

# **MPS Mathematics Leaders: A “Carousel Brainstorm and Prioritization” Process Facilitator’s Notes**

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## **1. DESCRIPTION OF THE ACTIVITY**

### **Overview:**

A Carousel Brainstorm activity is good for generating large numbers of responses to questions or issues. In doing so, the Carousel Brainstorm informally assesses the knowledge of the participants and frames the learning around a particular focus. It can serve as a warm-up activity for highlighting an agenda or as a synthesis of learning at the end of a session. It is also physically active and good for times when participants’ energy is low. A Carousel Brainstorm is usually about 45 minutes in length.

The activity begins with a number of different questions posted around the room on easel paper. Participants are divided into small groups and assigned a starting point to begin the brainstorming process. After a few minutes of brainstorming as a small group, they move on to the next question and repeat the brainstorming process. This continues until all groups have had the opportunity to brainstorm around each question. There are a variety of ways to summarize learning and bring closure to the activity.

### **Content:**

This Carousel Brainstorm focuses on:  
Highly Effective Math Teacher Leaders

### **Purposes:**

The specific purposes of the Carousel Brainstorm and Prioritization Process are the following:

- Assessing Knowledge Needs, Interests, and Attitudes
  - Building a Common Vocabulary
  - Collecting and Analyzing Data
  - Exploring Multiple Perspectives
  - Reflecting on Practice
  - Prioritizing Tasks
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## **2. CONTEXT OF PRESENT LEARNING EXPERIENCE**

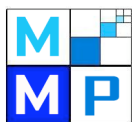
Developing a Checklist of the actions needed to be a highly effective MTL in St. Croix.

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## **3. ACTIVITY SET-UP AND MATERIALS NEEDED**

### **Room Set-up:**

- Center and front facilitator area (for overhead projector, materials, etc.) that is easily visible to all participants
- Carousel Brainstorm questions posted around the perimeter of the room on the walls with chart paper and markers
- Space for participants to move from posting to posting



**Materials:**

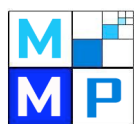
- Easel, chart paper, and different colored markers
  - Computer-generated posters, if desired
  - Overhead projector and screen
  - Chimes or some sort of noise maker
  - Purposes, Process, and Questions transparencies
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**4. INTERACTIVE PROCESS****Before the Session:**

- Create a set of Carousel questions and write each one on easel paper or use the computer-generated posters.
- Use the computer to generate the personalized Facilitator Notes and materials.
- Set up the room.

**During the Session:****The Brainstorm**

- Introduce the content topic and the purposes of this activity (using the Purposes transparency).
- Describe to the whole group that they will be brainstorming ideas and sharing them with a small group of 3-5 people (depending on the size of the whole group). They will be asked to record their ideas on easel paper—either building on an idea that is already listed or adding a new idea.
- Ask the group to give some examples of “guidelines for effective brainstorming.” Record them on chart paper and post them for all to see.
- Ask group members to count-off by the number of questions, and then explain the steps in the Carousel Brainstorm process (summarized on the Process transparency).
- Review the questions that are posted on chart paper around the room, letting groups know where they will begin the brainstorming process. (You can walk from paper to paper or use the Questions transparency.)
- Develop a signal or use chimes to let groups know when it is time to move to the next question. It is recommended that later rounds be given less time than early rounds. (e.g., rounds one and two may take 4 minutes each; round three may take 3 minutes; rounds four and five may take 2 minutes each.)
- When all groups have responded to each of the questions, ask groups to return to the question that they started with and to review all of the ideas on the chart paper. You might ask each small group to create a “key” and coding system to identify common themes and clusters of ideas.



- Finally, ask each group to report out to the whole group, briefly summarizing the themes and big ideas that emerged from the Carousel Brainstorming around their specific question.  
(Facilitator Note: You may want to ask for a volunteer to word-process the results of the brainstorming, so that later, a copy can be shared with each participant.)

### **The Prioritization**

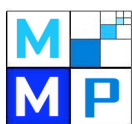
- Give each participant five dots with adhesive backing for each of the the Carousel categories.
- Have each Brainstorm group go from category to category placing their dots according to their personal priorities.
- A participant may use the dots to “vote” for their priority tasks by placing 1-5 dots next to those tasks until all five dots are used.
- Votes [dots] are established to identify the top five tasks in each category.
- These tasks will become a part of the Math Teacher Leader Checklist for the first semester.
- This checklist will be revisited in January.

### **Reflections on the Session:**

(e.g., What worked? What's worth remembering? What would you change? What follow up might be needed? etc. You may want to make some handwritten notes here, and then return to the CD-ROM to enter and print out this information.)

[Note to Programmers: Prose in this section will be entered from the open field in the final facilitator interview question.]

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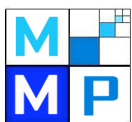


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# Highly Effective Mathematics Leaders: A Carousel Brainstorm and Prioritization Process

## Purposes of the Activity:

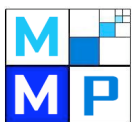
- Assessing Knowledge Needs, Interests, and Attitudes
- Building a Common Vocabulary
- Collecting and Analyzing Data
- Exploring Multiple Perspectives
- Reflecting on Practice
- Prioritizing Tasks



# Highly Effective Mathematics Leaders: A Carousel Brainstorm and Prioritization Process

## The Brainstorm:

- Step 1** - Brainstorm responses to your question, recording ideas on the chart paper.
- Step 2** - At the signal, move clockwise to the next question. Brainstorm responses, building on ideas already listed and adding new ideas.
- Step 3** - Repeat this brainstorming process until all groups have responded to all questions.
- Step 4** - Return to your original question and analyze the results of the brainstorm. Identify themes that have emerged in response to that question.
- Step 5** - Briefly summarize those themes and big ideas by reporting out to the whole group.



## The Prioritization

**Step 1** - Take five dots with adhesive backing for each of the Carousel categories.

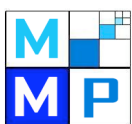
**Step 2** - With your Brainstorm group go from category to category placing their dots according to their personal priorities.

Note: use the dots to “vote” for your priority tasks by placing 1-5 dots next to those tasks until all five dots are used.

**Step 3** - Return to your original question and count the total number of votes [dots] to identify the top five tasks in each category.

**Step 4** - Discuss as a small group whether the top five tasks will indeed provide the necessary impetus to address the goal identified by your original question.

**Step 5** - Add any tasks that every member of your group agrees should be added. Be prepared to “sell” that task to the larger group.



# Highly Effective Mathematics Leaders: A Carousel Brainstorm and Prioritization Process

## Brainstorming Questions:

A. What Math Teacher Leader functions are indicative of effective communication/collaboration?

B. What teacher support activities should be accomplished by an effective Math Teacher Leader?

C. What Math Teacher Leader actions result in increasing personal and/or collegial knowledge/understanding?

D. What program/NSF grant responsibilities must be accomplished by an effective Math Teacher Leader?

