

Strong Team Effort Drives Creativity

Integrating the arts requires a dedicated group of teacher leaders.

Whether you call it a school improvement team, school leaders committee, or creative leadership team (CLT), principals who empower a group of teacher leaders to share the creative leadership role radiate energy that is contagious. The entire school is enriched by this group of educators who share expertise and are responsible for helping to infuse more creativity into their colleagues' teaching.

Identify Your School's Needs

There is no single recipe to follow as you build your CLT. Instead, ask reflective questions that help identify what would work best for your school:

- Why does a focus on creativity matter for students? Faculty? Your community? The nation?
- What would a CLT add to your school that is currently missing? Does the notion of forming a team of “chief creative officers”—who use their education insights and creative expertise to help the entire learning community—appeal to your school?
- What does getting the right “creative energy” and diverse perspectives on the CLT mean in your school? What expertise is needed? How can different spheres of influ-



ence strengthen the team? How would diverse points of view enrich the collaboration?

- What competencies does this group need to make them the champions of creativity in your

school? Consider folks with diverse capabilities, such as strong strategic planning, being an articulate spokesperson, and connections with the broader community.

- Which faculty members' talents should be leveraged regardless of organizational hierarchy? How can emotions and organizational history be respected without stifling change?

Team Composition

As you consider who might serve on your school's CLT, start by thinking about the talents and expertise needed before identifying individuals. Team composition will vary from school to school. Engaging in the following creative exercises can help you assemble an effective team with diverse talents.

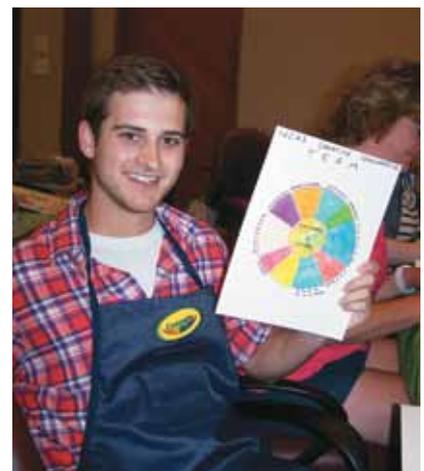
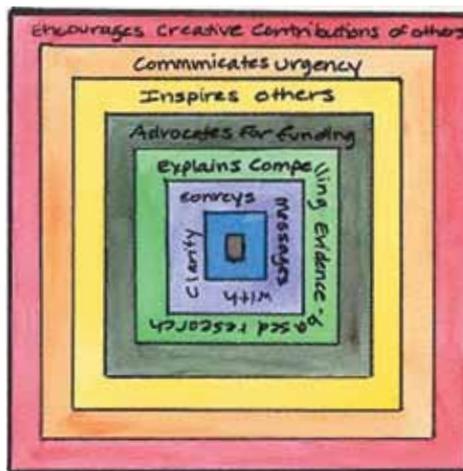
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Start by drawing a color wheel. Then identify what leadership attributes are needed, such as effective coach or someone with a passion for creativity. Customize it for your school's needs. Consider how the analogy of a color wheel can help you balance the full spectrum of talents and perspectives needed on your team.

A classic color wheel has both "warm" and "cool" colors. What leadership styles or personal talents could be represented as either warm or cool colors on the wheel?

Just as colors that are opposite each other on the wheel (complementary or contrasting colors) are strong and appealing when used together (red and green, for example), so too can contrasting leadership qualities enhance each other. Artists use contrasting colors to provide vigorous and intense results. How can the composition of your team be strengthened by adding a full spectrum of skills that appear opposite, yet actually complement each other? (Your art teacher can share deeper insights of color theory for this analogy.)

After each color has been labeled with a leadership skill, begin the discus-



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Savoy Elementary, Washington, D.C.; Noel Community Arts School, Denver, Colorado; New Jersey Administrators as Scholars Summit

sion of who from your school or broader community might be good candidates. Move around the entire wheel to make sure each talent is represented, even if you decide to have fewer team members because some individuals represent several areas of strength.

Using fine art is another way to stimulate other CLT composition analogies. Contemporary artist Frank Stella is famous for bold use of color in geometric patterns. Inspired by his painting, "Sunset," educators at the New Jersey Administrators as Scholars Summit designed a framework that helped indicate both the skills they felt were needed on their team and a sense of proportional representation.

For example, members of the CLT explained some of the qualities they were looking for. Participants agreed they need a few cool color members who are very organized, strategic leaders. They also agreed that the majority of members should be inspirational creativity spokespersons, as indicated by warm colors in the above illustration.

Although every CLT has a unique composition and set of priorities, they all share a commitment to increasing the creative capacity of their learning communities. 

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