: _____

Performance Coach's Name: _____

Date of Performance: _____

If any element was rated less than 3, what needs to be done to score a 3? To score a 4?

What greatest strengths did the leader exhibit through this performance?

What could be done to improve this leader's performance? Include any criteria on the Performance Checklist that were missed. Be specific.

Were there any significant issues that must be rectified (by additional practice and assessment) before entering this evidence into the Portfolio?

Final Assessment

When Can I Take the Final Assessment?

Complete the Final Assessment when you are able to sufficiently execute the module’s performance objective(s) according to the:

- Task-related criteria on the Final Assessment Performance Checklist
- Cross-cutting leadership skills on the Performance Feedback Form

When you take the Final Assessment — either as someone who takes it to “test out” of the module or as someone who has worked through the topics and Final Practice — the underlying assumption is that you are a competent, experienced, performer. This means that the Final Assessment does not include any “helps,” such as step-action tables or worksheets.

When Can I Add the Final Assessment to My Portfolio?

Has your Final Assessment performance met all the criteria on the Final Assessment Performance Checklist and earned at least a 3 on all of the cross-cutting skills on the Final Assessment Feedback Form?

Yes	No
<p>Add these items to your Portfolio and talk to your Performance Coach about next steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Assessment Performance Checklist • Final Assessment Feedback Form • Module Progress Tracker page • Additional artifacts such as documents, slides, video tapes, participant feedback forms, etc. 	<p>Do the following as needed before attempting the Final Assessment again when you are ready:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain performance feedback from your Performance Coach • Review relevant topics in the module • Repeat Topic Practices and/or the Final Practice • Pursue additional learning, training and experience

**Final Assessment
Instructions**

1. Gain permission from your supervisor, sponsor, or Performance Coach to complete the Final Assessment in a school setting.
2. Schedule the date, time and location of your session — one that works for you, your Performance Coach, and other participants.
3. Invite a group of 2 - 4 volunteers to assist you. Ideally, you should invite your real work team. (If you are an aspiring leader, this may be a team that you would lead once you enter the leadership role. For an incumbent leader, it should reflect the team or type of team that you are currently leading.)
4. Review the following with your Performance Coach:
 - Task-related criteria on the Final Assessment Performance Checklist
 - Cross-cutting leadership skills on the Performance Feedback Form
 - Final Assessment Scenario (on the next page)
5. Prepare any other materials or information that you and your participants need to have with you on the day of the activity.
6. Perform the Final Assessment as follows:
 - In a real school or district setting
 - With a team of teachers, staff, or other leaders as appropriate
 - Observed by your Performance Coach
7. Retain artifacts from your performance (documents, slides, etc.)
8. Obtain feedback from your Performance Coach about your performance, and discuss next steps.

**Final Assessment
Scenario**

Work with your Performance Coach to identify a pending decision that is expected to impact your immediate group or the organization. Assemble a team and lead them through the group decision-making process for the decision at hand.

Final Assessment Performance Checklist

Select one: Performer's self-assessment Performance Coach's observations

Performer's Name: _____

Performance Coach's Name: _____

Date of Performance: _____

*Check off each criterion that is observed. If the performance meets criteria with satisfactory quality, mark Yes. If not, mark No and provide feedback (use the back of the page for more space). Enter this performance into your portfolio when **all** items are marked Yes and **all** Feedback Form (next form) items are marked 3 or 4 (or Not Applicable).*

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
1. Prepare for the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Gather relevant data, bring to session	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring a sufficient number of flipcharts or have enough whiteboard space. Bring enough markers	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Bring paper and pencils for participants	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Arrange the room for maximum participation	
2. Prepare the team for the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Briefly explain the 3 processes to be used (Brainstorming, Multi-Voting, and Consensus) and their benefits	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> State the issue and present it as a question	

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
3. Conduct a Brainstorming session	<input type="checkbox"/> State the rules for Brainstorming	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide a time for silent thinking	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Write down solution ideas as stated, repeating out loud to make sure that they are accurately recorded	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Prevent judging, grimaces, etc.	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Make sure everyone contributes	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Gain full concurrence for modifications or combinations	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm that all known alternatives have been considered	
4. Identify the decision criteria	<input type="checkbox"/> Lead the team in establishing the criteria for this issue	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirm with the team that this is appropriate criteria for this situation	
5. Conduct a Multi-Voting session	<input type="checkbox"/> Explain the Multi-Voting process	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
	<input type="checkbox"/> Determine the number of votes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
	<input type="checkbox"/> Allow the members to vote silently	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Tally the results	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Provide the opportunity to champion low vote items	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate items with low votes	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Repeat the process as necessary	
	<input type="checkbox"/> End result is a short list of options	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Confirmed that the items that remain are the ones most likely to solve the problem	

Evidence	Criteria	Proficient? Give Feedback.
6. Conduct a Consensus session	<input type="checkbox"/> Frame and focus the discussion, including review of the decision criteria <input type="checkbox"/> Discuss each option <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct an informal poll / quick check <input type="checkbox"/> Conduct a “Five to Fist” check <input type="checkbox"/> Narrow to one choice <input type="checkbox"/> Confirm the solution and that everyone agrees with the wording	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
7. Close the session	<input type="checkbox"/> Thank participants for their work <input type="checkbox"/> Inform them of the next steps, communications to expect, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Final Assessment Feedback Form (page 1 of 2)

Performer's Name: _____

Performance Coach's Name: _____

Date of Performance: _____

*Use the rubric below to rate **only** the cross-cutting leadership skills on this page (including write-ins). Enter this performance into your portfolio when **all** Performance Checklist (previous form) items are marked Yes and **all** Feedback Form (this form) items are marked 3 or 4 (or Not Applicable).*

Performance Levels			
1	2	3	4
Emerging Needs Study and Practice <i>Few/none of desired behaviors were adequately displayed.</i>	Developing Needs Practice <i>Some but not all of the desired behaviors were adequately displayed.</i>	Proficient Meets Criteria and Expectations <i>All desired behaviors were displayed and performed correctly.</i>	Distinguished Could be Used as a Model to Teach Others

Eligible for Portfolio

How effective was the performer in these Cross-Cutting Skills?		Rating				
1.	Facilitating group interaction and managing participation	1	2	3	4	n/a
2.	Assisting the group to meet task criteria	1	2	3	4	n/a
3.	Modeling appropriate leadership behaviors	1	2	3	4	n/a
4.	Teaching others how to perform the tasks	1	2	3	4	n/a
5.	Presenting information clearly and concisely	1	2	3	4	n/a
6.	Leveraging technology to increase effectiveness	1	2	3	4	n/a
7.	Motivating others to achieve success	1	2	3	4	n/a
8.	Using group processes to achieve desired results	1	2	3	4	n/a
9.	Other:	1	2	3	4	n/a

Turn the page to provide additional written feedback (required).

Final Assessment Feedback Form (page 1 of 2)

Performer's Name: _____

Performance Coach's Name: _____

Date of Performance: _____

If any element was rated less than 3, what needs to be done to score a 3? To score a 4?

What greatest strengths did the leader exhibit through this performance?

What could be done to improve this leader's performance? Include any criteria on the Performance Checklist that were missed. Be specific.

Were there any significant issues that must be rectified (by additional practice and assessment) before entering this evidence into the Portfolio?

Recommended Reading and Resources

Chang, Richard & Dalziel, Douglas. (1999). Continuous Improvement Tools in Education, Volume 1. Irvine, CA: Richard Chang Associates.

Conzemius, Anne & O'Neill, Jan. (2002). The Handbook for SMART School Teams. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.

Lynch, Robert & Werner, Thomas. (1992). Continuous Improvement: Teams & Tools. Littleton, CO: Qualteam, Inc. (may be too old and out of print/distribution)

Michalski, Walter J. (1998). 40 Tools for Cross-Functional Teams. Portland, OR: Productivity Press.

Scholtes, P., Joiner, B. & Streibel, B. (1996). The Team Handbook, Second Edition. Madison, WI: Joiner Associates.

Acknowledgments

Tom Conkright, Author	Instructional Design Contractor
Ruth O'Dell	Houston County School District
Deb Page	Senior Practice Leader, Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement
JoAnn Brown	Program Director, Rising Stars, Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement
Pam Henderson	Operations Manager, Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement
Jinnie Lee Schmid	Instructional Design/Quality and Continuity Manager, Georgia Leadership Institute for School Improvement
Drake Highlander	Lead Instructional Design Contractor, Georgia's Leadership Institute for School Improvement