

# IMPROVE YOUR DECISION MAKING

**BCASBO Leadership Series**

February 2026

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# Decision Making



# How do you make decisions?



- I try to determine the real issue before starting a decision-making process.
- I rely on my own experience to find potential solutions to a problem.
- I tend to have a strong "gut instinct" about problems, and I rely on it in decision-making.
- I use a well-defined process to structure my decisions.
- I think that involving many stakeholders to generate solutions can make the process more complicated.
- I consider a variety of potential solutions before I make my decision.
- When communicating my decision, I include my rationale and justification.
- I determine the factors most important to the decision and then use them to evaluate my choices.

# Decision Making





# Decision Making

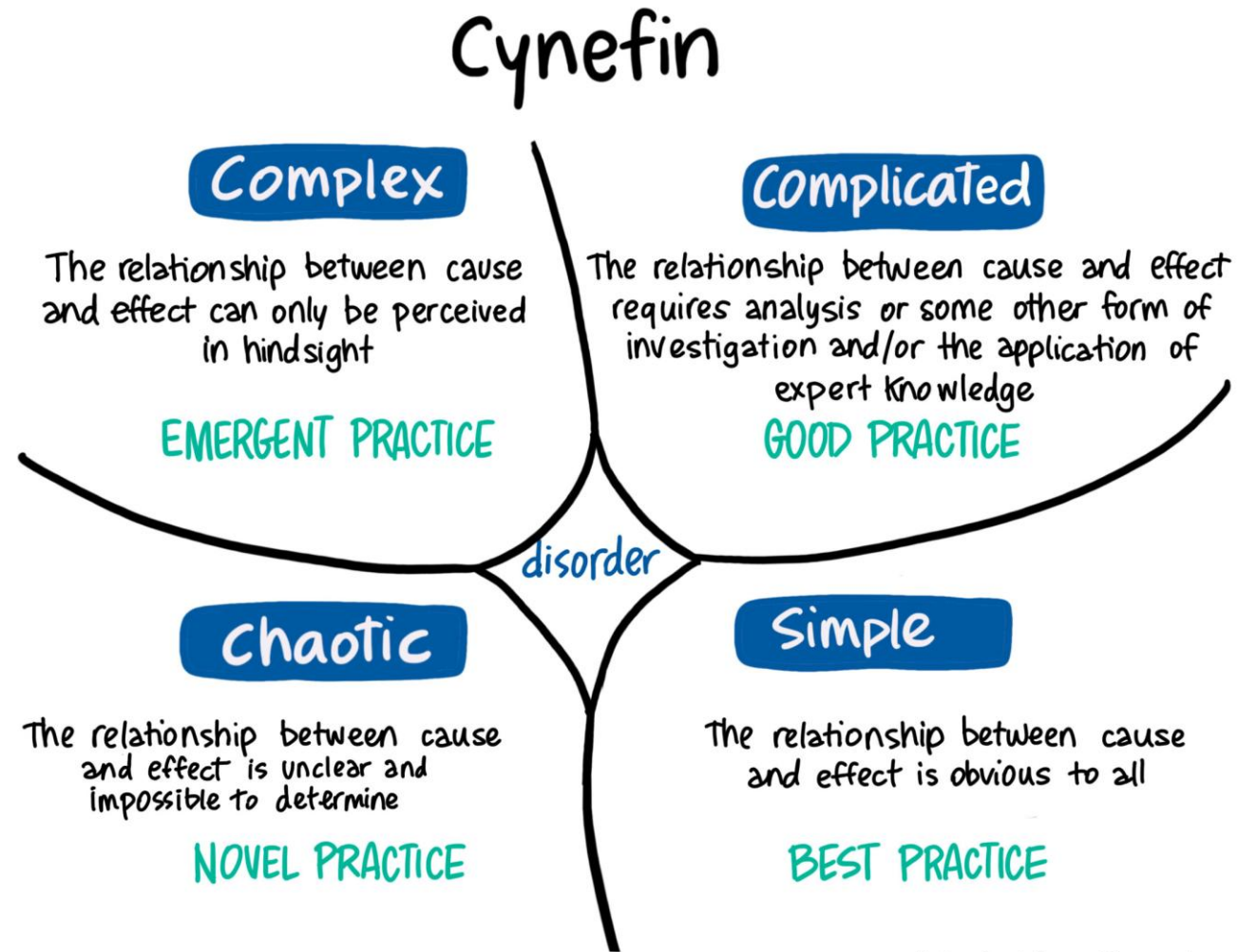
## Cynefin

- A **sense-making framework** that helps leaders understand **the nature of the problem** they are facing.
- Cynefin helps you decide **how** to think about a situation.

## Kepner-Tregoe – Decision Analysis

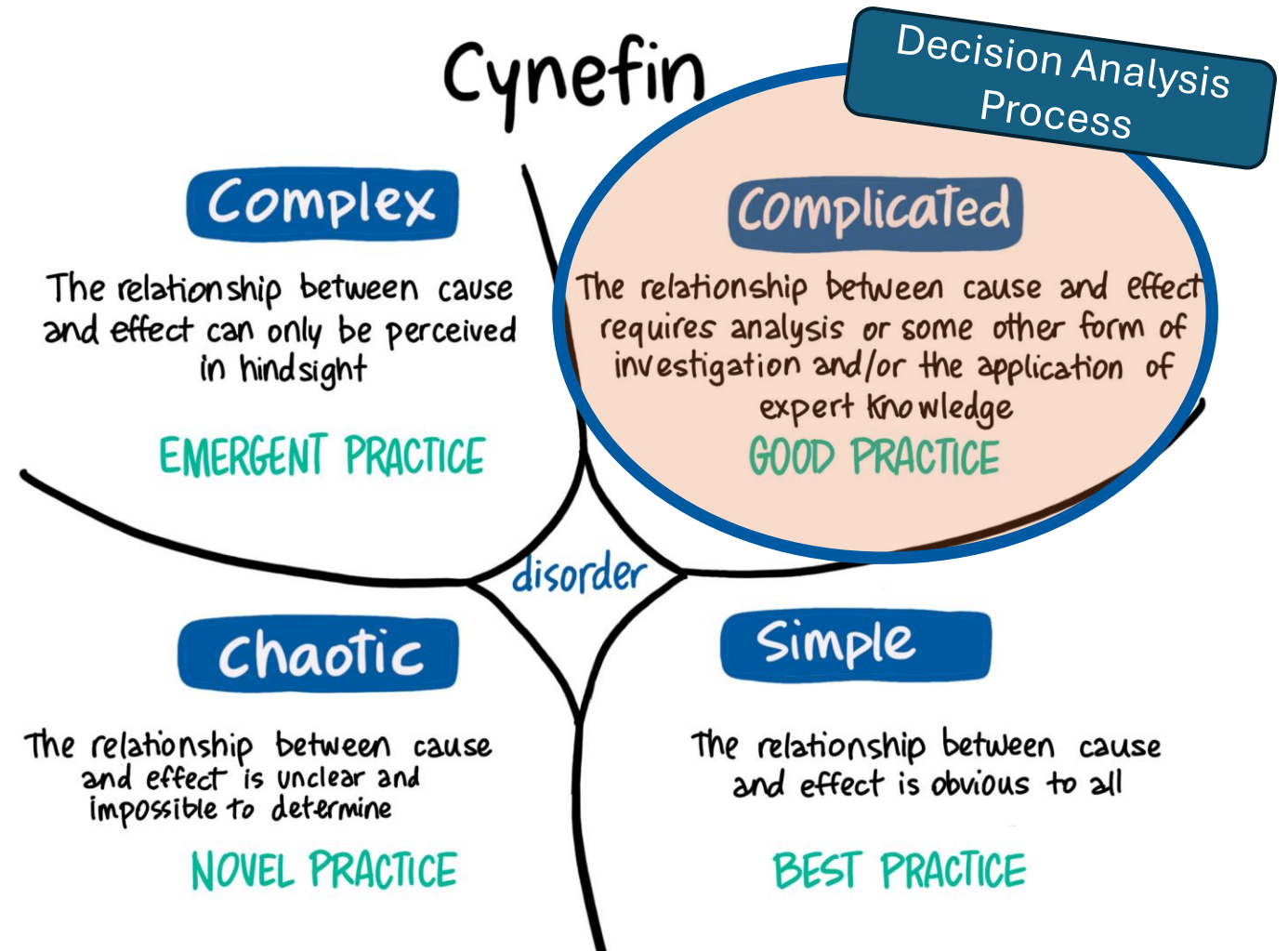
- Helps you decide *what* to do once the situation is clear.
- A **structured decision-making** and problem-solving methodology.

# Decision Making



Adapted from Snowden

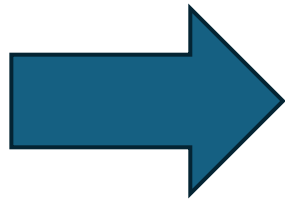
# Decision Making



# Decision Making

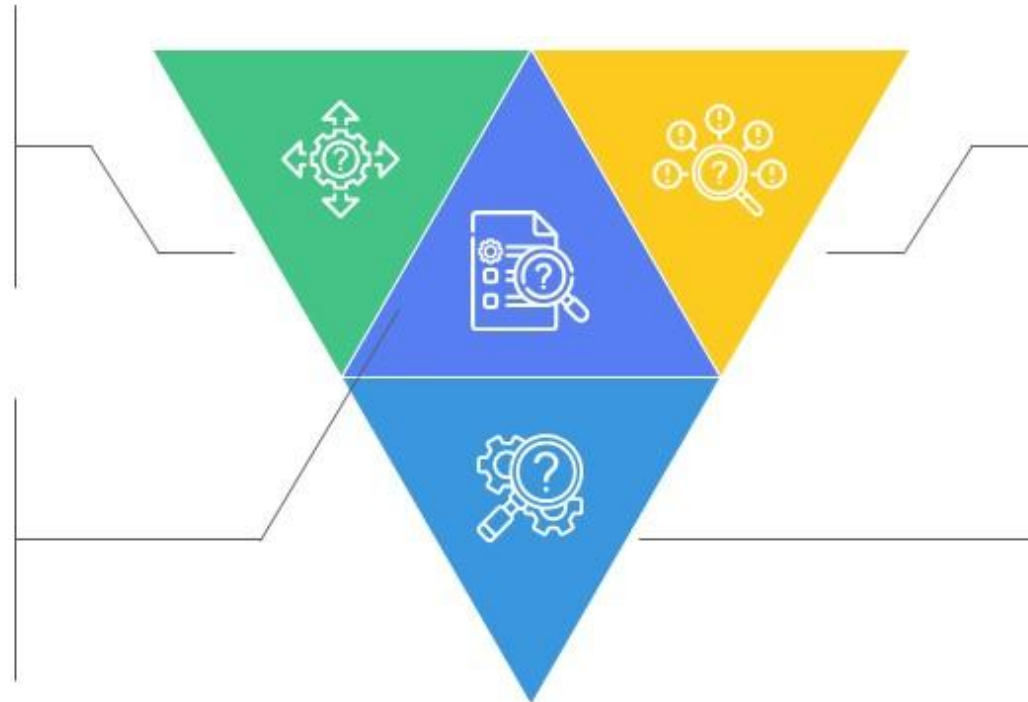
## Kepner Tregoe Method

4 Rational Processes – Key Activities



**DECISION ANALYSIS:**  
Here the alternatives are identified, and risk analysis was done for each (What will we do? – Present time),

**SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS:**  
It is used to clarify the situation, outline concerns, and choose a direction (What's going on? – Present time)



**POTENTIAL PROBLEM ANALYSIS:**  
Here potential future problems are anticipated, and preventative actions are developed (How to protect our decision? – Looking to the future).

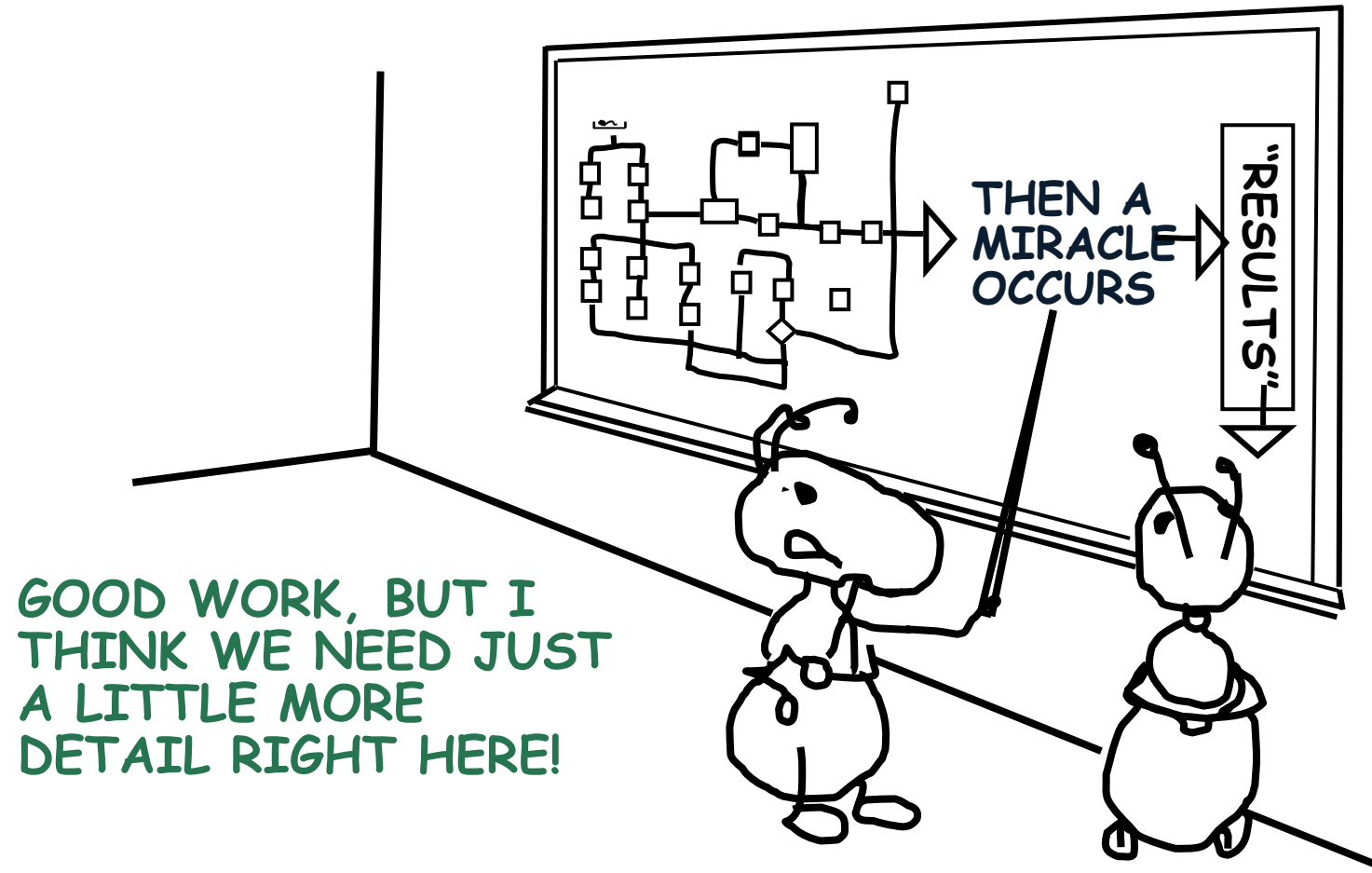
**PROBLEM ANALYSIS:**  
Here the problem is defined, and its root cause determined (Why did it happen? – Looking to the past).

# Avoiding Poor Decisions

- You need a systematic approach to decision-making so that, no matter what type of decision you have to make, you can make **decisions with confidence**.



# Rational Thinking Processes



# Rational Thinking

Makes thinking visible (transparent)

Lessen our reliance on experience or “gut feel”

Helps in unfamiliar situations

Help others improve their thinking abilities

Creates confidence

# Decision Analysis

- Decision Analysis
  - Asks - Which one should we choose?
    - Alternatives are evaluated against a clear set of criteria
  - Unbiased decision making
  - Develops a choice making pattern
  - Identifies all factors critical to the decision



# Decision Analysis

## Steps

1. Prepare a decision statement
2. Develop objectives
  - Classify into “musts” and “wants”
  - Rate relative importance of each “want”
3. List alternatives
4. Evaluate alternatives
  - Screen against the “musts” and compare against the “wants”
5. Assess risk
6. Make the Decision



# Decision Analysis

1. Prepare a decision statement
  - A short statement about what you are deciding.
  - Helps keep the attention focused on the purpose of the decision.
  - What do we need to decide?



# Decision Analysis

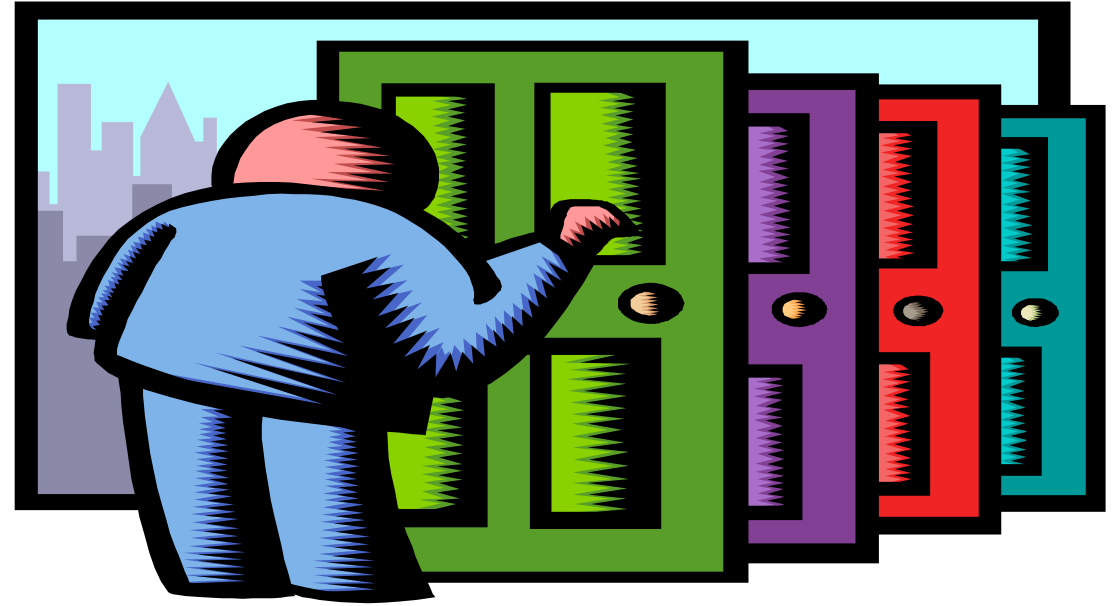
## 2. Develop objectives

- Helps you to evaluate alternatives fairly
- What factors will influence our choice?
  - Classify into “musts” and “wants”
  - Be clear about what is **mandatory** and what is **desired**
  - Rate relative importance of each “want”



# Decision Analysis

3. List alternatives
  - Identify or create possible choices
  - Review key objectives
  - List without debate



# Decision Analysis

4. Evaluate alternatives
  - Screen against the “musts”
    - Eliminate alternatives that do not meet the minimum requirements
  - Compare against the “wants”
    - Evaluate the relative performance of each alternative against each objective



# Decision Analysis

## 5. Assess risk

- Identify future threats for the best alternatives
  - Ask: What could go wrong, short and long term if this alternative is chosen?
  - What disadvantages are associated with this alternative?

# Decision Analysis

## 6. Make the Decision

- Select an alternative that best meets our criteria with acceptable risks



# Give it a Try

## Post Secondary Decision Example

- Review Conversation
  - Develop a decision statement.

*“Choose a four year college or university to attend.”*

# Give it a Try

## Post Secondary Decision Example

- Things important to Joe (page 2 of handout)
  - Establish and classify objectives (MUSTS & WANTS)
  - Weigh the WANT objectives

# Give it a Try

**MUST** Objectives: *what are they?*

- More than 5,000 Students
- Two to six hours from home
- Total tuition cost of less than \$12,000/year



or



# Give it a Try

## WANT Objectives:

- Assess relative importance (weight)

Objective	Weight
Good academic reputation	
Good selection of extracurricular	
Friendly atmosphere	
Desirable student housing	
Minimal cost	
Good Athletic Facilities	

# Give it a Try

## Post Secondary Decision Example

- Develop Alternatives
  - Review the four alternatives on the handout.



# Give it a Try

## Post Secondary Decision Example

- Evaluate Alternatives
  - Screen against MUSTS

# Give it a Try

## Post Secondary Decision Example

- Evaluate Alternatives
  - Screen against MUSTS
  - Compare against WANTS and assign relative scores

# Give it a Try

MUSTS	Pleasant U.	Mercy U.	Haven U.	Castle College
More than 5,000 students	✓	✓	✗	✓
2 to 6 hours from home	✓	✓	-	✓
Tuition less than \$12,000	✓	✓	-	✓

# Give it a Try

Objective	Weight	Pleasant U.	Mercy U.	Castle College
Good academic reputation				
Good selection of extracurricular				
Friendly atmosphere				
Desirable student housing				
Minimal cost				
Good Athletic Facilities				

# Give it a Try

## Post Secondary Decision Example

- Consider risks
  - What could go wrong?
- **Make your DECISION!**



# A Real Example

## Summary of Process

- Decision Statement
- Develop decision criteria/objectives
- Initial options for consideration
- Public consultation
  - Present criteria & seek additional criteria for consideration
  - Present & accept additional options for consideration
- Prepare & analyze options
  - Data requirements
- Finalize criteria and rank importance (Board)
- Public consultation
  - Present finalized criteria and board ranking
  - Present finalized options under consideration
  - Seek additional input (potential risks)
- Final data analysis for each option
- Board - rank options against criteria
- Consideration of risks
- Board makes decision

# A Real Example

## **What is the Best Choice?**

Select the school(s) whose closure will best position Mission Public Schools to sustain and enhance quality education.

# A Real Example



## Establish Objectives or Criteria

- MUST – Educationally sound
- Maximizing benefit to the operating budget  
*What is the impact of this closure on facility, staffing, and busing costs?*
- Optimize capacity for future growth  
*What is the impact of this closure on overall district capacity/utilization?*
- Minimize disruption to the district  
*To what extent will this closure create stability for the next 3-5 years?*

# A Real Example



## Establishing Objectives or Criteria

- Minimize disruptions to school cultures \*\*

*What proportion of the total school population will be new to the receiving school?*

- Minimize impact on integrated services

*To what extent will the displacement of services at a school being closed be detrimental to the neighborhood ?*

- Minimize bus ride time

*How will this closure affect the amount of time a child rides a bus?*

- Reduce three grade split classes

*How will the number of three grade split classes be reduced as a result of this closure?*



## A Real Example

### Public Consultation(s)

- Advised of decision-making process
- Presentation and review of the Board's objectives/criteria
  - Feedback opportunity – other considerations?
- Review of the options/alternatives under consideration;
  - Feedback opportunity – seek additional options to consider
- Reported back at another consultation meeting
- Delegations & submissions

# A Real Example

**Objectives**  
**or Criteria**  
**– (Weight)**

Benefit to budget (10)

Optimize capacity (9)

Create stability (7)

Disruption to culture (6) \*\*

Displaced special needs students (5)

Integrated services (4)

Displaced students (3)

Bus ride time (2)

Three grade splits (1)



**Board**  
**determines the**  
**weighting of**  
**each Objective**

# A Real Example



## Objectives or Criteria (Weighted)

### Evaluation Process

- A total of **14 options** were considered (12 original, 2 from public)
- Each of the options were ranked against the criteria established
- “Benefit to budget” - weighting (10)
- The alternative that provided the “best benefit to the budget” would be scored with 10 pts.
- The weighting is then applied.
  - $10 \text{ (score)} \times 10 \text{ (weight)} = 100$
- Process followed for all options and all criteria
- All school trustees participated in this evaluation process.

# A Real Example

Option	Weighted Scores									Rank	
	Benefit to budget	Optimize capacity	Create stability	Disruption to culture	Displaced special needs students	Integrated services	Displaced students	Bus ride time	Three grade splits		Total Score
3.3	500	288	266	186	155	172	90	100		<b>1,757</b>	<b>1</b>
2.2	260	108	350	276	250	200	150	66	50	<b>1,710</b>	<b>2</b>
3.2	340	288	266	216	155	172	90	100		<b>1,627</b>	<b>3</b>
3.1	400	288	266	72	155	172	90	100		<b>1,543</b>	<b>4</b>
4.2	220	189	308	216	195	172	111	52	44	<b>1,507</b>	<b>5</b>
1.2	310	450	224	192	110	128	48	38		<b>1,500</b>	<b>6</b>
4.1	250	450	224	240	110	128	20	20		<b>1,495</b>	<b>7</b>

*Report included this evaluation information and risk analysis.*

# A Real Example

- With the 14 options presented the result could have ranged from **no** closures to **up to 5** school closures.
  - **What did the Board decide to do?**
  - **What was the community reaction?**

# A Real Example

## Mission trustees have difficult choices to make

Mission parents should be keeping their eyes on the March 3 board of school trustees decision which will potentially see the closure of up to five elementary schools.

Besides the children initially affected if their school closes, the schools receiving the displaced kids will also see an influx of new faces this coming September.

We don't envy the decision resting on our elected officials' shoulders, but we remain hopeful they will choose the option or options that will ultimately benefit the district as a whole, while still taking into account the individual students.

The choice might be simple if one only had to consider the financial, budgetary aspect. But that just isn't the case. It's also a matter of capacity, and just like many other districts across the province, enrolment numbers continue to fall in Mission.

If nothing is done, everyone will suffer, because if no action is taken, the financial shortfall will have to be addressed somehow; likely through program cuts.

But regardless of trustees' decision, we are confident they have truly listened to parents' concerns, and hope anyone who may face their child having to attend a new school will understand difficult choices had to be made.

And if your neighbourhood school closes, bear in mind this will be one of those times where your children will watch your reaction. Show them how a responsible parent handles something unwanted.

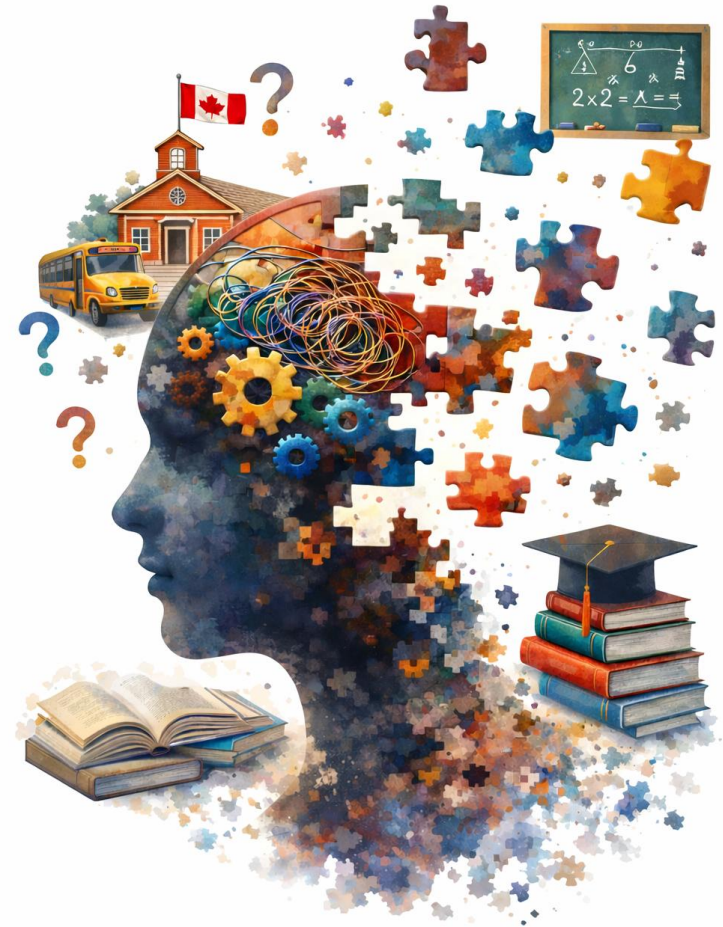
# Making Decisions



# Making sense of the decision(s) needed in a school closure

## These Parts of School Closure Are **Simple**

- These elements are procedural:
  - Legal closure process
  - Collective agreement rules
  - Student records transfer
  - Transportation standards
- These are not where conflict usually arises.



# Making sense of the decision(s) needed in a school closure

## These Parts Are **Complicated**

These elements are technical and analytical:

- Enrollment projections
- Capacity utilization
- Operating cost comparisons
- Capital and seismic upgrade costs
- This informs decisions — but doesn't create public acceptance.



# Making sense of the decision(s) needed in a school closure

## What Parts Are **Complex** (The Core Issue)

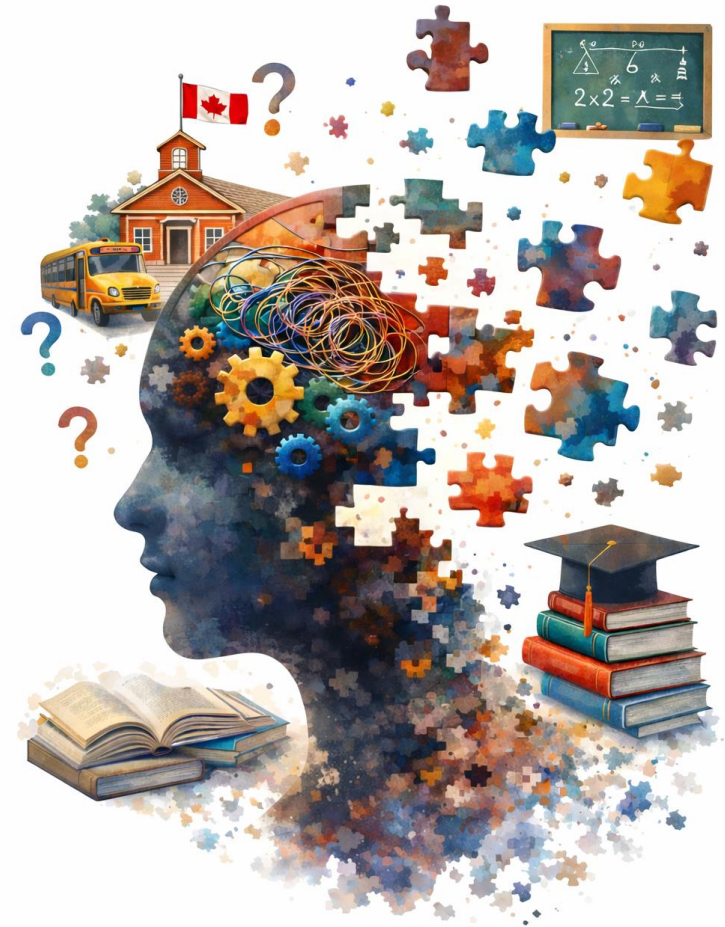
- This is where school closures become difficult.
  - Community identity
  - Parent trust
  - Staff morale
  - Political dynamics
  - Media narratives
- There is no predictable cause-and-effect here.
- You cannot prove a closure is “right” in a way that resolves emotions.
- Build legitimacy and trust, not just logic.



# Making sense of the decision(s) needed in a school closure

It Becomes **chaotic**

- If trust is low or communication falters, things can escalate:
  - Protests, public confrontation
  - Media crisis
  - Political intervention
- At this point, leaders must stabilize first:
  - Clear communication
  - Visible leadership
  - Immediate engagement
- Then return to appropriate category.



Questions?