

# Team Assessment

## How well does your grade level team operate?

**Purpose:** The following questions are designed to help evaluate how well grade level teams operate.

**Directions:** Answer the questions below to indicate how each statement applies to the grade level team. It is important to respond to the statements honestly and without over-thinking your answers. If possible, have all members of the grade level complete the survey and review the results. Discuss any discrepancies in the responses and identify any clear implications for the grade level.

**3 = Usually**

**2 = Sometimes**

**1 = Rarely**

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Teachers are passionate and unguarded in their discussions of issues.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Teachers call out one another's deficiencies and unproductive behaviors.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Teachers know what their peers are working on and how they contribute to the collective good of the grade level.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. Teachers quickly and genuinely apologize to one another when they say or do something inappropriate or possibly damaging to the grade level.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Team members willingly make sacrifices (such as budget, turf, head count) in their grade levels for the good of the school.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Teachers openly admit their weaknesses and mistakes.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Grade level meetings are compelling and not boring.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Teachers leave meetings confident that their peers are completely committed to the decisions that were agreed on, even if there was not initial agreement.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Morale is significantly affected by the failure to achieve team goals.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. During grade level meetings, the most important—and most difficult—issues are put on the table to be resolved.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Teachers are deeply concerned about the prospect of letting down their peers.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Teachers know about one another's personal lives and are comfortable discussing them.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Teachers end discussions with clear and specific resolutions and calls to action.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Teachers challenge one another about their plans and approaches.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Teachers are slow to seek credit for their own contributions, but quick to point out those of others.



**Scoring:** Average the scores for the questions on the previous page as indicated below.

<b>Dysfunction 1:</b> Absence of Trust	<b>Dysfunction 2:</b> Fear of Conflict	<b>Dysfunction 3:</b> Lack of Commitment	<b>Dysfunction 4:</b> Avoidance of Accountability	<b>Dysfunction 5:</b> Inattention to Results
Statement 4 ____	Statement 1 ____	Statement 3 ____	Statement 2 ____	Statement 5 ____
Statement 6 ____	Statement 7 ____	Statement 8 ____	Statement 11 ____	Statement 9 ____
Statement 12 ____	Statement 10 ____	Statement 13 ____	Statement 14 ____	Statement 15 ____
Total: ____	Total: ____	Total: ____	Total: ____	Total: ____

- A score of 8 or 9 is a probable indication that the dysfunction is not a problem for your grade level team.
- A score of 6 or 7 indicates that the dysfunction could be a problem.
- A score of 3 to 5 is probably an indication that the dysfunction needs to be addressed.

Regardless of the score, it is important to keep in mind that every grade level team needs constant work. Without it, even the best teams deviate toward dysfunction.

## **The Five Dysfunctions of a Grade Level Team**

### **Dysfunction 1: Absence of Trust**

This dysfunction stems from teachers not willing to be vulnerable within the team. When grade levels lack trust, team members:

- Are not genuinely open with one another;
- Are not open about their mistakes and weaknesses; and
- Find it impossible to build a foundation of trust.

#### **Strategies for Overcoming Dysfunction 1:**

- Identify and discuss individual strengths and weaknesses without fear of reprisals.
- Spend considerable time in face-to-face meetings and grade level planning.

***Absence of trust sets the tone for the second dysfunction...***

### **Dysfunction 2: Fear of Conflict**

Teams that lack trust are not capable of engaging in unfiltered and passionate debate of ideas. When grade levels fear conflict, team members:

- Resort to veiled discussions;
- Avoid meaningful discussions; and
- Provide guarded answers and comments, not wanting to reveal their true opinions.

#### **Strategies for Overcoming Dysfunction 2:**

- Acknowledge that conflict is required for productive meetings.
- Understand individual teacher's conflict styles.
- Establish common ground rules for engaging in conflict.

***Fear of conflict ensures the third dysfunction...***

### **Dysfunction 3: Lack of Commitment**

Without having their opinions heard in the course of passionate and open debate, team members rarely, if ever, buy in and commit to decisions. When grade levels lack commitment, team members:

- Pretend to agree with others to avoid conflict;
- Spend too much time trying to build consensus;
- Fail to make clear and timely decisions; and
- Close their doors and do their own things.

#### **Strategies for Overcoming Dysfunction 3:**

- Review commitments at the end of each meeting to ensure all team members are aligned.
- Adopt a “disagree and commit” mentality.
- Make sure all team members are committed regardless of their disagreements.

***Lack of real commitment and buy-in promotes the fourth dysfunction...***

### **Dysfunction 4: Avoidance of Accountability**

Without committing to a clear plan of action, even the most focused and driven teachers hesitate to hold themselves and others accountable. When grade levels avoid accountability, team members:

- Avoid difficult conversations;
- Avoid calling their peers on poor performance or behaviors that hurt the team; and
- Do not care if they let down the team.

#### **Strategies for Overcoming Dysfunction 4:**

- Explicitly communicate goals and standards of behavior.
- Regularly discuss performance versus goals and standards.

***Failure to hold one another accountable creates an environment where the fifth dysfunction can thrive...***

### **Dysfunction 5: Inattention to Results**

When team members fail to hold one another accountable, they put their own needs first. When grade levels do not attend to results, team members:

- Put ego, career development, and recognition ahead of goals of the team;
- Stagnate and fail to grow;
- Lose team members to other grades and schools; and
- Are easily distracted.

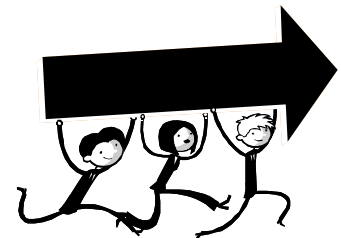
#### **Strategies for Overcoming Dysfunction 5:**

- Keep the team focused on tangible group goals.
- Reward individuals based on team goals and collective success.

***Like a chain with just one link broken, teamwork deteriorates if even a single dysfunction is allowed to flourish.***

### **Cohesive Teams**

- Trust one another.
- Engage in unfiltered conflict around important ideas.
- Commit to decisions and plans of action.
- Hold one another accountable for achieving team goals and plans.
- Focus on the achievement of collective results.



Adapted from Lencioni, P. (2002). *The five dysfunctions of a team*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.