



Solid Foundation is a school-based team process that helps:

- *Strengthen family-school connections*
- *Engage parents in their children's learning*
- *Improve student, academic and social learning*

Communication Ground Rules and Decision Making

Ground Rules are rules of behavior and interaction that team members agree on and use to conduct meetings, manage discussions, share ideas and reach decisions. They are important to establish effective methods of interaction among members that make it possible for them to work together productively.

The group can agree to abide by guidelines that will keep the conversation going. Typical items on this kind of list include:

- Be honest in representing your own experiences.
- Tell when you are representing other's viewpoints.
- Really listen to each other.
- Be respectful of other's points of view.
- No side bars; don't carry on a conversation with just a few people sitting near you separate from the main conversation.
- Focus on the issues, not people; do not put down people; express concerns about issues.
- Try to deliver your comments in a constructive way.
- No negative consequences for saying something that is challenging.

One of the most important questions regarding **Decision Making** is "Who actually decides?" From answers to this question, the following five decision-making processes can be clearly identified:

1. Individual decision – One person, normally the leader, actually makes a decision. Others involved in the situation are expected to abide by it.
2. Minority decision – A few of those involved in the situation meet to consider the matter. They make a binding decision for all concerned.
3. Majority decision – More than half of those involved in the situation make a binding decision for all concerned. Many political and democratic organizations use this principle.
4. Consensus decision – An entire group considers a problem on the basis of reason and discussion, with each member expressing a view. The group reaches a decision that all members can accept, regardless of how satisfied they are with it. No "majority-rule" voting, bargaining or averaging is allowed.
5. Unanimous decision – Each person fully agrees on the action to be taken, and everyone concerned fully subscribes to the decision they make.

When people are involved in making a decision, they are much more likely to support the decision than if some other person or group makes the decision for them. Therefore, going up the decision-making scale – from individual decision to unanimous decision – increases commitment. However, it also increases the difficulty of arriving at an agreement.

Check out Section 3 of the Solid Foundation Resource Manual for guidelines about effective practices for Shared Leadership. Don't forget you can also access this information online on your school's Solid Foundation page, Step 6 "View Resource Manual", Building Block: Shared Leadership or at <http://www.adi.org/SFResources-Menu/SharedLeadership.aspx>.



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www.Center-School.org/pa-pirc
www.adi.org/solidfoundation
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