



Two Decision-Making Models

OPRE report #2022-193

Although your team may have an established and documented process for decision-making in your team agreement ([previously distributed](#)), some issues or decisions might require a different model of decision-making.

To help you select the best decision-making strategy for your current issue, an interactive tool is available at <https://thedecider.app/>. For the purposes of this resource we highlighted two strategies often used by implementation teams in the table below. The table includes when each model works well and what steps they entail¹ to help your team pick the best strategy for each decision.

DECISION-MAKING MODEL	THIS MODEL WORKS WELL WHEN:	PROCESS
CONSENSUS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The decision is not urgent • The risk is high because there is wide-impact and consequences are irreversible • Expertise is dispersed • All team members are able to share their thoughts and diverse opinions are respected 	<p>The entire team shapes the decision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define the problem or opportunity in writing where people can see it 2. Brainstorm all possible options: write them down, cluster similar ideas 3. Take an initial non-binding vote to gauge the feelings of the team 4. Have people make a case for options they feel strongly about 5. Take another non-binding vote 6. Negotiate with holdouts: “What would it take to get you on board?” 7. Repeat steps 4-7 until everyone agrees with the decision
DEMOCRATIC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is wide impact • Information is readily available • Options are well-defined 	<p>The entire team votes on a decision</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the situation and develop your options 2. Call a meeting for voting 3. Designate an advocate for each option 4. Hold a timed debate between the advocates 5. Vote (yes, no, abstain) 6. Count the votes and continue voting if a stalemate exists

¹Adapted from NOBL. (2018). *Decide Better Together*. Retrieved <https://thedecider.app/>

TIPS:

1. Encourage the sharing of opinions with statements like, I think, rather than conclusive statements like “This is x.”
2. Ask open-ended questions, like “what do others think?”
3. Foster appreciation of all opinions by acknowledging gratitudes throughout the discussion like “thank you for sharing” and “I appreciate all of these wonderful thoughts.”

This resource was written by Sarah Avellar (Mathematica) and Liz Pollock (Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation (OPRE)) based on materials from the University of North Carolina’s Frank Porter Graham Child Development Institute - National Implementation Research Network in collaboration with the Administration for Children and Families’ Office of Family Assistance (OFA) and OPRE (contract #HHSP2332009564WC/HHSP23337050T). OPRE Project Officers: Katie Pahigiannis and Pooja Gupta Curtin. Mathematica Project Director: Sarah Avellar.

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