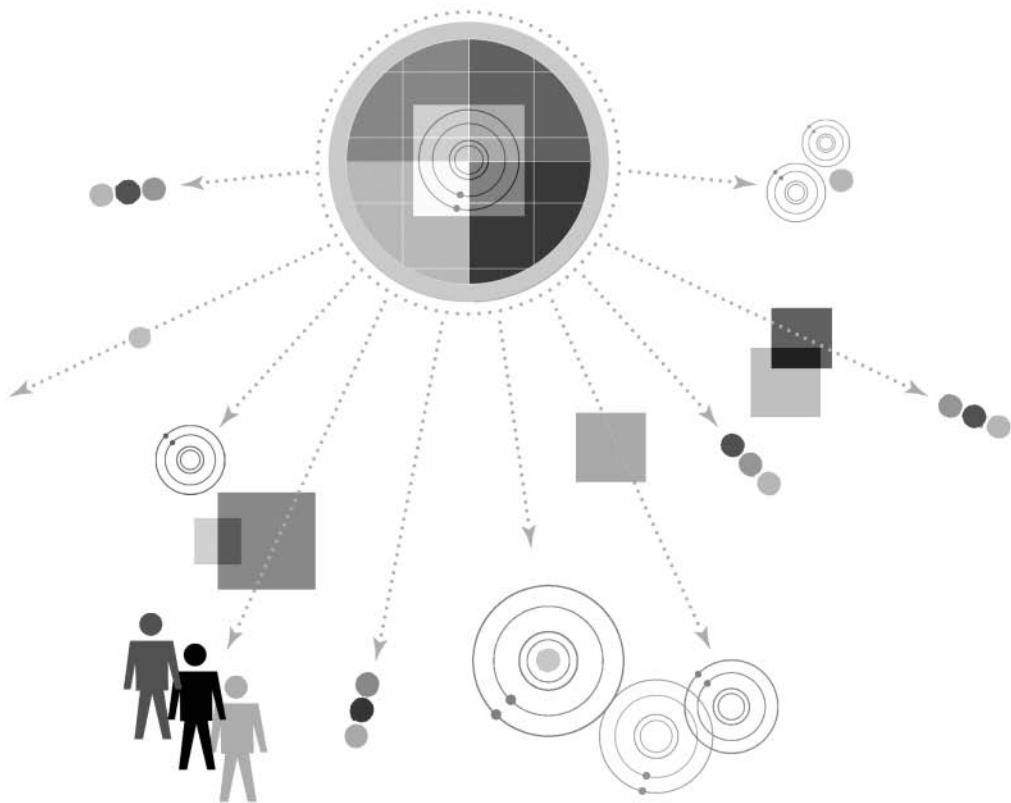


Leading

Effective Meetings, Teams, and Work Groups in Districts and Schools



Matthew Jennings



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Introduction

In my experience as both a graduate education professor and a school district administrator, I have asked many teachers what they thought of school faculty meetings—and not once did I ever receive a favorable reply. Most of the time, my questions provoked emotions ranging from indifference to contempt; teachers perceive faculty meetings as wastes of time to be tolerated, and nothing more.

The good news is that educational leaders can make faculty meetings better; they don't have to continue facilitating meetings that accomplish little or nothing. Because running effective meetings is not taught in most school administrator preparation programs, I set out to write this book with the goals of synthesizing the available research and translating it into action steps that you can take. Using the information and activities contained in this section will change your meetings from dreaded events to major sources of learning, social support, and dialogue.

Whether these roles are permanent or rotate is up to you. Permanent assignments have the advantage of consistency and of helping staff members develop role-specific skills over time. Rotating assignments have the advantage of promoting equal responsibility among all staff members for all roles.

Developing the Meeting Agenda

A meeting agenda provides staff members with a guide to the proceedings and encourages them to focus on upcoming tasks. Without an agenda, staff members may have trouble discerning the meeting's purpose.

When teachers help shape the agenda, they gain an increased sense of ownership for the meeting. Be sure to set a deadline by which teachers must provide topics in advance. When submitting items, teachers should include their names, the topics they wish to address, and the resources and approximate amount of time that they will require.

A quality meeting agenda should include the following:

- The overall purpose of the meeting in one or two clearly written sentences
- A note on who is required to attend
- The projected time span of the meeting
- The location of the meeting
- Any special resources that participants should bring
- Any advance preparation that is required
- The names of the recorder and timekeeper for the meeting

- Agenda items, preferably including questions to encourage advance reflection (e.g., “How can we cut our proposed budget by 10 percent without harming our instructional program?”), along with the projected time span for discussing each item

Figure 1.1 shows a sample meeting agenda. Although not strictly necessary, it is often helpful to share a rough draft of the agenda with staff representatives prior to distributing it, for proofreading and feedback. Whenever possible, staff members

1.1 Sample Meeting Agenda

Columbia School Faculty Meeting

Purpose: To celebrate our current successes implementing cooperative learning and to identify areas requiring additional assistance or training

Required Attendees: All teachers

Optional Attendees: Student teachers and paraprofessional staff

Date: October 8 **Time:** 3:45 – 4:30 **Location:** Team Room 2A

Required Materials: Cooperative learning journal, pen or pencil

Advance Preparation: Please read the small-group discussion questions below and reflect on your answers.

Recorder: Jane S. **Timekeeper:** Ralph R.

Agenda Items:

Base teams meeting (5 minutes)

- Staff-building activity

Small-group discussion of the following questions: (20 minutes)

- What cooperative learning strategies have worked successfully for you?
- What problems are you having with implementing cooperative learning strategies in our classrooms?
- What cooperative learning strategies would you like to learn more about?

Large-group sharing of small-group responses (15 minutes)

Base teams meeting (5 minutes)

- Review of next steps and responsibilities
- Team celebration

7.3 What Is an Inclusion Teaching Team? Form

An inclusion teaching team is defined as follows:

A partnership in which a *general education* teacher and a *special education* teacher share *all of the teaching responsibilities* for all of the students assigned to a classroom

Agenda Item #3: Potential Benefits of Inclusion Teaching Teams

Purpose: Team members will be internally motivated if they view their work as meaningful and potentially beneficial.

Duration: 10 minutes

Materials required: One overhead copy of the Potential Benefits of Inclusion Teaching Teams form (Appendix 2, p. 146)

Steps:

1. Review the overhead transparency of the Potential Benefits of Inclusion Teaching Teams form with participants, who follow along in their binders.
2. After highlighting the potential benefits for teachers listed on the form, ask participants to record any additional benefits they can think of in the space provided on their copy of the form.
3. Turn to the potential benefits for students listed on the form. Participants record any additional benefits on their copy of the form.

Agenda Item #4: Goals and Parameters

Purpose: The objective of this activity is to communicate the team's goals and parameters to potential members. An example of a *goal* would be, "All students in collaboratively taught classes

must demonstrate a 95 percent attendance rate"; an example of a *parameter* would be, "Team members must always use the common planning time provided for team business." Prior to the training session, complete the Goals and Parameters form and ask a trusted colleague to review it for clarity before including copies in the training binder.

Duration: 20 minutes

Materials required: Overhead copies of the Goals and Parameters form (Appendix 2, p. 147) and a filled-in version of the Our Vision form (see Figure 7.4; a blank version of this figure appears in Appendix 2, p. 148)

Steps:

1. Review the overhead transparency of the Goals and Parameters form with participants as they follow along in their binders. When done, ask if there are any questions.
2. Once participants understand the team's goals and parameters, review a completed version of the Our Vision form on the overhead projector.
3. Participants fill out the blank Our Vision forms in their training binders.

Agenda Item #5: Rules and Routines

Purpose: Teachers need to jointly develop the rules and routines that they will use in the classroom. If the teachers are not playing by the same rules, resentment and misunderstanding might ensue; in addition, if students perceive one teacher to be stricter than the other, they may exploit the situation.

Duration: 25 minutes

Materials required: One overhead copy of a sample Rules and Routines form (see Figure 7.5; a

7.11 Developmental Stages of Inclusion Teaching Teams

Typical Roles and Responsibilities		
Stages	<i>General Education Teacher</i>	<i>Special Education Teacher</i>
<i>1. Beginning</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes the lesson plans • Instructs students • Informs the special education teacher of upcoming lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modifies classroom materials as needed • Monitors instruction of special ed. students by the general education teacher • Implements behavioral interventions • Grades and modifies tests • Interacts primarily with special ed. students • Develops separate lesson plans and maintains a separate grade book
<i>2. Compromise</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writes lesson plans and shares them with the special education teacher • Shares responsibility for some aspects of lessons with the special education teacher • Shares responsibility for daily guided practice activities for all students with the special education teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeps a copy of the general education teacher's lesson plans • Reviews tests with the general education teacher to design modifications • Creates classroom visuals such as transparencies, written outlines, and study guides • Helps the general education teacher with classroom management • Shares responsibility for some aspects of lessons with the general education teacher • Shares responsibility for daily guided-practice activities for all students with the general education teacher • Develops and implements supplementary and supportive learning activities
<i>3. Collaboration</i>	<i>Both Teachers</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jointly plan and deliver instruction • Monitor and assess all students in the class • Share ownership of classroom duties • Plan daily to ensure classroom coordination • Jointly develop lesson plans 	