



Leadership Development

Anywhere, Anytime

Practical Tips for School Leaders – #51

January 5, 2021

Effective Teams

Did you ever consider why some teams work and are able to accomplish the task while others don't succeed? This article reminds us of the key components and drivers of effective teams. Do the teams you work with possess these? If not, what are the things you can do as the leader to ramp up the effectiveness of your teams?

Effective teams begin with three key components: 1.) The ability to maintain positive results over time; sustained performance, 2.) The ability to face challenges and bounce back quickly called team resilience and 3.) The ability to maintain energy, vibrancy and resources needed for the future termed vitality.

Leaders recognize that all teams differ, i.e. PLCs. The team distinctions include reliance, membership stability, task consistency, proximity, and similarity. Within each of the five areas there is also a range so the leader must ascertain where the members of the team fall on a continuum. Reliance is defined as the ability for the team members to work together and coordinate efforts, roles and responsibilities at work intermingled in a positive manner. Task consistency is knowing what needs to be done and planning for the future with little uncertainty. Proximity refers to the team members being able to access each other throughout the duration of the project. A team which shares common interests and 'knows' each other is defined as similar. Leaders should take the time to allow their team members an opportunity to learn about each other. In doing so, team members are likely to develop empathy and compassion, two key ingredients for successful teamwork.

Teams that work are characterized by seven drivers which lead to maximum performance. These are communication, capability, coordination, cognition, condition, cooperation, and coaching.

Communication – Are team members able to communicate effectively with each other and with people outside of the team?

Capability – Does the team have the right people with the necessary mix of skills, information, and other qualities?

Coordination – Do team members exhibit teamwork behaviors important for team success?

Cognition – Do team members hold a shared understanding of roles, core beliefs and vision?

Condition – Is the framework in which the team is asked to function poised for performing effectively?

Cooperation – Do the team members share beliefs and attitudes regarding the project?

Coaching – Is the leader or team members able to coach other members on effective performance or skills necessary for completion?

Think about the teams of people you lead? Which ones work effectively as a unit? Which ones need to have attention in one or more of the drivers of teamwork? How can you or members of the team coach others for performance?

Excerpt from *Leading Blog*, January 4, 2021, *Teams That Work*, Tannenbaum and Salas, 2020.
Tannenbaum, Scott and Salas, Eduardo. *Teams that Work*. Oxford University Press, October 2020.