Who's Who in School Technology Decision Making

Every school and school district has a different governance structure. Who makes decisions in your school or school district? You will need to do some research to learn about the decision-makers in your school.

ROLE	RESPONSIBILITY
Teacher	A classroom teacher is responsible for most decisions that impact the student and the teaching of his or her own class. A teacher may have a small discretionary budget for technology purchases or may need to petition their principal for additional, unallocated funding for a small technology purchase (such as a piece of software). Teachers do not generally make major decisions on technology policies or procedures in a school. A teacher may be part of a *committee*. (See below.)
Principal	A principal is responsible for the educational leadership and the day-to-day management of a school. Principals set school goals and strategies for improving student performance, as well as many other responsibilities. He or she is guided by the supervision of the *superintendent* and the policies of the *school board* as well as district, state, and federal mandates and policies.
School Technology Coordinator	At a school site, the school technology coordinator (sometimes called the media specialist or the librarian) directs all school technology programs including computer labs, mobile computer carts, lap top lending programs, and in-class computers. This person enforces policies about computer usage and supports teachers who are using technology for teaching and students who are using technology for learning. He or she may manage the school's technology budget as directed by the *principal*.
District Technology Director (Chief Information Officer, Chief Technology Officer)	At the district office, the district technology director (sometimes known as the chief information officer or the chief technology officer) usually sets technology policies and procedures such as acceptable use policies and rules about school email accounts. The technology director keeps an eye on funding opportunities such as eRate and state decisions about technology learning standards.
School Board	A school board is a small group that is elected by the community to represent the community's educational perspectives. Some school boards have student members. The board is responsible for establishing policies for a school district and determining strategies, long-term goals, objectives, and a budget for the school district. The school board approves a school district budget annually. A part of that budget is a technology budget for the school district.

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Superintendent	The superintendent provides educational leadership for a school district and serves as the leader of the school board and the district's chief administrative officer. They are responsible for representing community interests regarding student achievement and the operation of schools. They have a political responsibility to negotiate with multiple stakeholders to achieve their goals.
Parents (PTA/PTO/PTSA)	A parent can be an involved voice that impacts decision making in a school. The Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) and other PTOs (Parent Teacher Organizations) are groups of parents, teachers, and sometimes students who can play a role in influencing school decision-making. While they do not make policy decisions, parent organizations may help raise funds to support technology programs, may be a source for volunteers, and may support policy initiatives.
School Site Council	It is common for a school to have a school site council made up of parents, faculty, staff, and sometimes students, which helps inform decisions about school site spending. There are also School Finance Committees and other groups that influence school decision making. It's helpful to find out which committees influence technology spending at your school, who the members are, and whether students are invited to join those committees.
Student	Students are the ultimate stakeholders. Some schools and districts allow student representation on the PTA, the School Board, or other decision-making committees. More and more schools are becoming interested in student voices in many areas. Find out who makes decisions in your school! Speak Up! Get involved today!