**“Leaders collaborate and cooperate with others”**

In my experience as an educational leader I’ve participated in many committees and attended meetings that have molded my understanding organizational collaboration. The two committees that have helped develop my skills as a collaborative leader are the Shared Decision Making Committee and the South High Technology Committee.

Research conducted at the University of Iowa suggests that there are three leadership styles: Authoritarian, Democrative, and Laissez-Faire. Each of these styles yields a different result in an organizational setting.

The Authoritarian leadership style is one in which leaders are extremely direct by dictating all decisions to their subordinates. Research has shown that although this style of leadership can be effective, it’s the least enjoyable and creates a hostile work environment. As a member of the Great Neck South High School Shared-Decision Making Committee I was able to learn from an attempt at this leadership style gone wrong.

As the name suggests, the Shared Decision Making Committee is one that consists of school administration, teachers, and parents. During a meeting, one of our parents “strongly suggested” that the committee submit a letter to the superintendent urging him to review the district policy of utilizing unweighted grades to calculate our student Grade Point Averages on college applications. It was eye opening to witness the push back from our staff and the tension it created in the room for the rest of the meeting. This experience helped me realize that Great Neck is a district of strong-minded professionals who do not appreciate being “told or ordered” to do anything. This is something I will never forget.

Of the three leadership styles researched, constituents preferred the Democrative style best. The Democrative leadership style lends itself to collaboration and cooperation by nature. As an intern I’ve demonstrated this leadership style as co-chair of our South High Technology Committee. I’ve collaborated with administration, professional development staff, and my opposite co-chair to achieve many goals. Initially the other co-chair and I began to create meeting agendas ourselves. However as time passed we found that all of our committee members had a valuable opinion in what should be discussed at meetings. Since then we’ve created a group within the social media website Edmodo to involve all interested parties. This is a successful example of Democrative leadership style.