

Administrator Roles in Team Conflicts

While it is often best for administrators to remain on the sidelines during team conflicts because they do not always understand the subtle personal dynamics of individual teams, sometimes avoiding conflicts is impossible. When you do get pulled into team disagreements, use the following quick guide to determine your actions.

Administrator Action	Key Points to Remember
Listen without commitment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never forget that listening doesn't require action. • Use cautious language that does not convey a sense of commitment. • Avoid innocent comments that can be easily misinterpreted.
Base crucial conversations on facts that you have witnessed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never approach teachers about concerns based on hearsay. • Base crucial conversations on facts that you have observed. • Show up to team meetings unannounced to gain a true picture of a team's current reality.
Coach before commanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build crucial conversation skills in teachers. • Provide teachers with access to resources and research on conflict resolution. • Send key faculty members to training sessions on team facilitation. • Ensure that new teachers have knowledgeable mentors to guide them through early struggles.
Collect feedback to improve systems.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accept responsibility for crafting structures that encourage successful collaboration. • Collect detailed information on the struggles of learning teams. • Take action to improve the systems and processes in your building.
When all else fails, be flexible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand that some people just should not work together. • Understand that dysfunctional teams that cannot be repaired do not benefit teachers or students. • Be willing to restructure learning teams or to reassign teachers when necessary.