

HEARTS AT WORK



Why Happy Teachers Create Great Schools

*A Resource Book for Principals, Leadership Teams, and Teachers on
Fostering Teacher Wellbeing, Strengthening Morale,
and Developing Schools of Excellence*



**CHAPTER ALIGNED REFLECTIONS, ACTIVITIES, ASSESSMENTS,
PULSE SURVEYS AND MORE FOR PRINCIPALS, LEADERSHIP TEAMS,
TEACHERS, STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

CHAPTER 11

Involving Teachers in Decision-Making Processes

Chapter Summary

- Shared decision-making works when structures are clear and voices are genuinely included. Committees and forums need skilled facilitation, not just good intentions.
- Participation only builds trust when transparency and follow-through are consistent.
- Small, well-managed steps matter more than large, rushed reforms.
- When teachers help shape decisions, they feel ownership—not obligation.

Reflections & Action Guide

Involving Teachers in Decision-Making Processes

1. Creating Structures for Shared Governance

Chapter Intent

Move from top-down decisions to shared responsibility with clarity.

Reflection Prompts (Principal)

- Who currently participates in school-level decisions—and who is missing?
- Do teachers clearly understand where and how they can influence decisions?
- Are our committees active decision-making bodies or only advisory in name?
- Do roles feel meaningful or symbolic?

Action Steps

- Map all existing decision-making bodies and clarify their authority.
- Create or refresh committee charters (purpose, scope, decision rights).
- Ensure representation across experience levels, subjects, and roles.
- Share a simple decision flow chart with staff.

Linked Chapter Activity

Governance Mapping Exercise List:

- Decisions made centrally
- Decisions made collaboratively
- Decisions delegated to teams

2. Facilitating Teacher Committees and Feedback Forums

Chapter Intent

Make participation safe, balanced, and productive.

Reflection Prompts (Principal)

- Whose voices dominate meetings—and whose are rarely heard?
- Do teachers feel psychologically safe to disagree or raise concerns?
- Do meetings end with clarity or confusion?
- What happens to feedback after meetings end?

Action Steps

- Introduce clear meeting norms (voice equity, respect, time discipline).
- Use structured protocols (round-robin, small groups, written input).
- Summarize outcomes and next steps after every meeting.
- Rotate facilitation roles to build teacher leadership.

Linked Chapter Activity

Feedback Forum Reset

- Set a clear purpose
- One listening question
- One decision or action outcome
- One follow-up communication

3. Implementing Participatory Planning Models

Chapter Intent

Involve teachers early, not just during implementation.

Reflection Prompts (Principal)

- At what stage are teachers usually invited into planning?
- Do we ask for ideas—or approval?
- How do we manage disagreement or competing priorities?
- Do staff see evidence that participation shapes final plans?

Action Steps

- Involve teachers during problem definition, not just solutions.
- Use focus groups or design teams for major initiatives.
- Apply simple consensus tools (priority voting, criteria ranking).
- Communicate why some suggestions were or weren't adopted.

Linked Chapter Activity

Participatory Planning Workshop

- Identify the problem together
- Generate options collaboratively
- Agree on priorities
- Assign shared ownership

4. Ensuring Transparency and Follow-Through

Chapter Intent

Build trust through clarity, consistency, and reliability.

Reflection Prompts (Principal)

- Do teachers know what happened after they gave input?
- Where have we unintentionally over-promised?
- How visible is progress on agreed decisions?
- How do we respond when plans change?

Action Steps

- Create a visible “You said – We did – What’s next” tracker.
- Set realistic timelines and update regularly.
- Close loops publicly, even when decisions are delayed.
- Model honesty when plans shift or stall.

Linked Chapter Activity

Decision Follow-Through Review

- Review past commitments
- Identify stalled actions
- Communicate status clearly
- Reset timelines if needed

Principal Reflection

- Where am I truly sharing power—and where am I holding it?
- Which decision this term will I intentionally co-create?
- What one habit will I change to strengthen teacher voice?

Principal Action Commitment

One immediate change (next 2 weeks):

One structural improvement (this term):

How I will show teachers their voice mattered:

Leadership Reminder

Shared decision-making doesn’t slow schools down—it strengthens ownership, trust, and commitment.

Principal Self-Assessment Rubric

Teacher Involvement & Shared Decision-Making

How to use this rubric

- Read each indicator carefully.
- Mark the level that most closely reflects your current practice.
- Use the reflection + next-step prompts to plan improvement.

Domain 1: Structures for Shared Governance

| Level | Descriptor |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 – Emerging | Decisions are mostly top-down. Committees exist but have little real influence. |
| 2 – Developing | Some shared structures exist, but roles and authority are unclear. |
| 3 – Established | Committees have defined purposes and influence key decisions. |
| 4 – Embedded | Shared governance is systematic, trusted, and well understood across staff. |

Principal Reflection

- Do teachers clearly know which decisions they influence?
- Are governance structures symbolic or meaningful?

Next Action to Move Up One Level

- Clarify decision rights using a simple decision-mapping chart.

Domain 2: Facilitation of Teacher Committees & Forums

| Level | Descriptor |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 – Emerging | Meetings are dominated by a few voices; others stay silent. |
| 2 – Developing | Some facilitation strategies are used inconsistently. |
| 3 – Established | Meetings are structured, inclusive, and purposeful. |
| 4 – Embedded | Teachers confidently facilitate, and dialogue is balanced and safe. |

Principal Reflection

- Whose voices do I hear most often? Whose do I hear least?
- Do meetings end with clarity and next steps?

Next Action to Move Up One Level

- Introduce structured protocols (round-robin, written input, time limits).

Domain 3: Participatory Planning Practices

| Level | Descriptor |
|-----------------|---|
| 1 – Emerging | Teachers are informed after decisions are made. |
| 2 – Developing | Teachers are consulted, but late in the process. |
| 3 – Established | Teachers are involved early in planning key initiatives. |
| 4 – Embedded | Co-creation is the norm; planning is genuinely collaborative. |

Principal Reflection

- Are teachers invited to shape problems or just react to solutions?
- Do staff see evidence their ideas influence outcomes?

Next Action to Move Up One Level

- Involve teachers at the problem-definition stage of one major initiative.

Domain 4: Transparency in Decision-Making

| Level | Descriptor |
|-----------------|--|
| 1 – Emerging | Decisions are shared without explanation. |
| 2 – Developing | Rationales are sometimes explained. |
| 3 – Established | Decisions and rationales are regularly communicated. |
| 4 – Embedded | Transparency is proactive, consistent, and expected. |

Principal Reflection

- Do teachers understand why decisions are made?
- Where might silence be creating uncertainty?

Next Action to Move Up One Level

- Share agendas, minutes, and rationales consistently.

Domain 5: Follow-Through & Accountability

| Level | Descriptor |
|--------------|--|
| 1 – Emerging | Promises are made but often not revisited. |

| Level | Descriptor |
|-----------------|---|
| 2 – Developing | Some follow-up occurs, but inconsistently. |
| 3 – Established | Commitments are tracked and revisited. |
| 4 – Embedded | Follow-through is visible, reliable, and trusted. |

Principal Reflection

- How often do teachers ask, “What happened to that idea?”
- Do I close loops—even when plans change?

Next Action to Move Up One Level

- Create a visible “You Said – We Did – What’s Next” tracker.

Domain 6: Teacher Trust & Psychological Safety

| Level | Descriptor |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 – Emerging | Teachers hesitate to speak honestly. |
| 2 – Developing | Feedback is shared cautiously. |
| 3 – Established | Teachers speak openly without fear. |
| 4 – Embedded | Dissent is welcomed as a strength. |

Principal Reflection

- How do I respond to disagreement?
- Do teachers feel safe challenging decisions?

Next Action to Move Up One Level

- Publicly acknowledge dissenting views and learning from them.

Overall Reflection Summary

- Strongest domain: _____
- Domain needing most attention: _____
- One leadership habit I must change: _____

Principal Commitment (Action-Oriented)

One decision I will intentionally co-create this term:

One transparency practice I will strengthen:

How teachers will know their voice mattered:

Leadership Insight

Shared governance is not about giving up authority -it's about earning trust.