ADVIS
Advancing Independent Schools

Your Administrative Team

Building a leadership team that makes better decisions and strengthens the people who carry them out

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TODAY'S OUTCOMES

In two hours, your table will

1. **Build a team** for a sample school: who sits in the core, who joins a pod, who sends an update
2. **Diagnose trust** and name one move that raises psychological safety
3. **Rebuild a broken agenda** with protected strategic time
4. **Give and receive feedback** in every direction, including upward
5. **Leave with a commitment** and a partner who will check in

THE AFTERNOON

Today’s service

Time	Segment	What you’ll do
1:00–1:15	Where do you stand?	Spectrum line, table intros
1:15–1:35	Build the Table	Role-card sort
1:35–1:55	Trust and the pyramid	Dots, pairs, rewrite, norms
1:55–2:05	Break	Gallery walk of norms
2:05–2:30	The Meeting That Ate the Mission	Agenda-strip rebuild
2:30–2:52	Feedback lab	Triad practice, 3 rounds
2:52–3:00	Commit and close	Commitment card, partner

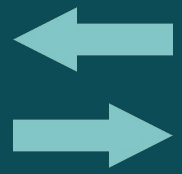
YOUR TURN • 1:00–1:15

Where do you stand?

Team of leaders

Protects its station

- Silos and turf
- Decisions get re-litigated
- The head is the referee



Leadership team

Protects the plate

- Shared goals come first
- Peers hold each other accountable
- Debate, then real commitment

Stand where your team sits today. Then: is that where **others** would put it?

YOUR TURN • 3 MINUTES

What has to happen for every plate to go out right?

Think of a great restaurant kitchen: one you've worked in, one you've seen on Hell's Kitchen, or your family's Thanksgiving.

Talk at your table for 60 seconds.

YOUR TABLE IS A KITCHEN BRIGADE

You just described every great admin team

In the kitchen	On the admin team
The prep list	Pre-reads out, outcomes named, recommendations ready
The pass	The decision point: owner and date
“Heard!”	Clear commitment after healthy debate
“Behind!” and “86 the salmon!”	Anyone can call out a problem, fast, without blame
Stations	Roles and decision rights
A kitchen in the weeds	The meeting that ate the mission

“A kitchen that never calls out problems doesn’t have fewer problems. It just serves them.”

ALL SESSION LONG

Hold up a card

Red

I can’t support this yet.

Yellow

I have a concern I need named.

Green

I’m in.

Practice check: **How caffeinated are you?**

BUILD THE TABLE • 1:15–1:35

Who’s at the table?

Stable core, flexible edge

Core cabinet
5–8 seats, meets weekly

Pod
Joins for one priority, then rotates out

Standing update
Written update; attends by invitation

Three different offers

Seat	A permanent place at the table
Voice	Consulted before the decision
Hands	Helps carry it out

Be honest about which one you’re offering.

YOUR TURN • 12 MINUTES

Build Brookfield’s table

Brookfield Day School

PreK–12 • 520 students • enrollment down 6%

Priorities: retention, instructional coherence, a three-year budget

Today: **13 people** at the table.

“Everyone talks; nothing moves.”

Place all 14 role cards

1. Core cabinet: no more than 8
2. Name one temporary seat
3. Mark each ring: seat, voice or hands
4. Write down your hardest call, and why

Debrief: **Where might a process look inclusive but leave people with little real influence?**

TRUST AND THE PYRAMID • 1:35–1:55

One dot: your team’s growth edge

1	2	3	4	5
Shared purpose	**Role clarity**	**Trust + conflict**	**Strategic discipline**	**Accountability**
Mission-first tradeoffs	Decision rights are known	Candor without casualties	The agenda protects priorities	Commitments are revisited

Walk to the posters. Place one dot on the trait that is your team’s **biggest growth edge**.

TRUST AND THE PYRAMID

Trust is the base layer



Patrick Lencioni, The Five Dysfunctions of a Team

If trust is weak, conflict goes underground, commitment is fake and accountability becomes top-down.

Every team moves through

Forming → Storming → Norming → Performing→ ADJOURNING

New members restart the clock. (Tuckman)

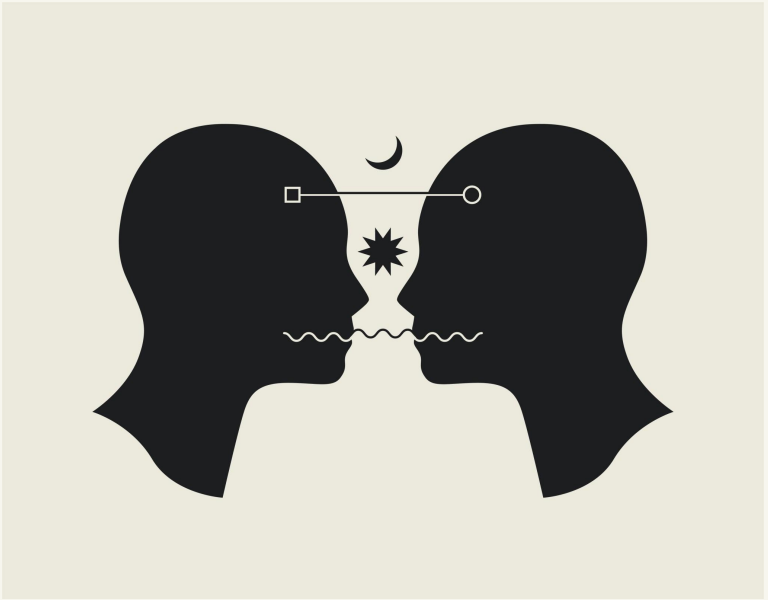
PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

“I can speak up and still belong”

I can speak up, disagree, ask for help, admit a mistake, and still belong on this team.

From my seat, I know it’s safe to disagree when…”
and
“From my seat, I know it’s not safe when…”
Then one minute together:

“What’s one leader move that would close the gap?”



PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

“I can speak up and still belong”

I can speak up, disagree, ask for help, admit a mistake, and still belong on this team.

Five leader moves

Go first
Admit your own miss

Name the mode
Brainstorm or decide?

Dissent is data
Thank the pushback

R/Y/G check
Surface quiet doubts

Stop triangles
Send it to the source

YOUR TURN • 5 MINUTES

The “solution-oriented” moment

Teacher: “I’m concerned this schedule will cut planning time and add duties we haven’t accounted for.”

Leader: “We need people to be solution-oriented.”

What happens to the next concern raised in that room?

With a partner, **rewrite the leader’s reply** in one or two sentences.

“Trust is shaped by what happens after someone takes the risk of speaking.”

YOUR TURN • 3 MINUTES

Write your kitchen’s three norms

1. Write three meeting norms on chart paper
2. Run a red / yellow / green check on each
3. Name and resolve any red or yellow
4. Post your norms on the wall

Kitchen language welcome: “Call it out before it leaves the pass.”

BREAK

1:55–2:05

Walk the gallery and star one norm you’d steal.

Your agenda is a moral document

Four-part meeting architecture

1. Metrics that matter
2. **Strategic priorities (protected time)**
3. Decision queue
4. Operational updates

Every item goes in one bucket

Info
Async when possible

Discuss
Input, no decision today

Decide
Lands today, with an owner

Nothing hits the meeting that isn't on the prep list.

YOUR TURN • 14 MINUTES

Rebuild the 90-minute meeting

1. Sort all 16 strips: Info, Discuss, Decide or Move Out
2. Assign minutes: total 90, with 30+ protected for one priority
3. Every Decide strip gets an owner and a recommendation

MINUTE 8

Kitchen fire!

A new strip lands at your table. Place it without blowing up your protected time.

Gallery compare (3 min): rotate one board right, react with R/Y/G

Bring your own (4 min): one real item from your meetings. Which bucket?

FEEDBACK LAB • 2:30–2:52

Feedback coaches the future

SBI-I + Feedforward

"In **[situation]**, when you **[behavior]**, the impact was **[impact]**. **What was happening from your perspective?** Next time, could we **[request]**?"

The Inquiry step: check your story before you treat it as fact.

FFP + Request

Facts what happened

Feelings the impact

Perception my story

Request the next step

Going upward? "I want to share something because I want us to succeed. Is now a good time?"

YOUR TURN • 3 ROUNDS × 5 MINUTES

Triads: everyone plays every role

SPEAKER

Gives the feedback

Pick a card. 1 minute to prep, 2 to deliver with SBI-I.

RECEIVER

Responds honestly

React as that person would. A little pushback is fine.

OBSERVER

Coaches the coach

Use the checklist, then 1 minute of feedback on the feedback.

One round must go upward: card C or E

Too close to home? Pass or swap your card.

FINAL THOUGHTS

1. **WE AREN'T THE TEAM WE THINK WE ARE**
2. **WHO BELONGS AT THE TABLE?**
3. **THE RIGHT PEOPLE STILL WON'T SPEAK UP WITHOUT TRUST**
4. **TRUST SHOWS UP IN AND HOW WE SPEND OUR TIME TOGETHER**
5. **BETTER MEETINGS NEED BRAVER CONVERSATIONS**

COMMIT AND CLOSE • 2:52–3:00

What you’re taking back on Monday

In the next 7 days, I will…

The person I need to involve…

The support or permission I need…

In 30 days, the evidence I’ll look for…

The norm or agenda change I’m taking back…

FIND A PARTNER

Someone from a different school. Swap cards, take a photo, set a 30-day check-in.

Partner check: is this within your authority, or a request to someone else?

ONE LAST QUESTION

What will you do differently so the next person has a better chance to contribute and lead?

If you change the meeting, you change the team. If you change the team, you change the school.

Service is open. Heard?