

# 10 Steps to Successful STEM Teacher Teams

by Anne Jolly

- 1. Build a foundation for the STEM initiative and for PLTs (professional learning teams).** At this stage we're interested in increasing faculty knowledge and buy-in for both STEM and for professional learning teams. This is also the time to reach consensus on what STEM is and what your school's STEM program will look like.
- 2. Overview PLTs in operation.** Give teachers an introduction to the sorts of activities they would engage in as members of professional learning teams who are working with STEM curriculum.
- 3. Organize for STEM PLTs.** This is the tough part. Put the right supports and incentives in place before beginning PLTs. Prepare for teams to have job-embedded meetings each week.
- 4. Prepare teachers for successful interactions.** Collaboration involves relationship-building. Guide teams in setting norms that build relationships and accountability.
- 5. Develop team outcomes and goals.** Team goals are rooted in student needs – however the goals *focus* on teacher learning.
- 6. Plan for successful work.** Before deciding on an initial plan, team members reflect on their assumptions, beliefs, and attitudes as well as their current practices. Their team plan includes STEM work as well as teamwork benchmarks, along with evidence of success they will collect.
- 7. Hold Productive Meetings.** Communication is key. You'll discuss possible communication guidelines along with helps for holding productive conversations, building trusting relationships, examining student thinking, and troubleshooting when necessary.
- 8. Maintain the momentum.** STEM team members will need appropriate feedback and ways of engaging in reflective analysis, self-assessments, and celebrations.
- 9. Assess team effectiveness.** Team members need to gather and analyze data on the work of the PLTs and the impact of STEM learning.
- 10. Facilitate successfully.** Facilitating, sustaining, and supporting the STEM teams is a shared responsibility among team members and school and system leaders.

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