Chetek-Weyerhaeuser Area School District
Creating Ground Rules with a New Group

Purpose
Reach consensus on ground rules with a new team or group of people.

Prior to the Meeting
Results of universal screening, district assessments will be prepared to share with school level team.

Getting Started	
2 minutes	The facilitator describes the purpose of the protocol and reviews the steps.

Common Background	
3 minutes	Participants Read the paragraphs below Ground rules are statements of behavior that address how members of a group will treat each other, communicate, participate, and interact as they learn together. Ground rules are a facilitator's friend. They guide the process of learning together. Because ground rules are built together, they immediately model the power of setting criteria together. This first step also underscores the importance of collaboration on the work ahead as the group sets the expectations for respectful, open dialogue with maximum participation. To be effective, ground rules must be clear, consistent, agreed-upon, followed and periodically revisited by all members. When written ground rules are missing, behavior patterns or norms emerge spontaneously. When these patterns are unproductive, the existing team will need written ground rules to promote new ways of working together and to break ineffective work habits. Every team and faculty should have its own set of ground rules that will challenge people to do their best work together. Teams should avoid selecting ground rules that echo already established productive norms. For example, if a team always arrives on time for the meeting, then this should not be a ground rule. In addition, ground rules must be limited in number. Their effectiveness depends in part on the ability of all to keep them in mind and be comfortable referring to them as they work together. Having more than six or seven ground rules will often be too much for a group to consciously manage. Finally, ground rules are dynamic. When a ground rule becomes an established norm, then it is time to remove that ground rule from the list and decide if there is another ground rule that would challenge the group to further improve its work together.

Some examples of Ground Rules

- One person talks at a time; there are not side conversations.
- Give full attention to the meeting (for example, do not read email).
- Honor the steps of the protocol and work with the facilitator.
- Share the aid during discussions so all voices are heard.
- Publish and distribute an agenda three days prior to the meeting.
- Listen, be nonjudgmental, and keep an open mind on issues until it is time to decide.
- Respect confidentiality on any sensitive issues that may be shared in meetings.
- Begin and end meetings on time.
- Balance reflection and discussion time so that all learning styles are honored.
- When an issue or a problem is posed, try to present a solution.

Brainstorm

| 4 minutes | Each person is given two index cards and asked to write two ground rules that would support his or her best work in this team. One ground rule should be written on each card. The facilitator reminds the group to write ground rules as statements of behavior like the examples given. |

Categorize

| 5 minutes | One person starts by reading an index card and taping it to an easel or board. In round-robin style, each person reads his or her cards. If the ground rule on a card is similar to any already on the easel or board, then the person reading the card will tape it close to the one representing a similar idea. |

Drafting

| 10 minutes | Depending on how similar the categories and statements are, the group may decide to draft five to six ground rules from the ones posted. However, if there is a wide discrepancy, then pairs may be assigned a category to draft a ground-rule statement. |

Consensus

| 8 minutes | The group considers their combined draft of ground rules and revises any language as needed. Then they agree to try the ground rules at the next meeting. The facilitator reminds the group that ground rules are dynamic and will be changed as the group needs evolve. |