

excerpt from ***Appendix C*** of

a center report entitled:

**Resource-Oriented Teams: Key Infrastructure
Mechanisms For Enhancing Education Supports**

Appendix C

Resource Aids for Developing Resource Coordinating Teams/Councils

- < *Checklist for Establishing School-Site Teams*
- < *Examples of Initial and Ongoing Tasks for
Team/Council*
- < *Planning and Facilitating Effective Meetings*

Checklist for Establishing School-Site Teams

1. ___ Job descriptions/evaluations reflect a policy for working in a coordinated and increasingly integrated way to maximize resource use and enhance effectiveness (this includes allocation of time and resources so that team members can build capacity and work effectively together to maximize resource coordination and enhancement).
2. ___ Every interested staff member is encouraged to participate.
3. ___ Team include key stakeholders (e.g., guidance counselors, school psychologists, nurses, social workers, attendance and dropout counselors, health educators, special education staff, after school program staff, bilingual and Title I program coordinators, health educators, safe and drug free school staff, representatives of any community agency significantly involved with the site, administrator, regular classroom teachers, non-certificated staff, parents, older students).
4. ___ The size of teams reflects current needs, interests, and factors associated with efficient and effective functioning. (The larger the group, the harder it is to find a meeting time and the longer each meeting tends to run. Frequency of meetings depends on the group's functions, time availability, and ambitions. Properly designed and trained teams can accomplish a great deal through informal communication and short meetings).
5. ___ There is a core of team members who have or will acquire the ability to carry out identified functions and make the mechanism work (others are auxiliary members). All are committed to the team's mission. (Building team commitment and competence should be a major focus of school management policies and programs. Because various teams at a school require the expertise of the same personnel, some individuals will necessarily be on more than one team.)
6. ___ Team has a dedicated leader/facilitator who is able to keep the group task-focused and productive
7. ___ Team has someone who records decisions and plans and reminds members of planned activity and products.
8. ___ Team uses advanced technology (management systems, electronic bulletin boards and E-mail, resource clearinghouses) to facilitate communication, networking, program planning and implementation, linking activity, and a variety of budgeting, scheduling, and other management concerns.

Exhibit

Examples of Initial and Ongoing Tasks for *Team/Council*

- , Orientation for representatives to introduce each to the other and provide further clarity of group's purposes and processes
- , Review membership to determine if any major stakeholder is not represented; take steps to assure proper representation
- , Share and map information regarding what exists (programs, services, systems for triage, referral, case management, etc. – at a site; at each site; in the district and community)
- , Analyze information on resources to identify important needs at specific sites and for the complex/family of schools as a whole
- , Establish priorities for efforts to enhance resources and systems
- , Formulate plans for pursuing priorities
- , Each site discusses need for coordinating crisis response across the complex and for sharing complex resources for site specific crises and then explores conclusions and plans at Council meeting
- , Discussion of staff (and other stakeholder) development activity with a view to combining certain training across sites
- , Discussion of quality improvement and longer-term planning (e.g., efficacy, pooling of resources)

General Meeting format

- , Updating on and introduction of membership
- , Reports from those who had between meeting assignments
- , Current topic for discussion and planning
- , Decision regarding between meeting assignments

Planning and Facilitating Effective Meetings

Forming a Working Group

- C There should be a clear statement about the group's mission.
- C Be certain that members agree to pursue the stated mission and, for the most part, share a vision.
- C Pick someone who the group will respect and who either already has good facilitation skills or will commit to learning those that are needed.
- C Provide training for members so they understand their role in keeping a meeting on track and turning talk into effective action..
- C Designate processes (a) for sending members information before a meeting regarding what is to be accomplished, specific agenda items, and individual assignments and (b) for maintaining and circulating record of decisions and planned actions (what, who, when).

Meeting Format

- C Be certain there is a written agenda and that it clearly states the purpose of the meeting, specific topics, and desired outcomes for the session.
- C Begin the meeting by reviewing purpose, topics, desired outcomes, etc. Until the group is functioning well, it may be necessary to review meeting ground rules.
- C Facilitate the involvement of all members, and do so in ways that encourage them to focus specifically on the task. The facilitator remains neutral in discussion of issues.
- C Try to maintain a comfortable pace (neither too rushed, nor too slow; try to start on time and end on time but don't be a slave to the clock).
- C Periodically review what has been accomplished and move on the next item.
- C Leave time to sum up and celebrate accomplishment of outcomes and end by enumerating specific follow up activity (what, who, when). End with a plan for the next meeting (date, time, tentative agenda). For a series of meetings, set the dates well in advance so members can plan their calendars.

Some Group Dynamics to Anticipate

- C *Hidden Agendas* – All members should agree to help keep hidden agendas in check and, when such items cannot be avoided, facilitate the rapid presentation of a point and indicate where the concern needs to be redirected.
- C *A Need for Validation* – When members make the same point over and over, it usually indicates they feel an important point is not being validated. To counter such disruptive repetition, account for the item in a visible way so that members feel their contributions have been acknowledged. When the item warrants discussion at a later time, assign it to a future agenda.
- C *Members are at an Impasse* – Two major reasons groups get stuck are: (a) some new ideas are needed to "get out of a box" and (b) differences in perspective need to be aired and resolved. The former problem usually can be dealt with through brainstorming or by bringing in someone with new ideas to offer; to deal with conflicts that arise over process, content, and power relationships employ problem solving and conflict management strategies (e.g., accommodation, negotiation, mediation).
- C *Interpersonal Conflict and Inappropriate Competition* – These problems may be corrected by repeatedly bringing the focus back to the goal – improving outcomes for students/families; when this doesn't work; restructuring group membership may be necessary.
- C *Ain't It Awful!* – Daily frustrations experienced by staff often lead them to turn meetings into gripe sessions. Outside team members (parents, agency staff, business and/or university partners) can influence school staff to exhibit their best behavior.