



Building Teams



How to Use This Guide

This discussion guide is intended to assist California educators who wish to use the QSF **Building Teams** video in meetings or discussions.

The questions and activities can be modified to fit the chosen purpose and audience.

Overview

Building strong leadership teams within a district, school, or department is crucial to prepare and to support the implementation of new plans and initiatives. These teams, representing the district community, are the key planners and communicators for change.

When identifying potential members for the team, follow a selection process with clear criteria. Once the team has been selected, clearly establish the team's role and essential purpose. Maintain interest and encourage member participation during meetings.

Facilitators play a crucial role in the success of the team's work. In fact, facilitating meetings provides an opportunity to engage motivated, emergent leaders in a role that fosters leadership capacity and prepares for eventual leadership transitions.

Key Topics

- Building teams
- Selecting facilitators
- Leading effective meetings

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; and working together is success.”
Henry Ford

Reflection Questions

1. What are the criteria the team members should meet, given the group's purpose?
2. How will the group's role, essential purpose, and time commitment be communicated to potential team members?
3. How will the team members' interest and participation be maintained?
4. Who can successfully design and facilitate effective meetings? Will this crucial role be designated to one individual, or will it switch among group members to build the team's facilitation capacity?

Activity 1—Determine When to Bring a Group Together

When people are asked to be part of any team that meets regularly they are being asked to commit their time, attention, and energy. So it is important to determine whether a meeting is the best way to accomplish what you are trying to achieve. Work towards a goal can progress without convening a meeting. Consider:

Can the initiative move forward through...	Who participates?	What is the expected outcome?
One-on-one interactions?		
Short consultations?		
Surveys		
Conference calls?		

To avoid holding a meeting because it is expected, keep in mind that a purposeful convening has:

- A clear purpose (e.g. ensuring all members share common understandings)
- A need for meaningful input and participation from all members
- A charge to act to address an issue/implement an initiative

Activity 2—Define Team Member Roles & Areas of Development

Leaders may use this resource to define the roles of team members and consider areas that might need development for members to be successful in their roles.

- Who needs to be at the table? (column 1)
- What skill set do they need to have? (column 2)
- If they don't have it, what support will be required to make them effective in their role? (column 3)

Team Members	Responsibilities in the Team Purpose/Process	Areas of Development to be Successful in this Role
Students		
Parents		
Teachers		
Administrators		
Other		

Activity 3—Determine Who Should be a Regular Member

Who should be a regular member and who could be an occasional participant? While it is advisable to include a range of participants who can offer different perspectives on an issue, consider which members ought to be regular participants and which might be invited to a convening when their viewpoint is needed.

REGULAR PARTICIPANTS

Name	Title	Role

OCCASIONAL PARTICIPANTS

Name	Title	Role

How can these roles and expectations be communicated to various invitees?

Activity 4—Facilitate the Team Work

Facilitators play a crucial role in the success of the team's work. When preparing to facilitate a meeting or a process, consider the following:

1. What strategies help establish or develop trust and mutual respect to encourage honest conversations and hear all views?
2. How is progress toward meeting a goal communicated to all team members?
3. What strategies are used to ensure each member has opportunity to contribute to the team purpose?
4. How will the team build mutual accountability to maintain focus on the team's purpose and complete work between meetings?
5. What proven strategies might help manage conflict in productive ways?

A Word About Balancing Change and Organizational Stability

An enduring challenge educational leaders face is creating a balance between needed change and maintaining organizational stability. This balance often includes planning for shared leadership and for eventual leadership transitions. Effective administrators understand the importance of building leadership capacity within the school or school district. They provide appropriate training and gradually increasing responsibility to those in leadership positions. They establish pathways for aspiring leaders and for those in informal leadership positions, such as teacher leaders. A commitment to planning for succession ensures the sustainability of effective programs.

For additional guidance for building teams and facilitating meetings, consult reputable resources to determine what research tells us about best practices. In the **Related Resources** sections under the **Building Teams** and **Leading Change** QSF videos, you will find resources with some evidence-based and promising practices for your consideration.