WE NEED to TALK

Productive conversations are a central element of collaborative learning, and, in many cases, those conversations are difficult because of disagreements and conflicts. Here are resources that tackle how to approach contentious conversations. Many include tools and protocols, and each offers a particular framework to guide how to handle this tough topic.

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TWEETED BY @LEARNINGFORWARD:

We’re curious: What collaboration skills do you find to be essential for your work in professional learning teams? How do you build them?

@VaelHeidi says: Nonjudgmental feedback, authentic listening, shared decision making, open communication, inclusion.

@kindtwinsmom says: Talking with teachers about the difference between inquiry and advocacy and the need to be explicit in what you are doing.

Courageous Conversations About Race: A Field Guide for Achieving Equity in Schools
By Glenn E. Singleton and Curtis Linton

Selected as NSDC’s book of the year in 2006, this book is written from a professional learning context in schools. Singleton and Linton offer a framework to encourage educators to examine their beliefs about race openly to reach solutions for offering all students equitable learning opportunities in schools. The authors build on a frame of educator passion, practice, and persistence and offer tools and rationale. (Corwin Press, 2006)
Trust is crucial to open and productive collaboration. Studies indicate a relationship between trusting relationships in schools and higher student achievement. In their work exploring trust in schools, Wayne Hoy and Megan Tschannen-Moran define five elements of trust:

**Benevolence**
Confidence that one’s well-being or something one cares about will be protected by the trusted party ... the assurance that others will not exploit one’s vulnerability or take advantage even when the opportunity is available.

**Honesty**
The trusted person’s character, integrity, and authenticity ... acceptance of responsibility for one’s actions and not distorting the truth in order to shift blame to another.

**Openness**
The extent to which relevant information is shared ... openness signals reciprocal trust.

**Reliability**
Consistency of behavior and knowing what to expect from others ... a sense of confidence that one’s needs will be met in positive ways.

**Competency**
The ability to perform as expected and according to standards appropriate to the task at hand.
