Grade Level Team Meetings
Powerful Tools for Improving Student Achievement

Idaho Reading First Coaches’ Webinar
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Modified from the National Reading First Conference Presentation and Materials by Linda Carnine & Jan Silverstein (July 2007)

“Quality is never an accident; it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction, and skillful execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives.”

Willa Foster

Our Vision

That SUCCESSFUL READERS would be fostered in each of your classrooms through your WISE CHOICES!

We hope the information that we share with you will assist you with the wise choices you must make each day within your schools.

Wise Choices Imply Wise Changes, BUT...

The kinds of changes made in RF schools are often perceived as BIG CHANGE. These choices change...

- What teachers teach
- How teachers teach
- What is tested, who does the testing, and why it is done
- How schedules and classroom time are determined
- What is expected of K-3 students (and teachers)
- How teachers work collaboratively across building systems (e.g. General Ed., Title I, and Special Ed.)
- How teachers make decisions about their classrooms
- What type of intensity is used for instruction

Setting the Stage for Change

- BIG CHANGE like that in RF can tend to make people focus on what it is that they may lose with the change.
- Many people have trouble with change itself.
- Favorite practices and habits are sometimes hard to give up.
- Adjusting to change takes TIME.
- Teachers and staff need to see that others around them are OK with the change.

Concerns-Based Model

A model for understanding how people (e.g. teachers) respond to change initiatives

Continuum: Stages of Concern

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stages</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unaware</td>
<td>Not aware of the need for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actively engaged</td>
<td>Fully engaged in the change process</td>
</tr>
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Continuum: Levels of Use

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Levels</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Use</td>
<td>Not using the new tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert Use</td>
<td>Using the new tools effectively</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Think about the two continuums. Think about your grade level team(s).

Where is each team along that continuum? What are your concerns? What is your skill level?

Think about a teacher that has truly mastered classroom routines and management procedures.

What does this teacher do that makes his or her classroom work so well?

Where is each team along that continuum? What are your concerns? What is your skill level?

Think about a teacher that has truly mastered classroom routines and management procedures.

What does this teacher do that makes his or her classroom work so well?

The Point

Powerful TEACHERS have HIGH RESPECT for the importance of …

the task at hand
and
the people involved.

Powerful TEAMS do too.

Big Ideas for Team Meetings

1. PROCESS OF THE MEETING: Powerful procedures make team meetings work and center on students’ needs.

2. CONTENT OF THE MEETING: Data-driven decision making and action-planning assures that all students meet goals for achievement.

Big Idea 1

1. PROCESS: Powerful procedures make team meetings work and center on students’ needs.

2. CONTENT: Data-driven decision making and action-planning assures that all students meet goals for achievement.

The Procedures*

Key Questions to Ask Yourself

1. Focus/Communicating Goals
2. Meeting Structures/Roles
3. Group Process
4. Shared Leadership/Planning
5. Follow-Up
6. Research Base/Professional Development
7. Motivation/Empowerment

*A Self-Assessment is attached on page 3 of your packet. Take a look.
Questions for Consideration

Focus/Communicating Goals

- What is our focus?
- Over time?
- At each meeting?
- How do we keep our goals visible?

Mission/Vision

- Achievement Goals
- Annual Calendar

Meeting Structure/Roles

- Meeting agendas
- Role clarifications

Group Process

- Norms of behavior
- Action planning/problem solving
- Schedule + time savers

Shared Leadership/Planning

- K-3 Action Plan
- Activity 1 (pages 2 & 3 in your packet)

Student data notebooks
- GLTM and BLT meeting notes

Research Base/Professional Development

- Articles, protocols for discussion, online sources
- Access to PD resources, e.g., expert trainers; SBRR programs & intervention materials; best practices for assessment, data analysis, & scheduling

Motivation/Empowerment

- Data boards & displays
- Public celebrations of accomplishment
- Food and drink

Possible Vision Statements

- Shining our light on every child!
- We can make each student in OUR care a successful reader!
- Making OUR classrooms the best places for reading success
- Let’s face the facts and do what needs to be done right now!

Achievement Goals

- K-3 Reading Goals:
  - Tell you what to teach and when.
  - Provide a framework for determining whether students are learning enough.
  - Provide a framework for determining whether instruction is meeting the needs of all students.

Vision

The First Step in Focusing

- Revisit the RF vision for your school.
- How can you align this vision with the actions you’ll take within your classrooms?
- What can you as a team envision that will drive your work for the school year?

Achievement Goals

Put Your Vision into Action by...

- Setting high expectations for the achievement of your students
- Translating those expectations into specific goals
- Knowing what it takes to reach those goals
- Sharing responsibility for ALL students at your grade level reaching those goals
Possible Achievement Goals

For one Grade 2 classroom...

- Make sure all 12 students at benchmark at beginning of the year stay at that level.
- Get all 6 strategic students to benchmark by May testing.
- Reduce # of intensive students from 6 to 3 by January benchmark.

Remember

Great teams do a few things extremely well!

Questions to Consider:

- What predictable procedures organize our work?
- Who does what?
- How is it ensured that the meeting will stick to the focus?

Participant Roles*

- Facilitator
- Time Keeper
- Recorder
- Engaged Participant

*Roles can be rotated as the group decides.

An Agenda is Essential

- Provides a targeted focus for the meeting
- Communicates important information
- Ensures that all information is covered
- Gives participants an opportunity to come to the meeting prepared
Meeting Agendas

- Examples in Your Packet
- Kihei Elementary – Hawaii
- Pasadena USD, CA
- Sample Timed Agenda
- Look for
  - Clear focus on data, action, and follow-up
  - Clearly established roles
  - Emphasis on accountability

Activity 2
Packet
Page 7-11

Time Management

TIME

How do we manage the little time we have?

Some Ideas for USING TIME

- Common Planning Time
- Periodic Extended Meeting Times
- Timed Agendas
- Use of Written Communication
- 90% focus on student achievement goals

- 2-minute Whine
- Regular GLTM schedule that fits your needs/circumstances
- Applying the “bell to bell” rule to your GLTMs

Questions to Consider:

- What are our student achievement goals?
- Are they the stretch we need?
- How are we doing?
- Are our actions getting us where we want to go?
- What needs to change?

3. Group Process

Questions to Consider:

- How do we work together?
- How do we solve problems?
- How do we manage time?

NORMS: What Are They?

- They are the standards for how you agree to operate while you are in this group.
- They need to be jointly developed and owned by each team member.
- They need to be available and used early on by members when standards are not being met.

You have a sample of norms for group meetings in the “Take-Away” Packet on page 12.

Working Together…

Some Ideas for USING TIME

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Goals for Student Achievement

Be sure the goals are:
- Targeted
- Cohesive (i.e., all aspects of the plan focus on the same target)
- Timely

Appropriate “Stretch”

It is not enough to simply move students forward…

Do the goals bridge the gap between where students are and where they need to be?

Action Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area for Action Plan</th>
<th>Action to Be Taken</th>
<th>Person Responsible</th>
<th>Report on Progress of Implementation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Materials and Instructional Practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Collection/Meeting and Grouping Practices</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Achievement Practices</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Data Utilization Practices</td>
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<td>Schoolwide Organization and Support</td>
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<td>Professional Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent and District Leadership</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading First Coach</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Steps to Be Taken

What are your actions…
- In the classroom?
- For the next meeting?
- For other staff members?

5. Follow-Up

Questions to Consider:
- What steps need to be taken?
- Who needs to know the various aspects of the decisions made to help us meet our student achievement goals?
- How do we make these things happen?
Keeping Key People in the Loop

Building Leadership Team

Grade Level Team

District Leadership

K-3 Teachers

Making Grade Level Teams Work

6. Research Base / Professional Development

Questions To Consider:
- What does research say about what we need to do?
- What do we need to know to do our jobs better?
- What new skills will help us get our kids to benchmark?

7. Motivation / Empowerment

Questions to Consider:
- How do we stretch and celebrate?
  - At each meeting?
  - Over time?

Bringing Research to the Table

- Professional conversation center around "best practices" that are proven to work.
- A high-quality meeting will bring research into the discussion.
  - Professional publications
  - Research articles
  - Etc.

Knowing When We Need Help

- If a team is at its "wit's end," plans aren't working, and no one knows of resources that will address the problem...
  - It's time to ask for help!
    - Consultants
    - Technical Assistant Providers
    - Publisher Training
    - Etc.

Be sure to celebrate your school’s Reading Success!!
Negative Examples of Process

- Long, rambling meetings with no agenda (3 hours vs. 45 minutes)
- Lack of data and its analysis
- Focus on excuses for failure (complaints about family, attendance, lack of service coordination, etc.)
- Little or no follow-up from previous plans
- Lack of implications for professional development

Positive Examples of Process

- Concise agenda
- Uses only the time needed to get the job done
- Data analysis is a foundation for discussion
- Plans are made for students not showing progress
- Follow up on previous plans
- Monitoring of Implementation of Plans
- Meetings are directly connected to professional development

Process – Conclusion A

A well designed process for conducting Grade Level Team Meetings will provide the necessary context for success.
“If you put a good teacher up against a weak system, the system will win every time.”

(Schmoker 2006)

We need to develop and maintain the system in order to bring out the best in our schools’ teachers…and in our students.

Big Idea 2

Big Ideas:

1. **PROCESS**: Powerful procedures make team meetings work and center on students’ needs.

2. **CONTENT**: Data-driven decision making and action-planning assures that all students meet goals for achievement.

**CONTENT**

Data-driven decisions and action-planning

Some teachers struggle knowing what choice to make once data is collected.

Data and Planning

It’s not always easy...

- To understand the implications of the data.
- For teachers to know what to do with the data.

Teachers can do these things with no trouble at all.

Data

It’s easy …

- To collect data
- To pass out data
- To have access to data

WRRFTAC K-3 Performance & Level of Challenge

% of K Students Entering At High Risk

Average Schools

Increasing Challenge

Decreasing Performance
The Educator Learning Gap

Data Analysis Has Different Subtleties at Different Times

Big Picture Data
- Benchmarks / Screening
- Outcome Measures

Small Details Data
- Progress Monitoring
- Diagnostic

Useful for “Big Picture” planning.
Useful for refining and “honing in” targeted plans.

Team Meeting Focus

Planning: Continuous Problem Solving Cycle

Big Picture Data

Leads to Big Picture Goals

Planning Starts With Taking a Big Look At All K-3 Performance Data

1) Previous End-of-Year (EOY) Outcome Data (overall reading ability)
2) Previous Adequate Growth Data (growth of students on benchmark and progress monitoring assessments)
3) Previous Program-Specific Mastery Data (from reading curriculum)

*By looking at performance of the immediate past, you can anticipate potential pitfalls and plan for them.
Summary of School Level Data

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<th>Grade</th>
<th>Adequate Growth Data</th>
<th>Outcome Data</th>
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<td>% and/or # Students Moved</td>
<td>% and/or # Students</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>From high risk to grade level</td>
<td>From high risk to grade level</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% and/or #</th>
<th>% and/or #</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students</td>
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<tr>
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<td>50/171</td>
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<td></td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>255/460</td>
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</table>

Sample Data From a School

75% Adequate Growth = 164 of the 219 Kindergarteners who began the year at “Some Risk” moved to Grade Level by the End of Year (EOY).

Setting Goals Based on Big Picture

Leads to …
- School Wide (year-long) Action Plans
- Grade Level Team (year-long) Action Plans for Target Groups

Characterized by …
- Broad focus
- Static (unchanging) in nature
- Aimed at the end of the year

Types of Big-Picture Goals

- Outcome Goals
- Adequate Progress Goals
  - For each grade level
  - For each sub-group
- Content Coverage/Mastery Goals

Small Details Data

Progress Monitoring & Diagnostic Data …

Show that your work is working (i.e. you are on your way to the Big Picture Goal).

OR…

Lead to small and timely “tweaks” in the instructional treatment.
Setting Goals Based on Small Details Data

Leads to …
- School Wide (rapid-process) Action Plans
- Grade Level Team (rapid-process) Action Plans for Target Groups

Characterized by …
- Narrow focus
- Ongoing revisions as data changes
- Aimed at the immediate changes needed

Team Meeting Focus

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Prior to school</th>
<th>Beginning of year</th>
<th>Throughout fall</th>
<th>Middle of Year</th>
<th>Throughout winter &amp; spring</th>
<th>End of Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To Collect Data</td>
<td>Create Action Plan(s)</td>
<td>Refine Grouping</td>
<td>Create Individual &amp; group instructional plan(s)</td>
<td>Refine Action Plan &amp; Grouping</td>
<td>Refine Individual and group instructional plan(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Action Plan(s)</td>
<td>Refine Grouping</td>
<td>Create Individual &amp; group instructional plan(s)</td>
<td>Refine Action Plan &amp; Grouping</td>
<td>Refine Individual and group instructional plan(s)</td>
<td>Create Action Plan for next year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Types of Small Detail Goals

- Progress Monitoring Goals
- Mastery Goals of Prerequisite Skill Subsets (in diagnosed areas)
- Other goals that are specific and expected to be met rapidly

Action Planning

**Focus** your plans
- In the areas that matter the most
- On key elements of instruction

**Revise** the plans when they are not sufficient.
- Monitor the data.
- If data is on track, keep doing what you’re doing.
- If data is not measuring up, make a change.

Oral Reading Fluency as Indicator

- ORF is a toothpick
- ORF is not designed to provide an exhaustive assessment
- ORF provides an efficient indicator of essential literacy skills acquisition like a toothpick provides an efficient way to tell if the cake is baked.
- If the toothpick has dough on it, what should we do?

Bake the Whole Cake, Don’t Just Cook One Place!

Using a torch to cook only the place we checked with the toothpick would not produce a very satisfying cake!
Planning Where it Matters – A

Vocabulary / Comprehension

Comprehension of Text

Mental Schema

Mechanical Skills

Planning Where it Matters – B

Earlier intervention for High Risk students

The Matthew Effect

The gap to fill is ever-widening.
The sooner it is closed, the better.

Planning Where it Matters – C

Find the root of a problem...
- Freddy struggles with comprehension. Is it:
  a) Simply because he lacks comprehension skills?
  b) He lacks the fluency necessary to use comprehension skills?
  c) He lacks the phonics skills necessary to be fluent?
     ... OR ...
  d) He lacks the phonemic awareness skills necessary to learn phonics which are necessary to be fluent which are necessary to use comprehension skills?

Key Elements in Action Plans

- Materials and Instructional Practices
- Time/Coverage/Mastery and Grouping Practices
- Assessment Practices
- Data Utilization Practices
- School Wide Organization and Support
- Professional Development
- Principal and District Leadership
- Reading First Coach

Key Elements in Refining Instructional Plans

A. Instructional Delivery
B. Time
C. Grouping
D. Instructional Materials

A - Instructional Delivery

1) Improve delivery skills of person teaching
2) Improve skills in knowing how to efficiently accelerate students who are High Risk or Some Risk through instructional programs
3) Change person teaching
### Ways to Increase Instructional Intensity

- Provide **repeated** opportunities for practice and review
- Provide additional, specific, and immediate feedback and correction
- Increase engagement and time on-task for **all** students
- Provide **repetition** and practice review

### A - Instructional Delivery

1. Improve delivery skills of person teaching
2. **Improve skills in knowing how to efficiently accelerate students who are High Risk or Some Risk through instructional programs**
3. Change person teaching

### Key Documents for GLTM Discussion of Early Intervention with High Risk Students

1. Develop pacing guides  
   - (that show how the gap will be closed in a timely manner)
2. Collect curriculum placement and content coverage data
3. Current Progress Monitoring Data
4. Documentation that Tracks Individuals  
   - An individual tutoring log, for example.

### B - Time

Increase instructional time **WITHIN OR OUTSIDE** the school day and school year.
Examples: 2nd and 3rd Grade Students

GLTM Participants Review Individual Progress of Targeted Students. When data indicates, then…
- Change group membership
- Make group smaller
- Make groups more homogenous

D - Instructional materials

Steps to take when considering materials used for students:
- Add scaffolding to program
- Change placement in program
- Add additional programs
  - supplemental or intervention
- Change program

Know When to REVISE a Plan

We’re not about beating a dead horse…

*When it’s all said and done, all the planning is just that, a plan…*

*If the plan does not work, change the plan. Don’t just keep doing the plan, because it’s the plan!*
Conclusion

The grade level team meeting may be the single most important component of Reading First. It provides a forum for:

- Analyzing assessment results
- Creating meaningful Action Plans
- Dealing with grouping/scheduling issues
- Communicating program philosophy, requirements, and activities
- Professional development

When GLTs serve these multiple purposes, they establish professional peer groups and become the cohesive element that makes Reading First a true program, rather than a series of loosely connected activities. —Central Consolidated SD RF GLTM Rationale

GLTM Rubric

Always:

- All teachers in the grade level are present and participating actively.
- Meetings occur weekly or at least every other week.
- Problems and solutions are the focus of discussion.
- Coach and principal participate regularly (usually weekly, barring emergencies).

Hope to See:

- All teachers collaborating toward common goals with a sense of collective responsibility rather than competition between teachers
- A "safe" affective environment in which teachers can share openly without fear of humiliation
- Decision making always based on a "priority" approach (i.e. addressing needs that are most important first rather than succumbing to the "tyranny of the urgent")

High Quality:

- Meeting and decision making is always centered on data from multiple types of assessments (diagnostic, screening, outcome, and progress monitoring).
- Decisions are specific and focused (i.e. measurable).
- Collaboration is constructive (i.e. positive environment, no negativity on behalf of participants).
- Focus of agenda and grade level needs are determined mostly by teachers and secondarily by leadership.
- Decisions that are made get implemented quickly with collaborative follow-up (e.g. the principal and coach provide the necessary feedback and support to ensure the solution is implemented and working well).

Concerns:

- meetings that are completely led by leadership
- meetings in which the teachers are "tuned out" and not participating
- meetings in which the teachers lack "buy-in"
- lack of data utilization in any form
- lack of understanding of how to use the data to inform instruction
- meetings not happening and/or not happening with sufficient frequency to make a difference in grade level decisions
- decisions not being made and/or not resulting in instructional change (i.e. meeting has become more of a social event)

Questions/Answers

Final Comments
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