

Guide to Successful Educator Teams

The following defines the components for building successful educator teams and facilitating meaningful, collaborative work that leads to measurable improvement for students and the school.

Components of Successful Educator Teams



Agreements for Collaborative Work and Roles

Defined agreements and roles set expectations, so educators can collaborate effectively.

Teams should:

- establish 4-6 agreements at the start that guide timeliness, efficacy, and quality of interaction, and record them on the team's notetaking document.
- have all members adopt roles suited to their strengths and preferences, and record them on the team's notetaking document.
- modify agreements and shift roles as best suits the group.
- review agreements at each meeting and choose one to focus on each time.

Facilitator should:

- foster a positive, supportive climate.
- initiate and facilitate, but not dominate, group conversation to determine group agreements and roles.

Participants should:

- stay active and engaged.
- abide by and support adherence to the agreements.
- adopt a role within the group that maximizes the group's effectiveness.
- hold him or herself, and others accountable.

Consistent Protocols

Consistent protocols 1.) define the process and create clear, recognizable goals that ensure rigor that leads to success 2.) enable leadership and team members to hold the team accountable 3.) build teaming capacity within staff.

Protocols should:

- be created at the start, but can be continuously updated, or adapted, though it's a good idea to give them a chance before revising.
- be used in all steps of the team's work:
 - trust building
 - data analysis
 - goal setting
 - action planning
 - communication
 - entry and exit process, identifying students the team is supporting
 - shared decision making



Facilitator should:

- introduce protocols and facilitate consensus around them.

Participants should:

- contribute to the development of protocols and adhere to them.

Sharing Measurable Goals

Measurable goals guide the work, ensuring focus, follow through, and effectiveness. 1.) The purpose expresses the underlying principles that drive the team's work. 2.) The overarching, measurable goals are the team's priority regarding the purpose. 3.) Interim action steps constitute the path to the larger goal(s).

The purpose should:

- be created through collaborative conversation to establish a common language and understanding.
- should be revisited at the beginning of each meeting.

The overarching, measurable goal should:

- be defined within the first two or three meetings.
- establish meaningful, measurable, challenging but attainable goals.
- be revisited at the beginning of each meeting, may be revised, and should be celebrated when met.

Interim action steps should:

- be defined when setting measurable goals.
- be clear and observable and tied to a measurable goal.
- be measured by quantitative or qualitative data or a descriptive rubric.
- be reviewed frequently and celebrated when met.

Facilitator should:

- ensure that the team identifies a clear purpose and measurable goal(s).
- provide feedback regarding how well goals align to purpose and whether measurable goals are rigorous but attainable.
- should pull in a School of District leader for guidance if the team is struggling with consensus.

Participant should:

- contribute to the articulated team purpose, measurable goal(s) and steps.
- stay engaged in the process until consensus is reached.



Accountability

Accountability must be rigorous, timely, and consistent. Building or District leadership and oversight is essential for team success. Leadership must recognize the value of the team's work and integrate it into the school's infrastructure. Established routines and protocols enable leadership to review and provide feedback on the work being completed.

The team should:

- establish structured, consistent formats for notetaking at meetings that include:
 - overall team goals
 - action steps, completion dates, and person responsible
 - accomplishments and obstacles
- upload notes and artifacts at the end of meetings to a shared location.
- regularly report to leadership on team goals and processes.

Building or District leadership should:

- be present at initial meetings to underscore the importance of the work and assess the functionality of the team.
- attend meetings periodically to get face-to-face updates on progress.
- review team meeting notes throughout the year.
- offer timely, consistent, and descriptive feedback that affirms the work.

Facilitator should:

- support team's follow through with diligent accountability.

Participants should:

- be receptive to feedback.
- support team members to accomplish follow through.
- ensure changes happen where change is needed.

Clear Communication and Timelines

A communication plan is a well-thought out, documented plan, with defined timelines, to communicate a team's activities, so the whole staff can work collaboratively to meet the goals. It will take dedication and persistence to document and follow. As a working document, it can be reviewed and adjusted.



A communication plan should:

- be drafted at the first or second meeting.
- lay out communication goals and activities between:
 - team members
 - team and staff at large
 - building staff and leadership teams
- outline a timeline, created at the start that runs start to finish and includes:
 - consistent meetings with a consistent duration
 - a data dive schedule
 - when student interventions may occur
 - when information is communicated to all stakeholders
- employ a shared calendar to support the implementation of the plan.
- be well communicated, so expectations are clear across all staff.

Facilitator should:

- facilitate development of and oversee the communication plan.
- review the team's timeline and offer feedback.
- be imaginative about how educators can collaborate to get the work done.

Participants should:

- make the most of meeting time by attending to agenda times and tasks.
- remain flexible with timing to get the work done.
- follow through with all defined communication activities.

