

What can we expect to get from this module?

No school leader succeeds alone. For lasting improvement, school leaders must build and lead highly effective teams. Why have teams? What separates effective teams from those that are just taking up space? How do you get a team off to a good start? What tools, techniques, and approaches can leaders use to strengthen team effectiveness? How can team meetings be more efficient? These are questions that are answered in this module.

Day One is devoted to exploring the question, "What are the foundations of effective teamwork, and what is the status of our team?" The homework assignment involves study of meeting management. On Day Two, participants continue to look at meeting management, as well as setting a team vision. They learn about various facilitation techniques that help teams function more effectively. Homework after Day Two is to learn at least one of these techniques and be prepared to demonstrate and explain it in Day Three. Day Three is devoted to team facilitation and group process skills. Participants watch and practice different ways to generate ideas, solve problems, prioritize and reach consensus.

Big Ideas in This Module

- *Teams of people can accomplish larger goals for the school than individuals can.*
- *People are more committed to action when they are part of the decision-making process. Decisions should be made by those who will implement them. A consensus approach is most useful for team decisions.*
- *Each team member brings different strengths to the team. Teams are more productive when they identify, maximize and channel these strengths. Teamwork helps everyone achieve their full potential.*
- *A clear, compelling vision tied to student achievement is essential to team productivity. This vision should be based on shared beliefs about high expectations, data, instruction, curriculum and accountability.*
- *Well-managed meetings have thoughtful agendas, clear boundaries and ground rules, and visible processes for gathering information, making decisions, and follow-up.*
- *High-performing teams learn together.*
- *There are many easy-to-use tools and techniques that teams can use to identify problems and their root causes, prioritize action items, choose strategies, and handle conflict. Team facilitators should be well-versed in these processes.*

Who is the training for? This module is designed to be taught to school leaders and potential school leaders. This may include school teams of principals, aspiring leaders, teacher leaders and others who are members or potential members of the school's professional development team. It is highly recommended that school improvement teams (or other teams) participate together.

Other SREB Leadership Curriculum Modules that support this module. This module is most appropriate for those who have a strong background in data analysis, curriculum, assessment and instruction, and culture (SREB core modules). This is because teams must develop a strong core of foundational knowledge in order to be effective.

What will we have to do to get the most from this module? This is a three-day training, but it cannot be completed in three consecutive days, because participants must apply what they've learned. Participants must commit to attending as a team, completing the prework, and attending three days of training. Each day is separated by about two months of homework/field practice. The following text is required for all participants:

- *Leading Your Team to Excellence.* Elaine K. McEwan. Corwin Press, 1997.

Module Design. This is a three-day workshop (2+1). It also includes prework and homework assignments. Each section is described below.

Prework (about three hours). Participants meet as a team to discuss a chapter on teamwork from Mike Schmoker. Also, they independently complete a survey related to the effectiveness of the team with whom they are attending this training.

Introduction: The Power of Effective Teams (three hours, 45 minutes). Participants use a variety of team activities to explore qualities of effective teams and to complete a self assessment of their team. Participants are asked to do a lot of processing of this information. Good practice is often sacrificed in team work, and they need to think about the implications of team practices.

Building the Team's Foundation (two hours). Participants learn about the stages of forming, storming, norming and performing. They determine what stage their team is in and then they create an action plan for improving their teams, considering such issues as distributed leadership, meeting management, team processes, having a clear vision, building trust, and other topics discussed in training.

Homework. Participants complete two homework assignments. One involves following up on the action plan generated in the last section; the other involves forming study groups to create presentations for Day Two of this training.

Day Two Introduction (30 minutes). Participants reflect on questions and answers regarding the material so far. They process through insights that they have gained about their teams since Day One of training.

Building a Team Vision (two hours). One of the study groups that was formed in Day One and assigned for homework involved setting a team

vision. In this section, participants facilitate their presentations to their teams. Then each team completes two activities: they outline their core beliefs, and they generate a vision.

Team Process Introduction (one hour, 30 minutes). The group participates in presentations on consensus decision-making, as assigned in homework from Day One. Then they choose among five breakout sessions, based on mini-presentations or panel discussions led by fellow participants, as identified in homework. The group processes included are brainstorming, goal setting, prioritizing action items, recording team ideas and handling conflict.

Meeting Management (one hour, 30 minutes). This section contains group presentations on the topic prepared by members of the meeting management study groups. Then, teams work together to complete the planning for an upcoming team meeting around a specific issue.

Homework. Participants study one or more methods for facilitating teamwork.

Day Three Introduction (45 minutes). Participants review content from Days One and Two and the homework, through a poster activity.

Small-Group Presentations (two hours, 15 minutes). Each school team chooses an action plan to describe to the others. After sharing, participants revise/renew their action plans.

Portfolio. The portfolio assessment for this module involves implementing a plan for improving team functioning, so that school leaders can work effectively and efficiently to improve student achievement.