Delegation by Design

Intentional Handoffs That Grow Leaders

UNBROKEN GROWTH

ROOTED IN GROWTH. BUILT TO LEAD.

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Unbroken Growth – Delegation Guide
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Credits
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Our philosophy on delegation

At Unbroken Growth, delegation is not “getting something off your plate.” Delegation is **how leaders build people while protecting the standard**. The goal is twofold:

- **Outcomes:** Work is delivered on time, at quality, with no surprises.
- **Growth:** The person you delegate to, gains clarity, confidence, and judgment.

Great delegation does four things consistently:

1. **Names the target** (what “done” looks like).
2. **Shares the why** (context, stakes, alignment).
3. **Sets decision rights** (clear authority level).
4. **Builds a feedback loop** (checkpoints, teach-back, escalation path).

Done well, delegation becomes a culture habit, **middle leaders model it, teams mirror it**, and schools steady faster under pressure.

Why this matters to you (APs, Principals, Coaches)

- **Regains time** for instructional leadership (fewer “avoidable fires”).
- **Improves consistency**—expectations are visible and shared, not assumed.
- **Builds trust**—clarity reduces friction; follow-through raises confidence.
- **Grows your bench**—people don’t just complete tasks, they build judgment.
- **Reduces churn and burnout**—load is distributed with guardrails, not dumped.

Bottom line: disciplined delegation lifts both **results** and **morale**.

The Delegation Template – components explained

A. Outcome (Definition of Done)
What will exist at the end? Make it **specific and observable**.
Prompts: "What will I be able to see, review, or use?" "What formats/criteria?"
Pitfall: Vague outcomes ("make it better").
Quality bar: Think checklist or acceptance criteria.

B. Why (Context & Stakes)
Explain how this task serves students, staff, or a priority.
Prompts: "What would happen if we didn't do this?"
Pitfall: Skipping context → shallow decisions later.

C. Authority Level (Decision Rights)
Pick one and say it out loud.

1. **Follow my plan**
2. **Propose, I approve**
3. **Lead, check key points**
4. **Decide, inform me**
5. **Own it, I'm eyes-off**
   Pitfall: Fuzzy authority → rework or overreach.

D. Resources
Time, budget, tools, people. Be explicit about access.
Prompt: "Who/what can you use? What's already available?"

E. Constraints / Guardrails
Must/must-not, standards, compliance, deadlines.
Prompt: "What can't we violate?"
Pitfall: Missing hard dates or compliance rules.

F. Milestones & Check-ins
Dates, deliverables, and the **first check-in on the calendar now**.
Prompt: "What will we review, and when?"
Pitfall: "Ping me if you need me" (that's not a plan).

G. Risks & Escalation
Name top 1–2 risks and exactly when/how to escalate.
Prompt: "If X happens, call me, don't wait."

H. Teach-Back

Have them summarize the plan in their words.
Prompt: “Walk me through your approach.”
Pitfall: “Any questions?” (often yields silence, not clarity).

I. Confidence (0–100%) & Support

Surface uncertainty early; agree on support that raises it.
Prompt: “What would move you from 70% to 90%?”

J. Close (Owner • First Step • Calendar)

Confirm the owner, the very first action, and the next time you meet.

How to use the template (10 minutes, live handoff)

Prep (before the meeting, 2 minutes):

Jot down the **Outcome**, **Why**, and a draft **Authority Level**.

Live handoff (about 1 minute per step):

1. **Outcome** – "Here's what 'done' looks like."
2. **Why** – "Here's why it matters now."
3. **Authority** – "For this one, level **3: Lead, check key points**."
4. **Resources** – "You have [tools/people/time]…"
5. **Constraints** – "Must meet [date/standard/guardrail]…"
6. **Milestones/Check-ins** – "Let's review [milestone] on [date]; I'm sending the invite."
7. **Risks/Escalation** – "If [risk], call me immediately."
8. **Teach-Back** – "Summarize your plan back to me." (Listen; adjust.)
9. **Confidence & Support** – "Where's your confidence? What boosts it?"
10. **Close** – "You own it. First step is [X] today. Calendar invite is set."

After-action:

- Hold the check-ins. Praise standards kept; coach gaps.
- Capture simple metrics (on-time, quality, support needed).
- Reflect quarterly: Who's ready for higher authority? Who needs targeted coaching?

Common missteps (and fixes):

- *Vague outcomes* → add acceptance criteria.
- *Moving goalposts* → freeze scope; queue new ideas for next cycle.
- *No calendar* → put the first check-in on the calendar in the handoff.
- *Invisible authority* → always name the level 1–5.

Authority Levels (1–5), explained with quick examples

1) Follow my plan

- **What it means:** Do the task exactly as I describe. I'm making the decisions.
- **Example:** "Use this email script and send it to these 15 parents today."
- **Use when:** The task is high-risk or the person is brand new.
- **Watch out for:** Adding new steps or changing the plan without asking.

2) Propose, I approve

- **What it means:** You create a draft plan. I review it and give a yes/no or edits.
- **Example:** "Draft the agenda for our staff meeting. I'll approve before it goes out."
- **Use when:** The person is learning and needs coaching, or the stakes are medium.
- **Watch out for:** Acting before approval.

3) Lead, check key points

- **What it means:** You run with the task, but we'll meet at specific checkpoints.
- **Example:** "Plan the 1-day PD. Check in after you pick the date and again after you lock the session list."
- **Use when:** The person has some experience; risk is moderate.
- **Watch out for:** Skipping the check-ins or moving milestones without telling me.

4) Decide, inform me

- **What it means:** You make the decisions and keep me in the loop. No need to wait for approval.
- **Example:** "Redesign the hallway duty schedule. Email me what changed by Friday."
- **Use when:** You trust their judgment; risk is low to medium.
- **Watch out for:** Surprises, share big choices or changes quickly.

5) Own it, I'm eyes-off

- **What it means:** You own the whole thing, start to finish. I won't check unless you ask.
- **Example:** "Run family engagement night each semester. You've got it."
- **Use when:** The person is proven, and the work is their strong area.
- **Watch out for:** Staying silent when a red flag pops up, escalate early if needed.

How to pick the right level in 10 seconds

- **High risk + low experience → Levels 1–2**
- **Medium risk OR growing experience → Level 3**
- **Low risk + high experience → Levels 4–5**

Start lower if you're unsure. **Move up the scale** as the person shows good judgment and follow-through. The goal is simple: **protect the standard and grow people at the same time.**

10 Minute Delegation Template

Purpose: fast, clear handoff that protects standards and builds capacity.

Use this 10 step flow (≈1 minute each):

1. Outcome – Define what “done” looks like. Be specific and observable.
2. Why – Share context, stakes, and alignment to goals.
3. Authority Level – Choose one: Follow my plan | Propose, I approve | Lead, check key points | Decide, inform me | Own it, I’m eyes off.
4. Resources – Time, budget, tools, people.
5. Constraints – Must/must not, standards, guardrails, deadline.
6. Milestones & Check-ins – Dates and frequency. Block the first check-in now.
7. Risks & Escalation – Top 1–2 risks and when/how to escalate.
8. Teach Back – Ask them to recap the plan in their words.
9. Confidence – 0–100 percent. What support raises it?
10. Close – Confirm owner, first step, and calendar invite.

Outcome (definition of done)	
Why (context/stakes)	
Authority Level (1–5)	
Resources	
Constraints/Guardrails	
Milestones & Check-ins	
Risks & Escalation	
Teach Back	
Confidence (0–100) & Support needed	
Owner · First Step · Date	

Tip: Use the same authority scale across your school so expectations are clear.

Contact & Next Steps

Ready to equip your middle leaders?
Here are three simple ways to get started:

1. **Compare dates in 15 minutes** – Book a quick alignment call:
   https://calendly.com/unbrokengrowth-team

2. **Explore tools & templates** – Visit:
   www.unbrokengrowth.org (see “Tools”)

3. **Stay in the loop** – Leadership insights, stories, and practical tools:
   https://ubgrowth.substack.com/

Contact
📧 **unbrokengrowth.team@gmail.com**
🌐 **www.unbrokengrowth.org**

Social
Instagram: **@unbroken_growth_cafe**
Bluesky: **https://bsky.app/profile/unbrokengrowth.bsky.social**

Mailing / calls
If you prefer a phone introduction or a district-hosted call, email us and we’ll coordinate directly with your PD calendar lead

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