IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS

TOOL SET

A Facilitating Effective Adult Collaboration and Conversation

TOOL SET

B Facilitating Data-Driven Conversations

TOOL SET

C Engaging Students in On-Track Conversations

TOOL SET

D Assessing Success Team Progress

NETWORK FOR COLLEGE SUCCESS

A

Facilitating Effective Adult Collaboration and Conversation

Contents

Purpose

A focus on effective adult collaboration moves teams toward becoming accountable communities that are able to address issues with a problem-solving approach rather than trying to ignore or minimize them. Accountable communities also self-monitor group and individual functioning and share both urgency and hope (The Skillful Leader by Platt and Tripp, 2000).

How & When to Use

Tool Set A supports Team Leads and members to acquire the necessary background knowledge to become an accountable and professional learning community focused on student achievement and results. Along with a professional reading, and/or the presentation in this Tool Set, your Success Team can assess the ingredients for effective adult collaboration and conversation.

The Freshman Success Framework is the foundation for effective school practice on On-Track and student success. The Network for College Success has seen the greatest and most sustainable gains for freshmen when schools develop high-functioning educator professional learning communities, which we call Success Teams.

This Tool Set focuses on the below actions of a Success Team stemming from the Freshman Success Framework.

Elements	Success Team
Setting Conditions	• Develops effective meeting strategies, such as establishing a mission statement and clear purpose, and building norms and action-oriented agendas • Shares Success Team roles and responsibilities conducive to success work • With principal and Team Lead, establishes foundational knowledge, sets purpose, and creates freshman success goals for On-Track and student connection

This Tool Set also highlights the actions stemming from the Framework for the Principal and Team Lead in support of the Success Team work.

Team Lead

• Setting Conditions: Acquires foundational knowledge on the importance of freshman course performance as well as tools and strategies to lead the Success Team

• Implementation: Establishes team meeting conditions conducive to the successful execution of Success Team duties

Principal

• Setting Conditions: Selects, programs, sets purpose, and provides foundational knowledge on freshman success work for core set of grade-level teachers

• Setting Conditions: Identifies team leadership (Team Lead, data technician, social-emotional learning specialist, etc.) and communicates expectations for their engagement with Success Team

• Implementation: Provides professional development and training opportunities on the transition to high school, data strategy, and social-emotional learning
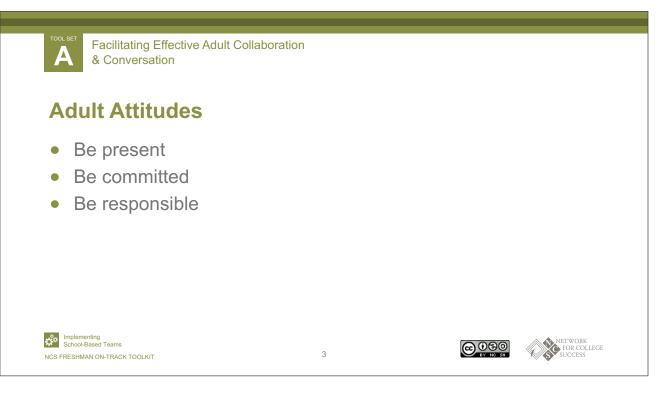
How Adults Can Work Together Presentation

A sample presentation to share with Success Team members focused on working together to improve On-Track rates.

How Adults Can Work Together Presentation

Created by the NCS Freshman Success Collaborative

November 2009

Implementing
School-Based Teams

2

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

TOOL SET

A

Facilitating Effective Adult Collaboration
& Conversation

Adult Attitudes

- Be present
- Be committed
- Be responsible

Implementing
School-Based Teams

3

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

203

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

TOOL SET

A   Facilitating Effective Adult Collaboration
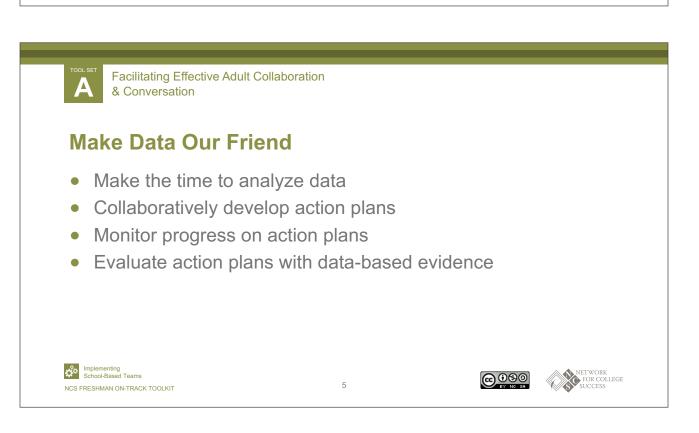& Conversation

System of Communication

- How can we set up a system of communication that will foster the collaboration necessary to meet student needs in a timely manner?
- How do we communicate with students to nurture ownership of their progress?
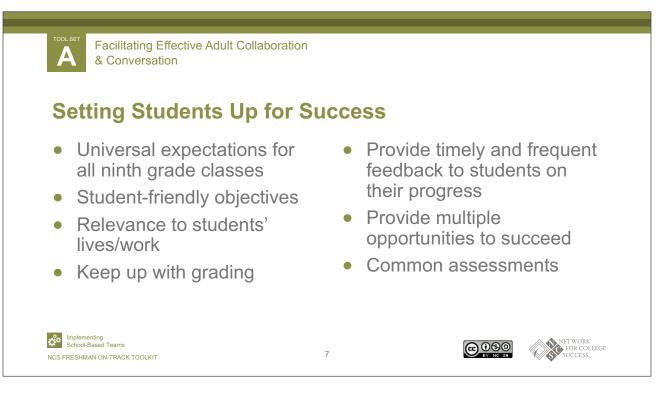
Implementing
School-Based Teams

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT   4

TOOL SET

A   Facilitating Effective Adult Collaboration
& Conversation

Make Data Our Friend

- Make the time to analyze data
- Collaboratively develop action plans
- Monitor progress on action plans
- Evaluate action plans with data-based evidence

Implementing
School-Based Teams

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT   5

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT   204

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Solutions-Based Orientation

- Bulk of conversations are focused on strategies for improvement
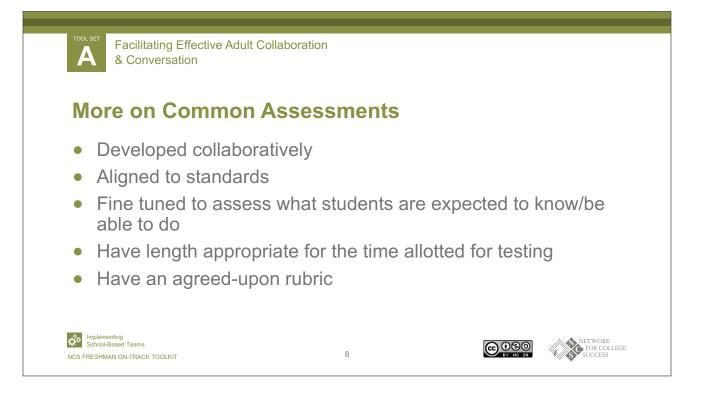- Creating a culture of support for struggling teachers

Implementing
School-Based Teams

Setting Students Up for Success

- Universal expectations for all ninth grade classes
- Student-friendly objectives
- Relevance to students' lives/work
- Keep up with grading

- Provide timely and frequent feedback to students on their progress
- Provide multiple opportunities to succeed
- Common assessments

Implementing
School-Based Teams

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

TOOL SET

A

Facilitating Effective Adult Collaboration
& Conversation

More on Common Assessments

- Developed collaboratively
- Aligned to standards
- Fine tuned to assess what students are expected to know/be able to do
- Have length appropriate for the time allotted for testing
- Have an agreed-upon rubric

Implementing
School-Based Teams

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

8

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

206

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Communities that Undermine Learning

An article that describes how three community prototypes – Toxic, Lassiez-Faire, and Congenial – serve as obstacles to team functioning and, as a result, limit improvement efforts.

IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

207

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

communities that undermine learning

School leaders must distinguish between PLCs that genuinely serve greater student learning and groups that protect mediocre performance by both students and adults.

Period 2 common planning time at River High School: Five minutes after the last bell, Team 9B teachers are amiably catching up on one another's weekends while waiting for the perpetual stragglers to arrive.

Maria, the team leader, seems to be the only one with a sense of urgency. "People, remember our norm of getting started promptly," she implores. "Let's go. We need to spend a few minutes planning April's field trip. Then we have to talk about how we're doing with the interdisciplinary writing prompts."

Before Maria has finished distributing a short agenda, Principal Knox arrives. He's on his daily walkthrough this period and cannot stay, but he wants to encourage the group with a "little pat on the back."

Al Knox is proud of his Professional Learning Community initiative at River High School. He has provided his PLCs with common meeting time, stipends for team leader(s), and summer training in norm development and agenda setting. Compared to the fractious group of ninth-grade teachers he saw two years ago, 9B is collaborating pretty well, Al thinks. He is pleased by the congenial tone of the gathering and the team's shared goal to improve student writing — a school priority. After a quick thanks for their efforts, Al continues his walk and leaves 9B to get on with its business.

If Al had stayed longer, the unfolding interaction might have made him reconsider his assessment. Instead of a few minutes, the field trip discussion took more than half the meeting. A tangent into a student discipline issue chewed up another 15 minutes.

Team 9B got to the main agenda item with 10 minutes left. At that point, two teachers admitted that they were not getting to the writing prompts despite previous promises. John "never could find the time" and Tina complained about "doing English in science." Colleagues' comments were dismayingly solicitous:

"That's OK, John. Get to it when you can."

"Listen, your low group isn't going to be able to write much anyway. Maybe you could just experiment with one of your good sections."

No one expressed dismay over how time had been used or the failure to address the

By Alexander D. Platt and Caroline E. Tripp

one agenda item that would have a direct impact on student performance. No one made a passionate plea about the serious gap in writing achievement. No one took a colleague to task for violating the team agreement, thereby granting tacit permission to the notion that individual autonomy takes precedence over responsibility to the group.

If we measure collaboration in terms of impact on teaching and learning, the meeting was a failure, and the group's performance inadequate.

False hope

Team 9B is one of many learning communities with the worthwhile mission of improving student learning springing up all over California. Some do indeed fulfill the promise of professional learning set forth by DuFour and others. But as Michael Fullan warns us from his research, "[We] have found that professional learning communities are being implemented superficially. They give the educators involved a false hope of progress."

To fulfill the promise of professional learning communities, skillful leaders need to do more than simply marshal resources and cheer faculty on from the sidelines. We must distinguish between groups that genuinely pool their mental effort to develop organizational intelligence in the service of greater student learning — what we call Accountable Communities — and groups whose interactions block improvement and protect mediocre performance by both students and adults.

Three different prototypes fall into the latter category: the Toxic Community, the *Laissez-Faire* Community and the Congenial Community. Although they may look different, each group:

• accepts or tolerates low performance, inertia or lack of contribution from its own members;

• expects and accepts low performance from groups of students who have somehow been labeled as less worthy or less capable;

• attributes poor student achievement to external factors like family background, lack of financial support for schools or community conditions;

• derives benefit from, and therefore exerts effort to sustain, conditions that favor adult comfort or convenience over student needs;

• has little or no collective experience with, or models for, effective problem-solving skills and strategies.

Real schools are full of such underperforming groups, many of which parade

To fulfill the promise of PLCs, skillful leaders need to do more than simply marshal resources and cheer faculty on from the sidelines.

as "effective teams." As you examine the profile descriptions that follow, and the suggested approaches for taking on such groups, consider how you would use them to diagnose and help Team 9B. Consider whether any of the groups in your school display similar characteristics and what you and your leadership team might do.

The Toxic Community

As their name implies, toxic groups are distinguished by their "negative take" on almost all aspects of schooling and by their real or perceived ability to stifle initiative, punish heretics (anyone who takes a leader's side on an issue), derail emerging solutions to problems, and blame everyone but themselves for mediocre student or adult learning.

Sarcastic humor and weary cynicism bind vocal members together in an "us versus them" or "this too shall pass" stance that serves to protect members from external demands and to drive non-subscribers to silence or to the safety of other spaces.

Toxicity may result from patterns of district bungling, including lack of supervision and feedback or lingering resentments over past injuries, such as strikes or destructive bargaining sessions. Toxicity is also fueled by emotional exhaustion from years of "initiative overload" and unsupported effort and continual stirring of a few "ringleaders" who derive gratification and a sense of purpose from being aggrieved.

By nature guarded and suspicious, toxic groups do pay attention to what the organization wants from them and to the ways in which organizational goals or changes in practice might affect their traditional rights and privileges. They often use the union contract to defend the status quo.

Rather than embracing promising ideas on their merits or supporting leaders who want to find ways of trying out new practices within the framework of the contract, Toxic Communities vote for and encourage union leaders who take a tough, protective stance.

Finally, Toxic Communities focus on why things should not be done, cannot work or are a problem for something that already exists. Thus, members most often present themselves as blockers to improvement efforts and as individuals whose job is to sort, select and label both children and other adults.

New teacher induction programs are no match for these lethal culture builders! Challenging these communities requires a balance of listening, acknowledging and direct intervention. These highly negative cultures almost always require some changes in personnel.

Approaches for tackling Toxic Communities

• Identify the past or present causes for the toxicity (previous authoritarian leadership, residue from strikes and contract impasses, a track record of broken promises from the district).

• Build bridges before lighting fires (Lencioni, 2002). Listen to and acknowledge previous conditions and past contributions

to the current situation before asking for changes.

• Give feedback to individuals when expectations for effective collaboration are not met, but avoid attacking or labeling statements. Instead, focus on the importance of pooling knowledge to better help students and name the consequences for students when adults are unable to collaborate.

• Adopt and consistently use structures that equalize participation in discussion and minimize opportunities for haranguing and bullying.

• Use transparent, data-based processes for identifying student learning problems and setting priorities for action, rather than unstructured decisions by acclaim or assertion.

• Honor contract provisions consistently, but persist with clear non-negotiables and expectations. Do not let grievances distract from your focus.

• Remove the most negative individual or a destructive ringleader from the group.

The *Laissez-Faire* Community

While Toxic Communities are often bonded by their sense of injury or by a common vision of "the other" as enemy, groups we have designated *Laissez-Faire* share little beyond a desire or belief in their right to be left alone to "do their own thing."

In *Laissez-Faire* Communities, teachers or administrators co-exist pleasantly but are disconnected from institutional goals and from each other's work and work concerns. Members are largely motivated by personal needs either for comfort and convenience or for instructional autonomy; no shared purpose or vision drives their interaction.

If Toxic Communities snarl and snort in response to requests for collaborative problem solving, *Laissez-Faire* Communities sniff and sigh with martyred resignation. The school's designated goals do not appear to have immediate relevance or utility. Rather than adversarial, as in Toxic Communities, relationships with leaders are often collusive: "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours."

Laissez-Faire Communities frequently evolve in heavily decentralized districts or schools in the absence of strong leadership. They also develop when leadership defines its role as protection of cooperative members and motivation through favors and deals. These communities tend to support mediocre learning because they see it as an inevitable result of student limitations and because examining and subsequently changing one's core practice would violate the fundamental value of autonomy.

Approaches for intervening with *Laissez-Faire* Communities

• Identify the practices and forces that are supporting autonomous actions, deal-making, secrecy or low expectations.

• Determine when and how the group interacts well to solve a problem (even if it is low-level) and build on established structures or norms.

• Establish clear problem-solving structures and make problem solving a central part of meeting agendas. Use time efficiently.

• Assess how much time is wasted on unimportant topics; be judicious in identifying the most important problems for the focus of collaborative action.

• Monitor how time is spent during group meetings; collect agendas and minutes.

• Help teams use standards and feedback to define a common learning problem, identify a change goal for itself, and establish how it will monitor its own performance.

• Offer options for initial structuring of joint work. Looking at student work, developing common assessments and examining student test results could all be productive starting points.

• Have much of the work done in course-alike pairs or trios where there is compelling rationale for working together.

The key to improving the collaboration of these autonomous units is to help them see that joint work will help them be more effective in their own classrooms.

The Congenial Community

Congenial Communities are "happy" or "nurturing" places to work. These groups send off the false aura of smoothly func-

tioning teams. Considerable effort goes into building and maintaining adult relationships and comfort, but unlike Toxic or *Laissez-Faire* Communities, they have no difficulty with requests to collaborate.

Members usually enjoy one another's company and have positive or neutral relationships with the leaders. Mediocrity is sustained because members do not challenge one another's ideas and practices in service of better student learning, because getting along comes first.

Problems are quickly reduced to simplistic statements and solutions, and no real effort is made to examine data to get at the core practices that are no longer serving children's needs. Congenial Communities especially can be by-products of leader shortcomings.

Recognizing that good relationships and trust create effective teams, administrators often overstress the role of congeniality and inadvertently send signals that getting along is paramount. Such leaders see themselves as being responsible for keeping peace and harmony, and worry that any attempt to press for genuine changes in practice will "undermine school morale" without producing results.

Thus, everyone understands that naming an ineffective practice goes against established cultural norms, and difficult questions about poor student or adult performance are swept under the rug.

Approaches for intervening with Congenial Communities

• Lead with relationship building and the need for acceptance and affiliation, but use data to reframe focus from adult comfort to students' losing out.

• Help congenial groups be more accepting of conflict by adopting protocols that assist members in managing conflict (see National School Reform Faculty Web site, www.nsrfharmony.org).

• Invest in training that helps members to identify their own preferential styles and conflict-aversive behavior, and analyze the consequence of "burying" difficult information or important disagreements.

• Invite community members to examine their own performance against criteria for a

Books Worth Reading
Six Secrets of Change; How Leaders Learn

Reviewed by George Manthey, assistant executive director, ACSA Educational Services

"Give me a good theory over a strategic plan any day of the week," is the opening sentence of Michael Fullan's latest book. It is a guide for both business and education leaders who want to make their organizations "survive and thrive." Six "secrets" are offered as a theory of action, with the caution that leaders be open to "surprises or new data that direct further action."

The secrets are not likely to surprise you as they deal with the way leaders treat employees, define purpose, build capacity, learn, share information, and create organizations that learn. Fullan cautions that for the secrets to work they must all be nurtured, as none are sufficient in isolation of the others. For me, the six secrets provide a useful filter for examining the efficacy of decisions and actions.

"The Six Secrets of Change" (2008), by Michael Fullan. Published by Jossey-Bass.

Gordon Donaldson credits Joanne Iskin, a principal in California's Lennox Unified School District, for insisting that this book get written. In it Donaldson provides a model (Interpersonal-Cognitive-Intrapersonal or I-C-I) that he has found useful for understanding performance and learning. The book provides real examples of how teacher leaders and principals have used the I-C-I model to provide a framework for their own leadership of learning. Donaldson asserts, "Persistent hurdles to leader effectiveness are the result, in part, of gaps of leaders' interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cognitive knowledge sets."

One aim of the book is to help leaders understand that their focus can not be their own skill set, but must include increasing their understanding of how what they do affects the "knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and practice" of those they are leading. Donaldson also reminds us that the highest purpose of leadership of schools is to lead in ways that increase student learning.

"How Leaders Learn" (2008), by Gordon A. Donaldson. Published by Teachers College Press.

collaborative and accountable community and identify goals for growth.

Team 9B is certainly not a Toxic group. It is probably more a hybrid. It has qualities that mark it as *Laissez-Faire:* spending time on topics not focused on teaching and learning and embracing individual autonomy as a primary value. The aversion to conflict and the cultural norm of guarding the friendly climate marks it more as a Congenial team.

The exact classification, however, is less important for leaders than being clear about how to monitor, supervise and coach Team 9B to work in ways that are more likely to impact student learning. This requires that leaders recognize malfunctioning teams and adopt a toolkit of intervention strategies listed above. They also need a clear vision of what a high-performing team looks like.

The Accountable Community: The vision of excellence

Accountable Communities are the much desired but rarely achieved ideal for team functioning. They are demanding and sometimes uncomfortable places to work. Labeling a community as "accountable" means its members have moved beyond merely working together well in service of students in general. The team takes direct responsibility for monitoring its own actions and for calling others on behaviors and stances that are not helpful to the mission.

Accountable Communities impact the consistency and quality of members' classroom instruction more than teams functioning at other levels. Accountable Communities live a "no quarter, no excuses" existence, where every choice a teacher makes is open to examination and revision when there are students who have not yet learned what they need to learn.

Could you describe any of your teams as accountable? Do you have some good teams who could stretch to this level of performance?

These communities are bonded and motivated by the glue of common goals, common agreements, common assessment and/or common students. They do not depend on external authorities to police them; they are able to connect their classroom work to larger organizational goals.

Becoming accountable

We can't expect all teams to become accountable overnight, but we do expect leaders to actively confront Fullan's worry that "professional learning communities are being implemented superficially," by taking four actions.

1 **Be committed to strong measures of accountability** and intervention in cases of malfunctioning teams. There will be no spontaneous outbreak of improvement without intervention, feedback and coaching.

2 **Give "life and clout" to the California Standards for the Teaching Profession Standard No. 6: Developing as a Professional Educator,** especially 6.3 — Working with Communities to Improve Professional Practice ("Inspect what you expect"). Use existing evaluation standards to reward contribution and recommend growth where needed.

3 **Develop clear definitions and images for what constitutes a high functioning, "accountable" PLC** that impacts student learning. Share these descriptions with teams so they can self assess their performance.

4 **Collect data on what is actually happening.** If the principal had really observed Team 9B, he would have been able to give growth feedback to the team leader or the entire team.

Accountable Communities are the much desired but rarely achieved ideal for team functioning. They are demanding and sometimes uncomfortable places to work.

Because of the emphasis on problem solving and the constant fine-tuning that goes on in Accountable Communities, the impact of their teaching on student learning is less random. Through their skilled problem solving, they relentlessly address learning gaps (concepts not yet understood and skills not yet mastered) for both adults and students.

There is a willingness to move beyond the most obvious solutions and responses to problems and seek other explanations and opportunities. They let go of treasured but non-working approaches when faced with data indicating their lack of success. When the knowledge of the group falls short, they seek external expertise.

Accountable Communities do not collaborate on everything. They are very selective and are known to push back against principals who have gone overboard on collaboration. Ironically, these groups are marked as much by what they don't collaborate about! Some have described this as "relentless focus" on matters of instruction and learning (see box above).

If school leaders want to maximize the power of PLCs, they need to not just support, but monitor and coach. Otherwise, we will have a few great teams, fewer great schools and many students performing below our hopes. ■

References

Lencioni, Patrick. (2002). *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

This article was adapted from "The Skillful Leader II: Confronting Conditions That Undermine Learning" (2008).

Alexander D. Platt and Caroline Tripp are authors of the best-selling book, "The Skillful Leader: Confronting Mediocre Teaching" (2000) and the new book, "The Skillful Leader II: Confronting Conditions that Undermine Learning" (www.ready-about.com). Platt is also a seminar speaker at ACSA's upcoming Leadership Summit, Nov. 6-8 in San Diego.

Conversations in Schools that Improve Student Achievement

A quick guide that provides criteria and specific language for collegial conversations focused on student outcomes.

IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT   214

Conversations in Schools that Improve Student Achievement

Schools that make the most learning gains for students have leaders who ensure the frequency and quality of professional conversations. *Conversations among adults about teaching and learning permeate the building. That means they happen at all times of day, in formal and informal settings, and all the adults involve themselves.*

The conversations:

- are substantive
- use recent information about student performance
- spring from questions that assume responsibility and capacity to improve student learning
- are non-defensive
- enable people to know things about each other as people
- reach out to Professional Knowledge
- lead to action

Listen in as you walk around the building....meetings, teachers' lounge, hallways. If you hear conversations like this, you can be sure the school is improving student results.

"Substantive" means they are talking concretely about teaching and learning itself, and the issues, decisions and actions teachers are taking in daily practice with specific students.

"Based on recent information" means teachers bring specific and timely evidence about how students are doing to the table. It could be from yesterday's work as well as quarterly assessments, writing samples, test scores: whatever will illuminate where students are and what they need next.

"Spring from questions" means the conversations are asking questions about the connection between teacher action and student results with an assumption that it is our job to improve student results, and that we are able to do so.

"Non-defensive" means that when students don't learn, teachers face the evidence squarely and accept responsibility for their part. They don't get hung-up in guilt or blame of themselves or of the students. Thus they are always working on how to adjust their actions to improve student results.

"Each other as people" means that staff members come to know one another as individuals who have life histories and interests and commitments.

"Reaching out to Professional Knowledge" means that these conversations do not happen in a vacuum. The teachers are aware that there is a vast reservoir of Professional Knowledge created by peers over the past century; and they need to bring this Professional Knowledge into their planning and their problem solving in order to maximize student success.

"Lead to action" means the conversations go beyond being interesting and satisfying for the participants. They lead to changes in instruction that benefit students. These changes can be seen, heard, and measured in their positive results.

Facilitating Data-Driven Conversations

Contents

Purpose

The Network for College Success believes multiple forms of data can be powerful tools for school improvement when they are used to trace causes, seek solutions, and guide change. Data-driven conversations require careful facilitation to ensure a safe and supportive environment wherein educators take ownership of their outcomes. It is important for Success Team members to be open to honest reflection about successes and struggles.

How & When to Use

All Success Team conversations should be rooted in data, so Team Leads must select protocols that support the effective facilitation of these conversations. The protocols in Tool Set C are frequently used in Network for College Success partner schools. Your team should establish a regular routine for using protocols as part of your data conversations to improve student outcomes.

Using protocols might feel forced at first try, but trust the process. The protocol is structured to create a safe environment for all.

The Freshman Success Framework is the foundation for effective school practice on On-Track and student success. The Network for College Success has seen the greatest and most sustainable gains for freshmen when schools develop high-functioning educator professional learning communities, which we call Success Teams.

This Tool Set focuses on the below actions of a Success Team stemming from the Freshman Success Framework.

Elements	Success Team
Setting Conditions	• Engages in regular, calendared Success Team meetings to 1) analyze data and 2) develop, monitor, and adjust interventions
Implementation	• Reviews incoming class performance data to develop early and targeted supports for students • Develops, implements, tracks, and evaluates Tier 2 interventions, making adjustments when appropriate • Reviews actionable student-level data in order to provide appropriate support

This Tool Set also highlights the actions stemming from the Framework for the Principal and Team Lead in support of the Success Team work.

Team Lead

• Setting Conditions: With principal and data technician, establishes Success Team meeting calendar that includes regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment

• Implementation: Establishes team meeting conditions conducive to the successful execution of Success Team duties

• Implementation: Works with data technician to bring actionable student-level data at regular intervals

Principal

• Setting Conditions: Provides and protects team meeting calendar, with regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment

• Implementation: Provides timely access to freshman success-related data, such as point-in-time On-Track data

• Implementation: Reviews and interrogates interim freshman success-related data in light of Success Team goals, and strategizes with team leadership around next steps

ATLAS-Looking at Data Protocol

A protocol to guide conversation when data is the focal point. The structured approach of a protocol, with clear norms and expectations for conversation, creates a safe space for all participants. This protocol supports equity of voice and allows all members to describe the data, make inferences, and share implications for future work.

ATLAS
Looking at Data

Learning from Data is a tool to guide groups of teachers discovering what students, educators, and the public understand and how they are thinking. The tool, developed by Eric Buchovecky, is based in part on the work of the Leadership for Urban Mathematics Project and the Assessment Communities of Teachers Project. The tool also draws on the work of Steve Seidel and Evangeline Harris-Stefanakis of Project Zero at Harvard University. Revised November 2000 by Gene Thompson-Grove. Revised August 2004 for Looking at Data by Dianne Leahy.

1. **Getting Started**
   - The facilitator reminds the group of the norms.
   - The educator providing the data set gives a very brief statement of the data and avoids explaining what she/he concludes about the data if the data belongs to the group rather than the presenter.
     Note: Each of the next 4 steps should be about 10 minutes in length. It is sometimes helpful for the facilitator to take notes.

2. **Describing the Data** (10 minutes)
   - The facilitator asks: "What do you see?"
   - During this period the group gathers as much information as possible from the data.
   - Group members describe what they see in data, avoiding judgments about quality or interpretations. It is helpful to identify where the observation is being made — e.g., "On page one in the second column, third row..."
   - If judgments or interpretations do arise, the facilitator should ask the person to describe the evidence on which they are based.
   - It may be useful to list the group's observations on chart paper. If interpretations come up, they can be listed in another column for later discussion during Step 3.

3. **Interpreting the Data** (10 minutes)
   - The facilitator asks: "What does the data suggest?"Followed by — "What are the assumptions we make about students and their learning?"
   - During this period, the group tries to make sense of what the data says and why. The group should try to find as many different interpretations as possible and evaluate them against the kind and quality of evidence.
   - From the evidence gathered in the preceding section, try to infer: what is being worked on and why?
   - Think broadly and creatively. Assume that the data, no matter how confusing, makes sense to some people; your job is to see what they may see.
   - As you listen to each other's interpretations, ask questions that help you better understand each other's perspectives.

4. **Implications for Classroom Practice** (10 minutes)
   - The facilitator asks: "What are the implications of this work for teaching and assessment?" This question may be modified, depending on the data.
   - Based on the group's observations and interpretations, discuss any implications this work might have for teaching and assessment in the classroom. In particular, consider the following questions:
     — What steps could be taken next?
     — What strategies might be most effective?
     — What else would you like to see happen? What kinds of assignments or assessments could provide this information?
     — What does this conversation make you think about in terms of your own practice? About teaching and learning in general?
     — What are the implications for equity?

5. **Reflecting on the ATLAS-Looking at Data** (10 minutes)
Presenter Reflection:
   - What did you learn from listening to your colleagues that was interesting or surprising?
   - What new perspectives did your colleagues provide?
   - How can you make use of your colleagues' perspectives?

Group Reflection:
   - What questions about teaching and assessment did looking at the data raise for you?
   - Did questions of equity arise?
   - How can you pursue these questions further?
   - Are there things you would like to try in your classroom as a result of looking at this data?

6. **Debrief the Process** (5 minutes)
   - How well did the process work?
   - What about the process helped you to see and learn interesting or surprising things?
   - What could be improved?

ATLAS - Looking At Data Protocol

Instructions

This is an example of the questions that would stem from each of the ATLAS Protocol steps. It can also serve as a template for note-taking. For each of the four phases of the ATLAS protocol, jot down additional questions that can be raised to elicit deeper analysis and reflection from participants.

FACTS *(What do we see?)*	INTERPRETATIONS & WONDERINGS *(What does the data suggest?)*	IMPLICATIONS *(What does this mean for our work?)*	NEXT STEPS *(So what are we going to do?)*
What do we see in terms of: • Performance in core courses vs electives? • Historical performance over time in courses? (if provided in graph) • Entire grade level vs special populations? (if student lists are provided) • Boys' performance? Girls' performance? • The proportion of students with B's or better vs those with D's and F's? • Proximity to our annual/quarterly On-Track benchmark? (if point-in-time On-Track percentage is shared) • Change in performance of students targeted for intervention? • Number of off-track students who have averages within the 40 – 59% range?	What does the data suggest about: • Academic rigor of the courses? • Student attendance patterns? • The effectiveness of our Tier 2 intervention on targeted students? • Execution of the modifications and accommodations in student IEPs? • Execution of learning plans for our ELLs? • Our tenacity in regularly updating grades? Are these grades a true reflection of where students are academically? • The quantity and types of opportunities given for students to succeed?	What does this mean for our work in terms of: • Students who are nearly off track? • Students who are off track? • Students who are failing more than 3 classes? • Our needs as teachers to successfully meet the directives in student IEPs and/or ELL learning plans? • Improving student access to the concepts and skills in our courses? • Adjusting our Tier 2 intervention? • Ensuring grades are as current as possible so that our actions are addressing real-time need?	From all the implications, what would be the high leverage next steps we can take toward improvement? (Limit the next steps to no more than 3, especially if the whole team is owning them)

Adapted from the School Reform Initiative ATLAS Protocol.

Wagon Wheel Tool for Data Analysis

A tool that allows for the triangulation and assessment of multiple variables and data points.

Wagon Wheel Tool for Data Analysis

Steps in using the wagon wheel:

- Assign key variables to each spoke on the wheel.

- Establish a scale for each spoke, with the highest performance on the inner rim of the circle. Label individual spokes with their own scale.

- Plot performance data along spokes, color coding to distinguish units being compared (classrooms, schools, departments, grade levels, budgets, or even certification areas).

- Connect the lines for each unit if comparisons are made between units.

- Identify the pattern of performance against selected performance standards.

Variables:		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		

(Wagon wheel diagram with spokes numbered 1–8 and a center labeled "Target")

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Adapted from Beyond the Numbers: Making Data Work for Teachers & School Leaders (White, 2011)

Wagon Wheel Tool for Data Analysis
Analyze to Prioritize

Performance	Inference
Strengths/Celebrations	
Obstacles	
Prioritizing List your most urgent needs and/or largest obstacles: 1. 2. 3.	

List Your Obstacles:

Using the template below, list your largest obstacle in the rectangle. Brainstorm all possible causes and list on the lines. Review your causes and circle only the ones which you can impact.

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Adapted from Beyond the Numbers: Making Data Work for Teachers & School Leaders (White, 2011)

Success Team in Action: North-Grand High School Video

A video that provides a snapshot of a Success Team holding an accountable conversation using a structured protocol.

Click here to view >>

IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

225

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Engaging Students in On-Track Conversations

Contents

Purpose

Success Teams are responsible for creating multiple opportunities to engage students in On-Track conversations. These opportunities can include school-wide events and Freshman Seminar or Advisory programs. Tool Set C provides examples on how one NCS partner school approached student engagement around On-Track goals.

How & When to Use

Success Teams can use Tool Set C to generate their own ideas for the work. It is important to distribute activities and responsibilities among team members to avoid burnout.

Success Team conversations focused on supporting incoming freshmen should happen in the spring so the team is ready to maximize opportunities, such as freshman orientation, later in the summer to engage students.

Connections to Framework

The Freshman Success Framework is the foundation for effective school practice on On-Track and student success. The Network for College Success has seen the greatest and most sustainable gains for freshmen when schools develop high-functioning educator professional learning communities, which we call Success Teams.

This Tool Set focuses on the below actions of a Success Team stemming from the Freshman Success Framework.

Elements	Success Team	
Setting Conditions	• Develops effective meeting strategies, such as establishing a mission statement and clear purpose, and building norms and action-oriented agendas • Shares Success Team roles and responsibilities conducive to freshman success work	• With principal and Team Lead, establishes foundational knowledge, sets purpose, and creates freshman success goals for On-Track and student connection • Engages in regular, calendared Success Team meetings to 1) analyze data and 2) develop, monitor, and adjust interventions
Implementation	• Develops, implements, tracks, and evaluates Tier 2 interventions, making adjustments when appropriate	
Communication	• Maintains strengths-based and action-oriented communication to support students • Celebrates student and adult successes around On-Track and student connection goals • Engages faculty in frequent communication on student progress and successful strategies	
Instruction	• Creates, implements, and evaluates instructional strategies around student engagement	

This Tool Set also highlights the actions stemming from the Framework for the Principal and Team Lead in support of the Success Team work.

Team Lead

• Setting Conditions: Acquires foundational knowledge on the importance of freshman course performance as well as tools and strategies to lead the Success Team

• Setting Conditions: With principal and data technician, establishes Success Team meeting calendar that includes regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment

• Setting Conditions: With principal and Success Team, sets freshman success goals for On-Track and student connection, and develops benchmarks to monitor progress

Principal

• Setting Conditions: Selects, programs, sets purpose, and provides foundational knowledge on freshman success work for core set of grade-level teachers

• Setting Conditions: Provides and protects team meeting calendar, with regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment

• Implementation: Reviews and interrogates interim freshman success-related data in light of Success Team goals, and strategizes with team leadership around next steps

Ideas for Engaging Students to Stay On Track

A menu of engagement activities aligned with the school calendar to support timely and relevant student engagement in On-Track efforts.

IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

228

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Ideas for Engaging Students to Stay On Track

Summer Prior to Entering Ninth Grade

Begin exposing incoming freshmen to the concept of On Track through transition activities. Use current students to deliver this information whenever possible! Possible activities include:

- Pre-Orientation/High School Investigation Day
- Freshman Connection
- Department teacher phone calls and/or individual meetings
- Back-to-School Orientation in August

Quarter 1

Get into the specifics about what freshmen must do to be considered On Track. Example activities:

- Grade-level assembly during 1st week of school, market as "On-Track pep rally"
- Classroom guidance lessons (On-Track Unit)
- Have students evaluate their first 5-week progress report. Using On-Track criteria, students evaluate whether they are On Track or off track. Can be done through any class, advisory period, or during a guidance lesson.
- Post pictures of On-Track students in lunchroom or high-traffic area
- Tie 1st quarter awards to On-Track status
- All freshman teachers should use On-Track language in their classes and relate students' performance in their classes to being On Track or off track
- Small group meetings with off-track students, led by upperclassmen

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Ideas for Engaging Students to Stay On Track

Quarters 2-3

Don't let the fire burn out from 1st quarter! Students will pick up on it and begin to think that it's not important anymore. Continue the On-Track talk throughout the 2nd and 3rd quarters. Example activities:

- On-Track breakfast club
- Field trips only for On-Track students
- Facilitate healthy department competition, such as a pizza party for the department with the most On-Track students
- Small group meetings for marginally off-track students, led by upperclassmen
- One-on-one meetings for severely off-track students, led by counselors, teachers, or administrators
- Grade-level meetings that center around On-Track trends for the entire grade
- Department/or advisory activities that help students to track their own data, such as attendance rate, number of D's/F's, detentions, etc.
- Gradebook checks that occur once weekly during a class (rotate which class throughout school year, so time is not taken from the same class each time)
- Pass out FAQs or myths/facts that clear up any misconceptions about being off track

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

230

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Ideas for Engaging Students to Stay On Track

Quarter 4

During the final quarter, help each student understand what he/she must do in order to get back On Track. This is often very time-consuming because it is so highly individualized and may vary from student to student. Dividing students among the Success Team and using adult mentors can help alleviate the burden.

- Small group or one-on-one meetings with off-track students. At the end of the meeting, students should be able to articulate exactly what they need to do to get back On Track.

- It is important to communicate to students that they can ALWAYS get back On Track, no matter how off track they may currently be. It may take more work for some students, but it is always possible.

- Culminating On-Track field trip or reward that students can work toward

- Final On-Track awards given at end-of-year ceremony

- Expose students to their sophomore year On-Track "to-do" list

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

**Engaging Students in
On-Track Conversations**

On-Track Unit Plan

An instructional unit created and implemented by the guidance department of a Network for College Success partner school. Teachers can modify the unit for use during seminar and/or advisory classes.

IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

232

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

On-Track Unit Plan
Overview

Purpose	To familiarize freshmen with the concept of "On-Track" status
Grade Level	First-semester freshmen
ASCA* Standards Addressed	A:A1.5 – Identify attitudes and behaviors which lead to successful learning A:B2.3 – Develop and implement an annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement
# of Sessions	Three Total Session #1: What Does "On-Track" Mean? Session #2: What is my 4-Year Plan? Session #3: Am I On Track?
Time Required	45 minutes each
Evaluation Tools	Pre- and post-tests

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

* American School Counselor Association

On-Track Unit Plan

Session #1: What Does "On-Track" Mean?

Goals & Objectives	**Goal 1: Introduce students to the concept of On Track** • Objective 1: Students will learn the definition of "On-Track" • Objective 2: Students will explore the credit requirements for graduation • Objective 3: Students will identify the "checkpoints" that occur throughout the year **Goal 2: Develop an awareness of the importance of staying On Track throughout high school** • Objective 1: Students will explore the relationship between freshman On-Track status and graduating from high school • Objective 2: Students will brainstorm and discuss possible consequences of falling off track in freshman year • Objective 3: Students will explore the relationship between attendance and On-Track status
ASCA* Standards Addressed	A:A1.5 – Identify attitudes and behaviors which lead to successful learning
Time Required	45 minutes
Materials Needed	What Does "On-Track" Mean? PowerPoint
Evaluation Tools	Pre- and post-tests

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

234

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

* American School Counselor Association

On-Track Unit Plan

Session #1: What Does "On-Track" Mean? (cont.)

Lesson Plan	1. Complete pre-test with students (5 min.)
	
	2. Begin PowerPoint
	
	    a. Making It to College activity and time for processing (8-9 min.)
	
	    b. On-Track lesson (5 min.)
	
	    c. Is This Student On Track? group activity (5 min.)
	
	    d. Attendance lesson (5 min.)
	
	    e. Activity and share-out (5-6 min.)
	
	    f. Checkpoints and wrap-up (5 min.)
	
	3. Complete post-test with students (5 min.)

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

235

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

On-Track Unit Plan

Session #2: What is my 4-Year Plan?

Goals & Objectives	**Goal 1: To develop a 4-year individual plan of study** • Objective 1: Students will use the transcript evaluation form to review the course requirements for graduation • Objective 2: Students will explore the relationship between creating a 4-year plan and staying On Track • Objective 3: Students will apply their knowledge of the graduation requirements to map out courses for the entire four years of high school
ASCA* Standards Addressed	A:B2.3 – Develop and implement an annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement
Time Required	45 minutes
Materials Needed	• Copies of the transcript evaluation/4-year plan of study form • Small bag of candy
Evaluation Tools	Pre- and post-tests

**NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS**

* American School Counselor Association

On-Track Unit Plan

Session #2: What is my 4-Year Plan?

Lesson Plan	1. Complete pre-test with students (5 min.)
	
	2. Pop-quiz for candy (5 min.)
	
	   a. What does the concept of On Track mean? (On-Track means you are performing in a manner that will allow you to graduate in four years. Must earn at least 5 credits by June of freshman year and can fail no more than one semester of one core course.)
	
	   b. An On-Track freshman is how many times more likely to graduate in four years than an off-track freshman? (3.5 times)
	
	   c. How many credits do you need to graduate from high school? (24 credits)
	
	   d. If you pass all of your classes freshman year, how many credits can you earn by the end of the year? (6 credits)
	
	3. Pass out a transcript evaluation form to each student. Explain how it illustrates the graduation requirements, elective courses, and non-credit requirements. Discuss courses open to freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors. (5 min.)
	
	4. Instruct students to fill out their tentative 4-year plans on the transcript evaluation form. Explain that these plans are not set in stone and may change from year to year. Ask students why having a plan can help them stay On Track to Graduate. (25 min)
	
	5. Complete post-test with students (5 min.)

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

237

**NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS**

On-Track Unit Plan

Session #3: Am I On Track?
(To be completed after 1st semester transcripts are available)

Goals & Objectives	**Goal 1:** **To assist students in identifying and evaluating their On-Track status after the 1st semester** • Objective 1: Students will use the transcript evaluation form to evaluate their first transcripts • Objective 2: Each student will determine his/her On-Track status and develop a plan to get On Track or remain On Track for the 2nd semester
ASCA* Standards Addressed	A:A1.5 – Identify attitudes and behaviors which lead to successful learning A:B2.3 – Develop and implement an annual plan of study to maximize academic ability and achievement
Time Required	45 minutes
Materials Needed	• Students' completed 4-year plans/transcript evaluation forms • Each student's transcript • Am I On Track? worksheet • "On Track" guide poster • A few pieces of candy
Evaluation Tools	Pre- and post-tests

**NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS**

* American School Counselor Association

On-Track Unit Plan

Session #3: Am I On Track?
(To be completed after 1st semester transcripts are available)

Lesson Plan	1. Complete pre-test with students (5 min.)
	
	2. Pop-quiz for candy (1 min.)
	
	    a. What does the concept of On Track mean? (On-Track means you are performing in a manner that will allow you to graduate in four years. Must earn at least 5 credits by June of freshman year and can fail no more than one semester of one core course.)
	
	    b. If you pass all of your classes, how many credits can you earn by the end of 1st semester? (3 credits)
	
	3. Define "transcript." (A document that shows all the classes you passed in high school, your grades, GPA, and any special awards, activities, or honors that you received. Many colleges use it to make admissions decisions.) Pass out each student's transcript. Discuss how to read a transcript – point out the following: identifying information, class rank, courses passed/failed, credits, service learning hours, and GPA. (10 min.)
	
	4. Pass out each student's transcript evaluation form/4-year plan that he/she completed during the last lesson. Instruct students to fill out the transcript evaluation form, checking off each 1st semester class that they passed. Pointing out the "Am I On Track?" poster, have students write on the form whether they are On Track and why. (10 min.)
	
	5. Complete post-test with students (5 min.)

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

239

**NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS**

Assessing Success
Team Progress

Contents

Purpose

Success Teams should regularly assess their progress to determine strengths and areas in need of growth. Assessment should not be limited to the performance of the team as a unit. It should include the performance of the Team Lead and administrators responsible for supporting the team.

How & When to Use

Success Teams should build time into their routines for assessment, reflection, and action planning. The Network for College Success encourages quarterly informal assessments. This allows the team to pause and celebrate successes. Regular team assessment can also reveal areas of concern that may require the team to set additional goals or take a new approach to the work.

Success Teams should approach assessment as a collaborative process grounded in a clear set of criteria or expectations for team performance. The Freshman Success Inventory is based on the NCS Freshman Success Framework (see the Framework in the About section of this Toolkit). The Inventory allows each team member to reflect on and respond to the criteria, after which the results are compiled so the entire team can determine a final performance level. Based on the data, teams are encouraged to set quarterly goals and action plans.

The video on Hancock High School showcases a high-functioning Success Team engaging in a solutions-oriented conversation about their students.
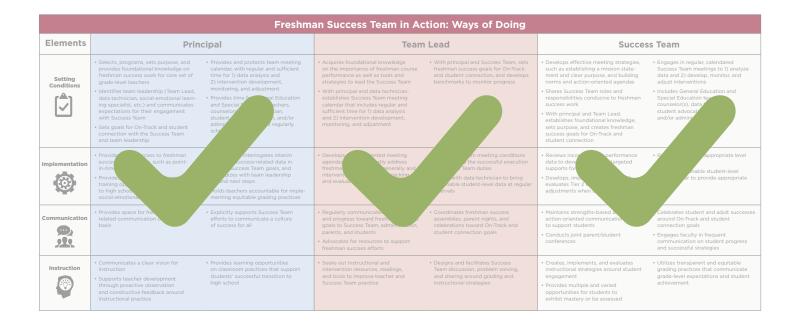
Connections to Framework

The [Freshman Success Framework](#) is the foundation for effective school practice on On-Track and student success. The Network for College Success has seen the greatest and most sustainable gains for freshmen when schools develop high-functioning educator professional learning communities, which we call Success Teams.

This Tool Set focuses on every behavior and action in the Framework. For more details on the Framework, please refer to the About section.

Freshman Success Team in Action: Ways of Doing					
Elements	**Principal**		**Team Lead**		**Success Team**	
Setting Conditions	• Selects, programs, sets purpose, and provides foundational knowledge on freshman success work for core set of grade-level teachers • Identifies team leadership (Team Lead, data technician, social-emotional learning specialist, etc.) and communicates expectations for their engagement with Success Team • Sets goals for On-Track and student connection with the Success Team and team leadership	• Provides and protects team meeting calendar, with regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment • Provides time for General Education and Special Education teachers, counselor(s), data technician, student advocate(s), and/or admin... regularly sch...	• Acquires foundational knowledge on the importance of freshman course performance as well as tools and strategies to lead the Success Team • With principal and data technician, establishes Success Team meeting calendar that includes regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment	• With principal and Success Team, sets freshman success goals for On-Track and student connection, and develops benchmarks to monitor progress	• Develops effective meeting strategies, such as establishing a mission statement and clear purpose, and building norms and action-oriented agendas • Shares Success Team roles and responsibilities conducive to freshman success work • With principal and Team Lead, establishes foundational knowledge, sets purpose, and creates freshman success goals for On-Track and student connection	• Engages in regular, calendared Success Team meetings to 1) analyze data and 2) develop, monitor, and adjust interventions • Includes General Education and Special Education te... counselor(s), data... student advocat... and/or admini...
Implementation	• Provides ... cess to freshman succe... such as point-in-time... • Provides ... training op... to high school ... social-emotional	• ... interrogates interim ...ccess-related data in ...uccess Team goals, and ...izes with team leadership ...nd next steps ...olds teachers accountable for implementing equitable grading practices	• Develops ...ented meeting agenda...tly address freshma...nerally and interven...racking and evalua...	• ...m meeting conditions ...the successful execution ...Team duties • ...with data technician to bring ...able student-level data at regular ...ervals	• Reviews incor...performance data to deve...targeted supports for... • Develops, imp... evaluates Tier 2... adjustments when...	• R... appropriate level ...nable student-level ...r to provide appropriate
Communication	• Provides space for fre... related communication o... basis	• Explicitly supports Success Team efforts to communicate a culture of success for all	• Regularly communicate... and progress toward fresh... goals to Success Team, admini...tion, parents, and students • Advocates for resources to support freshman success efforts	• Coordinates freshman success assemblies, parent nights, and celebrations toward On-Track and student connection goals	• Maintains strengths-based a... action-oriented communicati... to support students • Conducts joint parent/student conferences	• Celebrates student and adult successes around On-Track and student connection goals • Engages faculty in frequent communication on student progress and successful strategies
Instruction	• Communicates a clear vision for instruction • Supports teacher development through proactive observation and constructive feedback around instructional practice	• Provides learning opportunities on classroom practices that support students' successful transition to high school	• Seeks out instructional and intervention resources, readings, and tools to improve teacher and Success Team practice	• Designs and facilitates Success Team discussion, problem solving, and sharing around grading and instructional strategies	• Creates, implements, and evaluates instructional strategies around student engagement • Provides multiple and varied opportunities for students to exhibit mastery or be assessed	• Utilizes transparent and equitable grading practices that communicate grade-level expectations and student achievement

IMPLEMENTING SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS

NETWORK FOR COLLEGE SUCCESS

Freshman Success Inventory

A tool to collaboratively assess current practices across three main areas – the Success Team, the Team Lead, and the Administration – using four performance levels (Embedded, Practicing, Emerging, and Not Yet Practicing).

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

242

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Freshman Success Inventory

Rating descriptions

- **Embedded-** This practice is so ingrained in our work that it is a distinguishing feature of the culture of freshman success in our school (way of being)
- **Practicing-** This is a regular practice in our school (way of doing)
- **Emerging-** This practice is in its beginning stages in our school
- **Not Yet Practicing-** We have not begun this practice/we are planning to implement this practice in our school

Rate your team's current implementation level for each of the indicators below.

Administration (Principal or Assistant Principal)	Embedded	Practicing	Emerging	Not Yet Practicing
SETTING CONDITIONS: Administration selects, programs, sets purpose, and provides foundational knowledge on freshman success work for core set of grade-level teachers				
Administration identifies team leadership (Team Lead, data technician, social-emotional learning specialist, etc.) and communicates expectations for their engagement with Success Team				
Administration sets goals for On-Track and student connection with the Success Team and team leadership				
Administration provides and protects team meeting calendar, with regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment				
Administration provides time for General Education and Special Education teachers, counselor(s), data technician, student advocate or dean, and/or other administrator(s) to attend regularly scheduled meetings				

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

243

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Freshman Success Inventory

Administration (Principal or Assistant Principal) (cont.)	Embedded	Practicing	Emerging	Not Yet Practicing
IMPLEMENTATION: Administration provides timely access to freshman success-related data, such as point-in-time On-Track data				
Administration provides professional development and training opportunities on the transition to high school, data strategy, and social-emotional learning				
Administration reviews and interrogates interim freshman success-related data in light of Success Team goals, and strategizes with team leadership around next steps				
Administration holds teachers accountable for implementing equitable grading practices				
COMMUNICATION: Administration provides space for freshman success-related communication on a regular basis				
Administration explicitly supports Success Team efforts to communicate a culture of success for all				
INSTRUCTION: Administration communicates a clear vision for instruction				
Administration supports teacher development through proactive observation and constructive feedback around instructional practice				
Administration provides learning opportunities on classroom practices that support students' successful transition to high school				

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

244

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Freshman Success Inventory

Success Team Lead	Embedded	Practicing	Emerging	Not Yet Practicing
SETTING CONDITIONS: I acquire foundational knowledge on the importance of freshman course performance as well as tools and strategies to lead the Success Team				
With principal and data technician, I establish Success Team meeting calendar that includes regular and sufficient time for 1) data analysis and 2) intervention development, monitoring, and adjustment				
With principal and Success Team, I set freshman success goals for On-Track and student connection, and develop benchmarks to monitor progress				
IMPLEMENTATION: I develop action-oriented meeting agendas that consistently address freshman success goals generally and intervention development, tracking, and evaluation specifically				
I establish team meeting conditions conducive to the successful execution of Success Team duties				
I work with the data technician to bring actionable student-level data at regular intervals				
COMMUNICATION: I regularly communicate strategies and progress toward freshman success goals to Success Team, administration, parents, and students				
I advocate for resources to support our freshman success efforts				
I coordinate freshman success assemblies, parent nights, and celebrations toward On-Track and student connection goals				

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

245

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Freshman Success Inventory

Success Team Lead (cont.)	Embedded	Practicing	Emerging	Not Yet Practicing
INSTRUCTION: I seek out instructional and intervention resources, readings, and tools to improve teacher and Success Team practice				
I design and facilitate the Success Team discussion, problem solving, and sharing around grading and instructional strategies				

Success Team	Embedded	Practicing	Emerging	Not Yet Practicing
SETTING CONDITIONS: We develop effective meeting strategies, such as establishing a mission statement and clear purpose, and building norms and action-oriented agendas				
We share Success Team roles and responsibilities conducive to freshman success work				
With principal and Team Lead, we establish foundational knowledge, set purpose, and create freshman success goals for On-Track and student connection				
We engage in regular, calendared Success Team meetings to 1) analyze data and 2) develop, monitor, and adjust interventions				
Our Success Team includes General Education and Special Education teachers, counselor(s), data technician, student advocate or dean, and/or administration				

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

246

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Freshman Success Inventory

Success Team (cont.)	Embedded	Practicing	Emerging	Not Yet Practicing
IMPLEMENTATION: We review incoming class performance data to develop early and targeted supports for students				
We develop, implement, track, and evaluate Tier 2 interventions, making adjustments when appropriate				
We refer students to the appropriate level of intervention				
We review actionable student-level data in order to provide appropriate support				
COMMUNICATING A CULTURE OF SUCCESS: We maintain strengths-based and action-oriented communication to support students				
We conduct joint parent/student conferences				
We celebrate student and adult successes around On-Track and student connection goals				
We engage faculty in frequent communication on student progress and successful strategies				

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

247

Freshman Success Inventory

Success Team (cont.)	Embedded	Practicing	Emerging	Not Yet Practicing
CLASSROOM-LEVEL STUDENT SUPPORT STRUCTURES: We create, implement, and evaluate instructional strategies around student engagement				
We provide multiple and varied opportunities for students to exhibit mastery or be assessed				
We utilize transparent and equitable grading practices that communicate grade-level expectations and student achievement				

**IMPLEMENTING
SCHOOL-BASED TEAMS**

NCS FRESHMAN ON-TRACK TOOLKIT

248

NETWORK
FOR COLLEGE
SUCCESS

Success Analysis Protocol

A protocol to analyze the development of a best practice so lessons can be applied to future work.

Success Analysis Protocol
For Leadership Teams

Developed in the field by educators.

Roles
A timekeeper/facilitator

The facilitator's role is to help the group to keep focused on how this practice is different from other team practices. The analysis of what makes this practice so successful is the purpose of the protocol.

"Best Practice" is defined as a process that proved to be highly effective in achieving the intended outcome.

1. Discuss as a team and then write a short description of the one "Best Practice" of your team this year. Note what it is about the practice that made it so successful. Be sure to answer the question, "What made this experience different from other team experiences?" Identify a person to report on the team's success and the analysis of what made it successful. (20 minutes)

2. The Reporter shares their team's "Best Practice" and why it was so successful. (3 minutes)

3. The other team asks clarifying questions about the details of the "best practice". (3 minutes)

4. The group does an analysis of what they heard about the presenter's success and offers additional insights about how this practice is different than other team practices. Probing questions are appropriate and the presenter's participation in the conversation is encouraged. (3-5 minutes)

5. The presenter responds to the group's analysis of what made this experience so successful. (1 minute)

6. The other team's Reporter shares their "Best Practice" and what made it so successful. Repeat steps 3-5. (10-12 minutes)

7. Debrief the protocol as a whole group. Possible questions: What worked well? How might we apply what we learned to other team work? How might students use this process to reflect on their work? What adaptations to this protocol might improve the process? (5 minutes)

Facilitating Effective Adult Collaboration and Conversation

Success Team in Action: Hancock High School Video

A video that provides a snapshot of a Success Team successfully facilitating an accountable conversation about student outcomes.

Click here to view >>