

Effective Staff Committee Meetings

SURT October 2020

Online group norms

Put questions
into chat.

Mute mic unless
speaking.

Camera on or off
is personal
preference.

People may need
to come and go
from the meeting.

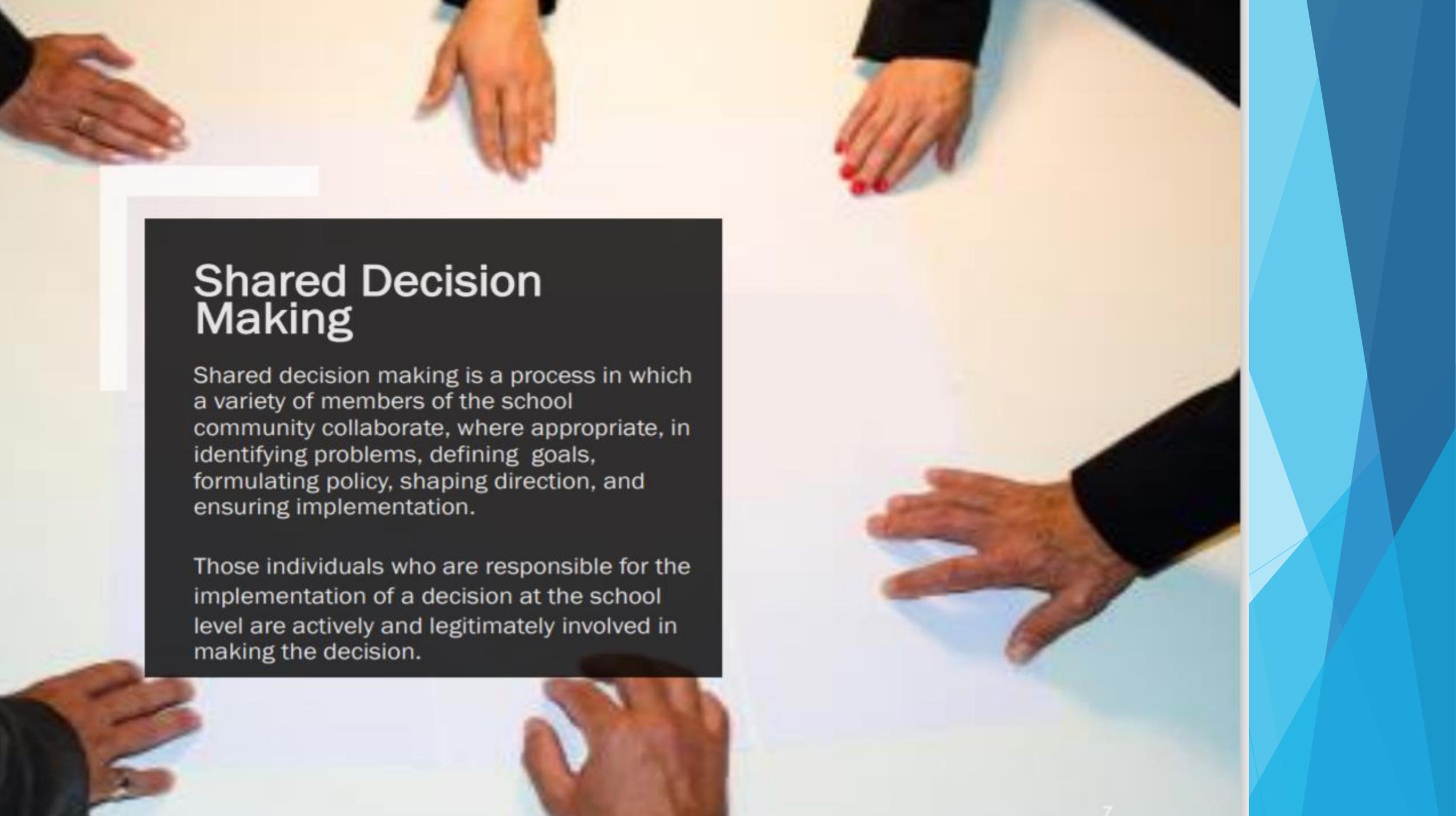
Who is here?

Please change your profile name so that it shows your first and last name

Please write in the chat box:

- Your name
- Your school
- One big concern or questions you have about your role as Staff Committee Chair





Shared Decision Making

Shared decision making is a process in which a variety of members of the school community collaborate, where appropriate, in identifying problems, defining goals, formulating policy, shaping direction, and ensuring implementation.

Those individuals who are responsible for the implementation of a decision at the school level are actively and legitimately involved in making the decision.

The Good and the Less Good

In previous meetings:

- ▶ What were the elements that made a meeting feel good?
- ▶ What were the elements of a meeting that frustrated you?
- ▶ What are some elements that should never happen?

Scenario

What just happened?

- ▶ Who didn't they hear from?
- ▶ How did they take turns talking?
- ▶ Who did most of the talking?
- ▶ How was the decision made?
- ▶ What else did you notice?

What is a Staff Committee?

Collective Agreement

- ▶ Shall be established in each school
- ▶ Does not limit duties and authority of Principal / Vice Principal (School Act, Labour Code, board policies)

Responsibilities

- ▶ To represent the staff
- ▶ To receive and make recommendations
- ▶ To advise and assist administration in the solution of specific problems
- ▶ To develop and maintain effective communication and consultation
- ▶ To review school policies and procedures and develop recommendations for improvement

Staff (Principal's) Meeting

- Chaired by Principal
- AO or secretary takes and distributes minutes
- Called by AO for a reasonable, time sensitive issue
- Limited to a "reasonable number a year."
- All staff must attend
- Cannot conflict with Professional Development days
- For purpose of information from AOs

Article A.30

Staff Committee Meeting

- Agenda circulated and minutes taken as determined by Staff Committee meeting
- Part-time employees not required to attend on days off
- Responsibility of each member to apprise themselves of decisions/ information

Article A.5.5.c

- Chaired by VESTA member
- VESTA member takes and makes minutes available
- Schedule meetings (i.e., once per month)
- Can use "representative" model
- AOs and teacher attend
- Motions are brought by VESTA members
- VESTA members advise AOs

Function

The Committee shall have the right to provide advice to the Principal/Vice-Principal(s), and to consider the following matters in relation to the operation of the school:

Provide advice to the P/VP

Staffing and assignments of teachers in the school

- ▶ Teaching assignments
- ▶ Utilization of SSSWs
- ▶ Consideration of upcoming postings
- ▶ Organization of classes (class casting)
- ▶ Planning for the next school year
- ▶ Physical requirements for classes
- ▶ Provision of learning materials
- ▶ Student assessment and reporting
- ▶ Room assignments

Provide advice to the P/VP

Assess teaching and learning conditions and recommend improvements

- ▶ Placement and transfer of students
- ▶ Staff-administration communication and relationship
- ▶ School climate
- ▶ Wider community or neighbourhood issues
- ▶ Learning resources and availability

Provide advice to the P/VP

School Curriculum Planning and Evaluation

- ▶ School wide themes or assessment
- ▶ Events involving the community
- ▶ Evaluation / reporting formats and schedule
- ▶ School calendar

Professional and Staff Development Activities

- ▶ Working with Pro-D committees to suggest and plan content
- ▶ Supporting teacher participation in inquiry projects

Provide advice to the P/VP

School Regulations, Policies and Routines

- ▶ Use of school budget
- ▶ Assemblies
- ▶ Attendance protocols
- ▶ Parent teacher events
- ▶ Student discipline plans and procedures
- ▶ Collection of money
- ▶ Field trips
- ▶ School-wide events
- ▶ Communication with parents

Provide advice to the P/VP

School Timetable and Organization

- ▶ Class sizes and fairness across the school
- ▶ Gym or other shared spaces
- ▶ Schedules, lunch time routines

Any other matter of concern to the members of the school staff

Staff Committee Committees

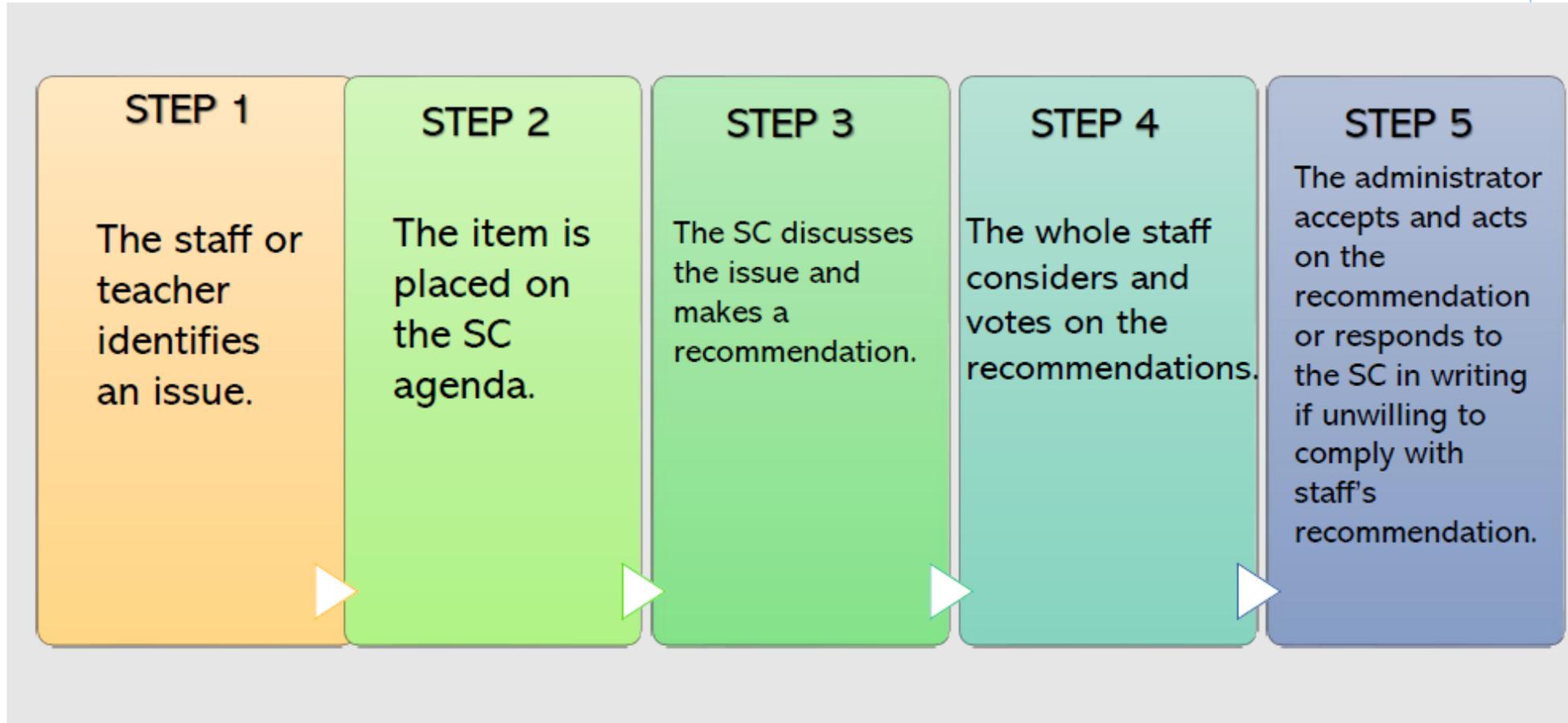
Interviewing Committee

Professional Development Committee

Timetable and Staffing Committee

Finance Committee.

How can I make a change at my school?



Dispute resolution

If the issue or non-action is perceived to be a violation of the collective agreement, a grievance may be initiated.

If the administrator does not comply, a process which involves the Local President and senior management may be established.

Activity

- ▶ Develop a motion to your Staff Committee Meeting
- ▶ Identify which aspect of the Staff Committee Language allows your motion
- ▶ One idea per motion
- ▶ Be specific and clear
 - ▶ What do you want your administrator to know?
 - ▶ What is the timeline?
 - ▶ What do you want done?
- ▶ Remember - motions do not include reasons why. The mover can speak to that when they move the motion.

Sample: That student conferences be held virtually and that meetings be scheduled to be no longer than 10 minutes each.

What if there is no staff committee at my school, or is not functioning well?

- ▶ Each staff member has the right to establish or call a Staff Committee meeting
- ▶ Remember that the Staff Committee is a part of your collective agreement and you cannot be denied that right
- ▶ Speak to colleagues - make sure representative of different roles in the school
- ▶ Talk to your Staff Rep about putting it on the agenda of the next VESTA meeting
- ▶ Circulate dates of meetings in advance and post agenda in the staff room where anyone can add their items

Who should be on the Staff Committee?

- ▶ All members of a school or a representative
- ▶ Principal / Vice Principal
- ▶ Entire staff or 20 employees selected by the staff representative of diversity of staff
- ▶ VESTA Staff Rep
- ▶ Chairperson is a teacher elected by teachers
- ▶ Secretary is a teacher who takes minutes

- ▶ Non-teaching staff should be welcomed to attend, but as this is a contractual meeting between teachers and administrators, they may not vote

What tips help things run?

- ▶ Hold a VESTA meeting first to discuss if items ought to be discussed in private among teachers first
- ▶ Plan to have staff committee meetings in advance of Principal staff meetings
- ▶ Special meetings on urgent issues can also take place
- ▶ Solicit agenda items from other staff members
- ▶ Create agenda and circulate prior to the meeting - important that staff know what will be discussed
- ▶ Share minutes with the whole staff

What do I need to know about chairing a meeting?

- ▶ Determine your own style based on your school culture
- ▶ Some formality helps to keep things focused
- ▶ Chair will keep a speakers' list and letting people speak in turn
- ▶ Report or discussion can happen first, followed by a motion and debate, then a vote, or you can start with a motion
- ▶ The most important thing is that everyone understands what they are voting on and that the outcome of the vote is clear

Roberts Rules of Order

- ▶ A structure that makes it easier for people to work together
- ▶ Helps groups accomplish their purposes
- ▶ Should assist a meeting, not inhibit it

- ▶ A meeting can only deal with one matter at a time
- ▶ All members have equal rights, privileges and obligations
- ▶ A majority vote decides an issue
- ▶ The rights of the minority must be protected
- ▶ All members have the right to be heard and the right to oppose
- ▶ Every matter presented for decision should be discussed fully - the right to have a say is as important as the right to vote
- ▶ Every member has the right to understand the meaning of a question and what effect a decision will have

Scenario 2

- ▶ What was different this time?

BCTF Members' Guide

That the purposes of staff committees are:

- a. to promote democratic decision-making in schools.
- b. to ensure greater commitment to decisions.
- c. to enhance professionalism and the quality of education.

Staff committees:

- a. are based on principles of participatory democracy, professional practice and collegiality.
- b. are consistent with the terms of local collective agreements and Federation policy.
- c. provide an opportunity for every staff member to be directly involved in shaping the educational policies and practices of the schools.
- d. provide teachers with the authority and autonomy to reflect on their practice, share and analyze this reflection with colleagues and apply the results of this analysis to the practical, day-to-day decision and policy making at the school level.
- e. provide a forum for collegial problem-solving on matters of resource allocation, education policy and professional practice within the school

VESTA policy

That the Staff Committee at each school analyze the staffing requirements for the integration of special education students when it carries out its function of addressing the timetable and organization of the school.

That solutions consistent with the bargaining agreement recommended by the school team be presented to the Staff Committee for endorsement.

That the Senior Teacher position be for one (1) year and be rotated among those interested as determined by Staff Committee decision.

That the Staff Committee be fully involved in all aspects of the staffing and organization of the school.

That Staff Committees should oppose and not participate in the development of any school organization that entails a reduction in current staff or services.

VESTA policy

That VESTA continue to support school-based staff committee decisions on both content and timing of Professional Development/Staff Development Non-Instructional Days

That the usage of Curriculum Implementation Funds, Professional Development and Joint Conference funds be determined by the staff committee in each school upon the recommendation of the school PD Committee

That all teaching staff must be involved in the school organization and in particular with regard to the assignments of students to classes.

That the Staff Committee in every school be encouraged to establish a teacher liaison who would attend all PAC meetings and report the teachers' concerns and issues to parents and who would report back to teachers on parents' concerns and issues.

That Staff Committee will ensure that a process is established to plan collegially for school based staff development.