

Introduce the Process

Goals

- Gain a general understanding of the Collaborative Action Team process.
 - Determine which activities the team has already accomplished.
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Collaborative Action Team Overview



What is a Collaborative Action Team?

A partnership between school, home, community and student representatives that identifies pressing issues in a school community and takes action to address them.

Core Concepts

- **Representative membership**
 - **Shared leadership**
 - **Consensus decision making**
 - **Action focus**
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Representative Membership

- Consists of a cross section of the school community: family members, community members, school personnel and students.
 - Helps the team better identify and meet school community needs.
 - Reinforces local control and self-reliance.
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Shared Leadership

- **All team members share leadership roles and responsibilities.**
 - **All team members are equally included in the following:**
 - **Representing the team**
 - **Making decisions**
 - **Carrying out responsibilities**
 - **Sharing success**
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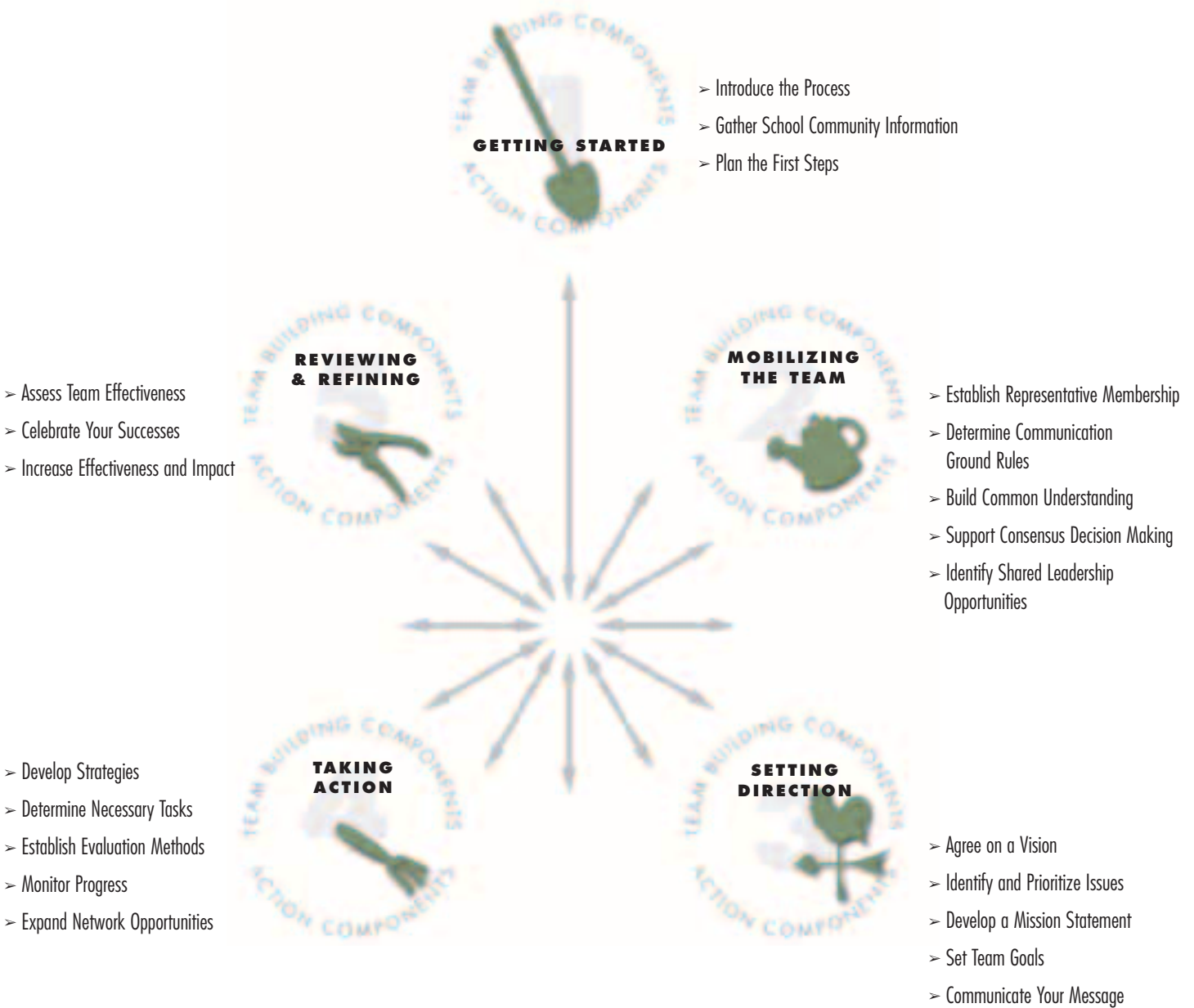
Consensus Decision Making

- Team decisions reflect the viewpoints of all involved and all members agree to support them.
 - Team members discuss issues, listen to each other, work to resolve differences and reach decisions based on a general agreement.
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Action Focus

- The primary purpose of a Collaborative Action Team is to take action to improve the school community.
 - The team takes concrete steps to plan, implement and evaluate action steps.
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Stages of the Collaborative Action Team Process



Collaborative Action Team Process Components

- **Team-building** components focus on how team members work together while respecting each member's unique strengths.
 - **Action** components help your team plan and take steps to achieve the team's vision, mission and goals.
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Stage 1

Getting Started

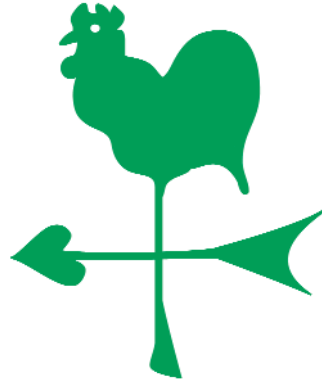
- **Introduce the process.**
 - **Gather school community information.**
 - **Plan the first steps.**
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Stage 2

Mobilizing the Team

- **Establish representative membership.**
 - **Determine communication ground rules.**
 - **Build common understanding.**
 - **Support consensus decision making.**
 - **Identify shared leadership opportunities.**
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Stage 3

Setting Direction

- Agree on a vision.
 - Identify and prioritize issues.
 - Develop a mission statement.
 - Set team goals.
 - Communicate your message.
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Stage 4 Taking Action

- Develop strategies.
 - Determine necessary tasks.
 - Establish evaluation methods.
 - Monitor progress.
 - Expand network opportunities.
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Stage 5

Reviewing and Refining

- **Assess team effectiveness.**
 - **Celebrate your successes.**
 - **Increase effectiveness and impact.**
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Define Your School Community

Goal

- Define your school community to clarify who should be on your team and who you want to impact.
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Examine Your School Community

Goals

- Assess factors in your school community that will affect the ongoing development of your team.
 - Gather information about your school community to help the team make future decisions.
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Factors That Could Impact Our Team's Development

- Characteristics of team leaders
 - Accommodation of members' needs
 - School system influences
 - Community culture
 - Access to local resources
 - Common direction
 - Communication
 - Shared leadership
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Plan the First Steps

Goals

- Determine initial responsibility for facilitating and coordinating the team and recording team business.
 - Review and agree on methods for organizing your Collaborative Action Team.
 - Plan the agenda and goals for a meeting of your Collaborative Action Team.
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Define Your Representative Membership

Goals

- Develop understanding and appreciation for a representative membership.
 - Define a representative membership that reflects your school community.
 - Develop strategies for recruiting new members.
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Representative Membership

What is it?

The team includes a wide range of people from all parts of the school community. Team members represent school, home, community and students. The team includes people of different ages, ethnicities, languages and income levels.

Why is it important?

The team will take action in a way that is:

- Comprehensive
 - Respectful of differences
 - Understanding of all viewpoints
 - Supported by the whole school community
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Build Your Representative Membership

Goals

- Build a representative membership.
 - Follow up on the recruitment strategy developed in the *Toolkit Activity: Define Your Representative Membership*.
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Determine Communication Ground Rules

Goals

- Determine ground rules for communicating among team members.
 - Practice consensus-building skills.
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Communication Ground Rules

What are they?

Rules of behavior and interaction that team members agree on and use to conduct meetings, manage discussions, share ideas and reach consensus.

Why are they important?

To establish effective methods of interaction among members that make it possible for them to work together productively.

Consensus-Building Skills

What are they?

The ability of team members to:

- Discuss issues
- Listen to each other
- Address differences and conflicts
- Work to resolve them
- Reach decisions based on general agreement

Why are they important?

To ensure that decisions reflect feedback, input and commitment from the whole team.

Build Common Understanding

Goals

- Develop team members' discussion skills.
 - Begin to develop respect, trust and understanding among team members.
 - Increase understanding of school community issues.
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Characteristics of Dialogue

- 1.** Reach deeper understanding of an issue by focusing on the values that underlie opinions.
 - 2.** Work through difficult issues by talking about the choices your school community or team is facing.
 - 3.** Seek “common ground,” not necessarily consensus at this point.
 - 4.** Talk without a specified outcome in mind—decisions come later.
 - 5.** Work with the goal of deliberation.
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Responsibilities of Discussion Participants

- 1.** Understand that dialogue is talking without reaching a decision.
 - 2.** Share your views.
 - 3.** Listen respectfully to others.
 - 4.** Maintain an open mind.
 - 5.** Help keep discussions on track.
 - 6.** Disagree respectfully when your views differ from those of others.
 - 7.** Respect confidentiality of discussions.
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Examine Team Decisions

Goals

- Examine how the team typically makes decisions.
 - Explore different decision-making methods.
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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 |

Use Consensus Decision Making

Goal

- Practice discussion skills needed for consensus decision making.
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Requirements for Reaching Consensus

- **Everyone's active participation**
 - **Expression and resolution of differences**
 - **Decisions for the good of the team**
 - **Consideration of everyone's opinion and viewpoint**
-

Discussion Skills Needed for Consensus

The ability of team members to:

- Discuss issues
 - Listen to each other
 - Address differences
 - Work to resolve differences and conflicts
 - Reach decisions based on general agreement
-

A Strategy for Successful Meetings

- How can we make our Collaborative Action Team meetings more efficient and productive?
 - What strategy can we develop to ensure that everybody contributes to successful meetings?
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Share Leadership Responsibilities

Goals

- Identify opportunities for your team to share leadership responsibilities.
 - Develop a process for sharing leadership responsibilities.
 - Give team members an opportunity to volunteer for leadership responsibilities.
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Take on Leadership Roles

Goals

- Help team members recognize their personal strengths.
 - Identify ways to encourage team members to use their strengths in leadership roles within the team.
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A Parent Named Dora Martínez

- 1.** What personal strengths did Dora bring to the team initially?
 - 2.** What potential barriers to becoming involved did Dora face?
 - 3.** How did Dora overcome the barriers?
 - 4.** How can we support each other to use our personal strengths in leadership roles?
 - 5.** How can we eliminate barriers?
-

Strengths

- I have creative ideas.
 - I'm good at planning kids' parties.
 - I have a great sense of humor.
 - I listen to others before I make a decision.
 - I'm good at getting things done when someone tells me what to do.
 - I have strong opinions and ideas about how to improve things.
-

Strengths and Leadership Roles

- I have creative ideas:
Resource Developer
 - I'm good at planning kids' parties:
Planner
 - I have a great sense of humor:
Mediator, Team Builder
 - I listen to others before I make a decision: Consensus Builder
 - I'm good at getting things done when someone tells me what to do:
Implementer
 - I have strong opinions and ideas about how to improve things: Visionary
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Develop Leadership through Mentoring

Goal

- Learn how team members can mentor each other to create an environment where members develop new strengths and take on new leadership roles.
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Collaborative Action Team Mentors...

Share their life experience, knowledge and skills with others to promote personal and/or professional growth.

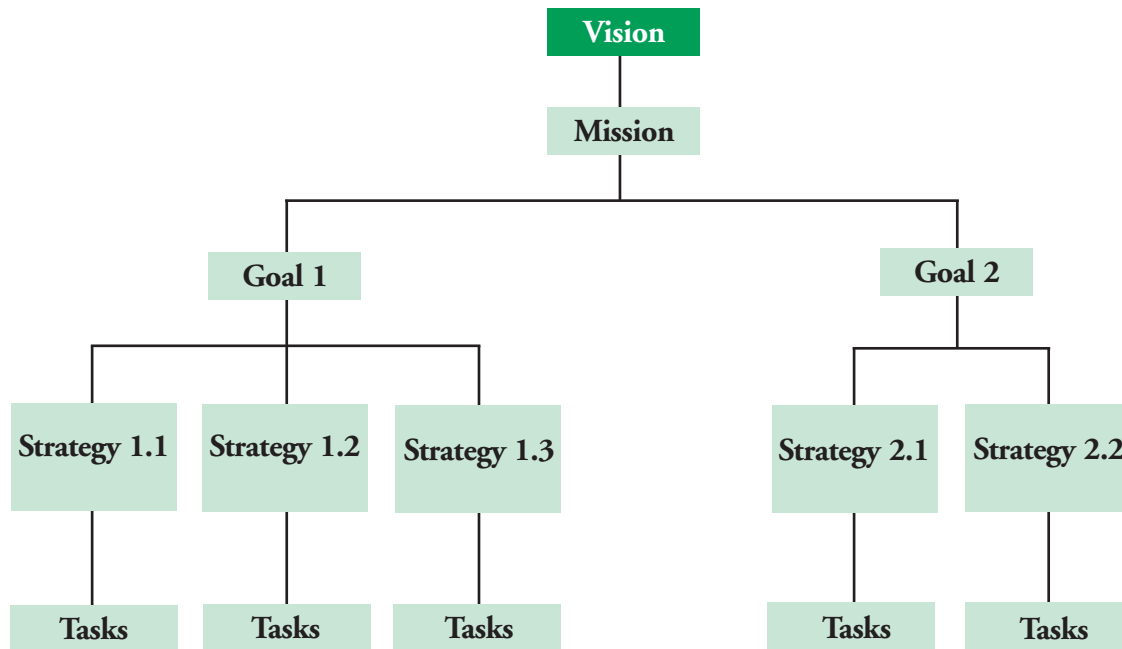
This expands and enhances the overall leadership available to your Collaborative Action Team.

Agree on a Vision

Goal

- Develop a common vision of the future for students and their families in your school community.
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Collaborative Action Team Action Plan Overview



Collaborative Action Team Vision Statement Example

Our school community will be a nurturing and supportive place to work and learn, where all students and families receive the educational opportunities they need to be successful in school and in life.

Assess Your School Community

Goals

- Discuss your school community's assets and needs.
 - Decide on information-gathering methods.
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Identify School Community Issues

Goals

- Discuss school community issues.
 - Use consensus decision making to prioritize these issues.
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School Community Issues

What are they?

Issues that directly affect the well-being and education of students and their families.

These issues may involve academic, economic, political, social, cultural or historical factors.

Why are they important?

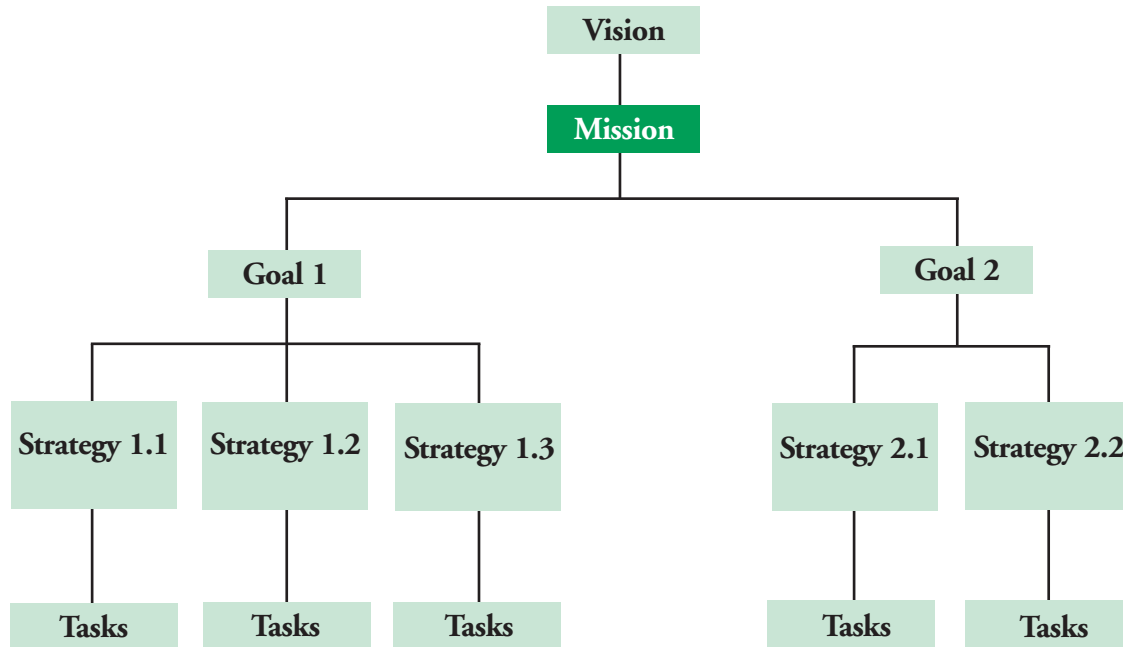
Examining these issues helps members understand differences and similarities in their viewpoints.

Develop a Mission Statement

Goals

- Clarify your team's purpose.
 - Develop a mission statement.
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Collaborative Action Team Action Plan Overview



Essential Parts of a Mission Statement

1. *What* does your Collaborative Action Team do?
 2. *For whom* do you do it?
 3. *How* do you go about it?
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Collaborative Action Team Mission Statement

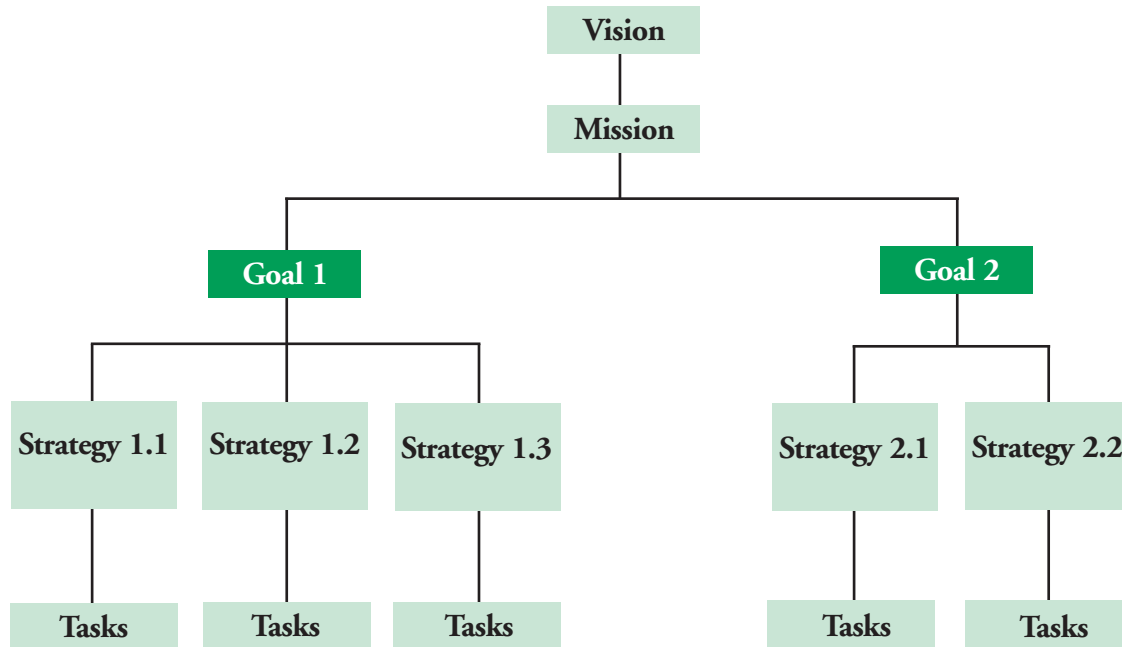
The mission of our Collaborative Action Team is to improve educational results for students and their families by working together as a partnership of school, home, community and student representatives.

Set Team Goals

Goal

- Set one or more goals for your team's top-priority issue.
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Collaborative Action Team Action Plan Overview



Example Goal Statements

Our Collaborative Action Team will
(Who)
support improvement in student
(What)
achievement in our schools.

Our Collaborative Action Team will
(Who)
increase parent and community
(What)
participation in school improvement
and decision making.

Define the Audience and the Message

Goals

- Identify the team's target audiences for communications.
 - Define the message your team wants to communicate.
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Examples of Key Information

- Team vision and mission
 - Team goals
 - Team accomplishments
 - Team membership
 - Specific opportunities or events
 - Team history
 - How to get involved
-

Create a Communications Plan

Goals

- Create a plan for communicating your team's message.
 - Use team members' diverse knowledge to reach a variety of audiences.
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Communicating Your Message to the Public

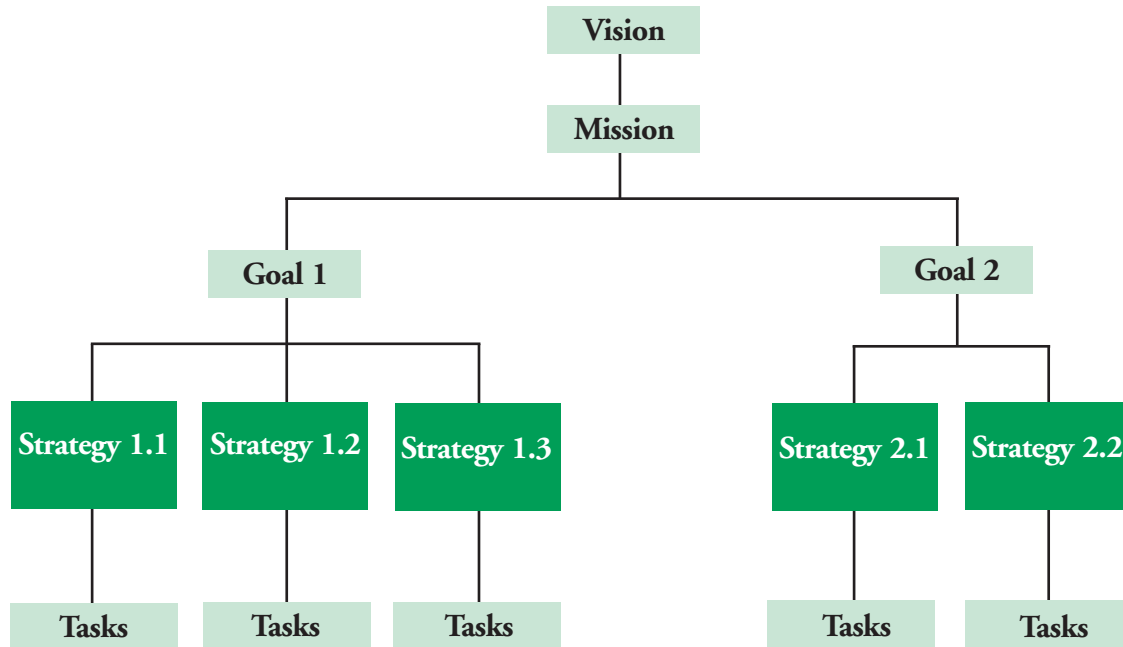
- Press releases
 - Brochures
 - Video
 - Website
 - Articles or letters to the newspaper
 - Announcements in church bulletins
 - Restaurant placemats
 - School marquee sign
 - Banners and signs
 - T-shirts and bumper stickers
 - School newspaper
 - Radio and TV public service ads
-

Develop Strategies

Goal

- Develop strategies for achieving team goals.
-

Collaborative Action Team Action Plan Overview



Sample Structure for Strategies

_____ *(Who)* **will** _____ *(action verb)*

a _____ *(what)*

_____ *(for what purpose)*

by _____ *(when)* .

Example Strategy Statement

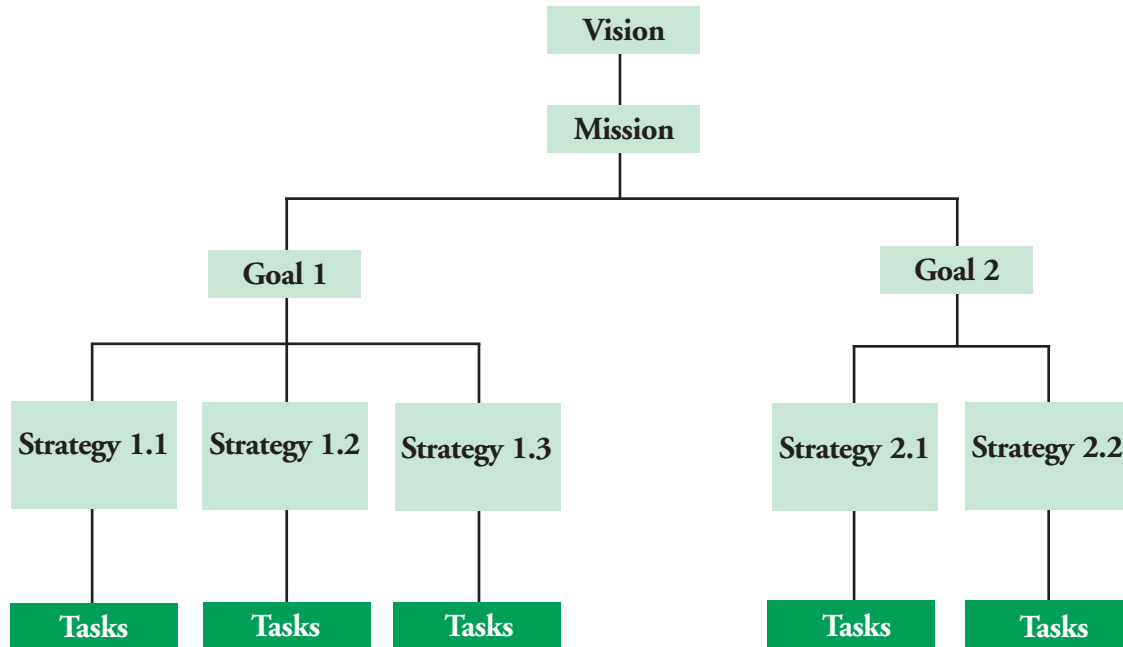
Our Collaborative Action Team will create
(Who) *(action verb)*
an after-school program at one elementary
(what)
school that strengthens low-performing
(for what purpose)
students' knowledge and skills in core
subject areas by February 1, 2001.
(when)

Define Tasks and Resources

Goals

- Determine the tasks required to carry out your strategies and to meet your goals.
 - Identify the resources you need to implement your strategies.
-

Collaborative Action Team Action Plan Overview



Determine Responsibilities and Timelines

Goals

- Develop timelines for each action worksheet task.
 - Decide who will be responsible for completing each task.
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Establish Evaluation Methods

Goals

- Develop methods for evaluating team strategies.
 - Define performance standards for the team's strategies and goals.
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Evaluation Steps

1. Develop evaluation questions.
 2. Define performance standards.
 3. Select measurements and methods.
 4. Collect the information.
 5. Analyze the data.
 6. Report your findings.
-

Performance Standards

- State the outcomes you can reasonably expect to achieve with your strategy.
 - Answer the questions, *How much* will be done and *When*.
-

Performance Standard Statement Examples

- Performance Standard 1:

By the end of the school year, at least 50% of
(when) *(how much)*
parents at each grade level will have volunteered
at least 10 hours of effective tutoring, mentoring
(how much)
or teaching assistance in their child's classroom,
and the number and hours of community volun-
teers at the school will have doubled.
(how much)

- Performance Standard 2:

By the end of the school year, at least 50% of
(when) *(how much)*
students in each classroom with over 150
parent and community volunteer hours will
raise their reading, math and writing grades
by one letter grade.
(how much)

Types of Measurements

- Standardized tests
 - Questionnaires/surveys
 - Informal or formal interviews
 - School or program records
 - Focus groups
 - Observations
-

Methods to Collect Information

- Personal contact
 - Telephone
 - Written forms
 - Home visits
 - Mail
 - Fax
 - Internet
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Report Progress and Review Responsibilities

Goals

- Clarify team members' responsibilities for implementing the team's action plan.
 - Identify additional actions needed to implement the team's action plan.
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Recognize Member Contributions

Goal

- Recognize and celebrate individual contributions and team achievements.
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How to Give Good Feedback

Poor feedback:

“You do a great job!”

Better feedback:

“I appreciate the translations you’ve done to ensure that all members can participate on our team.”

Also good:

“I admire you for volunteering to tutor three days a week at the school.”

Expand Network Opportunities

Goals

- Assess current contacts and connections.
 - Identify potential partners.
 - Develop strategies for approaching potential partners.
-

Networking

What is it?

The process of developing relationships and contacts with key people and organizations.

Why is it important?

Networking helps the team:

- Recruit new team members
 - Recruit short-term help for specific projects
 - Avoid duplication of existing programs or projects
 - Identify new opportunities and resources
 - Learn from others' experiences
-

Strategies for Building Networks

Ask yourself:

- Where do our goals overlap? How can we create a “win–win” situation?
 - What might this person find most appealing about being our partner? (e.g., sharing information, getting recognition)
 - Who would be the best person to contact the potential partner? (e.g., peer, authority figure, customer)
 - How should we approach this person? (e.g., letter, face-to-face, presentation)
-

Assess Team Effectiveness

Goals

- Assess the effectiveness of your Collaborative Action Team.
 - Use feedback to improve the way your team functions.
-

Celebrate Your Successes

Goal

- Identify ways to recognize and celebrate individual and team achievements.
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Increase Effectiveness and Impact

Goals

- Understand the major changes and issues your school community will face in the next five years.
 - Determine adjustments you will make to increase your team's effectiveness and impact.
-

Reviewing Factors That Impact Team Development

Were you concerned about any factors that are no longer an issue?

Does any factor now hold promise for the team? Does any factor cause difficulty?

What do we need to do to reduce the negative impact these factors may have on our work? What do we need to do to increase their positive impact?

Reviewing Representative Membership

What members have we lost and need to replace to maintain representative membership?

Are there new membership groups or categories that aren't represented and need to be?

Reviewing the Action Plan

Does our vision for the school community still reflect what we want to see happen?

Is our mission still the same?

Do our priority issues and goals still reflect the needs of the school community?

If not, what changes are needed to make our action plan relevant and accurate?

Reviewing Shared Leadership

Does the shared leadership process we developed previously still work?

Are all members equally represented in leadership roles and responsibilities?

Are new members being given leadership opportunities?
