Common Mistakes in Building Consensus

• We try to go it alone, rather than building a guiding coalition including opinion leaders.

Include Opinion Leaders on Guiding Coalition

• Who supports an idea is more important to its adoption than the merits of the idea.
• About 15% of members of organizations are Opinion Leaders - socially connected, knowledgeable, and trusted by others in the organization. Get them on board and the others will follow.
  – Patterson, et. al., 2008

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• We use a process that allows cynics and skeptics to dominate.
• We pool opinions rather than build shared knowledge.
A Cardinal Rule of PLCs

• The answer to the question, “how do we begin.....” virtually every aspect of the PLC concept is building shared knowledge. Put another way, a learning community always begins the decision-making process by learning together.
• Building shared knowledge is the prerequisite homework of a PLC when it is time to make a collective decision.

To Build Shared Knowledge of PLCs

• Read articles and the “Advocates” document on www.allthingsplc.info
• Read Books on PLCs
  – Most Comprehensive: Revisiting PLCs at Work
  – Building powerful teams: Learning By Doing
  – Responding to Kids who don’t learn: Whatever It Takes
• Field Trips to or video conference with a PLC
• Video conference with the DuFours
• Attend PLC Institutes, conferences
• Pilot a PLC within your department/grade level

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• We pool opinions rather than build shared knowledge.
• We feel we need consensus on each, specific detail of implementation.
• We set an unrealistic standard for consensus and invest too much energy in resisters.
When Do We Have Consensus?

• All can embrace
• All can endorse
• All can live with
• All agree not to sabotage
• Majority Rules

Consensus

We have arrived at consensus when all points of view have been heard, and the will of the group is evident—even to those who most oppose it.

Necessary Commitments From the Principal

• Provide time for teachers to meet in teams, on a regular basis, during school day.
• Provide resources and training for teams as identified by team.
• Protect our school from competing improvement initiatives.
• Will not use results of common assessments in teacher evaluation.
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**Fist to Five**

- 5 - I’ll champion
- 4 - Strongly Agree
- 3 - Agree
- 2 - Reservations
- 1 - Oppose
- Fist - Veto

**Consensus**

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