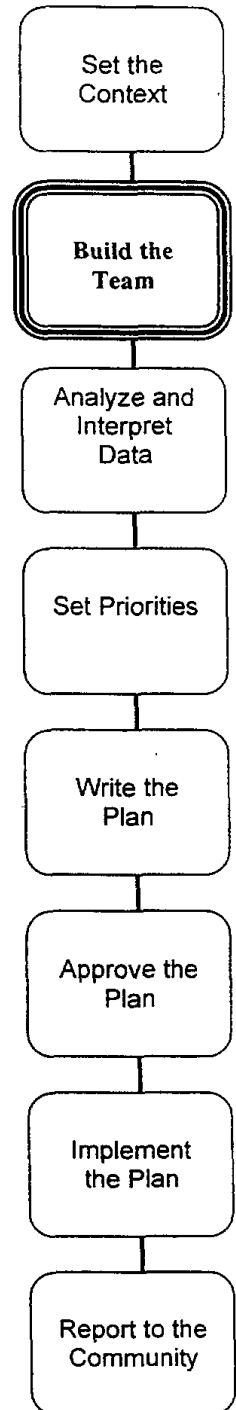


EQUITY AND EXCELLENCE

Build the Action Planning Team

The action planning team includes the people responsible for leading the development and implementation of the action plan. The selection of team members is a critical part of the process. Since teachers will most likely implement the majority of the plan, they should be heavily represented on the team.

The action planning team does not have to be “one more team” formed at your school. Consider how the work of other committees can mesh with the work of the action planning team.



Getting Started: Building the Team

What is the composition of the team?

At the minimum, your school action planning team must include: teachers, administrators, parents, community members and board members. Teacher members should include a cross section of grade levels and/or subject areas or programs. Administrators might include principals, superintendents, program directors, and curriculum coordinators. Community members might include business and industry representatives. (See Action Planning Rules on page iv.)

Action planning teams for technical centers might include teachers, the technical center director, superintendent, a representative from the regional advisory board and a community member.

Remember: *When forming the team, be sure to include a cross section of skills, points of view, and expertise.*

How big should the team be?

The size of the team will depend on school size and school configuration (elementary, middle, high school, technical centers). However, effective teams usually range from 5-8 people.

Some scenarios to consider when forming the team are:

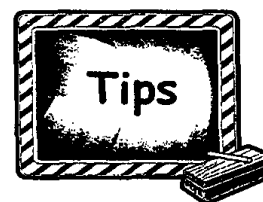
Scenario 1: There is an administrative team made up of the superintendent, assistant superintendent, curriculum coordinator, special services coordinator, technical center director, and principals from all schools in the district that serve as a leadership team or administrative council. In addition to this group there is a team in each school that analyzes data, does action planning work and shares information with the administrative team. The school team would include teachers, administrators, parents, community members and board members.

Scenario 2: A broad-based group starts to look at data at the school level. This group might include the principal, technical center director, teachers, a board member, a local business representative and a parent.

Team composition

**At the minimum,
the action planning
team must include:**

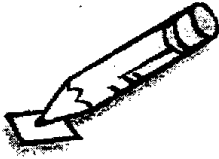
- teachers
- administrators
- parents
- community members
- school board members



Principles for effective teamwork

- ▶ All members share responsibility for the team.
- ▶ Decisions should always be agreed to by the team.
- ▶ Use methods which encourage full participation.
- ▶ Be flexible.
- ▶ Cut down the threat to individual members.
- ▶ Continually evaluate team progress.
- ▶ Team members should be conscious of the importance of their roles.

Source: Arbuckle, M.A. & Murray, L.B.; (1998) *Building Systems for Professional Growth*, The Regional Lab, Andover, MA



Key idea

Action planning teams must include members with strong leadership and data analysis skills

For more information about team building techniques that work, read...

The Team Handbook for Educators: How to use Teams to Improve Quality

by Scholtes, P.R.,
Bayless, D.L., Massaro,
G.A. & Roche, N.K.
(1994) Joiner Associates,
Madison, WI

Guidelines for Developing an Educational Support System

By Ron Rubin and
others, (1998) Vermont
Department of Education,
Montpelier, VT

Scenario 3: School people, teacher leaders and administrators make up the initial team and have clear responsibility for the data process which they then share with a more broad-based team.

Scenario 4: An action planning team is formed by the school board or technical center regional advisory board to lead the process.

Scenario 5: In a large departmentalized school, such as a grades 7-12 or 9-12 high school, a steering team made up of the principal, teachers, curriculum leader, and special services coordinator may oversee several smaller teams. The smaller teams would analyze data specific to the areas assessed and develop action plans to meet needs identified. The teams and plans probably would be organized by subject area.

Other scenarios might include some combination of the above. For example, consider two-tiered teams: a leadership team and a project team. Regardless of the team configuration, there must be a leader who manages the team.

What are the roles and responsibilities of team members?

When building the team, it is vital to thoughtfully consider the roles and responsibilities of the team members. Two of the most critical functions on a team are team leadership and data analysis. Be sure to include individuals who are able to fulfill those functions.

Before deciding on whether or not to become a team member, potential candidates need to understand that the responsibilities of membership may include:

- giving input and communicating within the group;
- sharing information with others outside the team in a timely manner so that two-way communication becomes the working practice of the team;
- reviewing data in an ongoing way;
- committing to understanding and interpreting data;
- helping to develop solutions to problems;
- providing mutual support within the group;
- sustaining participation in the hard work throughout the entire process.

What perspectives and skills does each team member offer?

Do not choose members just because they are in a certain job role in the school; instead, consider the skills and strengths each individual can bring to the task.

Teachers who serve on the team bring knowledge of curriculum, instruction, and assessment as well as knowledge of the individual students in their classroom. Since they are the people who will be implementing many of the action plan objectives, they have knowledge of strategies that might be the most successful. Teachers have a good sense of their professional needs and the concerns of their students' parents.

Board Members who serve on the team bring knowledge of the community as well as knowledge of the budget.

Regional Advisory Board members bring knowledge of how high schools and technical centers have aligned curricula and services, and of the workforce education needs of the region.

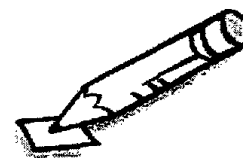
Community Members bring different perspectives on the needs and concerns of the community. Their participation also builds credibility and community ownership for the plan.

Parents bring a high level of commitment and are highly vested in the success of the school. They bring a unique insight into the needs and views of students.

Principals and Technical Center Directors link the community, district, school board, and teachers. The principal/technical center director is in a position to promote the development of shared goals, collaborative working environments, and procedures for monitoring an ongoing process toward meeting the goals of the action plan. The principal/technical center director strongly influences the likelihood that change will occur in the school.

Curriculum Directors bring knowledge of assessment, instruction, standards-based education, and professional development needs. They may have knowledge of the availability of grants and are often grant writers.

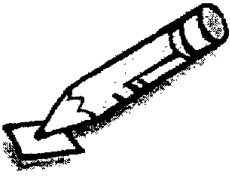
Directors of Special Services are familiar with legal requirements, parental and student rights, mental health resources, and facilitation



Key idea

Build the team with members whose skills and perspectives can strengthen the team and get the plan written to achieve the goals.

Notes _____



For guidance on establishing ground rules for meetings, see Appendix B.1

Remember the stages of team development

- ▶ **Forming**
Dependent on leader concern about clarity of task
- ▶ **Storming**
Conflict with members, leader, and task
- ▶ **Norming**
*Cohesiveness
Shifting leadership*
- ▶ **Performing**
*Interdependency
Creativity
High productivity*

Source: Arbuckle, M.A. & Murray, L.B. (1989). *Building Systems for Professional Growth*. Murray & Arbuckle, The Regional Lab, Andover, MA

processes. They may also be knowledgeable about the availability of grants.

Superintendents bring a district-wide perspective. Superintendents affect the success of the implementation of the action plan by the way they support new proposals, plan with school boards, provide district-wide leadership, visit schools to support implementation activities, and follow through on decisions of the action planning team.

Representatives from business and industry bring knowledge of the skills students need to pursue career opportunities and of resources available to acquire those skills.

How does a successful team work?

By definition, the mission of an action planning team is to increase student achievement through goal setting and ongoing monitoring of data. With this clear mission, the school can progress toward the goals of the action plan.

To ensure success, team members need to be clear about individual responsibilities and decision-making processes. Successful teams have assigned roles and responsibilities that have been agreed upon by team members. Action planning team members responsibly share information in an ongoing manner with others who are not members of the action planning team so that all school staff participate in the process. Communication must take place within the action planning team and across teams for changes in student performance to become a reality.