

A sampling of work in progress....

Pathway Team Leadership Guide and Toolkit

- *NOTE: Please send your own suggestions, resources, tools, and practices related to Pathway Team Leadership and Facilitation and/or effective Teaming to Patricia Clark (patricia510@gmail.com) and/or Rob Atterbury (ratterbury@connectedcalifornia.org). Include also useful websites for team facilitation resources.*
- *This is a work in progress. Electronic versions of a Pathway Team Leadership Resources and Tools will be posted on the ConnectEd website.*

Characteristics of Successful Teams

1. *Goals:* Team members have clear, realistic goals which all team members understand.
2. *Norms:* The team sets specific (often written) standards and customs for meetings and work.
3. *Roles and responsibilities:* Team members have clearly defined roles; responsibilities are shared and everyone knows their assignment.
4. *Positive environment:* The team meets regularly in a pleasant setting.
5. *Time:* Regular meetings are scheduled with an agenda and sufficient time to meet goals; meetings begin and end on time (a norm).
6. *Effective meetings:* An agenda is developed and followed. Communication is clear.
7. *Procedures:* The team agrees on procedure to make decisions, solve problems, and meet deadlines; all members participate in discussions and attend meetings; there is open, frequent feedback.
8. *Relationships:* The team members enjoy and support each other and have pride in their work; conflict is openly discussed. Open, honest communication is supported by all team members.
9. *Planning.* The team collaborates on planning the meetings, has a written plan for the year, and revises the plan from time to time.
10. *Decision making.* The team has agreed on a method for making decisions and group problem solving.
11. *Shared vision and leadership.* The team has developed a vision and shares leadership in achieving the goals of the team and the school.

SAMPLE TEAM AGREEMENTS OR NORMS

Norms exist on every team whether or not they are named or agreed upon. Norms tend to fall into one of two categories: procedural or interpersonal. Procedural norms define how things will be done (logistics, timeliness (start/end on time), decision-making process (consensus), setting priorities, etc.). Interpersonal norms describe how we will work together (courtesy, shared roles, enforcement of norms). The process of formally establishing productive norms is to name the ways a group wants to be together for the purpose of achieving desired outcomes. Quality norms create an environment where people can voice, question, disagree, support, take risks and still be working respectfully and purposefully toward the shared goal. In addition, the process of setting norms also allows you and your colleagues to hold each other accountable.

The following agreements are meant to provide our group a starting place for being conscious of the ways we work and interact as a learning community. We hope to use these agreements to facilitate deeper dialogue and foster an environment conducive to our collective learning.

SPEAK YOUR TRUTH

- Speak your truth. Voice your perspectives and encourage others to do so.

ASK QUESTIONS

- Question for understanding & clarity.

ASSUME POSITIVE INTENT

- Enter into discussions with understanding all are working toward common goals.
- Seek to understand other perspectives being shared.

RESPECT INTERDEPENDENCY/STAY ENGAGED IN THE WORK

- Your learning depends on others' engagement and participation
- Likewise, your engagement and participation contributes to everyone's learning
- Ask for the type of support you need and advocate for the needs of others

SUPPORT BALANCED CONTRIBUTION OF ALL (WATCH AIR TIME)

- Be aware of who speaks the most & who is silent. Encourage participation of all.

APPRECIATE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OTHERS

- Acknowledge individual or group contributions to team's collective development
- Recognize participant members' risk-taking, sharing, and/or courage in acting upon our community agreements.

PROCEDURAL: ⇒ Start & End on Time. ⇒ Keep to the Agenda & the Times Listed (unless team agrees to add item/s, spend more time on a particular item) ⇒ Be Present.

DEVELOPING and USING TEAM NORMS

Norms are important for a team, especially when challenging issues may be involved or when the team plans to work together over time. Starting with basic norms builds trust, helps to clarify team members' expectations of one another, and establishes points of "reflection" that the team can use to determine how it is doing regarding process. Norms may be added to, condensed, "retired", or refined as the team evolves.

An establishing norms activity typically takes approximately 15 - 20 minutes. *(This may take far less time if the team has worked together before and/or team members are familiar with norms.)* Important to keep in mind: The team will work with greater commitment if they themselves generate their norms.

One process for setting Norms

Procedure:

1. The facilitator passes out post-it notes to each team member.
2. Each person writes a norm (or a statement how s/he wants the group to work together) on a post-it.
3. The team shares its individual notes and divides them into the two categories - procedural norms and interpersonal norms.
4. Within each category, group suggested norms that are similar *(For example, "take turns speaking" and "make sure everyone speaks" should be grouped together.)*
5. Give a name to the norm for each group. (From the example above, the norm could be "Make sure everyone is heard.")
6. The group discusses the norms that have been suggested and checks to see whether or not the group is in agreement. The group should reach consensus on the norms it accepts.

Another process for setting Norms

1. Ask everyone to write down what he/she needs in order to work productively in a group and/or "what norms or team agreements would we like to have to ensure a positive team environment and effective team meetings.: *NOTE: Giving an example of one thing the facilitator needs, i.e., "to have all voices heard," or "to start and end our meetings when we say we will" will help team members focus on process rather than product.*
2. Each participant names one thing from her/his written list, going around in a circle, with no repeats, & as many circuits as necessary to have all suggested norms listed.
3. Ask for any clarifications needed. One person may not understand a norm that another person has listed or may interpret the language differently.
4. If the list is VERY long - more than 10 norms - ask the group if some of the norms can

be combined to make the list more manageable. NOTE: Sometimes the subtle differences are important to people so it is more important that everyone feel her/his needs have been honored than it is to have a short list.

5. Ask if everyone can abide by the proposed list of norms. NOTE: If anyone dislikes or doesn't want to comply with one of the norms, the particular norm should be discussed and a decision made to keep it on the list with a notation of objection, to remove it, or to try it for a specified amount of time and review it again.
6. Ask if any one of the norms might be hard for the group to follow. If there is one or more norms some team members think are difficult for the team to follow, those norms should be high-lighted and given attention. With time it will become clear if a norm should be dropped or need significant work. Sometimes what might appear to be a difficult norm turns out not to be so difficult after all. For example, "Everyone has a turn to speak" is sometimes debated with the argument that not everyone likes to talk every time an issue is raised, and others think aloud and only process well is they have the space to do so. Frequently, a system of checking in with everyone, without requiring everyone to speak, becomes a more effective norm.
7. Ensure everyone is comfortable with the proposed norms that are written down. Then ask everyone to sign her/his name to the paper. The facilitator closes by stating, "This is an organizational agreement. We may need to add or adapt norms as our team evolves. " Keep the norms in a highly visible place and/or include them at the top of every team meeting agenda.

USING NORMS

- Begin each meeting with a quick review of the team norms. Keep the team norms posted in your meeting room and/or include them at the top of each team meeting agenda.
- Ask for a volunteer or assign someone to serve as process checker. He/she will be responsible for paying attention to how well the team does in following the agreed-upon norms and in adhering to the meeting agenda, etc.
- Optional activity: Ask each team member to choose one of the norms he/she will pay close attention to/work on during this particular meeting/work session. At the end of the meeting, each team member might identify the norm s/he chose to work on and self-assessing the degree to which s/he adhered to the norm. (possible pair-share activity)
- While the meeting or team session is in progress, refer to your team norms whenever they might help group process. i.e., If one person is dominating, it is easier to refer to a norm that says, "Take care with how often and how long you speak," than to ask someone directly to stop dominating the group. If one of your norms is to "start and end on time" and several team members come 5 minutes late, the facilitator can then remind the group that they all agreed to start on time and to honor our team norms.)
- At the end of each meeting or team work session, reflect on the plus/deltas of the meeting/session. The process-checker and/or the team as a whole should

reflect on how well the team did in meeting its norms. Note any of the norms that were not followed particularly well either for attention in the next team meeting and/or for discussion and refinement.

- Add new norms and/or adjust norms as the team develops and new situations arise.

SOME ADDITIONAL TEAM MEETING TOOLS/STRATEGIES

Put up a Parking Lot: A parking lot is for items and questions will come up during a meeting that may not be relevant to the content at that particular moment. In order to acknowledge these questions without disrupting the pace of the session, place a piece of flip chart paper on the wall that says "Parking Lot." In the beginning of the session explain that if a question comes up that would be better suited for a later point in the discussion, they will be placed in the parking lot and the group will return to them later. (Be sure to leave enough time to address these questions!)

Stacking: When your team is in a discussion and several team members have their hands raised, use the technique of stacking. Write each person's name in the order that s/he raised her/his hand so team members do not have to keep their hands up and you do not have to remember who is next.

Hand Signals: Create some hand signals that everyone agrees upon before the training. For example, if the time allotted for a discussion of an item is almost over, the timekeeper might form a "T" (for time) with her/his hands two minutes before the time allotted will end as a reminder to the group. The group might then agree to extend the time for discussion OR to table further discussion until the next team meeting.

Talking Stick: Avoid having people speak over one another by incorporating some sort of symbolic "talking stick" which gives the floor to only the person holding it. (i.e. Koosh ball, stuffed animal, carved "rain" stick, etc.)

Brainstorming 101 - The Process

In general, the idea behind brainstorming is to have each person in the team offer ideas that pertain to a given topic or problem. Simply sitting together and sharing thoughts is good, but using a good brainstorming process is even better.

Here is one version of a basic Team Brainstorming Process:

1. Write the topic to be brainstormed at the top of a flip chart page.
2. Start with one team member &, in turn & in order, have each team member contribute an idea.
3. Each person can only provide one (1) idea per turn.
4. Write down ALL ideas on the flip chart page and, when full, hang each page in order on a good blank wall.
5. If a team member has no idea when her/his turn comes, he/she can say "PASS," and the sharing of ideas continues with the next person.
6. There is no discussion of any idea beyond that required to accurately capture it on the flip chart page.
7. When everyone passes in succession, the brainstorming is complete.

Brainstorm Facilitation Notes

- 1. Writing the topic to be brainstormed at the top of a flip chart page focuses the team on the topic, helps to keep everyone on track, and lowers the possibility that people will be offering ideas on multiple topics.*
- 2. Starting with one team member and, in turn and in order, having all team members contribute an idea brings order to the process. Everyone quickly learns that, in each round, s/he will be asked to contribute an item to the list.*
- 3. Each person can only give one idea per turn so that it gives everyone an equal opportunity to contribute. One person may be sitting there with eight ideas, and another only one idea initially. If the person with eight gives them all at once, the other person may now not be able to contribute anything for a while. The brainstorm process allows for greater participation and satisfaction.*
- 4. Writing down ALL ideas on the flip chart paper and then hanging them on the wall becomes a dramatic demonstration of the power of collaboration. As the list gets longer, the team is inspired by its ability to go way beyond what was expected at the outset.*
- 5. Allowing team members to "pass" if they have no idea is really a safety outlet for those rounds where someone has truly come up dry. It creates comfort in the process. It is important to note, however, that they should be reminded to say "pass" rather than using some gesture or other way of communicating. Occasionally there are team members who do not want to participate or otherwise are "tuned out" of the team's activities. Having to say the word "pass" has its own discomforts, especially if it is said repeatedly. Early in the process, it is unlikely that anyone passes more than three times in succession.*
- 6. There is no discussion of the items. Brainstorming is a "divergent" process. That means that you are seeking the largest number of thoughts possible. There will be plenty of time to narrow the list later. Additionally, gathering a large number of thoughts and ideas will trigger new thoughts. Team synergy results when its results are bigger than the sum of the*

parts, meaning, that ideas were generated that nobody had considered prior to the brainstorming.

7. When everyone passes in succession, the brainstorming is complete. This is generally the rule for finishing the process, but you also need to consider if you generated enough results. If not, you may want to continue the process by using various techniques for reenergizing the team's creativity (see below).

Using the above process can result in 50...75...100...150 or more ideas on the wall. It is a powerful process.

A Few Brainstorming Tips and Techniques

There are many ideas to enhance the brainstorming process. Here are a few.

⇒ Strive for many ideas. Encourage creativity and free association.

⇒ Use multiple scribes (at least 2) to increase speed. In a very large group doing a brainstorm process, you might use 3 scribes and one additional person to "hang chart paper.")

⇒ Use sticky dots to prioritize the list quickly. A large list can quickly be reduced to a few by giving each participant a strip of 4-8 colored dots (which can be found in the label department of most office products stores) and having them place the dots on the list items that they like best. Frequently there are some clear-cut winners that show up immediately.

A FEW CONSENSUS BUILDING and PRIORITIZING STRATEGIES

KALEIDOSCOPE GROUPS Participants form small groups with other faculty members/staff/community stakeholders they don't know well, from different departments, different pathways, different grade levels, different roles, etc. Each group member takes a few minutes to discuss her/his position on the issue, proposed solution, etc.) Small group participants should pay attention to both similarities and differences in terms of feelings/ opinions regarding the overall proposal, guiding principle/aspect, etc.)

The facilitator will then guide a debrief of the whole group either asking each small group to share a summary of their discussion OR, depending on the size of the faculty, using a power sweep or round robin. Participants might share their feelings on the topic and/or what they are still wondering about the topic.

YES-NO-WHAT DO YOU NEED? The facilitator states the proposal (or shares a potentially controversial aspect of the proposal/ guiding principle/priority) and the focus of the discussion is also written on a chart pad.

Each participant states either:

- YES, I support this, and shares why, OR
- NO, I do not support this, and this is what I would need in order to support it.

A participant may also elect to remain neutral, with the caveat that neutrality implies a willingness to support what the group decides. The debrief may include a discussion of strategies to meet the need of those opposed and/or of how best to reach consensus given any deeply held feelings of participants.

SPEND YOUR DOTS Facilitator leads a brainstorming process around determining solutions, priorities, principles, etc. After group has determined a list of ideas, the facilitator then gives each participant five sticky dots (number of dots may vary) and asks everyone in the group to vote their dots. Each participant can choose to divide her/his dots among several guiding solutions/principles/priorities/ etc. OR spend them all on one or two of the ideas that are most important to her/him.

FIVE FINGER SHARE (or FIST OF FIVE) Facilitator shares a proposed solution/strategy, guiding principle, etc. S/he then asks participants to quickly indicate where they stand by using one of their hands. Participants share how they feel by raising a hand with a certain number of raised fingers. NOTE: If this is the first time a faculty/staff is using five finger share OR if there are new faculty/staff members, it helps to have a PowerPoint slide or a poster or chart paper which describes the following:

Five fingers: Love the proposal. I support this and will actively work to make this a reality.

Four fingers: Really like. I support this proposal. While I may not be a leader in implementing this proposal, I will do what is appropriate to support this.

Three fingers: Neutral. I won't undermine the efforts of others.

Two fingers: Really dislike. Prefer other options, but will abide by the group's decision. I will not sabotage.

One finger: Hate. I am opposed to the idea.

Clenched Fist: I am seriously opposed to the idea and will do my best to block it.

If anyone holds up a clenched fist or one or two fingers, the facilitator may encourage her/him to share they he/she would need in order to raise three, four, or five fingers.

THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN, THUMBS SIDEWAYS Facilitator shares a proposed solution/strategy, guiding principle, etc. S/he then asks each participant to quickly indicate where s/he stands by using one of her/his thumbs. Each participant shows how s/he feels by clenching her/his fist and then using a raised thumb (a thumb pointing upward) to indicate "I agree" or "I support"; a lowered thumb (a thumb pointing downward) to indicate "I disagree" or "I do not support"; and a sideways thumb (a thumb pointing sideways) to indicate "I am neutral."

Additional Strategies for Prioritizing Your Group's Ideas: Choose one of the following techniques when you need to have your group make a decision based on several options.

- **N/3-** Each participant gets as many votes as the total number of proposal items divided by 3. (i.e. If there are a 30 items on a brainstormed list, each person should identify their top 10 or 30/3.)
- **Assigned Points-** Each participant gets an assigned number of votes and can stack points. (i.e. Each person is given ten points. They can spread these points out to indicate that they support 10 of the ideas on the brainstormed list, or they can assign 5 of their points to one idea, 2 points to another, etc. to show strong support.)

Some of these consensus strategies are based on the work of the Coalition of Essential Schools, National School Reform Faculty, Bay Area School Reform Collaborative, Nancy Golden and others. All are frequently used in effective team meetings.

Leadership Compass Exercise

This exercise is a great way to help participants identify their own (and other's distinct leadership styles, and to learn that we need different kinds of leaders in a group in order for the group to be effective.

- a. Before doing this exercise, prepare four pieces of flip chart paper with a direction at the top and characteristics for that leadership type listed. Do not post these until you shared the characteristics later in the exercise.
- b. Introduce the Leadership Compass Exercise. You can use the following text to introduce this exercise:

A leadership group is almost like an organization. Each of us contributes in different ways to the success of our group and to the culture of our group. The people who are involved in the leadership group all have different skills that contribute to the success of the whole group. Although we may have a fairly good idea of what each other's skills and abilities are, we may not know too much about each other. This exercise is a way of finding out more about each other and more about how to work with the different people that make up a complete leadership group.

An organization, not unlike our group, needs all different types of people to be complete. I am going to describe four types of people. As I do, please listen and be honest with yourself about which description you believe fits you best.

Of course, we cannot really say that everyone in the world fits into one of these types, and many of us may believe that we have characteristics of several of these types. But, please pick one "leadership type" which holds some truth for you and go to that area.

- c. Now read the characteristics of each leadership type (North, South, East, West) and post the flip chart paper with the characteristics as you have completed reading each.
- d. When you have finished reading all four, ask the students to move to the leadership direction that best represents them. Give them a few seconds to have fun with the novelty of this before moving on. You might want to ask them to compare notes with each other like birth order, astrological sign, etc. What do they find that they have in common.
- e. Now, ask them during the next ten minutes to answer three questions as a group. They will be expected to report back to the entire group at the end of the exercise:

- *What we like most about being a North, South, East, West is:*
 - *What we need the most help with is:*
 - *The best way for you to work with us is:*
- f. After ten minutes have the groups stay in their positions and report back to each other. Debrief by making a few observations or posing a few questions:
- *Did you notice how we all have different skills that could contribute to the success of this whole? How would that work on a team or a project?*
 - *How did it feel to be in a group of people that acted/thought like you?*
 - *Did you learn something new about each other?*
 - *Do you have a new appreciation for someone in this room?*

NORTH:

Strengths

- assertive, active, decisive
- likes to be in control
- quick to act, sense of urgency
- courageous, enjoys the challenge
- likes variety
- likes to be in a position of leadership
- "Just do it" "I'll do it" "What is stopping us?"

Possible problems with this style

- gets defensive, may be argumentative
- may push for decisions too soon
- may take too many risks
- has trouble giving up control or delegating to others
- may be seen as egomaniac

SOUTH:

Strengths

- trusting, innocent approach to others
- willingness to believe and accept others
- allows others to feel important and involved as decisions are made
- sees emotions and intuitions as truth
- supportive, nurturing, warm
- relational, relations come first
- "Let's do what is right?" "We want to be fair!"

Possible problems with this style

- may have trouble saying no to requests
- internalizes difficulty and assumes blame
- may be taken advantage of
- immersed in present, may lose track of time
- may have difficulty dealing with anger

EAST:

Strengths

- visionary, sees big picture
- idea-oriented, forward looking
- insight into mission and purpose
- likes to explore
- Strongly spiritual
- "endless possibilities" "we have options"

Possible Problems with this style

- may lose focus on task
- poor follow through
- can develop a reputation for lack of dependability
- can be very enthusiastic in the beginning and then lose interest over time
- may be seen as flaky

WEST:

Strengths

- will weigh all sides of the issue
- uses data and analysis to make decisions
- seen as very practical and reliable
- follow procedures
- careful, introspective, self-analytical
- "We must look at this objectively"

Possible problems with this style

- can become stubborn
- may be resistant to change
- not open to emotional arguments
- may be seen as withdrawn or cold

GETTING STARTED: A CHALK TALK EXERCISE TO GATHER DATA, SURFACE STRENGTHS, NEEDS, AND CONCERNS

Your team has a new charge (new charter) - to develop and/or enhance your academy/pathway program so as to be able to meet the ConnectEd criteria as a certified pathway. There is an expectation that each District will have at least two pathways ready for certification by the end of the 2009-10 school year and at least two additional pathways ready for certification by the end of the 2010-11 school year.

Explain that the purpose of this exercise is to bring out information, ideas, and opinions that the team will use to develop the products of the first stage of this year's team process. (A clear and common understanding of the charter, mission statement, ground rules, defined roles, vision statement, interests, and draft work plan/action plan.) This exercise also gets all team members mentally and physically participating in the team process.

Read each question aloud as you reveal the pre-posted flipcharts with the following (suggested) Statements or other statements that better apply to your team. The purpose behind each question appears in parentheses, but do not write these on the charts.

Remind everyone that for the next 10-15 minutes that every one will participate in a team dialogue; however, each participant can only use a sharpie marker and that no traditional "talking" (vocalizing) is allowed.

I believe our team has been tasked to . . . (*mission*)

I volunteered for this team because . . . (*interests and commitment*)

It's important to me that our team succeed because . . . (*interests*)

The concerns I have about our team and/or our tasks are . . . (*interests, issues to be addressed*)

We'll know our team has succeeded when we see or hear . . . (*vision and criteria for success*)

During team meetings, it is important to me that. . . (*ground rules and operating procedures*)

I expect our team to complete its charter in _____ months. (*operating procedures, mission*)

I can spend ____ hours, per week, doing our team's work . . . (*mission - how much can the team take on*)

The skills, knowledge and experience I bring to this team are . . .
--include your name (*tasks, data collection*)

Tasks I prefer to perform as a team member include . . . -- include your name
(*tasks, data collection*)

The best thing about *name of project* is . . . (*appreciative inquiry, used to break open negative paradigms and set a positive tone at the outset*)

In today's meeting I hope this team . . . (*agenda*)

COMMON PLANNING TIME ACTIVITIES

The following Pathway aspects should be addressed in team meetings:

- I. Review last week's action plan*
 - II. Individual Student Achievement*
 - Discuss individual student achievement (grades, attendance, behavior)*
 - Develop a plan of action to address the needs of underachieving students (e.g., parent conferences, phone calls, extra help, advisement, etc.)*
 - III. Curriculum and Instruction*
 - Assess student work for high expectations (e.g., tuning protocol, syllabi development)*
 - Plan interdisciplinary projects*
 - IV. Pathway Motivation/Recognition Activities*
 - Plan & coordinate team assemblies, celebrations, student rewards, newsletters, etc.*
 - Organize career development activities*
 - V. Collect & Analyze data. Adjust action plan accordingly.*
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PATHWAY WEEKLY ACTION PLAN/MINUTES

Lead teacher/s: _____ *Team:* _____ *Date:* _____

Agenda Items	Actions	Responsible Party	√
I. Review last week's action plan			
II. Individual Student Achievement			
III. Identify under-performing students (attendance, grades, behavior)	Actions to address needs of underperforming students		
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
<i>III. Curriculum & Instruction</i>			
<i>Assess student work for high expectations</i>			
<i>Plan an interdisciplinary project</i>			
<i>IV. Pathway/House</i>			
<i>Motivation/Recognition Activities</i>			
<i>Plan motivation/ recognition activities</i>			
<i>Organize college & career development activities</i>			
<i>Showcase student work</i>			
<i>V. Collect & analyze data. Adjust action plan accordingly.</i>			
<i>Comments/other</i>			

Please give a copy of this agenda form to your House/Pathway Administrator/Coordinator

Pathway Weekly Data Collection
(To be discussed during common planning time)

Meeting date: _____ Pathway Team: _____

Teacher: _____ Subject: _____

Daily average of absences this week _____

Number of students on roster (per Pathway class period) _____

Total number of phone calls made (or other parent/family contact) _____

Total number of parent conferences _____

Total number of resource people involved/used _____

Describe: _____

Total number of students referred to/provided extra tutoring/help _____

% of students with grades of "A" or "B" _____

% of students with grades of "D" or "F" _____

Other Concerns or Causes for Celebration:

PATHWAY TEAM TEACHING

Pathway Teachers working together to coordinate classroom content and activities

Rationale

- To blend real-world experiences with rigorous academic study
- To reinforce learning across academic areas
- To collaborate on teaching content and learning techniques

Components

- Each teacher develops a curriculum map for her/his class/es.
- Teachers determine common themes across curricula
- Meet weekly during common planning time to discuss coordination of content and themes
- Determine common expectations for all written work.
- Determine common expectations for student presentations/exhibitions of work.
- Evaluate student work to assure high expectations and high quality.
- Coordinate reading lists to reflect all academic areas.
- Reinforce Habits of Mind and SCANS skills across all subject areas.
- Reinforce literacy and math standards across all subject areas
- Coordinate after school and/or before school/lunch time tutoring sessions.
- Share instructional time to support common themes and projects.
- (If applicable) Develop an interdisciplinary Pathway/House Student Portfolio

PATHWAY ACTION PLAN

Aspect _____

(Pathway School-Based Learning (*including Pathway Curriculum Integration and Development*), Pathway Student Support Strategies, Pathway Work-based Learning, Pathway Service Learning, Pathway Student Leadership & Voice; Pathway Recruitment and Scheduling, Pathway Home-School Partnership, Pathway Business/Community/Post-Secondary Advisory Board & Partnerships; Pathway Events and Publicity, etc.)

WHO (is responsible)

For WHAT (describe overall actions involved)

WHY important? Purpose? (if applicable)

ACTION STEPS/ACTION TIMETABLE (what, when)

RESOURCES NEEDED:

EVIDENCE OF SUCCESS:

Understanding and Overcoming the Five Dysfunctions of Teams

Dysfunction 1: Absence of Trust

Members of teams with trust:

- Admit weaknesses and mistakes
- Ask for help
- Accept questions and input about their areas of responsibility
- Give one another the benefit of the doubt before arriving at a negative conclusion
- Take risks in offering feedback and assistance
- Appreciate and tap into one another's skills and experiences
- Focus time and energy on important issues, not politics
- Offer and accept apologies without hesitation
- Look forward to meetings and other opportunities to work as a group

Members of teams with an absence of trust:

- Conceal their weaknesses and mistakes from one another
- Hesitate to ask for help or provide constructive feedback
- Hesitate to offer help outside their own areas of responsibility
- Jump to conclusions about the intentions and aptitudes of others without attempting to clarify them
- Fail to recognize and tap into one another's skills and experiences
- Waste time and energy managing their behaviors for effect
- Hold grudges
- Dread meetings and find reasons to avoid spending time together

Suggestions for overcoming Dysfunction 1:

- *Requires shared experiences over time*
- *Requires in-depth understanding of the unique attributes of team members*
- *Structured team-building activities - Start with simple things like sharing number of siblings, children, hometown, favorite hobbies, first job, worst job*
- *Team Effectiveness Exercise - Team members identify the single most important contribution that each of their peers makes to the team, as well as the one area that they must either improve upon or eliminate for the good of the team. A leader manages the dialogue that ensues, keeping the conversation productive and constructive.*
- *Experiential Team Exercises - Activities such as ropes courses and other creative outdoor activities involve collective support and cooperation can be valuable tools for enhancing teamwork.*

Dysfunction 2: Fear of Conflict

Teams that engage in conflict:

- Have lively, interesting meetings
- Extract and exploit the ideas of all team members
- Solve real problems quickly
- Minimize politics

- Put critical topics on the table for discussion

Teams that fear conflict:

- Have boring meetings
- Create environments where back-channel politics and personal attacks thrive
- Ignore controversial topics that are critical to team success
- Fail to tap into all the opinions and perspectives of team members
- Waste time and energy with posturing and interpersonal risk management

Suggestions for overcoming Dysfunction 2:

- *Acknowledge that healthy conflict is productive*
- *Members of teams that tend to avoid conflict must occasionally assume the role of a "miner of conflict" - someone who extracts buried disagreements within the team, sheds the light of day on them, and forces the team members to work through them. Some teams decide to assign a team member this role during a given meeting or discussion.*
- *Real-time permission - During a difficult team discussion, one in which conflict is productive but possibly strong, remind team that conflict is important, necessary, and good for the team.*

Dysfunction 3: Lack of Commitment

A team that commits:

- Creates clarity around direction and priorities
- Aligns the entire team around common objectives
- Develops an ability to learn from mistakes
- Takes advantage of opportunities before competitors do
- Moves forward without hesitation
- Changes direction without hesitation or guilt

A team that fails to commit:

- Creates ambiguity among the team about direction and priority
- Watches windows of opportunity close due to excessive analysis and unnecessary delay
- Breeds lack of confidence and fear of failure
- Revisits discussions and decisions again and again
- Encourages second-guessing among team members

Suggestions for overcoming Dysfunction 3:

- *Cascading messaging - At the end of each meeting, review key decisions made during a meeting and agree on what needs to be communicated to others about those decisions. This helps team members clarify what they have actually agreed upon. It also helps them to clarify which decisions, if any, should remain confidential, and which should be communicated quickly and comprehensively.*
- *Deadlines - Establish clear deadlines for when decisions will be made and honor those dates with discipline and rigidity. The worst enemy of a team that is susceptible to this dysfunction is ambiguity.*

- *Contingency and worst-case scenario analysis - Briefly discuss contingency plans up front and clarify the worst-case scenario for a decision a team is struggling to make. This usually allows the team to reduce its fears by helping it to realize that the costs of an incorrect decision are survivable and far less damaging than imagined.*
- *Low-risk exposure therapy - Start with a demonstration of decisiveness in a relatively low-risk situation. When teams force themselves to do this, they usually come to realize that the quality of the decision they made was better than they had expected, and they learn that the decision would not have been much different had the team engaged in length, time-consuming study.*

Dysfunction 4: Avoidance of Accountability

A team that holds one another accountable:

- Ensures that poor performers feel pressure to improve
- Identifies potential problems quickly by questioning one another's approaches without hesitation
- Establishes respect among team members who are held to the same high standards
- Avoid excessive bureaucracy around performance management and corrective action

A team that avoids accountability:

- Creates resentment among team members who have different standards of performance
- Encourages mediocrity
- Misses deadlines and key deliverables
- Places an undue burden on the team leader as the sole source of discipline

Suggestions for overcoming Dysfunction 4:

- *Publication of goals and standards - Clarify publicly exactly what the team needs to achieve, who needs to deliver what, and how everyone must behave in order to succeed. The enemy of accountability is ambiguity.*
- *Simple and regular progress reviews - Team members should regularly communicate with one another, either verbally or in writing, about how they feel their teammates are doing against stated objectives and standards.*
- *Team rewards - By shifting rewards away from individual performance to team achievement, the team will create a culture of accountability.*

Dysfunction 5: Inattention to Results

A team that focuses on collective results:

- Retains achievement-oriented employees
- Minimizes individualistic behavior
- Enjoys success and suffers failure acutely
- Benefits from individuals who subjugate their own goals/interests for the good of the team
- Avoid distractions

A team that is not focused on results:

- Stagnates/fails to grow
- Rarely defeats competitors
- Loses achievement-oriented employees
- Encourages team members to focus on their own careers and individual goals
- Is easily distracted

Suggestions for overcoming Dysfunction 5:

- *Make public declarations about intended results - Teams that are willing to commit publicly to specific results are more likely to work with a passionate desire to achieve those results.*
- *Reward only those behaviors and actions that contribute to those results.*

- adapted from the work of Patrick Lencioni in The Five Dysfunctions of a Team - A Leadership Framework, Jossey Bass, 2002. (source: Rob Atterbury)