

Potential Team Members

Each school community is unique. The people who represent your school community will differ from those who represent another school community. Here are some common examples of potential team members:

School

Teachers
Superintendent
Administrators
Secretaries
Principals
Parent involvement staff
Janitors
Community liaisons
Teachers aides
Security guards
Title I staff
Union representatives

Home

Parents of students
Grandparents
Older siblings and cousins
Other relatives
Other guardians
PTA members
Classroom volunteers
Parent Advisory Committee members

Community

Elected officials
Neighbors
Senior citizens
Block club representatives
Service organizations
Fraternities/Sororities
Youth-serving agencies
Family-serving agencies
Business owners
Police/Fire department
Churches and synagogues
Colleges and universities
County extension office
Museum representatives
Library representatives

Students

Class officers
Community service club members
Peer counselors/mentors
Students not involved in extracurriculars
Alternative high school students
Homeroom representatives
Students who are not “traditional leaders”

Values of Shared Leadership

- We, not I
- Trust among members
- Diverse perspectives
- Preparing members for leadership
- Empowering members through shared responsibility
- Appreciating each team member's expertise and skill

Traditional vs. Shared Leadership

Closed Participation

Followers listen and do what they are told.

Broad Participation

All team members participate actively in any discussion or decision the team makes.

Centralized Power

Followers conform and take no part in making decisions.

Decentralized Power

Diverse perspectives are valued as a way to increase everyone's knowledge.

Vertical Relationships

Decisions come from the top.

Horizontal Relationships

All team members have equal opportunity to participate.

Focus on Cooperation

School, home, community and students work informally with, but independent of each other.

Focus on Collaboration

School, home, community and students formally share resources, power and authority to accomplish a mutual goal.

Leadership Based

I, you, he or she is accountable.

Community Based

We take responsibility.

Autocratic

One voice dominates.

Democratic

Many voices are heard.

Rigid

Leadership is rule-oriented, regardless of the situation.

Flexible

Leadership is group-oriented and sensitive to the situation.

Consensus Decision Making

Consensus decision making is one of the most effective methods of group decision making. It requires that all members agree that they can live with the decision. In other words, even though the decision may not represent an individual's preferred choice, he or she will agree to support it. Consensus decision making is the recommended method for reaching major decisions and building group support in a Collaborative Action Team. Some people feel it takes too much time. However, teams using consensus decision making are likely to have higher ownership of their decisions in the long run. Therefore, team members will invest more time in supporting decisions and less time in rehashing, complaining or failing to carry them out.

Characteristics of Consensus Decision Making

- All members contribute. Everyone's opinion is used and encouraged. Differences are viewed as helpful, rather than hindering and disruptive.
- Everyone has an opportunity to share feelings about an issue through group survey.
- Team members who continue to disagree indicate that they're willing to experiment and "live with" a decision for a while.
- All members share in the final decision.

Consensus Decision Making is Not:

- A vote for unanimity.
 - The result of the leader's preference or someone else's first choice.
 - Everyone fully agreeing with the decision.
 - Without conflict or frustration.
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Action-Planning Steps

Agree on a Vision

What is your “dream” for your school community?

Identify and Prioritize School Community Issues

What challenges face your school community that keep your team’s vision from becoming a reality?
Which challenge is your top priority?

Develop a Mission Statement

What is the purpose of your team, based on your vision and the issues you’ve identified?

Set Team Goals

What general result do you want to achieve in each priority area?

Develop Strategies to Accomplish Goals

For each goal, what different strategies will you use to achieve the results you want?

Determine Necessary Tasks

What specific tasks must you do to implement your strategy?

What resources are needed?

Who will be responsible for completing the task?

When will each task be done?

Collaborative Action Team Process Steps

The Collaborative Action Team process involves five stages and twenty-one major steps:

Stage 1: Getting Started

Introduce the Process

The team gets an overview of the Collaborative Action Team process. This helps team members assess what activities they have already accomplished.

Gather School Community Information

The team defines “school community” in their own terms and gathers information about it. This provides an opportunity to identify factors in the school community that might affect team development.

Plan the First Steps

The team plans how to deal with the “nuts and bolts” of keeping the team organized. The team also plans the first official meeting.

Stage 2: Mobilizing the Team

Establish Representative Membership

The team begins to identify potential members to ensure that the team is representative of the whole school community. The team also develops strategies for recruiting new members.

Determine Communication Ground Rules

The team sets ground rules for communication and interactions between team members. These ground rules apply during and outside of meetings as team members work together. Communication ground rules set a tone of mutual respect.

Build Common Understanding

The team begins discussing issues that face the school community. As team members share their diverse viewpoints and experiences, they begin to find common ground. This provides a foundation for consensus decision making.

Support Consensus Decision Making

The team explores how to make decisions by consensus. Consensus decision making gives all team members an opportunity to voice their opinions on a topic. This helps ensure that individuals are committed to supporting team decisions.

Identify Shared Leadership Opportunities

Team members learn more about each other's strengths and skills. They match their strengths to team leadership roles and responsibilities.

Stage 3: Setting Direction

Agree on a Vision

The team agrees on a common vision—a “dream” for the school community's future. A team vision helps members stay focused on accomplishing the team's goals.

Identify and Prioritize Issues

The team gathers and analyzes information about the challenges the school community faces. Team members then come to consensus and prioritize those issues they feel are most important to address.

Develop a Mission Statement

The team develops a mission statement that reflects who the team is and what the team will achieve. This statement helps team members and the overall school community understand why the team exists.

Set Team Goals

The team develops specific statements about what team members will do to address priority issues. These goals help the team stay focused on results.

Communicate Your Message

Team members plan how to tell others about the team and what the team plans to accomplish. Good communication—both within the team and with others in the school community—is an important strategy for team success.

Stage 4: Taking Action

Develop Strategies

The team defines the approaches team members will take to reach the team's goals. A clearly defined approach moves the team from general ideas to specific methods and makes the team's work much more concrete.

Determine Necessary Tasks

The team breaks down team strategies into the specific steps team members need to take. Team members decide who will be responsible for completing each task and when it will be accomplished.

Establish Evaluation Methods

The team decides the best methods for monitoring progress and measuring the impact of the team's projects.

Monitor Progress

The team continually checks team members' progress on implementing the action plan and makes necessary adjustments. The team also recognizes members' contributions.

Expand Network Opportunities

The team forms connections with other people and organizations to build long-term support. Networking also helps the team gather the resources for pursuing the team's action plan.

Stage 5: Reviewing and Refining

Assess Team Effectiveness

Team members evaluate how well the team is functioning in terms of communication, leadership, decision making, etc. This evaluation provides an opportunity to discuss what the team is doing well and how the team can improve.

Celebrate Your Successes

The team recognizes and appreciates short-term and long-term successes. The acknowledgment of success helps maintain team momentum.

Increase Effectiveness and Impact

The team identifies key activities and concepts that need to be revisited to keep the team working effectively. The team also reassesses school community issues to ensure that the team continues to meet school community needs.

Factors That Impact Team Development

1. **Characteristics of team leaders**—individual traits, “people skills,” attitudes about teamwork and commitment to collaborate.

Example: The key facilitators of one Collaborative Action Team found they each have different skills. One is the motivator and “cheerleader.” The other ensures that team members follow through on the team’s ideas. People enjoy being on the team both because it’s exciting and motivating and because it achieves results.

2. **Accommodation of members’ needs**—awareness of and response to the possible challenges people must confront in order to participate on the team.

Example: One Collaborative Action Team whose priority issue was “increasing parent involvement” began team meetings at 3:30 PM. This was a great time for school representatives, but parent attendance was very low. After switching the meeting time to 6:30 PM, parent involvement more than tripled and school representation was maintained.

3. **School system influences**—the degree to which the school district and/or school campus supports the process. This particularly includes the influence of the superintendent and principals.

Example: A central office administrator initiated one Collaborative Action Team as a city-wide effort. All principals were required to participate. When this administrator left the district, the team was not a priority for her replacement. He let the principals decide whether or not to participate, and several principals decided they were too busy to attend the meetings.

4. **Community culture**—common attitudes, values and patterns of behavior in the community.

Example: One Collaborative Action Team starts each meeting with refreshments contributed by team members. These pre-meeting socials bring people together and build a sense of community.

5. **Access to local resources**—the ability to supply basic resources for holding meetings, maintaining membership lists and notifying members of activities.

Example: One Collaborative Action Team was meeting in a variety of places. This made it more difficult for team members to keep track of the location for each month's meeting. The school district purchased a vacant building for a parent resource center and now encourages the team to hold its meetings there.

6. **Common direction**—the ability to agree on priority issues, develop goals and turn the team's vision into reality.

Example: One Collaborative Action Team quickly selected “improving communication between the school and the home” as a priority issue. The team decided to redo the marquee in front of the school. The Parent Teacher Organization provided funds to purchase paint, letters and plants for landscaping. Now, when parents drive up to drop off or pick up their children, they see current information about school activities and functions.

7. **Communication**—ground rules that address interactions between team members during and outside of meetings, as well as written forms, such as meeting notices and summaries.

Example: One Collaborative Action Team developed a system to ensure that people were informed about the team. Before each meeting, notices are mailed, posted in the newspaper, sent home with students and announced on the radio. Current team members also receive a reminder phone call. The team's efforts have resulted in consistent participation by a diverse group of community members.

8. **Shared leadership**—covers a range of items from developing local leadership to consensus decision making to contributing resources.

Example: One team decided to have a three-member leadership team with one home, one school and one community representative. This trio holds a leadership meeting before each monthly team meeting. The trio plans the meeting agenda and agrees on the roles and responsibilities they will take for the meeting.

Factors That Could Impact Our Team's Development

Factors	Impact on Our Team
Characteristics of team leaders: individual traits, “people skills,” attitudes about teamwork, and commitment to collaborate	
Accommodation of members’ needs: awareness of and response to the possible challenges people must confront in order to participate on the team	
School system influences: the degree to which the school district and/or school campus supports the process	
Community culture: common attitudes, values and patterns of behavior in the community	
Access to local resources: the ability to supply basic resources for holding meetings, maintaining membership lists and notifying members of activities	
Common direction: the ability to agree on priority issues, develop goals and turn the team’s vision into reality	
Communication: covers conducting meetings, interaction between members and written communication	
Shared leadership: covers developing local leadership, making decisions by consensus and contributing resources	

School Community Information

Types of Information	Sources of Information	Who will collect
Student Information		
Student enrollment information: age, ethnicity, gender, etc.	School District Data Division School District website State Department of Education	
Percentage of students from economically disadvantaged households	Same as above	
Percentage of students from single-parent households	Same as above	
Percentage of English as Second Language (ESL) students	Same as above	
Attendance rates	Same as above	
Dropout rates	Same as above	
Behavioral information: discipline referrals, drug use, pregnancy rates, etc.	School principal School counselor	
Standardized test scores	Same as above	
School District Information		
School district policies	School District Community Liaison Superintendent's office School District Information office School District website	

School Community Information

Types of Information	Sources of Information	Who will collect
School district contact information: superintendent, principals, school board	Same as above	
School improvement plan/school district strategic plan	Same as above School principal	
Student handbook	School principal	
School-sponsored programs and services for students and their families	Same as above	
School rankings from State Department of Education	Same as above State Department of Education	
PTA contact information	School principal	
Community Information		
Community maps: school feeder patterns, etc.	Public Library City Hall	
Census information	Public Library City Hall State government website	
Programs and services available to families	United Way Department of Human Services Other nonprofit organizations	
General community information: business/industry, colleges/ universities, etc.	Chamber of Commerce Public Library Tourism and Visitors' Bureau	

Organize Your Collaborative Action Team

Read through the following organizational issues. As you do, think about your school community and ask yourself:

- Which of these areas need to be prioritized? Which ones are important to the success of our Collaborative Action Team?
- How formal or informal does our strategy need to be in this area?
- Which areas might be the most challenging to manage? Which ones will be easy?

Remember, each area provides opportunities for shared leadership. The challenge is to share responsibility while keeping organized. Also, have realistic expectations. Every team member (including you) has limited time and many obligations. Your team will probably never be as organized as you would like it to be!

Plan Meetings

What methods will you use to:

- Develop the goals and agenda for each meeting?

- Coordinate all the people who agree to facilitate parts of the agenda?

- Make logistical arrangements: room set-up, refreshments, materials and supplies?

Communicate with Others

What methods will you use to:

- Contact team members between meetings?

- Ensure that team members get advance notice about meetings or events?

- Keep potential members and stakeholders informed about your activities?

- Follow up with people who missed the meeting?

- Orient newcomers to the team and “bring them up to speed”?

Manage Information

What methods will you use to:

- Track information discussed and decisions made at meetings?

- Track people who attend a meeting or indicate an interest in participating?

- Compare who was invited to participate with who actually came?

- Keep the team's action plan up to date and accurate?

Member Support

What will members need to be able to participate? How will you arrange for the following:

- Childcare?

- Transportation?

- Translation of materials and discussions to another language?

- Accommodate members with disabilities?

Maintain Accountability

What methods will you use to:

- Ensure that people follow through on their commitments (i.e., Joe said he'd contact a local business to ask for a donation)?

Evaluate Your Progress

What methods will you use to:

- Get feedback on how well your team is functioning?

- Get feedback on how well you are accomplishing team goals?

Coordinate with School District and/or Administration

What methods will you use to:

- Keep the school board informed of your activities?

- Keep the principal and/or superintendent informed of your activities?

Determine Leadership Responsibilities

Listed below are three major categories of responsibilities for leadership that are key to getting your team organized in the beginning. Discuss these responsibilities among members of your organizing group and determine which of you will take initial responsibility for each of these three roles.

Team Coordinator—takes care of logistics and organizational aspects.

- Makes logistical arrangements for meetings, events or activities.
- Organizes team communications and information sharing.
- Distributes necessary documents before meetings (agenda, minutes, handouts, etc.).
- Ensures follow-up on team decisions.
- Monitors the team's progress through the Collaborative Action Team process.
- Monitors the development and use of the team's action plan.
- Makes team materials and resources available to other team members as necessary.

Team Facilitator—supports the Collaborative Action Team process during team meetings and in other group settings.

- Leads meetings and helps the team stick to the agenda (keeping time, staying focused on agenda topics).
- Facilitates team discussions and activities.
- Ensures that all team members have the opportunity to be heard.
- Helps the team build consensus.
- Suggests alternative procedures and methods when the team gets stuck.
- Summarizes decisions made in meetings.
- Deals with conflicts constructively.
- Evaluates how well the team functions collaboratively.
- Remains neutral during team discussions.

Team Recorder—makes sure the decisions and activities of the team are documented and all members remain well informed.

- Creates a record of team activities and decisions.
 - Checks with members for accuracy of those records.
 - Communicates ideas and information using a variety of techniques (video, audio, written).
 - Prepares meeting minutes.
 - Takes notes of team discussions on a flipchart.
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Team Meetings “To Do” List

Before the meeting:

- ___ Discuss goals for the meeting and develop an agenda based on them.
- ___ Determine who will be responsible for each agenda item. Try to include as many people as possible.
- ___ Confirm who will lead which activities and ensure that they have any resources or materials they need.
- ___ Confirm the meeting site and room set-up by phone or in writing.
- ___ Identify equipment and materials needed for the meeting and arrange to get them to the meeting place. Ensure that equipment is working properly.
- ___ Mail meeting notices at least seven days before the meeting. Include minutes of the last meeting and the agenda for next meeting.

At the meeting:

- ___ Agendas, which should include meeting goals
- ___ Someone assigned to take minutes
- ___ Sign-in sheet and team membership list with names, addresses, email and phone numbers
- ___ Nametags and/or tent cards
- ___ Meeting evaluation forms

After the meeting:

- ___ Follow up to ensure that volunteers complete the tasks they've taken on.
 - ___ Contact members who were not at the meeting and update them.
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Agenda Format for Collaborative Action Team Meetings

Place:

Date:

Time:

Meeting Goals

- Goal 1:
- Goal 2:

AGENDA

Item	Time	Person Responsible
Welcome, review agenda & meeting goals	5 min.	
Conduct icebreaker exercise	15 min.	
Hear reports from members on tasks done	5 min.	
Discuss topics/conduct activities	45 min.	
Summarize key decisions & determine next steps/actions	10 min.	
Set goals and agenda for next meeting	5 min.	
Conduct meeting evaluation	5 min.	

Timekeeper: _____ Recorder: _____ Translator: _____

Collaborative Action Team Meeting Evaluation Form #1¹

Facilitator(s):

Meeting Date:

Please rate your level of agreement with each statement (circle your response).

	STRONGLY DISAGREE			STRONGLY AGREE	
1. I was prepared for the meeting.	1	2	3	4	5
2. People openly expressed their opinions and ideas.	1	2	3	4	5
3. I actively listened to what others had to say.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I was satisfied with the team's decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
5. I was able to stay focused on agenda items.	1	2	3	4	5
6. The facilitator(s) ran the meeting well.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I was clear about who would do what assignments at the next meeting.	1	2	3	4	5

Comments/Suggestions:

¹ Adapted from Chang, R. Y., & Kehoe, K. R. (1996) *Meetings That Work*. Irvine, CA: Chang Associates.

Collaborative Action Team Meeting Evaluation Form #2¹

Facilitator(s):

Meeting Date:

List below specific examples of what you feel went well (pluses) during this Collaborative Action Team meeting. Also list what you feel didn't go so well (minuses).

Pluses	Minuses

Additional Suggestions: _____

¹ Adapted from Chang, R. Y., & Kehoe, K. R. (1996) *Meetings That Work*. Irvine, CA: Chang Associates.

Collaborative Action Team Development Checklist

Check off each step as your team completes it. Remember, the steps may not follow the same order for every team.

Stage 1: Getting Started

- Introduce the Process:** We have introduced the Collaborative Action Team process to all stakeholders.
- Gather School Community Information:** We have defined our school community and gathered information and data related about it.
- Plan the First Steps:** We have organized our Collaborative Action Team and have taken the first steps for conducting effective meetings.

Stage 2: Mobilizing the Team

- Establish Representative Membership:** We have members who represent the school, home, community and students.
- Determine Communication Ground Rules:** We have determined communication ground rules.
- Build Common Understanding:** We have discussed issues and looked for common ground.
- Support Consensus Decision Making:** We reach consensus when making decisions.
- Identify Shared Leadership Opportunities:** We understand the concept of shared leadership and have agreed to share responsibility for leadership roles.

Stage 3: Setting Direction

- Agree on a Vision:** We have agreed on a team vision.
- Identify and Prioritize Issues:** We have identified and prioritized school community issues.
- Develop a Mission Statement:** We have agreed on a team mission.
- Set Team Goals:** We have set team goals to address our priority issues.
- Communicate Your Message:** We have communicated information about our Collaborative Action Team to the school community.

Stage 4: Taking Action

- Develop Strategies:** We have developed strategies to address each goal.
- Determine Necessary Tasks:** We have determined necessary tasks for each strategy, assigned responsibilities and determined timelines.
- Establish Evaluation Methods:** We have established methods to evaluate our team's process and outcomes.
- Monitor Progress:** We have monitored progress and recognized members' contributions.
- Expand Network Opportunities:** We have investigated and taken advantage of opportunities to expand our collaborative network.

Stage 5: Reviewing and Refining

- Assess Team Effectiveness:** We have assessed our team's effectiveness.
 - Celebrate Your Successes:** We have taken time to celebrate our successes.
 - Increase Effectiveness and Impact:** We have identified areas for improvement and made plans to address them.
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Tips for Facilitating Discussions

1. Don't lecture. You should talk less than anyone on the team.
2. Stimulate and moderate the discussion by asking questions, identifying key points and managing the group process.
3. Don't interject your personal views.
4. Cultivate the voice of diversity by encouraging all representative groups to share their views.
5. Be friendly, sensitive, understanding and supportive.
6. Don't try to be the most knowledgeable person on the team, but be the best prepared.
7. Don't back off from the discussion. Be in harmony with it by encouraging participation and then slipping into the background when you're not needed to maintain the discussion's momentum.
8. Have courage to be imperfect and risk making mistakes.

Adapted from *Planning Community-Wide Study Circle Programs*, Study Circles Resource Center, Topsfield Foundation, Inc., 1996.

School Stories

Share your personal experiences and perspectives about schools. Listen to others as they share their own stories. Use the following questions to provide some starting points for discussion.

1. Take a trip down memory lane and think about the way things were when you were in school. What did you enjoy about school? What did you dislike? (For students, what is school like for you today? What do you like and dislike?)
2. How do you think today's schools differ from the schools you attended? (For students, how do you think today's schools differ from the schools your parents attended?)
3. What is your idea of a good education?
4. What do you think are the most important challenges facing schools in our school community? What strengths do our schools and community have to meet these challenges?
5. What kind of relationships do our schools have with parents, businesses, health and social agencies, the faith community and other sectors of the school community? How can we better communicate with each other and work together?

Adapted from *The Busy Citizen's Discussion Guide: Education in Our Communities*, Study Circles Resource Center, Topsfield Foundation, Inc., 1995.

Team Decisions Information Sheet

One of the most important questions regarding decision making is “Who actually decides?” From answers to this question, the following five decision-making processes can be clearly identified:

1. *Individual decision.* One person, normally the leader, actually makes a decision. Others involved in the situation are expected to abide by it.
2. *Minority decision.* A few of those involved in the situation meet to consider the matter. They make a binding decision for all concerned.
3. *Majority decision.* More than half of those involved in the situation make a binding decision for all concerned. Many political and democratic organizations use this principle.
4. *Consensus decision.* An entire group considers a problem on the basis of reason and discussion, with each member expressing a view. The group reaches a decision that all members can accept, regardless of how satisfied they are with it. (No “majority-rule” voting, bargaining or averaging is allowed.)
5. *Unanimous decision.* Each person fully agrees on the action to be taken, and everyone concerned fully subscribes to the decision they make.

When people are involved in making a decision, they’re much more likely to support the decision than if some other person or group makes the decision for them. Therefore, going up the decision-making scale (from individual decision to unanimous decision) increases commitment. However, it also increases the difficulty of arriving at an agreement.

Team Decisions Checklist

Instructions: Think about the ways in which your team typically makes decisions. Then read each of the statements below. Circle the three statements most typical of your team.

1. When decision making is necessary, a few team members usually get together and handle it.
 2. The school administrator usually decides, and the question is settled.
 3. All team members are encouraged to express their views before the decision is made.
 4. We attempt to include something for everyone in the decision.
 5. We frequently let the majority rule.
 6. The person in charge of the task makes the decision.
 7. Often, all team members agree on a decision and support it wholeheartedly.
 8. A small inner circle of people run things in our team.
 9. We make a decision only when most team members agree on a particular course of action.
 10. We don't make a decision until every team member agrees to support it completely.
 11. Our team members are allowed to air their views, but our leader makes the decision.
 12. A few team members usually dominate the team.
 13. We don't make a decision unless every team member can accept it to some extent.
 14. We require a numerical majority before we make a decision.
 15. We don't make a decision until every team member actively supports it.
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Team Decisions Interpretation Chart

Instructions: In the first column, circle the numbers of the statements you chose on the previous handout. Count the number of circles on each row and write the total in the second column. (Be sure to count your circles, not the numbers inside the circle.) The style with the highest number of “Total Circles” represents your team’s typical decision-making style.

Statement Numbers	Total Circles	Representative Style
2, 6, 11		Individual
1, 8, 12		Minority
4, 9, 14		Majority
3, 4, 13		Consensus
7, 10, 15		Unanimous

Consensus Decision Making

Consensus decision making is one of the most effective methods of group decision making. It requires that all members agree that they can live with the decision. In other words, even though the decision may not represent an individual's preferred choice, he or she will agree to support it. Consensus decision making is the recommended method for reaching major decisions and building group support in a Collaborative Action Team. Some people feel it takes too much time. However, teams using consensus decision making are likely to have higher ownership of their decisions in the long run. Therefore, team members will invest more time in supporting decisions and less time in rehashing, complaining or failing to carry them out.

How Consensus Decision Making Works

1. A member of the team states the proposed decision.
2. Someone writes the proposal on a flipchart or board so everyone can see it and check its accuracy and completeness.
3. The facilitator asks each member in turn to talk about whether he or she supports the decision and why or why not.
4. Team members opposed to the decision can suggest modifications or alternative decisions.
5. If all team members agree that they can support the proposed decision, then consensus exists. No decision is finalized until all members indicate that they can live with it.

Guidelines for Consensus Decision Making

- Avoid arguing for your own position. Present your views as clearly as possible. Then listen carefully to other members' reactions.
- Don't assume that someone must win and someone must lose when the discussion reaches an impasse. Instead, look for the next most acceptable option for all concerned.
- Don't change your mind simply to avoid conflict. When agreement seems to come too quickly and easily, be suspicious. Explore the reasons and ensure that everyone accepts the decision for similar reasons.
- Avoid conflict-reducing techniques, such as majority vote, averaging, coin flips and bargaining.
- Differences of opinion are quite natural and should be expected. Try to involve everyone in the decision-making process. Disagreements can help a team reach a decision because they provide a broad range of information and opinions. These in turn can increase the chance that the team will find more adequate solutions.
- Paraphrase issues to ensure understanding and clarity.
- Listen carefully and encourage all team members to participate.

Characteristics of Consensus Decision Making

- All members contribute. Everyone's opinion is used and encouraged. Differences are viewed as helpful, rather than hindering and disruptive.
- Everyone has an opportunity to share feelings about an issue through group survey.
- Team members who continue to disagree indicate that they're willing to experiment and "live with" a decision for a while.
- All members share in the final decision.

Consensus Decision Making is None of the Following:

- A vote for unanimity
 - The result of the leader's preference or someone else's first choice
 - Everyone fully agreeing with the decision
 - Without conflict or frustration
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Brainstorming Guidelines

Brainstorming is a commonly used term for creative thinking. It's often helpful to break a Collaborative Action Team into small groups to discuss an issue or question. Brainstorming is one of the most popular small group techniques because it's simple to use, it takes little time and materials, and it's quite effective. You can use brainstorming whenever your team needs to form a list of ideas about an issue or to come up with responses to a question.

The purpose of brainstorming is to get as many ideas possible out on a given question or issue. You tap team members' creativity without stopping to discuss or judge the worth of anything that comes up. It's helpful to have a well-defined and clearly stated problem or question to which people can respond. Brainstorming takes 15 to 30 minutes, depending on the size of the small groups and the complexity of the question. The ideal group size for brainstorming is five to eight persons. Use the first 10 to 15 minutes for forming and recording ideas from each small group. Use the balance of the time to eliminate duplications and prioritize items. Have someone in each group record ideas on a flipchart sheet as they come up. This should be done without any comments about their appropriateness or lack thereof. If a group reaches a stopping point, enjoy the silence, since the best ideas often come afterwards.

There are four rules for brainstorming you should post or give to team members.

- List all the ideas—the more the better. Don't hold back any ideas, even if they seem silly at the time.
- Don't discuss ideas as they're being formed.
- Don't judge ideas. All ideas are welcome.
- Repetitions are okay. Encourage people to build on others' ideas.

After the allotted time for forming ideas is past, have each small group facilitator review the items. Then have each small group identify and either eliminate or combine any duplicates. Next, have a spokesperson for each group report back to the whole team with either the group's entire list or its top three to five. Groups should use consensus decision making to select these items. The group then reaches a decision everyone can accept, regardless of how satisfied they are with it. Post the top three to five items from each small group.

Finally, take action to address the issue. If the issue is simple, this may mean simply assigning responsibility for carrying out a decision. If the decision will require multiple actions, assign a group of volunteers to develop an action plan to address it. Another option is to plan a separate meeting with everyone involved to develop goals and strategies for action.

Collaborative Action Team Leadership Responsibilities

Match the appropriate letter to the group or person that tends to fulfill each responsibility based on your observations of your team:

A - principals/central office
T - teachers/school staff
S - students

H - parents/other relatives
C - community representatives

Mutual Member Responsibilities—responsibilities that all Collaborative Action Team members have at all times:

_____ Contributing ideas, concerns and information

_____ Listening respectfully to everyone

_____ Maintaining an atmosphere of mutual respect

_____ Focusing on the issues and actions

_____ Helping to build consensus

_____ Volunteering to do necessary tasks

_____ Keeping the discussion facilitator neutral

_____ Reviewing the meeting minutes and other records of team activities for accuracy

Coordinating Responsibilities—responsibilities needed for handling logistics and organizational aspects of the Collaborative Action Team:

_____ Making logistical arrangements for meetings, events or activities

_____ Organizing team communications and information sharing

_____ Distributing necessary documents before meetings (agenda, minutes, etc.)

_____ Ensuring follow-up on team decisions

_____Monitoring the team's progress through the Collaborative Action Team process

_____Monitoring the development and use of the team's action plan

_____Making team materials and resources available to other team members as necessary

Facilitating Responsibilities—responsibilities that support the Collaborative Action Team process when the team is in meetings or in other group settings:

_____Leading meetings and helping the team stick to the agenda (keeping time, staying focused on agenda topics)

_____Facilitating team discussions and activities

_____Ensuring that all team members have the opportunity to be heard

_____Helping the team build consensus

_____Suggesting alternative procedures and methods when the team gets stuck

_____Summarizing decisions made in meetings

_____Dealing with conflicts constructively

_____Evaluating how well the team functions collaboratively

Recording Responsibilities—responsibilities that ensure that team decisions and activities are documented and that all members remain well informed:

_____Creating a record of team activities and decisions

_____Checking with members for accuracy of those records

_____Communicating ideas and information using a variety of techniques (video, audio, written)

_____Preparing meeting minutes

_____Taking notes of team discussions on a flipchart

Collaborative Action Team Shared Responsibilities

Add the name of the volunteer and the length of time that they will be responsible in the appropriate columns.

Coordinating Responsibilities	Who Will Do It?	For How Long?
Handling logistics—meeting space, refreshments, etc		
Organizing team communications and information		
Distributing documents prior to meetings		
Ensuring follow-up on decisions		
Monitoring progress throughout the Collaborative Action Team process		
Monitoring the development and use of the action plan		
Making team materials and resources available		

Facilitating Responsibilities	Who Will Do It?	For How Long?
Leading meetings		
Facilitating discussions		
Ensuring that all members are heard		
Helping to build consensus		
Suggesting alternatives when the team gets stuck		
Summarizing decisions made		
Dealing with conflicts		
Evaluating how well the team functions collaboratively		

Recording Responsibilities	Who Will Do It?	For How Long?
Recording activities and decisions		
Checking the accuracy of records with members		
Communicating information, using a variety of techniques		
Preparing meeting minutes		
Taking notes on flipcharts		

A Parent Named Dora Martínez

Seven months had gone by since this group initiated a Collaborative Action Team to increase parent involvement in schools. The team felt that by increasing parent involvement, they could help curb drug and alcohol abuse, teen pregnancy and domestic violence. The team was stuck in a rut and needed to spark up some momentum. Only two parents had consistently attended meetings for the past four months. The team was scheduled to make a presentation before the school board that night and give a progress report.

Lost in thought, I didn't notice when Dora Martínez walked in. She tapped me softly on the shoulder to get my attention, then greeted me and said, "You wanted parents? You got more parents!" Stepping aside, Dora motioned for a new group of parents to come forward. She introduced them—eight in all, including her husband! It was a turning point in the development of our Collaborative Action Team.

The team meeting resumed with an air of excitement provided by the voice of the team's Mexican immigrant newcomers. They provided a rare and timely perspective to consider in planning for the school board presentation. Dora emerged as a natural leader in this session, and the parents looked to her for direction. When it came time for a parent to volunteer to deliver their thoughts to the school board, the team unanimously selected Dora. This meant that Dora would have to make a presentation in English! Although she'd been taking English classes with a teacher at 7 AM once a week, she didn't feel at all ready to speak before the school board. It would be her first time to attend a school board meeting and the first time she would make a presentation in English. Nevertheless, Dora accepted the responsibility, with the condition that every single parent in the room go with her. The parents agreed.

An interesting thing happened at the school board meeting. During a break, Dora and two other parents approached me. They expressed an all-too-familiar frustration: "Why do they conduct the meeting only in English when they know we don't understand? This is why we don't go to school meetings; it's a waste of our time." I understood their frustration, but I didn't think the problem could be resolved at this meeting. I encouraged them to address this issue in the next school board meeting, using the proper channels. I proceeded to explain the process for getting on the agenda. However, when the meeting resumed and the time came for Dora to present, the new assistant superintendent pointed out that many members of the audience spoke and understood only Spanish. She proceeded to introduce Dora in both languages. Feeling supported by her comments, Dora greeted the school board by reading a short paragraph she had prepared in English. Seeing the effort she had made, the President of the Board then volunteered to conduct the rest of the meeting in both languages—a first for this community. Dora Martínez went on to deliver a passionate speech in Spanish that touched all who attended.

In the case of Dora, the Collaborative Action Team had provided a nurturing environment for personal growth and leadership development. Dora left her nursing career in Mexico and came to the U.S. with her husband and family in search of a better life. She has a quiet disposition that some confuse with passivity. Once you get to know her, though, you find that she's a natural grassroots organizer. Dora firmly believes in community collaboration to benefit students and their families, no matter what side of the border she's on.

Throughout this event, Dora showed her personal strengths in several areas of leadership: being a risk-taker, a visionary, a team builder and even a mentor. To this day, Dora continues to be involved on the Collaborative Action Team and mentors other parents along the way.

Strengths-Based Collaborative Action Team Leadership Roles

Communicator—helps everyone understand the message

Consensus Builder—helps a group of people talk with one another so they can make a decision that all members can support

Evaluator—pays attention to detail and helps the team evaluate and reflect on decisions and activities

Implementer—follows through on decisions and gets things done

Mediator—helps people understand each other

Mentor—helps people lead activities and advises them on how to improve

Planner—thinks about what's needed to make things happen

Resource Developer—finds what's needed to make things happen

Risk Taker—tries new ideas and approaches

Team Builder—helps people feel like they're part of the team

Visionary—shares dreams about making things better and leads people to make these dreams come true

Gardeners

In responding to the following items, think about people in your school, home and community who have inspired and guided you. These are people who helped prepare you for good times and bad times. They are role models that still linger in your memory as important to your personal and/or professional growth.

In your school

My mentor: _____ Relationship: _____

Why is this person special and what did you learn from this mentor?

In your home and family

My mentor: _____ Relationship: _____

Why is this person special and what did you learn from this mentor?

In your community

My mentor: _____ Relationship: _____

Why is this person special and what did you learn from this mentor?



Tilling the Soil and Planting the Seeds

Think of how your Collaborative Action Team helps members teach and learn from one another. As a small group, respond to the following questions. Ask someone in the group to write your responses on the flipchart.

1. What about our team encourages people to teach and learn from each other?

2. What barriers exist for members to teach and learn from each other?

3. How can the team encourage members to develop the mentor qualities we identified earlier so that we can teach and learn from each other?

4. What might you be able to teach others on the team?

5. What do you need to learn from others on the team?



Information-Gathering Methods

Discuss the advantages and disadvantages listed for each of the following methods. Decide which methods might work best for your own survey.

1. **Face-to-face interviewing**

- a. Most thorough
- b. Involves training volunteer surveyors
- c. Takes the most time

2. **Telephone**

- a. Good for gathering lots of information of many different types
- b. Involves training volunteer surveyors
- c. Takes less time than face-to-face interviewing
- d. May not reach people with no phone

3. **Mailed surveys**

- a. Works for simple questions with no more than six items
- b. Economical
- c. Not necessarily representative of the whole community and return rate is often very low

4. **Captive-audience survey**

- a. Written responses from student groups, service clubs, business organizations, etc.
 - b. Least expensive and lowest need for surveyor training
 - c. Least likely to produce responses, except from those with vested interest
-

Mechanics of Surveying

As you plan and develop your survey, remember the following pointers to help it succeed:

1. When writing survey questions:
 - Consider the social, economic and ethnic makeup of your school community.
 - Customize your survey for differences related to rural vs. urban areas.
 - Test the clarity of your survey questions with a few individuals. Then revise the questions, if necessary.
 2. When training people to be surveyors:
 - Consider whether you need bilingual surveyors.
 - Provide them with full information about how to conduct the survey.
 - Discuss the survey questions and explain how to record responses.
 - Provide information on routes, times, meeting places, and emergency and safety procedures.
 3. When publicizing your efforts to the school community:
 - Clearly describe the purpose and need for your survey.
 - Use a variety of media: newspaper, television, radio, brochures, posters, bulletin board announcements, school marquee, etc.
 4. When tabulating your results:
 - Determine who will tabulate the results.
 - Decide what equipment (computers, printers, copiers) you will use.
 - Decide how results will be shared with others.
-

My School Community and Me

What are the three best things about my school community?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What are the top three things my school community needs to address?

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

What am I willing to do to help make a difference?

1. _____

 2. _____

 3. _____

-

Our School Community

Listen to the presenters and write your impressions of the responses you hear to the following questions:

1. What are the three best things about our school community?

2. What are the top three things our school community needs to address?

3. What are we willing to do to help make a difference?

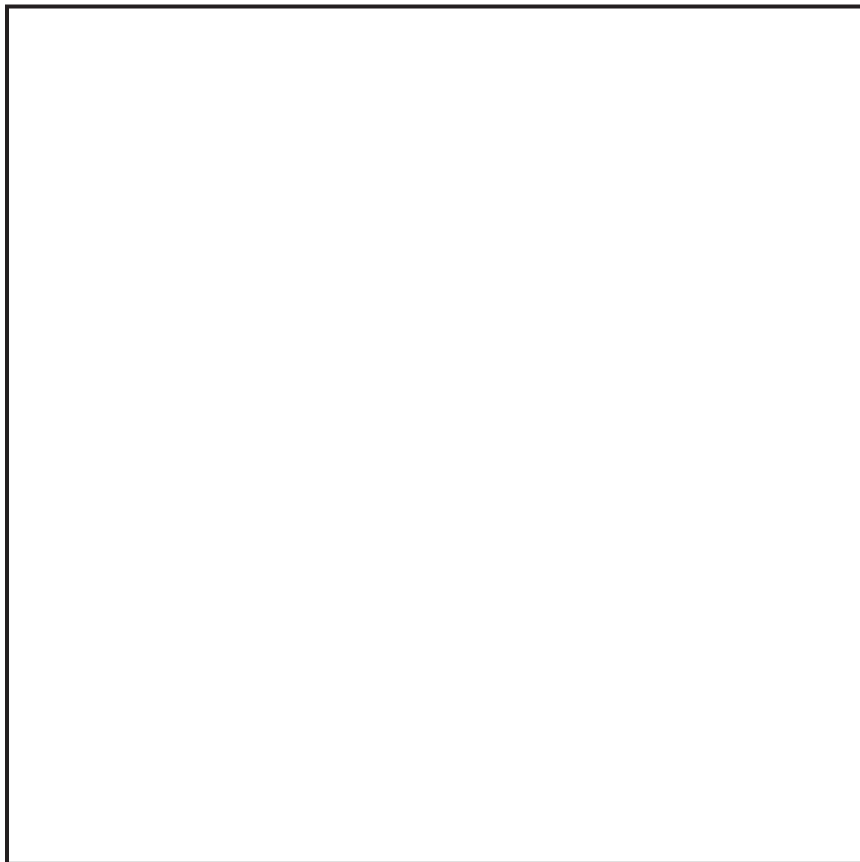


Developing a Mission Statement	
Essential part	Ideal response
1. <i>What</i> does a Collaborative Action Team do?	
2. <i>For whom</i> does it do it?	
3. <i>How</i> does it do it?	

Collaborative Action Team Report Card

(Your School District Here)

Use this area to design a logo or a picture that describes your Collaborative Action Team.



History of the Team

Use this area to describe how your team was started and how the team has developed.

Vision and Mission

Use this area to highlight your team's vision and mission.

Goals and Current Projects

Use this area to highlight your team's current goals and projects.

Accomplishments and Successes

Use this area to highlight your team's accomplishments to date.

Team Members

Use this area to describe the different parts of your school community that are represented on your team.

Talk to Us

Use this area to describe how people can get more information about the project. Explain how they can get involved or give their input.

Other

Use this area to add any specifics you'd like to include about your team.



Strategies for Successful Communications

- Build relationships with key people to ensure that your message gets out.
 - Keep people informed on a regular basis—don't just give one-time information.
 - Follow up to ensure that the information is being distributed or presented in the way you expected.
 - Pay attention to the amount of information you provide—short enough to keep people's interest, but long enough to convey important details.
 - Use a variety of strategies to reach your audience. Don't rely on just one method.
 - Keep track of which strategies work and which strategies don't.
-

Characteristics of a Good Strategy

1. Indicates who will do what and has an action verb (see below).
2. Specifies a target date by which you will complete the strategy.
3. Is observable and measurable—when you reach your target date, you can see whether or not you’ve achieved the results you wanted.
4. Is clear enough so that everyone on the team and in the community can understand it.
5. Is realistic—a good strategy works with the time and resources available and has a high probability for success.

Sample Structure for Strategies

(Who) will *(action verb)* a *(what)* *(for what purpose)* by *(when)* .

Example: Our team will compile a directory of after-school programs for teens in trouble
(who) *(action verb)* *(what)*
to identify available services and gaps in services by July 1, 2001.
(for what purpose) *(when)*

Sample Action Verbs to Use with Strategies

Access	Create	Increase	Obtain
Acquaint	Decrease	Individualize	Organize
Change	Develop	Inform	Plan
Compile	Devise	Initiate	Prepare
Compose	Establish	Interview	Prevent
Conduct	Identify	Investigate	Reduce
Construct	Improve	Involve	Refine
Coordinate	Implement	Locate	Stimulate

Develop Evaluation Questions

What important questions should we ask to find out if we're having an impact on our goals?

Examples

Goal: Support improvement in student achievement.

Strategy: Start an after-school program that targets middle and low-achieving students in core subject areas.

Question: What impact is the after-school program having on student test scores?

Goal: Enhance and increase parent and community engagement in schools.

Strategy: Host a forum where the superintendent informs parents about a standards-based curriculum to improve student achievement.

Question: What difference does it make if parents are informed about standards?

Goal: Support an increase in student achievement.

Strategy: Increase parent and community volunteerism in schools to provide subject-focused tutoring, mentoring and teaching assistance.

Questions: How does increased and focused parent and community volunteerism affect students' reading, math and writing grades? How does it affect student behavior and discipline? How does it help the teachers improve their quality of teaching?

Sample Evaluation Worksheet

Goal: The Collaborative Action Team will support an improvement in student achievement.

Strategy: The Collaborative Action Team will increase parent and community volunteerism at one school to provide subject-focused tutoring, mentoring and classroom teaching assistance.

Performance Standard: 1. By the end of the school year, at least 50% of parents at each grade level will have volunteered at least 10 hours of effective tutoring, mentoring or teaching assistance in their child's classroom, and the number and hours of community volunteers at the school will have doubled.

Information Needed	Measurement Tool Used	Who to Contact for Information	How to Collect Information	When to Collect Information
Number of parents and community members volunteering Number of hours volunteered Services provided by parents and community members	Form for tracking volunteer activity	Parent Liaison Teachers	Develop a form for tracking volunteer activity. Follow up to ensure that forms are being used.	Continuously. Volunteer must fill out every time.
Teacher satisfaction about effectiveness of volunteer tutoring, mentoring or teaching assistance.	Interviews	Teachers	Schedule interviews during Parent/Teacher conference day or during teacher planning periods. Have school Collaborative Action Team members conduct interviews.	Quarterly
Volunteer satisfaction about the effectiveness of their mentoring, tutoring or teaching assistance to the students and teachers.	Interviews	Volunteers	Have Parent Liaison schedule interviews with 10-15 randomly chosen volunteer parents. Have Collaborative Action Team members conduct interviews with randomly chosen community volunteers.	Quarterly

Sample Evaluation Worksheet

Goal: The Collaborative Action Team will support an increase in student achievement.

Strategy: The Collaborative Action Team will increase parent and community volunteerism at one school to provide subject-focused tutoring, mentoring and classroom teaching assistance.

Performance Standard: 2. By the end of the school year, at least 50% of students in each classroom with over 150 parent and community volunteer hours will raise their reading, math and writing grades by one letter grade.

Information Needed	Measurement Tool Used	Who to Contact for Information	How to Collect Information	When to Collect Information
Classes with over 150 parent and community volunteer hours	Form for tracking volunteer activity	Teachers Parent Liaisons	Ensure that the form developed to track volunteer activity requests information about classes.	Continuously. Volunteers must fill out every time.
First grading period reading, math and writing grades for every class Last grading period reading, math and writing grades for classes with over 150 volunteer hours	Reading, math and writing grades Tally sheet with students identified by number, instead of name	Teachers Principal	Ask principal for permission to collect grade information. Ask teachers to fill out tally sheet, using student numbers to keep individual student names confidential.	First grading period Last grading period

Evaluation Worksheet

Goal _____

Performance Standard _____

Information Needed	Measurement Tool Used	Who to Contact for Information	How to Collect Information	When to Collect Information

Force Field Analysis

Force field analysis assumes that “sets of events, pressures or technologies” called *forces* affect all situations in society. To illustrate, let’s use the goal of schools establishing working partnerships to improve academic results with the community and parents. In this case, the present political structure in the community or school district might represent a negative force. The potential improvement in standardized test scores and reduced dropout rates might represent a positive force.

In any given situation, *forces* might either weaken or reinforce change. Force field analysis provides a systematic way of looking at the impact of present or future factors that might weaken or reinforce a change.

To use this technique, you must first list the forces that are involved in the situation. When doing so, rely on both your intuition and documentation of the forces operating in similar situations. Classify each force as *driving* or *restraining* the situation. Use the following points as a guide:

1. Use small groups of five to seven team members.
2. List an event or issue on a flipchart sheet. Then draw two columns and label them “Positive Forces” and “Negative Forces.”
3. Brainstorm about the forces that will reinforce the change. Don’t judge the merit of any idea.
4. List these forces in the “Positive Forces” column on the flipchart sheet.
5. Brainstorm about the forces that will weaken or prevent the change. Again, don’t judge the ideas.
6. List these forces in the “Negative Forces” column on the flipchart sheet.
7. Rank the inhibiting forces and agree on the three to six most important forces.
8. Set goals and strategies for removing the negative forces and strengthening the positive forces.

Force Field Analysis

Event: _____

Positive Forces	Negative Forces
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____
6. _____	6. _____
7. _____	7. _____
8. _____	8. _____

Analyzing Team Effectiveness Questionnaire

Read both of the statements in each box. Circle a number ranging from 1 to 7 that most strongly describes how your team functions.

Goals		
Team goals are confusing or conflicting.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Team goals are clear and shared by all team members.

Team members show little interest in achieving goals.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	All members care about team goals and feel involved in achieving them.
---	---------------------------	--

Leadership		
The team lacks clear leadership.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	The team has effective leaders.

The team depends too much on one or two people for leadership.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Many team members share in leadership roles.
--	---------------------------	--

Leadership roles and responsibilities are unclear.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Members understand and accept leadership responsibilities.
--	---------------------------	--

Decision Making		
Decisions are not made or are unclear.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Decisions are clearly made and acted on.

Decisions get made based on opinions, not facts.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	The team makes information-based decisions.
--	---------------------------	---

Decisions are made too quickly, without enough discussion.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Everyone participates in discussions and considers different perspectives.
--	---------------------------	--

Decisions are made by a few people, with many people left out of the process.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7	Decisions are made by consensus and have full team support.
---	---------------------------	---

Handling Conflicts			
Tensions and differences are avoided or denied.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7	The team addresses and works through conflict.
Shared Responsibility			
Team members' knowledge, experience, talents and skills aren't used or appreciated.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7	Team members' knowledge, experience, talents and skills are used to achieve team goals.
The most experienced person always does the job.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7	Team members are encouraged to learn new skills and take on new roles.
Diagnosing Problems			
The team jumps to solutions—treats the symptoms without looking at the root problem.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7	Each situation is carefully diagnosed before action is taken. Remedies attack the root problem, not symptoms.
Communicating			
A few members dominate discussions.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7	All team members share discussion time equally.
Some members are interrupted or not listened to. Team members aren't encouraged to share ideas.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7	All team members are listened to with respect. Team members are encouraged to speak up.
Team members do not participate actively in discussions.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7	All team members participate actively in discussions.
Discussions are guarded and defensive.	1	2 3 4 5 6 7	Discussions are respectful, honest and open.

Trust and Support								
Team members are distrustful. The atmosphere is careful and superficial.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Team members feel comfortable revealing feelings and receiving supportive responses from others.
Criticism is common. Team members are afraid to give and receive feedback.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Team members listen to and use feedback. Everyone seems comfortable expressing disagreement.
It's everyone for themselves. Team members don't support each other.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Team members show genuine concern for each other.
Creativity and Growth								
The team is in a rut and doesn't show growth or progress.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	The team is flexible and seeks new and better ways to do things.
Team members are stereotyped into playing the same roles over and over.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Team members continually change and grow in the roles they play.

Analyzing Team Effectiveness Questionnaire Scoring Sheet

Average Score

To calculate the average score for each item, add the scores and divide by the number of people who answered the question. For each category, add the average for each item and divide by the number of items.

Example: Three people filled out item #1. Their scores were 1, 5 and 6.
Three people filled out item #2. Their scores were 5, 7 and 3.
There were two items in the category.

	ITEM #1	ITEM #2
Add scores	$1 + 5 + 6 = 12$	$5 + 7 + 3 = 15$
Divide by number of people	$12 / 3$	$15 / 3$
Average score	$= 4$	$= 5$

	CATEGORY
Add the item averages	$4 + 5 = 9$
Divide by number of items	$9 / 2$
Average score	$= 4.5$

Range of Scores

The range of scores for a category tells you how much agreement people had about the item.

Example: If no one answered 1 or 2 to a category, then the range of scores for that item is 3–7.

Example: If one person answered 2 to a category and everyone else answered 6, then the range of scores for that item is 2–6.

Category	Average Score	Range of Scores
Goals		
Leadership		
Decision Making		
Handling Conflicts		
Shared Responsibility		
Diagnosing Problems		
Communicating		
Trust and Support		
Creativity and Growth		

Keys to Successful Collaboration

The following items are some of the keys to successful collaboration. Most of them are based on team members' signs of commitment and positive attitudes toward team building and action planning. The more these are present in your team, the greater your chance for success. To what extent do you feel these key items are present in your team?

1. Key decision makers participate in team activities and are supportive of the team. *The presence of supportive administrators and superintendents provides psychological support for the team's work.*
 2. Team members consistently participate in team activities and stay informed about the team. *Consistent representation is important for the health and vitality of your team.*
 3. Team members participate actively in meetings—discussing issues, making decisions and planning action. *Everyone present needs to contribute to the discussions, ask pertinent questions and keep involved.*
 4. Team members complete assignments between meetings. *Work assigned to team volunteers is carried out on time.*
 5. Everyone contributes to decisions and goal setting. Consensus is generally reached. *Even though not everyone may agree with the goals and strategies, the team needs to reach consensus. Team members need to develop goals and strategies themselves, rather than relying on the facilitator.*
 6. Multiple leaders have evolved within the team. Many team members take on new roles and responsibilities. *Several people need to be willing to fulfill leadership roles for the team.*
 7. The team is a high priority for team members and the school community. *Members see their participation as an important activity and put in the time needed to do the team's work. People believe the team's work is important.*
 8. Members talk positively about the team process with each other and with individuals in the school community. *Members who offer positive feedback demonstrate a sense of pride and support for the team.*
-

Collaborative Action Team Toolkit Activity Checklist

Check off each Toolkit Activity your team needs to review and/or repeat. Remember, some steps have more than one Toolkit Activity. You may use one this time that you didn't use before.

Stage 1: Getting Started

- Introduce the Process
- Define Your School Community
- Examine Your School Community
- Plan the First Steps

Stage 2: Mobilizing the Team

- Define Your Representative Membership
- Build Your Representative Membership
- Determine Communication Ground Rules
- Build Common Understanding
- Examine Team Decisions
- Use Consensus Decision Making
- Share Leadership Responsibilities
- Take on Leadership Roles
- Develop Leadership through Mentoring

Stage 3: Setting Direction

- Agree on a Vision
- Assess Your School Community
- Identify School Community Issues
- Develop a Mission Statement
- Set Team Goals
- Define the Audience and the Message
- Create a Communications Plan

Stage 4: Taking Action

- Develop Strategies
- Define Tasks and Resources
- Determine Responsibilities and Timelines
- Establish Evaluation Methods
- Report Progress and Review Responsibilities
- Recognize Member Contributions
- Expand Network Opportunities

Stage 5: Reviewing and Refining

- Assess Team Effectiveness
- Celebrate Your Successes
- Increase Effectiveness and Impact

Considerations About the Long-Term Impact and Sustainability of Your Collaborative Action Team

As you discuss the following issues, consider these questions:

- Are we ready to move to the next level in any of these important areas?
 - Would it benefit the team to move forward in any of these areas?
 - What internal and external changes, resources and efforts would this require?
1. **Scaling up.** You can “scale up” your Collaborative Action Team’s work and level of impact several ways:
 - Going to a deeper level by addressing underlying “causes” of problems.
 - Expanding into other schools in the same district, other school districts or other school communities.
 - Helping other schools form Collaborative Action Teams.
 - Affecting policy by introducing the collaborative process and its core concepts to policy and decision-making groups.
 - Including key leaders and policy makers as members of your team.
 2. **Funding.** How your team supports itself financially will affect the team’s sustainability.
 - Obtaining grants and direct funding from corporations. Consider these carefully because they bring risks and limitations, as well as resources.
 - Soliciting in-kind contributions.
 - Bringing potential funders into the partnership.
 3. **Institutional Structure.** Consider whether the team should become a permanent entity. There are several options:
 - Operating under the auspices of your school district or local governing bodies. This can bring credibility and authority to the team, but the politics of these governing bodies can divert your goals.
 - Establishing yourself as a nonprofit organization or a public-private intermediary.
 4. **Networking.** Nurturing a network that allows your team to share experiences and to learn from other similar organizations will greatly increase the team’s sustainability and impact:
 - With other organizations in your school community,
 - With other collaborative organizations beyond your school community—by participating in local, regional or national networks and
 - With other entities interested in collaborating for school community improvement—presenting at the conferences of relevant associations.
-