



Tomorrow River Community Charter School Governance Board Meetings Consensus Guidelines

The TRCCS is committed to using consensus decision making to find solutions to issues and to take action on items. Consensus ensures that all opinions, ideas and concerns are taken into account and that the group is committed to finding solutions that everyone actively supports, or at least can live with. It is a respectful dialogue between equals, empowering individuals and bringing people together to build stronger decisions and communities. Consensus is working towards a win-win solution that is acceptable to all; when everyone agrees there is a greater commitment to the decision. The group is always working to make decisions that further the mission and vision of the TRCCS.

Step 1. Introduce Item

Step 2. Explore/discuss the Item

- Gather thoughts and reactions
- Everyone is encouraged to participate, guests are welcome to share, must stay on topic
- Collect ideas

Step 3. Emerging Proposals

- Developed idea that everyone might agree on

Step 4. Discuss, clarify and amend the Proposal

Step 5. Agreement

- **Agreement:** Supports the proposal
- **Reservation:** Reservations but willing to let the proposal pass
- **Stand Aside:** Can't support the proposal but does not want to stop the group
- **Block:** Fundamental disagreement with the core of the proposal that cannot be resolved

Consensus: No blocks, not too many stand asides or reservations, active agreement

Step 6. Implement the Decision

Skills for Consensus:

- *Active Listening: give the speaker full attention*
- *Summarize: The facilitator will give a succinct and accurate summary of what has been said*
- *Synthesis: Finding common ground*

Hand Signals:

- *Raise hand when you wish to make a point*
- *Raise both hands if your point directly relates to the person talking*
- *Wave open hands when you agree, saves on time asking everyone's opinion*

Adapted from "Consensus Decision Making" by Seeds for Change