

Professional Learning Teams

The following table describes the ways that professional learning teams differ from traditional teacher teams. After reviewing the table with your colleagues, use the questions at the bottom to reflect on your current reality.

| Traditional Teacher Teams | Professional Learning Teams |
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| Hold regular meetings that may sometimes be focused on student learning, but are often primarily focused on school routines or procedures. | Hold regular meetings focused specifically on student learning—and only on student learning. |
| Have inconsistent levels of trust between team members; teachers may engage in collegial conversations, but they tend to avoid conflict with one another. Keeping the peace is a priority. | Have high levels of trust between group members, allowing for productive conflict to occur in a safe environment. This level of trust leads to consensus and commitment on the part of all team members. |
| Rarely expose teachers to the instructional practices of their peers. Members tend to rely on their own professional experiences when making decisions for their students. | Seek to identify and amplify instructional practices that work. Members are willing to rethink what they do in the classroom based on the collective work of the group. |
| Members see themselves as loosely connected colleagues. While they may share a common group of students, teachers largely act as individuals when making instructional decisions. | Members see themselves as interdependent, sharing ownership for the success of all students. |

1. Which characteristic of professional learning teams do we currently do well? What can we celebrate?
2. Which characteristic of professional learning teams seems the most intimidating? Why?
3. Which characteristic of professional learning teams can we start working on today? What will our first step be? Who can help us in our efforts?