



# Facilitating Conversations for Consensus Overview

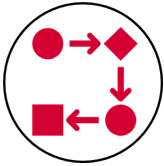
The ability to facilitate conversations via consensus for team-based decision-making supports a shared leadership approach to drive positive change. Instructional leaders committed to continuous improvement must be able to define consensus, understand when to use consensus and when not to use consensus, and establish processes for constructive decision making. School leaders may adopt a hybrid model, leveraging different decision-making processes based on the nature and complexity of the issue under consideration.



## Defining Consensus:

A consensus is a framework for making decisions with all participants involved. Instead of simply voting for an item and having the majority of the group getting their way, a group using consensus is committed to finding solutions that everyone actively supports or at least can live with.

## Establishing a Process to Facilitate Consensus Decisions:



- Introduce and Clarify the Issue
- Open the Discussion
- Explore Solutions
- Form a Proposal
- Amend the Proposal
- Test for Agreement
- Plan to Implement the Decision

## Managing Conversations:



Effective instructional leaders that realize the benefits of shared leadership should formulate strategies for moving to consensus. A successful consensus building strategy uses the 5 C's: carefully listening, considerately looking at the situation, calmly discussing conflicting perspectives, conscientiously looking at the facts, and cooperatively working together. In any team setting, there will still be personality clashes and conflict in arriving at consensus. School leaders should work to mitigate these conflicts by addressing the conflict, listening, and encouraging those in conflict to present ideas for resolution.

## Communicating Decisions:



- What key points for messages do we want to share when communicating the decision?
- How does the decision reflect or align with the school's strategic priorities, vision, mission, & values?
- How will we answer the "why" for this decision?
- Who will provide the communication?
- How will it be communicated?
- When will it be communicated?
- How will we check for understanding and acceptance?