Turning Points

TRANSFORMING MIDDLE SCHOOLS

Guide to Collaborative Culture and Shared Leadership
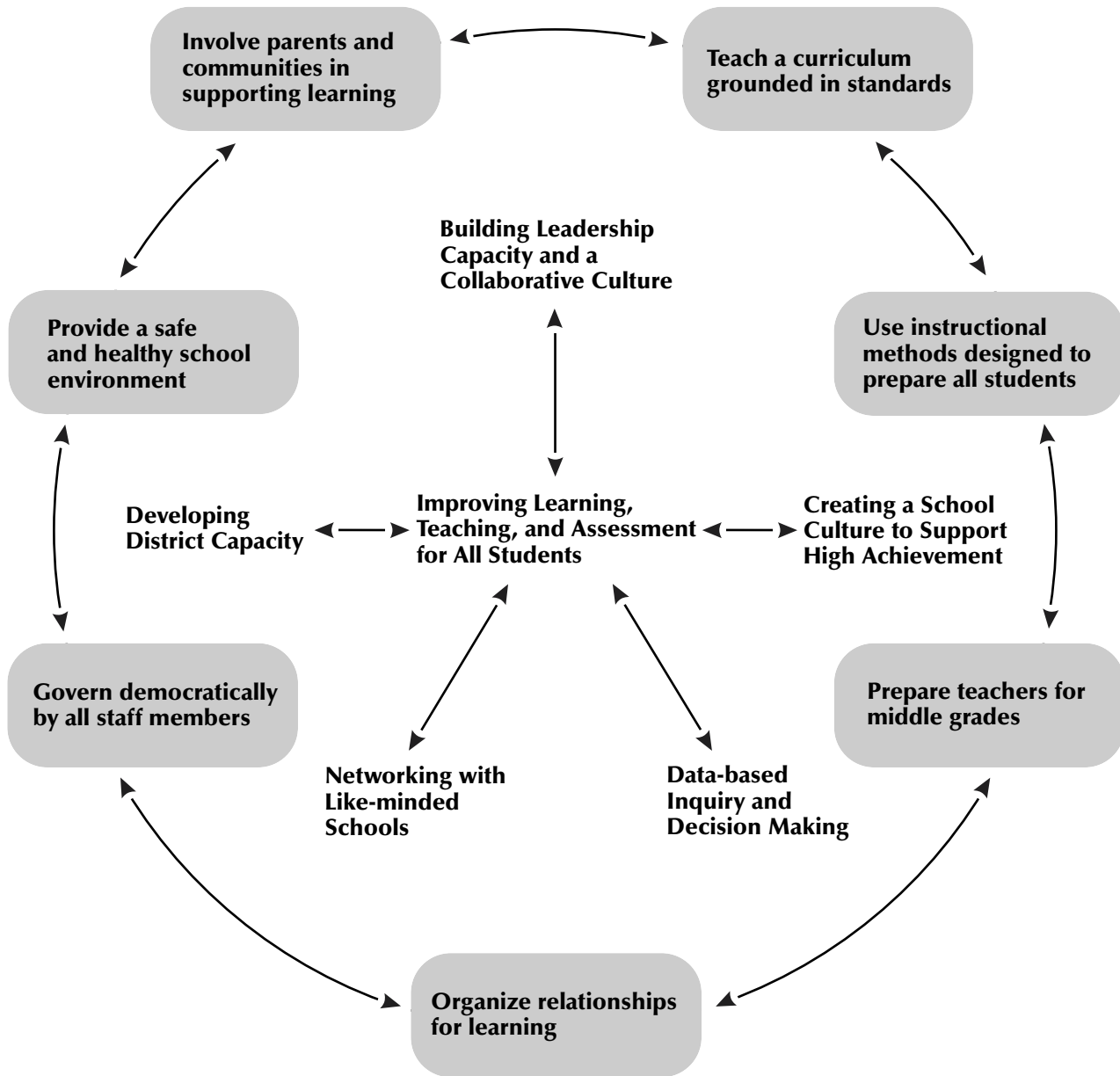
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Preface

Turning Points is a national design for middle school change, coordinated by the Center for Collaborative Education in Boston, Massachusetts, which serves as the National Turning Points Center. Based on the seminal *Turning Points* report issued by the Carnegie Corporation in 1989, it is a comprehensive and systemic school reform initiative that involves a change in practices, values, and the culture of the school.

Turning Points schools create a new culture built around the collaboration of all members of the school community. This collaborative culture requires structures that empower teachers and administrators to work together to make the most important decisions regarding the educational experiences of their students. The two primary components of this culture are 1) shared leadership and decision making and 2) the creation of effective teacher teams.

This guide begins with rationales and detailed explanations for developing a collaborative culture and for creating shared leadership, decision making, and effective teacher teams. The Shared Leadership section describes the changing roles of the members of the school community. The Effective Teams section explains the components and skills needed for team members to be successful when they work together on the challenges facing their school. The Appendix includes a selection of tools, protocols, and exercises that can be used to develop a collaborative culture and shared leadership.

Turning Points Design
Principles and Practices

Involve parents and communities in supporting learning

Teach a curriculum grounded in standards

Building Leadership Capacity and a Collaborative Culture

Provide a safe and healthy school environment

Use instructional methods designed to prepare all students

Developing District Capacity

Improving Learning, Teaching, and Assessment for All Students

Creating a School Culture to Support High Achievement

Govern democratically by all staff members

Prepare teachers for middle grades

Networking with Like-minded Schools

Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making

Organize relationships for learning

Turning Points Principles*

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Teach a curriculum grounded in rigorous, public academic standards, relevant to the concerns of adolescents and based on how students learn best

■

Use instructional methods designed to prepare all students to achieve high standards and become lifelong learners

■

Staff middle grade schools with teachers who are expert at teaching young adolescents, and engage teachers in ongoing professional development

■

Organize relationships for learning to create a climate of intellectual development and a caring community of shared educational purpose

■

Govern democratically through direct or representative participation by all school staff members, the adults who know students best

■

Provide a safe and healthy school environment as part of improving academic performance and developing caring and ethical citizens

■

Involve parents and communities in supporting student learning and healthy development

Six practices translate these principles into action in each school and throughout a network of Turning Points schools in a district. Within each area of practice, teacher teams, a school leadership team, and faculty committees, engage in collaborative work.

The Six Turning Points Practices

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Improving Learning, Teaching, and Assessment for All Students: working collaboratively to set high standards, close the achievement gap among students, develop curriculum that promotes habits of mind and intellectual inquiry, utilize a wide range of instructional strategies and approaches, emphasize the teaching of literacy and numeracy

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Building Leadership Capacity and a Professional Collaborative Culture: creating a democratic school community, fostering skills and practices of strong leadership, establishing regular common planning time, embedding professional development in the daily life of the school

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Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making: setting a vision based on the Turning Points principles, collecting and analyzing multiple sources of data to help improve areas that most impact learning, teaching, and assessment, setting annual measurable goals

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Creating a School Culture to Support High Achievement and Personal Development: creating structures that promote a culture of high-quality learning and teaching, establishing small learning communities, eliminating tracking, lowering student-teacher ratios, building parent and community partnerships

■

Networking with Like-minded Schools: participating in network meetings, summer institutes, and forums; visiting other Turning Points schools

■

Developing District Capacity to Support School Change: building district capacity through collaboration

Introduction

Rushing out of the main office, seventh grade teacher Harold Eccles almost bowled over his colleague, Maria Cordero. "Sorry, Maria! Do you know where our study group meets this afternoon?"

"Tony's room. Did you get the article I put in your box?"

Looking over his shoulder, Harold called back, "Yes, I liked that one a lot. Can't wait to hear what Tony has to say about it. I have to run—I'm late for my academic team meeting!"

Harold Eccles, Maria Cordero, Tony Maddux, and three other teachers from Cass Middle School are members of a study group investigating the effect of teacher expectations on low-performing students. The faculty agreed that this was an important topic to investigate after analyzing the self-study data their school received from the Turning Points National Center. According to this data, 73% of students with a C- average or lower reported that they have higher expectations for themselves than their teachers do. The teachers formed a study group to find out why students perceived that their teachers had low expectations of them and what could be done about it. They will use their findings to make recommendations to the full faculty and leadership team.

Two months into the study, the teachers have read and discussed several articles on their topic. They have also interviewed 20 students—12 students whose average is lower than a C- and 8 students with better than a B average. In the interviews, the students were asked to share their thoughts on how they and their teachers expect them to do in school.

At the study group's second presentation to the full faculty, Maria gave an update on their progress and preliminary findings. She also asked the faculty what questions they had about the topic and what directions the study should take. The presentation and discussion that followed helped the faculty develop interest in the research and share their ideas. Eventually, the whole school will look to this study group for guidance about how to improve the learning of students who have an average below C-.

The work of the study group reflects the collaborative culture of a Turning Points school where all members of the school community work together to improve teaching and learning. Recognizing the need both to strengthen the academic core of middle schools and to establish caring, supportive environments that value young adolescents, Turning Points schools often undergo dramatic change. Teachers employ new instructional methods. Students and teachers are organized in new ways. Students are involved in planning and managing their own learning. The school schedule may be redesigned. Professional development operates differently. New partnerships between the school and the community are created. All of these efforts are focused squarely on improving learning, teaching, and assessment. Because change in Turning Points schools is a complex process, a new operational culture is required, one that is based on *collaboration, shared leadership and decision making.*

Collaborative Culture

In a collaborative culture, members of the school community work together effectively and are guided by a common purpose. All members of the community—teachers, administrators, students and their families—share a common vision of what the school should be like. Together they set goals that lead them toward this vision. In doing so, they create a culture of discourse in which the most important educational matters facing the school are openly and honestly discussed. Members respect each other, value their differences, and are open to each other's ideas. Even when there is disagreement, people listen to each other because they believe deeply that differences are vital in moving their school forward. The teachers in Turning Points schools know they can be more effective and are continually looking for the piece of advice, the book, the research, the organizational structure that will help them improve. The many different voices, experiences, and styles of the school community add to its strength and vitality.

Many studies, including the research Carl Glickman cites in his book, *Renewing American Schools*, support the Turning Points view that a collaborative culture best builds and sustains effective teaching and learning in schools. Glickman reports that successful schools are places where teachers are always questioning their practices; faculty members guide one another, plan together, coordinate their practices, and participate in the most important decisions; and larger questions about educational practice are at the forefront of meetings and conversations.[1] These elements—faculty members working together, discussing important issues relevant to their role as professionals, and taking a significant role in the school's decision-making process—provide the foundation for developing a collaborative culture.

BUILDING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

To build a collaborative culture, members of the school community:

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Share the belief that working collaboratively is the best way to reach the school's goals

■

Develop organizational structures that allow teachers to form teams and work together

> **"Collaboration means working together jointly, especially in intellectual endeavors."**
> *—Webster's Dictionary*

■

Agree on norms so teams can work effectively

■

Define a vision for the school based on what students should know and be able to do

■

Set goals to achieve the vision

Shared Leadership and Decision Making

Shared leadership and decision making is a primary component of a school's collaborative culture. It allows all members of the school community to play a role in determining the direction of the school and in understanding the impetus for change. Shared leadership means many more people than the administrators have the information and the power to make decisions and enact changes. Instead of one or two people making decisions alone, teams make decisions by consensus after all participants have voiced their opinions and support for the change. Shared leadership requires an operational structure that allows more people to lead the thinking of the school and to participate in making decisions at all levels. To build a practice of shared leadership, a school needs to form teams and give them significant responsibility, schedule regular meeting times, improve methods of communication, and find ways to implement shared decisions.

When schools adopt shared leadership and decision making as an organizational practice, the role of the principal often changes dramatically. Instead of being the primary decision-maker on all matters, the principal creates opportunities for teachers, parents, and other members of the school community to become leaders and decision makers as they work together to build on the successes and tackle the challenges of the school.

With shared leadership teachers become members of teams and play a substantial role in the change a school undertakes. As teachers participate on the school's leadership team, study groups, and academic and discipline-based teams, they are able to influence their school's direction and make decisions about the school's curriculum, teaching priorities, hiring, and budget and expenditures. When teachers have a

Shared leadership means many more people than the administrators have the information and the power to make decisions and enact changes.

genuine part in making decisions and implementing changes, they become more committed to reform efforts. In a collaborative culture, reform is not imposed upon teachers but created by them.

Parents and other community members also have a stake in the shared leadership of a school. Led by teams of teachers and the leadership team, the Turning Points school makes it possible for those outside of the school to participate in school reform. For example, the school might request feedback from parents on the challenges that affect students and the family-school connection, or a parent member may join a study group. With these groups' new role in school leadership comes the responsibility to work closely with the school to understand its work and its needs.

GROUPS CONTRIBUTING TO SHARED LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING IN TURNING POINTS SCHOOLS

- Leadership team

- Academic teams

- Study groups

- Discipline-based teams

- Full faculty

Working in Teams

Effective teams are one of the key instruments of the Turning Points design. As schools are being asked to do more and more, the demands on schools and teachers are greater. Research has shown that successful schools create structures that allow teachers to collaborate on the challenges they face. Instead of working in isolated classrooms without interaction with their colleagues, teachers in successful schools come together to discuss ideas, share practices, and plan curriculum.[2]

Teams vary in size, purpose, and the length of time they work together. An academic team may work together for a number of years while a study group may be task-specific and end its work

after a year. Effective teacher teams respond to the needs of students and the changing nature of the school.

BENEFITS OF WORKING IN TEAMS

Teachers working in teams benefit schools in three important ways:

- Teachers working together are better able to create shared expectations and high standards for all students.

- Teachers working together engage in discourse that leads to creating learning experiences that are richer and of higher quality than those created by teachers working in isolation.

- Teachers working in teams are more effective in creating the collaborative culture that allows a school to continuously reflect on and improve its practices.

CHALLENGES TO DEVELOPING A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

Of course, there are many operational and cultural barriers to developing a collaborative culture. Established systems often stand in the way of such change. In many middle schools, teachers are not organized into teams. If teams do exist, the schedule may not allow them to meet for a significant amount of time. Teachers are so busy that it is difficult to put immediate concerns on hold to consider a question posed in a study group, or to take the time to reach consensus on a major instructional decision. Redefining a school's culture so its teachers value working together and can team effectively is even more difficult because teaching historically has been characterized by a culture of isolation. This culture of isolation has kept teachers from working together and supporting each other and has made it more difficult to learn from colleagues.[3] Finally, as people confront these ingrained challenges and begin to change their beliefs and practices, tensions and disagreements inevitably arise.

These challenges do not have to keep a school from successfully reforming. Instead, it is how a school and its staff respond to them that will make changes in practice and culture successful. These obstacles actually provide opportunities for schools to work together.

Drawing on the tools in this guide and the assistance of a coach and network, a Turning Points school will, with time and commitment, overcome the challenges and build a strong collaborative culture.

EXAMPLES OF EVIDENCE THAT A SCHOOL HAS SHARED LEADERSHIP AND A COLLABORATIVE CULTURE

■ School governance structures engage the entire faculty through teams, committees, and full faculty meetings to decide on key instructional, programmatic, and budgetary issues of the school.

■ The entire school community develops a shared vision to move the school forward.

■ Teams of teachers plan and implement curriculum and assessments for students.

■ Teams work collaboratively to examine multiples sources of data to identify challenges and then use an inquiry process to develop school-wide solutions.

■ Teams of teachers and others use protocols for looking at student and teacher work.

■ Study groups meet every month to investigate the challenges the school faces.

■ Full faculty discusses recommendations made by study groups and reaches consensus on how to implement recommended changes.

■ All teams know what the other teams are working on through regular progress updates and publication of the minutes and agendas.

■ School-wide challenges and goals are known by students, teachers, and parents.

Shared Leadership and Decision Making

This section describes each of the five groups that make up the shared leadership structure and explains how the groups work together to effect school change.

The Shared Leadership Structure

The Turning Points design calls for a collaborative leadership structure based on shared decision making. This shared leadership allows teachers, administrators, students, parents, and community members to play a significant role in the decision making that affects all aspects of the school. In the shared leadership structure, members of the school community work collaboratively in groups and make decisions by consensus.

THE FIVE GROUPS

■

Leadership team

■

Academic teams

■

Study groups

■

Discipline-based teams

■

Full faculty

GROUPS CONTRIBUTING TO SHARED LEADERSHIP AND DECISION MAKING IN TURNING POINTS SCHOOLS

NAME	ROLES	MEMBERSHIP	MEETINGS
Leadership Team	Coordinates change effort and professional development Facilitates and manages data-based inquiry and decision making Models shared leadership Develops collaborative accountability Develops system of communicating teams' and school progress to both the internal and external school communities	Six to twelve members: Teachers representing all grade levels, disciplines, and specialists Principal Parents (optional) Community member (optional)	Once every two weeks for two hours
Academic Team	Develops instructional practice to improve teaching and learning for students they teach Uses protocols such as consultancies, text-based discussions, looking at student work, and peer observation to improve practice	Two to six teachers who share the same students	At least twice a week for at least 45 minutes each time
Study Group	Investigates a topic related to teaching, learning, and assessment based on data and consensus from the full faculty	Five to eight members: Mostly teachers May include administrators, parents, community members	Twice a month for one to two hours
Discipline-based Team	Maps school curriculum Develops coherence within the discipline Identifies best practices within the discipline	All teachers who teach a specific discipline	Every four to six weeks for one to two hours
Full Faculty	Participates in and comes to consensus on decision making for all school-wide issues	Full faculty	Once a month or as needed

THE LEADERSHIP TEAM

The leadership team coordinates the school's effort as its members gather information, guide the vision-making process, and communicate the school's progress to all members of the school community. To undergo major change, any organization needs a group of people that understands the change process, is committed to it, and takes responsibility for its success. Whole-school change requires extensive coordination, communication, and management. In a Turning Points school, the leadership team takes the central role of leading the change process that a school undergoes while ensuring that the faculty and staff are an integral part of all change.

The leadership team is responsible for coordinating, communicating, and managing the Turning Points change effort.

The leadership team should have six to twelve members including the principal and teachers representing major constituencies in the school (e.g., all grade levels, specialists, disciplines, etc). The school may also consider including parent or community representatives. The leadership team meets every other week for two hours and works on a number of different fronts to lead the change process.

These include:

Ensuring the Turning Points change process continues to move forward by maintaining the school's focus on its goals and vision and by monitoring the implementation of the six Turning Points practices. The leadership team manages the many processes that are part of the Turning Points reform including vision setting, data-based inquiry, curriculum mapping, and the school review. This team develops agendas, action plans, and any professional development required to implement these processes. Essentially, the leadership team ensures that the faculty is committed to and engaged in Turning Points reform.

Facilitating and managing decision making on significant issues that affect the school and making other decisions based on staff and team input. The leadership team manages the Turning Points data-based inquiry and decision making practice for the whole school. In addition, the leadership team uses Turning Points benchmarks to monitor the change process to make sure the school is moving toward its vision and goals.

Ensuring effective communication on all phases of the Turning Points change process. Communication is essential to the success of the Turning Points change effort. It is the responsibility of the leadership team to communicate about all signifi-

cant school operations including the progress, process, and potential pitfalls of the change effort. Communication should not be considered a one-time effort, such as a newsletter or memo that goes out to those concerned. Instead, the leadership team needs to create a system that regularly and repeatedly informs all members of the local community about the many changes the school is undergoing. This system includes a number of different tools such as informal updates, team presentations, sharing of team minutes, and inviting other teams or community members to leadership team meetings. The leadership team understands that informing as many people as possible about how the school is improving enables more people to participate in ways that are helpful.

The leadership team encourages trust by listening to the faculty, responding to what the faculty sees as important, and communicating the progress and process of their work.

Clear and effective communication fosters trust among the staff by answering their questions and eliminating surprises. The leadership team encourages trust when its members listen to the faculty, responds to what the faculty sees as important, and communicates the progress and process of their work. By developing clear lines of communication between faculty teams, the leadership team can facilitate teachers' learning from each other so they will know how each team is working to implement the Turning Points design.

ACADEMIC TEAMS

Academic teams form the core of the Turning Points collaborative structure of shared leadership.

Academic teams form the core of the Turning Points collaborative structure of shared leadership. An academic team consists of two to six teachers who teach and are responsible for the same students. This team meets at least twice a week for a minimum of 45 minutes each time. The purpose of this team is to develop a home base for students and teachers alike. With an academic team, especially if teachers teach more than one subject, students usually interact with fewer teachers. As a result, teachers and students know each other better. Teachers understand their students, know what motivates them, what discourages them, and what kinds of challenges or help they respond to. Communication with parents is more consistent when an academic team organizes how and when to make contact. Because students work with the same teachers and peers, their level of comfort and stability rises, which results in more opportunities for leadership and learning.

The Changed Role of the Principal

In the new role, the principal recognizes that no one person in the building is the most knowledgeable or experienced practitioner. Rather, the principal is aware of the strengths of the staff and taps into each member's expertise to improve teaching and learning in the school. The principal works with the staff to develop a strong professional culture in which teachers continuously collaborate to ensure fulfillment of the school's vision.

FOCUS ON INTERCONNECTED AREAS

The principal's new role focuses on five interconnected areas:

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Sharing decision-making power with staff and faculty

The principal shares authority by providing meaningful opportunities for teachers to participate in significant decision making in academic teams, discipline-based teams, study groups, and the leadership team.

■

Providing support for effective functioning of teams

The principal ensures that teachers have the skills and understanding to participate effectively in teams. These skills include defining a purpose, setting measurable goals, creating norms for operating, setting agendas, and assigning tasks. The principal also gives ongoing feedback to teams, supporting and encouraging their work. Giving compliments and recognition to teams for their progress goes a long way towards supporting their work.

■

Being an instructional leader who prompts others to continuously learn and improve their practice

As the instructional leader, the principal often visits classrooms to work with teachers and students or attends academic team meetings to assist the development of effective teaching and learning strategies. In this role, the principal also obtains instructional resources and professional development opportunities that improve learning, teaching, and assessment practices.

The principal shares authority by providing meaningful opportunities for teachers to participate in significant decision making.

Effective Teams

Creating effective teacher teams that are committed to improving student, team, and school performance is a complex undertaking. Understanding what creates effective teams will help make teacher teams successful. Numerous studies and books chronicle the complexities of developing teams within organizations and document the practices that help teams successfully meet their goals.[4] The findings in these resources can be adapted to schools.

Characteristics of Effective Teams

In schools, effective teams:

- Have a culture of discourse at their center

- Have a clearly defined purpose that guides their work and specific, measurable goals that they achieve

- Define and are committed to norms that guide how the team operates

- Are disciplined in maintaining their focus

- Communicate effectively within the team and with those outside of the team

■

Improve the ability of team members to function as a team in the future.

(See the Appendix section of this guide for tools to assist Turning Points teams.)

1

EFFECTIVE TEACHER TEAMS HAVE A CULTURE OF DISCOURSE AT THEIR CENTER.

In a culture of discourse, team members discuss and think about significant issues related to improving teaching, learning, and assessment. Team members demonstrate respect for each other by valuing differences of opinion and being open-minded to others' ideas. Disagreements and challenges are welcomed in team discussions because they often push collective thinking to a deeper level. Ultimately, many of these discussions should result in improved student learning and growth.

It takes time and discipline to raise the quality of teacher discourse— focusing on ideas and application rather than on the housekeeping details that often take up so much of teachers' time. Teams may use text-based discussions, case studies, and protocols for looking at student and teacher work to deepen their conversations and focus them on the substantial issues surrounding teaching and learning. At times, meetings can become uncomfortable when a group is confronting important and difficult issues. However, when a culture of discourse is at the center of a team's operations, the work of the team is better informed by the expertise of its members and is more likely to effect lasting change.

2

EFFECTIVE TEACHER TEAMS HAVE A CLEARLY DEFINED PURPOSE THAT GUIDES THEIR WORK AND SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE GOALS THAT THEY ACHIEVE

The most successful teams have a purpose or mission they are deeply committed to that drives them forward. A clearly defined purpose energizes a team because all members understand why they are together. Similar to an overarching goal, the purpose or mission defines the general intent of the team. This common purpose serves to keep the team focused at all times. All actions and decisions must make sense relative to this purpose.

Specific, measurable goals are the steps that will lead a team toward accomplishing its purpose and making an impact on the school or students. Too often in schools, committees meet and meet, plan and plan, and fail to achieve measurable results. Often, at the end of the school year or when the team loses its momentum, little or no action has taken place. Clear, measurable goals prevent this wheel-spinning by focusing discussion on action and how to achieve the desired outcomes.

Creating Specific Goals

To create specific goals, team members start by looking at their purpose and asking questions about how to fulfill that purpose. Some questions that might help at this stage include:

What do we need to do to accomplish our purpose?
What steps will move us toward fulfilling our purpose?
What evidence will show that we are moving closer to our goals?

Goals should be limited in number, move a team toward their purpose, be realistic and feasible, and be measurable.

The following table gives examples of purposes and goals for different types of teams.

EXAMPLES OF TEAM PURPOSES AND GOALS

TYPE OF TEACHER TEAM	TEAM PURPOSE	SAMPLE GOALS
Two-person, eighth grade academic team	To make student work more authentic and intellectual	Create two units that utilize experts from outside the school These units will be guided by habits of mind, skill goals, and content standards Instructional strategies will be varied and include active, applied learning and multiple-draft processes
Cross grade social studies team	To make social studies curriculum more coherent	Solicit input from students, parents, community members, and other schools on what is important to teach in social studies Develop year-long themes in each grade level Map the curriculum and eliminate gaps and redundancies
Study group investigating how well the school educates its low-income students	To investigate ways to improve the learning of low-income students	To research the types of support, instruction, and interaction that best support low-income students To pilot initiatives that target low-income students and gather data on their success. To recommend and implement practices that will improve the learning of low-income students
Leadership Team	To develop a shared leadership structure that allows more people to participate in the decision-making process	Create teacher study groups Develop systems to communicate with parents and the public Get input from teachers on all school-wide decisions

Appendix of Tools

This appendix includes the following eight tools to help teams work together more effectively. (For additional tools, see the Turning Points *Guide to Data-based Inquiry and Decision Making, Looking Collaboratively at Student and Teacher Work,* and the *Guide to Curriculum Development.*)

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Guidelines for Effective Meetings

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Setting Norms for Collaborative Work

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Creating Meeting Agendas

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Guidelines for Setting Goals

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The Consultancy Protocol

■

The Text-based Seminar

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Building a Collaborative School Culture: How Are We Doing?

■

Assessing a Team's Quality of Work

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

When you first establish a team, distribute the following helpful guidelines for discussion. You may adapt them to fit the needs of individual teams and revisit these guidelines as necessary.

Process

- The meeting agenda is distributed with sufficient time for members to prepare for the meeting.

- Members arrive on time for meetings.

- Meetings start and end at the scheduled times.

- Each meeting has an assigned facilitator, recorder, and timekeeper. (Often these are rotating positions.)

- Teams follow norms they have established together. (See the next page for a norm-setting activity.) These may include:
  trusting that members can say what they truly feel about an issue
  keeping confidentiality when agreed upon
  asking clarifying questions when in doubt about an issue
  having a chance to consider more than one solution to an issue
  thoroughly understanding an issue prior to reaching consensus
  encouraging participation by everyone, even the quietest members

- There are set time limits for individual agenda items.

- At the end of each meeting, the facilitator summarizes what has been accomplished. Plans on "who will do what by when" are finalized and recorded in the minutes.

- The recorder distributes minutes of meetings to all team members in a timely fashion.

- Someone takes responsibility to communicate regularly with the leadership team and other interested groups. (This may be a rotating position.)

- Periodically, teams evaluate meeting efficiency, productivity, and use of time.

SETTING NORMS FOR COLLABORATIVE WORK

Norms are ways of working together that help groups be more thoughtful and productive. Norms fall into two categories: procedural and interpersonal. Once norms have been established, it is important that the entire group, not just the facilitator, take responsibility for making sure that the norms are respected, and for redirecting the group when they are not. Norms can change and evolve as the group develops and matures.

Process

Areas to consider when setting norms

- **Logistics:** meeting time, place, duration, and frequency

- **Timeliness:** start time, finish time, lateness, and attendance

- **Courtesy:** listening, interruptions, equal participation, dealing with disagreements, respect, empathy, and sharing the workload

- **Decision Making Process:** How will we make decisions? Reach agreements? How will we show agreement?

- **Workload Assignment:** How will work be assigned? How will conflicts with existing workloads be settled?

- **Setting Priorities:** How will we discharge responsibility for on-time completion and equal distribution?

- **Enforcement of Norms:** How will we make sure the norms are followed?

ACTIVITY FOR SETTING NORMS

In this activity, members of a team write statements individually about how they want their team to operate on post-its and then categorize the statements into procedural norms and interpersonal norms. The group discusses the statements and reaches consensus on norms for their group.

Procedure

1. The facilitator passes out four post-it notes to each team member.

2. Each person writes a norm—a statement about how they want the group to work together—on each of the post-its. One norm for each post-it.

3. Each member reads his or her individual post-its aloud to the group and then places the post-it on a chart paper labeled with one of two categories—procedural norms and interpersonal norms.

4. Within each category, the facilitator groups the suggestions 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 in item 4, the norm could be "Make sure everyone is heard."

6. The team members discuss the norms that have been suggested and check to see whether or not they are in agreement about the norms. The group should reach consensus on all norms, keeping in mind that too many norms may be difficult to follow.

Hints

■ The team will work with greater commitment if they generate their own norms.

■ Post the norms during each meeting.

■ Add new norms as the team develops and new situations arise.

ASSESSING A TEAM'S QUALITY OF WORK

To maintain the quality and effectiveness of a team's work, team members need to take time to reflect on what they are doing. Following are areas of discussion that can help teams assess their work. Teams may use these questions to gauge their work focusing on the essentials of Turning Points reform. Use the indicator chart for each question to note the team's effectiveness.

Process

1. How effective is our team in developing practices that will improve student learning?

Sample indicators:

Not effective					Very effective

- What practices for instructing and assessing our students have we changed, tried, or added to our repertoire?

- How have we addressed the needs of diverse learners?

- Do we use protocols for looking at student work to tell us about how our students are doing?

- Do we observe each other's classrooms and have follow-up discussions about what we observe to improve learning, teaching, and assessment?

- Have we developed rubrics or assessment criteria for assessing student work?

- Do we plan and implement curriculum and assessment for students we share?

2. How effective are we in communicating our work?

Sample indicators:

Not effective					Very effective

- Do we allow time at each team meeting for an update from the leadership team liaison?

- Do we maintain and distribute clear, concise minutes to team members and others who may be interested?

- Do we employ multiple ways of communicating our work such as newsletters, email communication, displays, presentations to other groups, and team mailbox?

- Do we allow time for team members to socialize?

- Do we include written reflections on our team's work and progress as part of team meetings?

Center for Collaborative Education

Turning Points is affiliated with New American Schools, a dynamic coalition of teachers, administrators, parents, policymakers, community and business leaders, and experts from around the country committed to improving academic achievement for all students. All NAS designs have been validated through extensive testing and research.

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