



# School Leadership Team Toolkit

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *School Leadership Team Frequently Asked Questions*

**Q1. *What is an SLT?***

**A1.** The School Leadership Team (SLT), composed of parents, staff and administrators, is responsible for developing school-based educational policies, and ensuring that resources and budget are aligned to implement those policies.

**Q2. *Does my school need to have an SLT?***

**A2.** Yes. New York State Education Law Section 2590-h requires every New York City public school to have a School Leadership Team. SLTs are important structures for collaborative school-based decision making. (See Chancellor’s Regulation A-655, Section I).

**Q3. *Why is an SLT important?***

**A3.** The SLT is responsible for developing their school’s Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). SLTs play a significant role in creating a structure for school-based decision making, and shaping the path to a collaborative school culture. New York State Education Law Section 2590-h requires every New York City public school to have a School Leadership Team.

**Q4. *What is CR A-655?***

**A4.** Chancellor’s Regulation A-655 or CR A-655 is the document issued by the Chancellor of New York City Department of Education that ensures the formation of a School Leadership Team (SLT) in every public school, and a District Leadership Team (DLT) in every community school district. It also includes the central plan for school-based planning and shared decision making.

**Q5. *Who are the members on my school’s SLT?***

**A5.** There are three mandatory members of the SLT: the Principal, the UFT Chapter Chair and the PA/PTA President. Additional members of the team (parents and staff) are elected by their own constituencies.

**Q6. *How many members can be on an SLT?***

**A6.** An SLT may have between 10 and 17 members, with an equal number of parents and staff members.

**Q7. *What does balance mean?***

**A7.** Balance means that your school’s SLT has an equal number of parents and staff members. Mandatory members must be counted when determining if the team is balanced. For example, a balanced thirteen-member team is: 5 parents, 5 staff members, 1 CBO representative, and 2 students. Students and CBO members do not count toward balance.

**Q8. *How are team members chosen to serve on the SLT at my school?***

**A8.** Parents and staff are elected by their own constituent groups in a fair and unbiased manner. Elections must be advertised widely with reasonable advance notice.

- Elections must be open to all members of the constituent group (e.g., PA/PTA, CSA, UFT and DC-37).
- Parent member SLT elections take place any time after the election of officers to the PA/PTA. (See Chancellor’s Regulation A-660, Section I.F.)

**Q9. *Who is eligible to be elected to the SLT?***

**A9.** The major stakeholders of parents, staff and administrators comprise the makeup of an SLT.

- Parents from the school are eligible to be elected to the SLT by the members of the PA/PTA.
- A parent is defined as a parent (by birth or step-parent), legally appointed guardian, foster parent or person in parental relation to a child.

- A person in parental relation refers to a person who has assumed the care of a child because the child's parents or guardians are not available, whether due to, among other things, death, imprisonment, mental illness, abandonment of a child, or living outside of the state.
- The SLT may also invite a community-based organization to become a member of the team, and may also include high school students. A minimum of two students on the SLT. The exact composition of the team must be set in the team's bylaws.

**Q10. *Are there any restrictions?***

**A10.** Yes. A parent may not serve on the SLT as a parent member in the school where he or she is employed, however the parent may serve in other schools where he/she has a child in attendance. A parent who is employed at the school may serve as a staff member on the SLT.

**Q11. *Can a parent serve on more than one SLT?***

**A11.** Yes. A parent who has children attending more than one school may be elected to serve on each school's SLT.

**Q12. *Can the school's parent coordinator serve on the SLT?***

**A12.** No. The parent coordinator may not serve as a member of the SLT in any capacity in the school where he/she is employed. However, the parent coordinator may be invited to attend meetings as an observer or presenter. The parent coordinator may also be asked to serve on SLT subcommittees.

**Q13. *In a new school, how is an SLT established?***

**A13.** The parents of the school must establish a PA/PTA before the SLT can be formed. The PA/PTA is established following the process contained in Chancellor's Regulation A-660. Once the PA/PTA is established, the school must take the following steps:

- The principal, UFT Chapter Chair and PA/PTA President, or their designees, must work together to draft bylaws for the SLT.
- Each of the constituent groups must elect member representatives based on the team composition established in the newly drafted bylaws and Chancellor's Regulation A-655 (which outlines the required composition for SLTs).
- Once all team members have been identified, the SLT must review and adopt the team's bylaws (the bylaws may be amended at this time to meet the needs of the team).

**Q14. *Are there leadership positions on the SLT?***

**A14.** Yes. The SLT must use a consensus-based decision-making process to ensure that all voices are heard and all members have an equal opportunity to participate. There are, however, positions to help the SLT operate effectively. The SLT must have a chairperson or co-chairpersons and a secretary. Many SLTs decide to establish additional positions to fulfill other duties for the team. Check your team's bylaws to see which positions your school's SLT has established and to read the duties of each position. The SLT must reach consensus to select members to serve in these roles.

**Q15. *What is the role of the SLT chairperson?***

**A15.** The chairperson is responsible for:

- scheduling meetings
- ensuring that team members have the information necessary to guide their planning
- focusing the team on educational issues of importance to the school
- ensuring that all team members have an opportunity to be heard
- other duties, as defined in the SLT bylaws

**Q16. *What is the role of the SLT secretary?***

**A16.** The secretary is responsible for:

- sending SLT meeting notices

- recording the minutes of SLT meetings
- maintaining the meeting minutes at the school and providing a copy to the school's PA/PTA
- other duties, as defined in the SLT bylaws

**Q17. *How do students become members of the team?***

**A17.** All members of the team must be elected by their constituent groups, however the team's bylaws may establish the criteria for student participation such as minimum age and or grade level.

**Q18. *Who can attend an SLT meeting?***

**A18.** Members of the school community as well as the general public and the press may attend SLT meetings to observe and listen to the proceedings. SLTs may choose to allow these attendees to speak, but if they do, they must create rules to ensure fairness, such as setting time limits on speaking time. These rules should be explained in the SLT's by-laws

**Q19. *Why does the SLT have to have bylaws?***

**A19.** Chancellor's Regulation A-655 governs the formation of SLTs in every New York City public school. CR A-655 requires SLTs to develop bylaws to provide clear and consistent direction about team organization and responsibilities. The SLT should review the bylaws at least once every two years or upon revision of CR A-655. If, after a review, the team concludes that the bylaws must be amended, the team may do so by following the amendment provision included in the bylaws template. All amendments must be made by consensus and may not conflict with CR A-655. The team should review the SLT Bylaws Template, included as Attachment 4 of CR A-655, when developing bylaws or making amendments.

**Q20. *How often does SLT meet?***

**A20.** The SLT should meet at least once a month during the school year. The team may find that monthly meetings provide sufficient opportunity to achieve its goals. However, many SLTs find it necessary to schedule more frequent meetings.

- The SLT bylaws should specify the day and time of the monthly meeting (e.g., "The SLT shall meet on the first Thursday of every month from 4:00pm – 6:00pm").
- The SLT should make every effort to adhere to the bylaws when scheduling meetings.

**Q21. *Can the SLT hold its meetings outside of school or DOE premises?***

**A21.** No. CR A-655 requires that all SLT meetings take place on school or DOE premises and be scheduled at a time convenient to the parent members.

- ***Tele-conferencing and video conferencing are not a permissible way to conduct a meeting.*** If a member could not attend a meeting, the team, if quorum has been met, can agree that the individual could call or video conference to be kept informed but it would not count towards attending a meeting or the remuneration stipend.

**Q22. *I am a mandatory member of my school's SLT, but I cannot attend every meeting. What should I do?***

**A22.** Mandatory members or their designees are expected to attend all SLT meetings.

**Q23. *What is quorum for SLT meetings?***

**A23.** Quorum is the minimum number of members in attendance necessary to conduct business at any meeting. The SLT must ensure that the quorum for meetings is specified in the team's bylaws. The quorum may include additional requirements such as mandatory representation from all constituent groups, or the presence of the three mandatory members or their designees.

**Q24. What is the term length for members on the SLT?**

**A24.** The length of term and the duration of a term will vary from one SLT to the next. The term length for elected members must be specified in your school's SLT bylaws, Mandatory members serve on the team for the duration of their term of office (i.e. PA/PTA president serves a 1 year term of office). Most SLTs opt for two-year terms. The term length set in the bylaws does not apply to the mandatory SLT members.

**Q26. If a member has completed their term on the SLT can he/she be elected again?**

**A26.** The answer depends on your SLT bylaws. Check the bylaws to see if your school's SLT has put term limits in place. If term limits exist and no other willing candidate comes forward from a particular constituent group, a member may be elected for an additional term.

**Q27. If a seat becomes vacant on the SLT, how is it filled?**

**A27.** When a seat becomes vacant on an SLT, the constituent group must elect a new member to fill the vacancy to complete the term left open by the departing member.

**Q28. If a vacancy is filled, is that a new term?**

**A28.** No. The term remains intact and is completed by the incoming member, who upon its completion may run for their own term outright.

**Q29. What does my school's SLT do?**

**A29.** The SLT is responsible for developing the school's annual Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP). The CEP development process requires teams to:

- use relevant data to assess and prioritize school needs,
- set goals to meet school needs,
- develop action plans to achieve goals,
- implement action plans,
- assess interim progress, and
- evaluate overall plan effectiveness

The SLT is also responsible for ensuring that the CEP is aligned with the school-based budget. The principal, who is responsible for developing the school-based budget, will consult with the SLT during this development process for total alignment.

The SLT is responsible for using consensus-based decision making to develop the CEP.

Additional responsibilities:

- The SLT is not responsible for the hiring or firing of school staff. However, consistent with Chancellor's Regulation C-30, the SLT must be consulted prior to the appointment of a principal or assistant principal candidate to the school. (CR A-655, Section II, B, 1)
- The superintendent will consult with the SLT regarding any school restructuring plans for the school. With respect to all proposals to close a school or make a significant change in school utilization, the SLT shall participate in the joint public hearing held at the school.
- The SLT shall provide an annual assessment to the community district or high school superintendent of the principal's record of developing an effective shared decision-making relationship with the SLT members during the year. (CR A-655, Section II, B, 2)

**Q30. How does the SLT make informed-decisions as it develops the CEP?**

**A30.** SLT members should spend time getting to know the school. The "Statistics & Budget" tab on the school's portal page is a great place to start. Here, you will find a wealth of data about the school. Team members should review tools such as the School Snapshot, Quality Review, and School Survey results. You will also find the CEP from previous years as well as information about the school's budget.

- Many SLTs also choose to review other data sources, such as state assessments, inquiry team reports, and school-developed survey results.
- SLTs use a variety of information sources to identify school needs, develop priorities and set goals.

**Q31. *What is the Comprehensive Educational Plan (CEP)?***

**A31.** The Comprehensive Educational Plan serves as a school's blueprint for implementing instructional strategies, professional development opportunities, and parent involvement activities that promote continuous school improvement. The Appendices to the CEP provide school-based responses to applicable legal requirements and Chancellor's Regulations.

**Q32. *When the CEP has been drafted, what next?***

**A32.** The CEP is a document that is developed over many months. Once it has been finalized and certified by the superintendent, the SLT should continue to assess whether the school is meeting the goals set forth within it.

**Q33. *What are some ways the SLT can keep the school community connected to the work of the team?***

**A33.** It is a great idea for team members to spend time thinking about how to share information with their constituents. SLT members must be mindful that they were elected by their constituent groups and develop ways to share information and gather feedback. For example, many PA/PTAs incorporate a School Leadership Team report into the order of business for their general membership meetings, wherein a parent member serving on the SLT presents a brief report and solicits feedback from the membership. This type of consultation ensures that parents have opportunities to impact the work of the SLT through their elected representatives.

**Q34. *What is the Parent Involvement Policy?***

**A34.** The Parent Involvement Policy (PIP) is a required component of the CEP for all Title I schools. The PIP must describe how the school will build capacity for strong parent involvement to improve student academic achievement, coordinate and integrate all parent involvement programs in the school, involve Title I parents in the annual evaluation of the policy and include them in school activities. The PIP includes a School-Parent Compact, which outlines how parents, the entire school staff, and students will share responsibility for improving academic achievement.

- The SLT must consult with Title I parents in the development of the PIP. This consultation typically occurs between the SLT and representatives from the school's Title I Parent Committee.

**Q35. *How do SLT members receive annual remuneration?***

**A35.** SLT members, including students and community-based organization (CBO) representatives, are eligible to receive an annual remuneration of \$300 for completing 30 hours of service on the SLT and attending a training session. Team members may satisfy this training requirement by attending a live training session offered by the District Leadership Team or from the Central Office.

- Team members who serve less than 30 hours may request remuneration on a pro-rata basis (\$10.00 per hour).
- Team members who contribute more than 30 hours will not receive more than the \$300 allotment.
- CBO Members must be listed as a member in the team's bylaws
- Individual team members may choose whether to accept or waive the annual remuneration and donate the funds to be used for other school purposes.

**Q36. How does a member know they have reached 30 hours of service to the SLT?**

**A36.** Team members are responsible for ensuring that all records documenting the number of hours served are submitted to the chairperson for processing. Team members will be asked to complete a remuneration log form, provided by the school, in the spring of each school year.

**Q37. What activities of the SLT are eligible for remuneration?**

**A37.**

- SLT members are required to attend all meetings of the SLT
- Attend a minimum of two hours of training
- Additional training directly related to the work of the SLT in crafting the CEP and/or aligning the budget to the CEP
- Administrative tasks directly related the work of the SLT
  - Minutes
  - Agendas
  - Correspondence

**Q38. As a member of the SLT, members may be asked to participate on a C-30 Level I Committee. Can that be counted among the activities eligible for remuneration?**

**A38.** No. SLT members who serve on a C-30 Level I committee may not receive SLT remuneration for that service. Chancellor's Regulation C-30 does not permit payment to individuals who serve on Level I Committees. This service is separate and distinct from the responsibilities of the SLT that qualify for remuneration under Chancellor's Regulation A-655.

**Q39. Are all members of the team eligible to be remunerated?**

**A39.** Yes. Every member of the team is eligible to be remunerated for their service on the team, including CBO partner and students.

**Q40. What is a CST?**

**A40.** A CST (Community School Team) is an enlarged partnership of community stakeholders; parents, caregivers, administrators, school staff, and community organizations. Its focus is to develop greater opportunities for participation in collaborative discussion, decision and policing-making to improve the quality of education in the local community.

**Q41. What is the relationship between the Community School Team and the School Leadership Team?**

**A41.** The School Leadership Team sponsors the Community School Team and SLT members serve on and lead the CST. Any change in local school policy adopted by the school is done through an official meeting of the SLT.

**Q42. Is there a difference between an SLT and a CST?**

**A42.** Yes. While CST membership includes SLT members, CSTs are not restricted in practice, governance or in decision making rules, in the same way as SLTs.

**Q43. Are CST members eligible for remuneration?**

**A43.** No. Because CST members are not SLT members nor are they governed by CR A-655, they are not eligible to receive the pro-rated \$300 remunerated stipend for their service.