

# **Input & Decision-Making at the Atlanta Neighborhood Charter School**

In making decisions for our school community, we are guided by principles and supported by practices that give voice to those directly impacted by decisions and provide clarity so that decisions can be made effectively *and* efficiently.

## **What principles guide the decision-making process at ANCS?**

Our ANCS Guiding Principles are used to guide the decision-making process at ANCS.

### *1) We come to school and every class prepared to learn and do our best.*

- We define problems clearly and involve all those affected in inquiry before we advocate for solutions.
- We propose solutions that are crafted with thoughtful consideration primarily on how they affect teaching and learning and the health and wellbeing of the children in our community.
- We balance the need for efficient decision-making with the need to solve problems collectively and cooperatively.

### *2) We respect each other, our surroundings, and ourselves.*

- We are all part of the same team; we collectively own problems, and we collectively solve them.
- We share feedback and input in a constructive way. We listen to feedback and input with an open-mind.

### *3) We take responsibility for our actions and learning.*

- We accept the responsibilities associated with our role in the school community as teachers, parents, or administrators and respect the roles of others.
- We recognize that we can learn from the perspectives and experiences of others and commit to listening and assuming goodwill.

### *4) We resolve conflicts in a peaceful, meaningful, thoughtful way*

- We allow conflict and differing ideas to exist, and we recognize that tension may be a part of making decisions.
- We focus on solutions, not blame, and presume positive and constructive intentions on the part of others.

### *5) We celebrate our individual and collective successes.*

- We celebrate our culture of cooperation, trust, and partnership as part of what makes us special as a school community.

## **Who makes what decisions?**

The framework below seeks to lay out what types of decisions are made by which people/groups.

<b>Decision-Making Body</b>	<b>Jurisdiction</b>	<b>Examples</b>
<p><b>Governing Board</b></p> <p>(ANCS by-laws require majority of board members to be ANCS parents)</p>	<p>State and federal law, the school’s charter agreement, core strategic issues</p>	<p>Sets policies aimed at making sure school is in compliance with laws and charter; approval of budget; changes to school’s charter and/or strategic plan</p>
<p><b>K-8 Leadership Team</b></p> <p>(Executive Director, Principals &amp; Assistant Principals, Director of Business/Operations, Special Education Coordinator, Director of Collaborative Learning &amp; Partnerships)</p>	<p>Big issues that affect core aspects of school life or school program</p>	<p>Implementation of charter and strategic plan; state mandates; changes to academic program</p>
<p><b>Executive Director/Principals</b></p>	<p>Day-to-day “nitty gritty”, immediate student or employee matters</p>	<p>Oversight of faculty/staff, student and employee safety; procedures to support school policies</p>
<p><b>Campus Leadership Teams</b></p> <p>(facilitated by Principals; representatives from grade levels)</p>	<p>Elements of the educational program that require professional design and affect one campus</p>	<p>Daily schedule for students and faculty/staff; professional development; norms for common spaces; grade level trips</p>
<p><b>Full Faculty/Staff</b></p>	<p>Elements of the educational program that require professional design and affect the whole school</p>	<p>Creation of curriculum scope and sequence; grading practices</p>

**How are decisions made?**

In general, the appropriate decision-making body for a particular issue or proposal will:

- 1) outline a process for a decision to be reached on the issue or proposal, including a mechanism for the gathering of input from those individuals and/or groups likely to be impacted by the decision;
- 2) specify a timeline by which a decision will be made.

The decision-making process—which might include the creation of a short-term task force or

working group—will be communicated to those individuals and/or groups likely to be impacted by the decision.

In some rare instances where time is of the essence, the decision-making body may make a decision on an issue without gathering input.

The Executive Director and Governing Board Chair will determine which decision-making body should address a particular issue or proposal if it is unclear to whom the issue should go.

Unless otherwise specified by the decision-making body, decisions should stand for at least three months before changes can be proposed.

**How is input gathered prior to making big decisions that impact all students, families, and/or faculty/staff at one or both campuses?**

Some decisions at our school will impact all (or most) of the students, families, and/or faculty/staff at one or both of our campuses. Examples of such decisions might include the adoption of our school's annual budget, approval of the yearly school calendar, or the employee leave policy. For these decisions, the Executive Director and Board Chair will consult with the Principals and PTCA President about the process for gathering input from those groups most likely to be impacted by the decision. The process and timeline for gathering input along with key background information on the matter to be decided upon will be explained and communicated to impacted groups through a variety of means, such as:

- Courier
- Email and phone messaging system
- Website and social media

The actual gathering of input should also involve multiple avenues in order to give everyone in impacted groups an opportunity to express their opinion. Those avenues for gathering input and feedback can include (but do not need to be limited to):

- Anonymous surveys
- PTCA meetings and/or separate community meetings
- Focus groups

A summary of the feedback gathered should be presented along with the final recommendation to the decision-making body.