

# Principles of Organizational Justice

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Organization justice is the collective perception of the general fairness of the organization by its members, which is based on two basic tenets of justice:

*Distributive Justice*—the fairness of who gets what, and

*Procedural Justice*—the fairness of the mechanisms of distribution (Greenberg, 1991).

The theoretical and research literature on organizational justice can be summarized in large part by the following principles (Hoy & Tarter, 2004):

1. **The Interpersonal Justice Principle**—*Sensitive, dignified, and respectful treatment of others promotes a sense of fairness:* Bad news can be given respectfully and sympathetically.
2. **The Equity Principle**—*What individuals receive from the organization should be proportional to their contributions:* Equity requires an evenhanded fairness that balances equity and equality.
3. **The Egalitarian Principle**—*Decision making should be free of self-interest and shaped by the collective mission of the organization:* No one's interest should take precedent over the needs of the organization; egalitarian behavior is balanced and dependent on needs of the individual.
4. **The Perception Principle**—*Individual perception of fairness contributes to a general sense of justice:* Objective perception is not the issue; justice is in the eye of the beholder.
5. **The Voice Principle**—*Authentic participation in decision making enhances a sense of fairness:* Cultivate both formal and informal mechanisms to elicit teacher voice.
6. **The Consistency Principle**—*Consistent leadership behavior is a necessary condition for subordinate perception of fairness, but it is not sufficient:* Ensure that behavior is positive as well as consistent.
7. **The Accuracy Principle**—*Decisions should be based on accurate information:* Promote a sense of justice by demonstrating that decisions are based on sound, impartial evidence.
8. **The Correction Principle**—*Negative feedback should lead to the reversal of bad decisions:* Faulty or poor decisions need correction.
9. **The Representative Principle**—*Decisions must represent the interests of the concerned parties:* Representation is achieved when teachers believe their ideas are represented and have influence on decisions.
10. **The Ethical Principle**—*Honesty, integrity, authenticity, sincerity, equality, impartiality, trustworthiness, and honor are contemporary ethical and moral standards that should guide behavior in decision making.*

In sum, a sense of justice in the school workplace is dependent on leader behavior that is consistent with these ten principles. Leader behavior that is equitable, sensitive, respectful, consistent, free of self-interest, honest, and ethical is likely to create a perception of fair and balanced treatment. Moreover, the principles of voice, egalitarianism, and representativeness are crucial in any attempt to empower teachers. Teachers want to participate in decisions that affect them (voice), but they must be willing to put the interests of the school ahead of their own (egalitarianism) and yet feel that their views are being authentically represented in the process of deciding. Finally, leaders must have the good sense and confidence to reverse and correct poor decisions as they get feedback and more accurate information.