



Quick Guide to Collective Decision-Making

- For any decision point, start by opening up the question to the collective in an official meeting (ie. board or executive meeting).
- Notify the collective about discussion ahead of time, to allow everyone a chance to prepare their questions. When possible, provide background information and resources that can help better inform the collective.
- Members of the collective do not necessarily need to provide solutions but rather questions/prompts that may be necessary to deepen the discussion.
- Members of the collective must also think about whether there are any conflicts of interest or personal biases on the subject matter. If so, members of the collective must disclose such information and remove themselves from voting (or the discussion as a whole if deemed necessary).
- Using the 3 Modes of Thinking, allow for an adequate amount of time to discuss the decision point.
- The chair of the meeting must identify once there are viable solutions that the collective can vote on. It will be the chair's responsibility to facilitate (or delegate facilitation) and ensure the meeting stays on topic and reaches appropriate action items (whether it is a decision or further discussion/research).
- Make sure you document any key discussion points and votes that come out of the meeting.
- If the decision point affects the collective internally or is proven to be a point of contention, consider inviting/hiring an external facilitator to chair or mediate the discussion.

3 Modes of Thinking

Effective PAC governance relies on the group's collective ability to bring a diverse set of questions into a discussion. This process also involves identifying what "Mode of Thinking" is being exercised. Remember, you don't always need to provide solutions as an individual. Finding questions with the 3 Modes of Thinking are a way for you and the collective PAC to be fully informed before approaching any course of action.

Modes of Thinking		
<p>Fiduciary <i>Focuses on stewardship</i> ensuring the organization's resources, policies, and practices are used responsibly, ethically, and in compliance with laws and standards.</p>	<p>Strategic <i>Looks at the future</i> setting priorities, anticipating future trends/needs, and aligning decisions with the organization's mission and long-term goals.</p>	<p>Generative <i>Explores the deeper meaning</i> asking deeper questions, evaluating outcomes, and surfacing new insights that shape how the organization understands its purpose.</p>

Case Study on Sensitive Decision Points

For any sensitive or contentious decision point, especially ones dealing with potential bad actors within your stakeholders, it's important to remember there is no one right way of going about it. The following scenarios offer prompts designed to stimulate deeper discussion, thereby guiding your collective towards the most appropriate course of action.



Scenario 1: Breach in Policy

If there is a breach in policy, what are the steps PAC / DPAC can take to approach the situation?

Purpose: To ensure the PAC/DPAC approaches policy breaches fairly, collectively, and in alignment with governance principles.

Step 1: Bring the Issue to the Collective

- “Let’s add this to our official meeting agenda so everyone is aware and prepared to discuss.”
- Notify members ahead of time with background information (e.g., which policy was breached, what occurred, and any relevant timelines or documentation).
- Ensure the discussion is part of a formal meeting (not informal chats or email threads).

Step 2: Frame the Discussion

- “What do we know about the situation?”
- “What is our role and responsibility as a PAC/DPAC in this matter?”
- “Do we have all the information needed, or do we need to seek clarification (e.g., from the district or the PAC constitution/bylaws)?”
- Encourage other questions that deepen understanding rather than jumping to solutions.

Step 3: Identify Conflicts or Bias

- “Does anyone have a direct or personal connection to this issue that might affect their objectivity?”
- Members with conflicts should declare and step back from voting or the discussion.

Step 4: Apply the 3 Modes of Thinking

- **Fiduciary:** What are our duties under our constitution and district policies?
- **Strategic:** What options uphold trust, fairness, and good governance?
- **Generative:** What does this situation teach us about improving or clarifying our policies?
- Allow enough time for thoughtful reflection before moving to action.

Step 5: Facilitate and Decide

- The chair (or an appointed facilitator) keeps the discussion focused on the issue and ensures all voices are heard.
- Identify viable actions, such as:
 - Reviewing or revising a policy.
 - Documenting the incident and response.
 - Requesting clarification from the school district or BCCPAC.
 - Engaging an external mediator if tensions are high.

Step 6: Document and Follow Up

- Record key discussion points and decisions in meeting minutes.
- Follow up with any assigned actions (e.g., policy review committee, communication to district).
- Reflect on lessons learned to strengthen future policy adherence.



Scenario 2: Concern with a Teacher or Principal

If a PAC / DPAC has any concern(s) with a teacher or principal, what are the steps they can take?

Purpose: To handle sensitive concerns respectfully and through appropriate channels.

Step 1: Clarify the PAC/DPAC's Role

- “Is this concern within our mandate as a PAC/DPAC, or should it be addressed through school or district procedures?”
- Avoid discussing personnel matters directly: focus instead on systems, communication, or policy-level issues.

Step 2: Bring the Topic to a Collective Discussion

- Schedule the issue for an official meeting with prior notice and relevant background information (while maintaining confidentiality).
- “Let’s discuss how we can raise this concern constructively and through the right process.”

Step 3: Reflect on Conflicts and Bias

- “Does anyone have a personal connection or conflict of interest that may influence their view?”
- Encourage members to speak from the perspective of the collective parent community, not individual experiences.

Step 4: Use the 3 Modes of Thinking

- **Fiduciary:** What boundaries must we respect (e.g., not intervening in staff management)?
- **Strategic:** What steps can we take to advocate appropriately (e.g., formal letter, request for meeting with the principal or district)?
- **Generative:** What does this issue suggest about communication, collaboration, or school climate?

Step 5: Determine Appropriate Action

- “Do we need to gather more information or perspective (e.g., from the school district’s parent engagement policy)?”
- Possible actions:
 - Request a meeting with the principal or district representative.
 - Write a formal letter summarizing the PAC/DPAC’s concern.
 - Seek advice from BCCPAC or other PACs/DPACs or district leadership on proper protocol.
 - Engage an external facilitator if internal discussions are divisive.

Step 6: Record and Close the Loop

- Document the discussion and actions taken.
- Follow up to ensure concerns are acknowledged and next steps communicated.
- Reflect at a later meeting: “Did our approach align with our values and bylaws?”