BUILDING CONSENSUS AND SUPPORT FOR MASTER SCHEDULE DECISIONS; MAKING MASTER SCHEDULE DECISIONS

This document includes:
- ➢ *A few Consensus Building Strategies*
- ➢ *A Decision Making Process*
- ➢ *Design Thinking (see Stage 1 resource: "Design Thinking")*
- ➢ *A Theory of Action (to inform decision making)*
- ➢ *A Sampling of Polling Aps*

A FEW CONSENSUS BUILDING STRATEGIES

NOTE: These consensus-building strategies might be used internally by the Master Schedule Team and/or used when facilitating a decision-making activity with the faculty as a whole or with specific master schedule stakeholder groups.

Consensus:
A general agreement or concord, an idea or opinion that is shared by all the people in a group

Consensus is both a process and an outcome.

Consensus is agreement, but not necessarily a complete agreement.

A consensus agreement is one that all team members can support.

KALEIDOSCOPE GROUPS

Working in small groups (trios, quads), each group member takes a few minutes to discuss her/his position on a particular topic, issue, decision to be made, etc.) Small group participants should pay attention to both similarities and differences in terms of feelings/ opinions regarding the overall topic, issue, dilemma, decision, etc.)

The facilitator will then guide a debrief of the whole group either asking each small group to share a summary of their discussion OR, depending on the size of the faculty, using a power sweep or round robin. Participants might share their feelings on the topic and/or what they are still wondering about the topic.

YES-NO-WHAT DO YOU NEED?

The facilitator states the master scheduling proposal (or shares a potentially controversial aspect of the master schedule proposal/ guiding principles/priorities) and the focus of the discussion is also written on a chart pad.

Each participant states either:

YES, I support this, and shares why, OR

NO, I do not support this, and this is what I would need in order to

support it.

A participant may also elect to remain neutral, with the caveat that neutrality implies a willingness to support what the group decides.

The debrief may include a discussion of strategies to meet the need of those opposed and/or of how best to reach consensus given any deeply held feelings of participants.

SPEND YOUR DOTS

The facilitator leads a brainstorming process around making a particular decision or setting a particular priority, etc. After the group has determined a smaller list of some of proposed principles/priorities/elements, etc., the facilitator then gives each participant five sticky dots (number of dots may vary) and asks everyone in the group to vote their dots.   Each participant can choose to divide up her/his dots among several principles/priorities/design elements, etc. OR spend them all on one or two of the ideas that are most important to her/him.

FIVE FINGER SHARE

The facilitator shares an aspect of the project proposal, or a proposed guiding principle, design element, or _____.   He/she then asks participants to quickly indicate where they stand by using one of their hands. Participants share how they feel by raising a hand with a certain number of raised fingers. (NOTE: If this is the first time a group (or some members of the group) is/are using five finger share OR if there are new faculty/staff members, it helps to have a PowerPoint slide or a poster or chart paper which describes the following:

Five fingers: Love the proposed schedule/guiding principle/_____. I support this and will
actively work to make this master schedule (etc.) a reality.
Four fingers: Really like.   I support this master schedule proposal. While I may not be a
leader in implementing the master schedule, I will do what is appropriate to
support this.
Three fingers: Neutral.   I won't undermine the efforts of others.
Two fingers: Really dislike. Prefer other options, but will abide by the group's decision. I
will not sabotage.
One finger: Hate. I am seriously opposed to the idea.
If anyone holds up one or two fingers, the facilitator may encourage her/him to share
they he/she would need in order to raise three, four, or five fingers.

Some of these strategies are based on the work of the Coalition of Essential
Schools, National School Reform Faculty, Bay Area School Reform

Collaborative, Nancy Golden and others.

See also "How to Reach Consensus" (with pictures) at wikiHow
http://www.wikihow.com/Reach-a-Consensus

See also: "Consensus Building: A Key to School Transformation," by Daniel Baron, (senior fellow with the National School Reform Faculty) Instructional Leader, Principal Leadership, February, 2008

      The article includes a Tuning Protocol for Building Consensus that could be used by faculty groups or student groups. Also, includes a "Proposed Decision-Making Process."

      Consensus here is defined as: "* I can live with the decision * I will support my colleagues in implementing this decision * I will do absolutely nothing to impede the implementation of this decision."

      A copy of the article was retrieved in November 2013 at
http://www.parkwayschools.net/CandD/CurriculumAreas/cte/documents/Article.Consensus.Bldg0001.pdf

A DECISION MAKING PROCESS

UMass at Dartmouth defines the Decision-making process as the "process of making choices by setting goals, gathering information, and assessing (alternatives)." There are many versions of decision-making processes available in books, in practice, and on-line. Typically, they include the following steps:

- Identify/Clarify the decision to be made (Define the Problem/Situation)
- Gather the data needed to make an informed decision (Note: sometimes brainstorming possible options comes before gathering data; sometimes gathering data is repeated in the sequence of steps)
- Brainstorm/Generate alternatives (List the options)
- (Option) Gather more data related to alternatives under consideration (may involve research, site visits, phone calls, polls, etc.)
- Evaluate the alternatives (Weigh the possible outcomes; consider pros and cons for each alternative)
- Consider Values – *(How well does each alternative align with the school and/or district vision and mission? How well does each alternative align with theagreed upon master schedule guiding principles?)*
- Choose an Alternative (Make a Decision)
- Implement the decision (Act on the decision)
- Evaluate decision effectiveness (learn from and reflect on both the decision and the decision-making process.

Two other examples include:

From UMass Dartmouth:

The UMass Decision Making Process is used to help students make a decision regarding their major, but can be applied in many other circumstances.

- ➢ Identify the Decision to Be Made
- ➢ Gather Information
- ➢ Identify the Alternatives
- ➢ Weigh the Evidence
- ➢ Choose From Alternatives
- ➢ Take Action
- ➢ Review the Decision

    For more detail on each of these steps in the decision-making process, see: https://www.umassd.edu/fycm/decisionmaking/process/

From Thomas Edison State College: Identifying/Clarifying the decision to be made
- ➢ Identifying possible decision options
- ➢ Gathering/processing information
- ➢ Making/implementing the decision
- ➢ Evaluating the decision

    For more detail on each of these steps in the decision-making process, see http://myedison.tesc.edu/tescdocs/Web_Courses/EDL-530/documents/DecisionMaking_Proc.htm

DESIGN THINKING

Design Thinking is "a creative process that helps you design meaningful solutions in the classroom, at your school, and in your community."

Many schools and districts, including the districts involved in the initial James Irvine Foundation/ConnectEd California Linked Learning District Initiative, have been trained in the Design Thinking process and use design thinking as part of their decision making process.

Since there are many design thinking strategies, tools, and resources, information on Design Thinking is included in a separate document, entitled "Design Thinking."

THEORY OF ACTION

Often when a master schedule team is involved in the decision-making process, especially when the decision/s involved might result in a major shift in the use of time or structures for learning in the school setting, it is important to ground the work in a theory of action. A clear understanding of the reasons behind any major decision will also help to build consensus and support for the decision.

Theory of Action

Proposed Strategy:
If we do this, (describe in detail)

Then "X" will happen: (Explain in research-base or evidence-based practice why this will work)

And we will see this result in….

Theory of Action:
- Aligns intended theory with the realities of work within an actual organization.
- Connects strategy to the actions and relationships critical to good instruction and student learning.
- Identifies the mutual dependencies that are required to get the complex work of…improvement done.
- Grounded in research or evidence-based practice.
- Begins with a statement of a causal relationship between what I/we do and what constitutes a good result in the organization
- High leverage for achievement and equity
- Powerful enough to transform programs and practices

    o Adapted from *Instructional Rounds in Education* – Elizabeth A. City, Richard F. Elmore, Sarah E. Fiarman and Lee Teitel, 2009

EXAMPLES (from *Instructional Rounds in Education*, City, Elmore, Fiarman & Teitel)

Broad Theory of Action: "If our vision of writing across all content areas is compelling and students and staff have good motive and work hard, then students will write amore successfully."

Good Theory of Action: "If system and building level administrators monitor teaching practice in a serious and visible way, then teachers will teach high-level writing skills and then students will learn to write more fluently and powerfully."

Better Theory of Action: "If teachers have access to coaching and professional development focused on the core skills of high-level writing, and if administrators monitor and support the acquisition of these skills through their daily visits to classrooms, then teachers will teach higher-level skills and students will demonstrate their learning by producing higher-level writing products."

Best Theory of Action: "If teachers are knowledgeable about the performances that equate to high levels of writing, and if they participate in the development of assessments that provide evidence of those performances, then they will know how to test their own knowledge and skill against the requirements of the new curriculum, and students will demonstrate higher levels of performance in their writing."

NOTE: Another valuable example is the Smarter Balanced Theory of Action.
See http://www.smarterbalanced.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Smarter-Balanced-Theory-of-Action.pdf

Some questions to consider when developing a Theory of Action:
Where do I/we begin my/our research?
How do we get from the current state to the desired state?
What are the vital actions that will improve our school as an organization, transform our practice, and improve results for our students and teachers?
What evidence do we have that these actions will be successful?
As a result of these actions, what will happen?
How will this action/these actions transform our high school?
> *How will this action/these actions transform our teaching and learning?*
> *How will this action/these actions transform our school/district leadership?*
> *How will this action/these actions impact students? Teachers? Counselors? Administration? Our parents and community?*
> *What will this action/these actions lead to?*
> *What results will we see?*

FROM THE EVALUATION TOOLKIT for Magnet School Programs:
Developing a Theory of Action:
Key Actions:
- Surface assumptions about how (your school/master schedule)* is supposed to work
- Create a logic model to explicitly connect your activities and goals
- Use your logic model to develop relevant evaluation questions

"When you are trying to figure out what works and why, begin with a thorough understanding of how your (school as an organization// master schedule)* is supposed to work. As the visual representation of your theory of action, a logic model can be useful for creating a shared understanding, clarifying assumptions, and focusing an evaluation." *(adapted from original text)

> *NOTE: In most of the literature on change theory, A Theory of Change or a Theory of Action differs from logical model, since a Theory of Change or Theory or Action requires participants to surface and articulate underlying assumptions which can be tested and measures AND because it "shows a causal pathway from here to there" by specifying what is needed for goals to be achieved.*

From ActKnowlege: A Theory of Change "defines all the building blocks required to bring about a long-term goal. Like any good planning and evaluation method for…change, it requires participants to be clear on long-term goals, identify measurable indicators of success, and formulate actions to achieve goals."

From Jim Connell and Adenna Klem: "You should ask yourself whether your Theory of Change is:
PLAUSIBLE (stakeholders believe the logic of the model is correct: If we do these things, we will get the results we want and expect):

DOABLE (human, political (policy), and economic resources are seen as sufficient to implement the action strategies in the theory:

TESTABLE (stakeholders believe there are credible ways to discover whether the results are as predicted);

MEANINGFUL (Stakeholders see the outcomes as important and the magnitude of change in these outcomes being pursued as worth the effort)."

A few Theory of Action, Theory of Change, and/or Logic Model resources:
"Theory of Change: A Practical Tool for Action, Results, and Learning," prepared for Annie E. Casey Foundation, prepared by Organizational Research Services, 2004
http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/cc2977k440.pdf

W.K. Kellogg Foundation Logic Model Development Guide
http://www.wkkf.org/resource-directory/resource/2006/02/wk-kellogg-foundation-logic-model-development-guide

"Theory of Change as a Tool for Strategic Planning: A Report on Early Experiences," Wallace Foundation, Wallace Foundation/ Aspen Institute on Community Change August 2004
http://www.wallacefoundation.org/knowledge-center/advancing-philanthropy/Documents/Theory-of-Change-Tool-for-Strategic-Planning-Report-on-Early-Experiences.pdf

THEORY OF ACTION TEMPLATE *(expand boxes for note-making for actual use)*

Proposed Strategy: If we do this, (Describe in Detail….	Then "X" will happen (Explain in research-base or theory-base or evidence-base why this will work)	And we will see this result in…

POLLING APPS

Poll Everywhere   http://www.polleverywhere.com
Poll Everywhere lets you engage your audience anywhere in real time
Poll Everywhere allows you to conduct a poll without specialized equipment (other than smart phones).

PollDaddy   http://www.polldaddy.com
Create Surveys and Polls
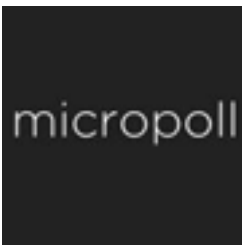With your account from PollDaddy you can create online surveys and polls for your website, blog, and social network.

Thumb.it   http://www.thumb.it.com
Real Time Opinion Platform
Thumb provides its users with a simple way to give and get opinions. Users can join the community and vote in polls online

MicroPoll   http://www.micropoll.com

MicroPoll calls itself the "easiest way to create website polls….FREE"

AddPoll   http://www.addpoll.com
AddPoll gives users a number of tools that allow them to "create online surveys, polls and forms using best online software in the web. Real time detailed reports, stunning designs, and many more features."

Flisti   http://www.flisti.com
With Flisti you can create free online polls "free & easy."

Kwiqpoll   http://www.kwiqpoll.com
Kwiqpoll is a fast and easy online poll builder. "Create a poll and share the link on any social media site or email."

Mentimeter   http://www.mentimeter.com
Mentimeter gives users an easy way to create an interactive presentation using mobile polls.

Tezaa   http://www.tezaa.com
Tezaa is a website for creating and taking polls or quizzes. Users can take surveys and share their opinions. Tezaa is a poll and survey creation community that provides a platform for polls to be quickly and easily created.

Pollibob   http://www.pollibob.com
Pollbob.com lets users create and take online polls. The polls can be shared with others so users can see what their friends think about a topic or issue. Each time the user creates, stakes or shares a poll, they earn points which can be used to unlock rewards.

Sources: Recommendations from Teachers, online search for popular polling applications, and AppAppeal.com (reviews of over 3500 free web apps in 180+ categories)
See the Polling category at http://www.appappeal.com for much more detailed reviews of many of the applications listed above.

Other popular polling apps mentioned in some reviews include:
Poutsch "Poutsch is Quora for polls"

Ranker "provides embeddable polls for other sites... also acts as a browsable hub that invites users to make a list of their most or least favorite items"

Wedgies: "As well as being able to set up an embeddable poll...Wedgies also allows users to set polls specifically for sharing on social media and can even allow for responses via text message." "great balance of simplicity, functionality, and design."