Local decision making means that schools are able to develop policies and practices in response to the particular needs and aspirations of their communities.

In a Junior Secondary school context, strong engagement with parents and the community will provide schools with the opportunity to shape curriculum, teaching and leadership practices in a way that meets the needs and aspirations of the local community.

Why is it important?
By engaging with parents and the local community schools are able to develop localised responses to the development of young adolescent learners.

Increased community involvement in school-based decision making strengthens the role of families and the community in the development of school policies and increases their sense of ownership for new programs or reform processes.

Key messages
The role of the principal is crucial in encouraging greater involvement from parents, students and teachers in local management (DETYA, 2000).

Based on the international literature, Barrera-Osorio et al. (2003) suggest that local decision making may lead to:
- more input and resources from parents
- more effective use of resources
- a higher quality of education as a result of more efficient use of resources

- a more open and welcoming school environment because the community is involved in this management
- increased participation of all stakeholders in decision-making
- improved student performance as a result of reduced repetition rates, reduced dropout rates and better learning outcomes.

Examples of practice
- Establish local consultative mechanisms for regular review and refinement of the Junior Secondary program
- Encourage community input into decision making and policy development
- Offer professional learning opportunities for parents and community members to develop their capacity to engage in decision making processes.
