

DISTRICT DESIGN TEAMS AND SCHOOL DESIGN TEAMS

Characteristics of Design Teams

- Act as change agents committed to making engagement central for all
- Have high credibility with students, staff, and community
- Are good communicators who listen more than talk and who pose reflective questions
- Volunteer their attention, commitment, and persistence to the work of the team
- Are continual learners, learning individually and collectively
- Understand and use a common language
- Are developed over time and often have a stable membership
- Are not focused on daily operations or routine management
- Work as a learning community

... Related to Systems Thinking

- Focus their efforts on transformation, not reform, to become more and more like a learning organization
- Focus their attention on enhancing capacity to support innovation; District Design Teams focus on the entire district, while School Design Teams focus on the school
- Fasten attention on designing systems that support the design of engaging work for students
- Attend to system properties and the changes needed in these systems to encourage and support continuous innovation
- Facilitate the development of a clear set of beliefs, vision, and mission and use them in their daily work, including the constant inducting of others
- Think strategically and form goals about accomplishment
- Measure progress in various ways, such as through the use of the School Standards, Classroom Standards, System Capacity Standards, and Six Critical Systems
- Spend time in research and development and in creating prototypes of organizational changes that enhance the capacity of districts or schools to support engaging work for students

... Related to Working on the Work Framework

- Are committed to the Working on the Work framework and use it as the lens through which initiatives, programs, and resources are viewed and evaluated
- Get others involved in the core business of schools
- Understand the need for engagement in today's schools
- Believe teachers are leaders, designers, and guides to instruction
- Use the discipline of design to be attentive to the characteristics of work likely to increase the power of work to engage others
- Model, share, and facilitate protocols

DISTRICT DESIGN TEAM

Purpose

A District Design Team's main purpose is to cause the school district to become an engagement-focused learning organization, one which enables schools to make the design of engaging work for students its centerpiece—the core business—and to ensure that such a focus is maintained and sustained over time.

For a change to be sustained, it is essential that a group be established that can be depended on to sustain and support a course of action intended to produce change, even in the absence of the leader who initiated the change.

***Working on the Work:
An Action Plan for Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents
Phillip C. Schlechty, 2002, p. 55***

Relationship with the Schlechty Center

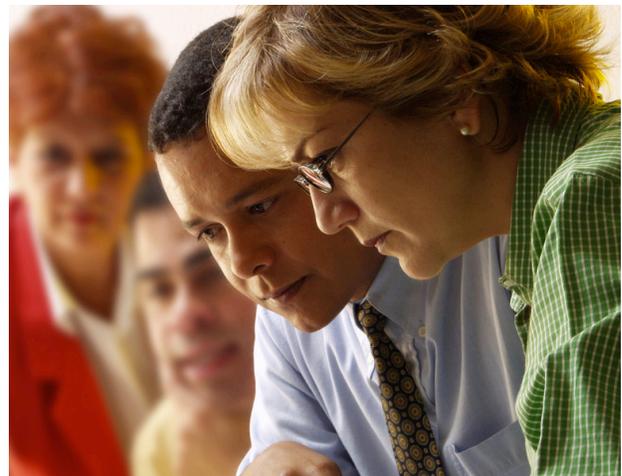
The Design Team will always be the entry point for Schlechty Center work, as well as the primary participant in all on-site work.

Guiding Principles for a District Design Team

- A District Design Team is developed, not simply appointed.
 - A District Design Team “confronts the brutal facts” about the district and commits to addressing them.
 - A District Design Team demonstrates openness to ideas, genuine curiosity, and disciplined thinking.
 - A District Design Team uses the Working on the Work framework, the Schlechty Center System Capacity Standards, and the Six Critical Systems as major parts of its work.
 - A District Design Team accepts the design challenge of creating experiences, new tools, and conditions that will enlist others in transforming the school district.
 - A District Design Team shares a common sense of purpose and serves as a champion for the district direction.
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Composition of a District Design Team

- The superintendent leads the District Design Team.
- The superintendent identifies leaders in the district who collectively have the power, creativity, technical competence, and leadership to make, maintain, and sustain organizational change. (Kotter, 1996)
- Some members of the superintendent's “cabinet,” or its equivalent, should be members of the District Design Team.
- These leaders should come from across the organization (central office and school-based) and have an understanding of and commitment to (or have the potential to do so) the Working on the Work framework, the Schlechty Center System Capacity Standards, the Six Critical Systems, strategic thinking, marketing, and becoming a learning organization.



DISTRICT DESIGN TEAM (CONTINUED)

Functions of a District Design Team

- A District Design Team operates as a learning community that shares common reading, thinking, discussion, and use of protocols, all focused on organizational transformation.
- A District Design Team utilizes its authority to make decisions on behalf of organizational transformation.
- A District Design Team supports and assists schools in developing School Design Teams and school workplans.
- A District Design Team creates vehicles for communication between and among School Design Teams and between the District Design Team and School Design Teams.
- A District Design Team coordinates district staff attendance at conferences, including identification of participants, pre- and post-conference discussions, and assessment of impact.
- A District Design Team studies Schlechty Center tools to determine their usefulness, timeliness, and potential impact for the school district.
- A District Design Team communicates the nature and impact of the organizational transformation efforts within and beyond the district.

SCHOOL DESIGN TEAM (CONTINUED)

Guiding Principles for a School Design Team

- A School Design Team is developed, not simply appointed.
- A School Design Team “confronts the brutal facts” about the school’s progress and commits to addressing them.
- A School Design Team demonstrates openness to ideas, genuine curiosity, and disciplined thinking.
- A School Design Team uses the Schlechty Center School Standards and Classroom Standards and the Working on the Work framework as major parts of its work.
- A School Design Team leads colleagues in accepting the design challenge of creating engaging experiences for students and teachers that will enlist others in transforming the school.
- A School Design Team shares a common sense of purpose and serves as a champion for Working on the Work as a means of improving the level of student engagement.

Composition of a School Design Team

- A team is made up of a principal and teacher leaders.
- The principal identifies teachers who understand and are committed to the Working on the Work framework and who have the following characteristics:
 - + are change agents
 - + have high credibility within the school
 - + are good listeners and communicators
 - + are continual learners
 - + are successful in getting others involved in the school’s core business
 - + model teacher attributes that support Working on the Work
 - + are volunteers
- The principal ensures that teachers with these characteristics volunteer to serve.
- The principal and team select a teacher co-chairperson.

Functions of a School Design Team

- A School Design Team operates as a learning community sharing common reading, thinking, and discussion; designing engaging work for students; using protocols and assessments of engagement for students and staff; and designing engaging experiences for teachers—all focused on school transformation.
- A School Design Team leads in the development of the school’s plan to increase engagement and monitors progress using the School Standards and Classroom Standards.
- A School Design Team studies Schlechty Center tools and processes to anticipate needs and determine activities and processes for staff development.
- A School Design Team acts as a resource and support to all teachers in understanding and using the Working on the Work framework.