

**MPEA – Standard I Case Study**  
**Superintendent**  
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***“Data Driven Decision Making”***

Decision-making has never been an easy process and the current cry for accountability has only made it worse. It seems every decision you make comes under scrutiny and any decision that doesn't have a solid basis in fact, comes back to bite you. You have resolved to take a more formalized approach to decision-making and have settled on a process which includes the following seven general steps:

- STEP 1 - Define the Situation
- STEP 2 - Identify the Alternatives
- STEP 3 - Assess the Alternatives Using All Available Data
- STEP 4 - Select the Best Possible Solution
- STEP 5 - Secure Acceptance of the Decision
- STEP 6 - Implement the Decision
- STEP 7 - Evaluate the Decision

You know in your heart that decision-making is not always a rationale process but you are committed to decision-making that is defensible and that is based on data when ever possible. It's a good thing you've done your homework because a potentially critical decision has just come upon your desk.

Mr. Grant, the high school principal has just announced his retirement. He has been a fixture in the district for fifteen years and has done a good job. The high school is seldom a problem area, academics are good and the students and staff seem productive and content. The assistant principal, Mr. Smith, is a former football coach in the district, and a "good ole boy" figure whose main contributions have been as a disciplinarian and athletic director. He has not shown much in the area of supervision of teachers or in professional development. His academic record was average and he was considered a solid, though not spectacular teacher. He would certainly be able to maintain status quo in the high school and he has a strong following based on his charisma and former success as a coach.

You have two other in-house candidates that have shown interest. One, Dr. Clyde, is a relative newcomer to the district. Dr. Clyde received his Ed.D. in Ed. Leadership from the state university three years ago and was an outstanding student, though he did not pursue a administrative position in order to stay in the classroom for a few more years. Many of the ideas that have been instituted in the high school in the past few years have come from Dr. Clyde. While he is absolutely brilliant and has provided numerous suggestions and ideas, he has always stayed out of the implementation phase, preferring to focus on his classroom and "his kids". The faculty seem to respect him, but, to a certain extent, appear to simply tolerate his manner which they find aloof at times. Dr. Clyde has the academic credentials, and would probably have the high school on the cutting edge, if the faculty and students would warm to him or he to them.

The last candidate is Ms. Brown. A fireball of a teacher; revered by the students and envied by the faculty. She is a go getter. With no resources, she has turned the

Spanish department into a model for all the state. She single-handedly started the high school Spanish Support Group, a group of her students who used their classroom learnings to go out into the ever growing Hispanic community and help acclimate them to the community and the school. She's been on countless school and community committees, worked to implement new school programs and even served in what you would consider "quasi-administrative" capacities; representing the school at administrator conferences, supervising students and making low level decisions when the principals were out of the building. The faculty like Ms. Brown but they do have a problem in that she lives in the "big city" some 30 miles away and she lives with her "significant other" in a homosexual relationship. She would be good if she could be accepted.

These will be your candidates as the deadline has passed and no out of school candidates have applied. How will you approach the decision-making process in this situation?

First consider these questions:

1. Do rational decision-making models apply to decisions like this?
2. What type of information gathering tools might you use in a situation like this?
3. What data are the most important?
4. Who would you involve in the decision-making process?
5. What group processes would be of the greatest use in reaching consensus?
6. What factors should not be considered in the decision-making process

Now develop recommendations including:

- A list of issues which might affect decision-making process.
- A list of approaches to the decision-making process, including who to involve, why involve them and how to involve them.
- A list of the data that will be needed to make an informed decision and why you selected the data source.
- A list of strategies for gathering perspectives concerning the candidates.
- A list of possible consensus building strategies that might be useful.

ISLLC Standards:

Primary standard:

Standard one: **A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by facilitating the development, articulation, implementation, and stewardship of a vision of learning that is shared and supported by the school community.**

Secondary Standard:

Standard six: **A school administrator is an educational leader who promotes the success of all students by understanding, responding to, and influencing the larger political, social, economic, legal, and cultural context.**

Standard one skills, dispositions and performances:

Skills:

- learning goals in a pluralistic society
- the principles of developing and implementing strategic plans
- information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies
- effective communication
- effective consensus-building and negotiation skills

Dispositions:

- School vision of high standards
- Continuous school improvement
- Inclusion of all members of the school community

Performances:

- the vision and mission of the school are effectively communicated to staff, parents, students, and community members
- the vision is developed with and among stakeholders
- the school community is involved in school improvement efforts
- the vision shapes the educational programs, plans, and actions
- relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals.
- barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed
- needed resources are sought and obtained to support the implementation of the school mission and goals
- existing resources are used in support of the school vision and goals

Critical Needs Areas Addressed:

- #5 Providing information, which will assist public school administrators and teachers in understanding the process of [site-based] decision making.

Notes to Instructor:

1. This case study is one that can be used to determine students' entry level skills in analysis, decision-making, communications, planning and vision development/stewardship. You may not use all of the scoring rubric depending on the skills that you are trying to reinforce.
2. The activity could take as little as 60 minutes if you desire to see only a skeleton plan and analysis or as much as three hours if you have them apply a particular decision making model or desire to see specific plans or in-depth analysis.

Extended learnings:

1. Have the students research their own schools concerning the type of leadership they would like to have and what limitations they are willing to accept on the part of prospective candidates.
2. Use the scenario as the backdrop for teaching hiring practices or policies. Have the students practice skills taught in the classroom through the "lens" of the scenario.

Texts:

1. Administrators Solving the Problems of Practice: Decision-Making Concepts, Cases and Consequences. 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition – Wayne K. Hoy, C. John Tarter. Pearson Education Inc. Boston Mass. 2004/ISBN 0-20538080-8
2. Management of Organizational Behavior: Leading Human Resources Eighth Ed. – Paul Hersey, Kenneth H. Blanchard, Dewey E. Johnson. Prentice Hall Upper Saddle, NJ

URIs:

1. The Society for Judgment and Decision Making is an interdisciplinary academic organization dedicated to the study of normative, descriptive, and prescriptive theories of decision. <http://www.sjdm.org/>
2. Successlink – Includes a “best practices” section which addresses conflict resolution, school character development and other programs that might assist in this case. <http://www.successlink.org/>
3. The Rural School and Community Trust – A non-profit that offers articles and suggestions on community building and numerous other related topics. <http://ruraledu.org/>
4. Pathways to School Improvement – Sponsored by NCREL, Pathways offers articles on critical issues concerning school improvement. Topics include Family-Community, Leadership, and At-risk Students. <http://www.ncrel.org/sdrs/>
5. The National Clearinghouse for Comprehensive School Reform (NCCSR) - NCCSR is the central gateway to good information on comprehensive school reform. NCCSR collects and disseminates information that builds the capacity of schools to raise the academic achievement of all students. <http://www.goodschools.gwu.edu>

Topics that students should be able to use or address:

- Ethical Frameworks
- Professionalism and Staff Relations
- Change Processes
- Community Relations
- Diversity
- Creating Shared Vision
- Consensus Building
  - Quality Circles
  - Delphi
  - Brainstorming
  - Verteams

- Nominal Group Technique
- Structured Absent Group
- Communications Skills
- Personnel Issues - Hiring

<b>The administrator has knowledge and understanding of:</b>	<b>Level One</b>	<b>Level Two</b>	<b>Level Three</b>
the principles of developing and implementing strategic plans	Does not address recognized strategic plan in the district	Recognizes that the district strategic plan should impact the decision-making process.	Recognizes that the district strategic plan should impact the decision-making process and integrates the expectations of the plan into all products.
information sources, data collection, and data analysis strategies	Mentions no specific data collection or analysis methods	Mentions data collection and analysis methods but only in general terms	Data collection and analysis is detailed and specific as to types of data needed and for what purpose
effective communication	Plans do not incorporate effective communication strategies	Mentions communication strategies	Communication strategies are adapted to meet the individual differences of participants
effective consensus-building and negotiation skills	Plans do not incorporate effective consensus-building skills	Plans for consensus building are present but do not address specific diversity issues.	Plans for consensus building are present and address specific diversity issues.

Appropriate dispositions	Fails to communicate vision of high standards or plans do not address school improvement including all members of the school community	Communicates vision of high standards but decision making fails to include all members or are top-down in nature	Communicates vision of high standards and decision-making includes all members of the school community
Vision communication and development	A vision of high expectations is not clearly stated	A vision of high expectations is clearly stated and expectations are not based on the welfare of the entire school community.	A vision of high expectations is clearly stated and is based on the welfare of the entire school community.
Relevant demographic data pertaining to students and their families are used in developing the school mission and goals.	Mentions no specific data collection effort to use all demographic characteristics of the district.	Mentions demographic data collection and analysis but only in general terms	Collection and analysis of demographic data is detailed and specific as to types of data needed and for what purpose
barriers to achieving the vision are identified, clarified, and addressed	Student does not accurately identify major issues in the scenario	Students identify several issues but do not fully develop the impact they have on the school or community.	Students identify several issues but do not fully develop the impact they have on the school's and community's future.

