Tools to Support Work Area 2

Situate Academic Learning and Achievement in the Context of a Youth Development Approach



Tools to Support Work Area 2:

Situate Academic Learning and Achievement in the Context of a Youth Development Approach

Work Area 2 activities and resources help schools to build on their prior knowledge and existing practices to increase their understanding of learning in the context of youth development and to develop a plan that expands on existing youth development practices.

Key Questions When Working on This Area:

- How will you develop a shared youth-centered vision focused on positive youth outcomes?
- How will you create a shared understanding of the interconnection between youth development and learning?
- How might staff experience effective youth development practices themselves?

Key Questions To Reflect on Your Progress in This Area:

- How has staff understanding of youth development changed?
- How do staff members apply their understanding of youth development?
- What evidence is there of a connection between youth development and learning?

Activities

- Youth Development and Learning: Applying a Youth Development Approach to Schools: An activity that helps school staff draw upon their prior knowledge to cultivate an understanding of a youth development approach and its importance to learning
- Our School's Youth Development Strengths and Dreams: A visioning activity that helps school members to identify and build on the youth development-aligned practices and policies already practiced in their school
- Identifying Youth Development Target Areas: An activity to help guide school members find a starting point for their work within the broad arena of youth development

Resources

- What is Youth Development?: A one-page overview of youth development
- Educator Definitions of Youth Development: Samples of participant interpretations of youth development for themselves and their setting.
- What Does Youth Development Look Like in Action?: A two-page overview of the different areas of youth development and examples of school practices and activities aligned with these areas
- Youth Development Overview PowerPoint: Three slides on the end goals of a youth development approach, connection to learning and motivation and a definition of a youth development approach
- Youth Development Goals and Skills: A one-page handout on the end goals of a youth development approach defined in more detail than the PowerPoint and linked to specific skills and assets youth will need
- Youth Development Rubrics: The following are rubrics that provide descriptors of schools at different phases in their process and can help schools identify where they are and where they'd like to be:
 - o Systems to Support School-Wide Youth Development and Shared Responsibility
 - Physical and Psychological Safety
 - Supportive and Caring Community
 - Support for Autonomy
 - Meaningful Skill-Building Experiences

Youth Development and Learning: Applying a Youth Development Approach to Schools

Why is youth development critical to learning and what does it look like in instructional settings?

PURPOSE:

This activity develops an understanding of a youth development approach and its importance to learning.

AUDIENCE:

School staff (particularly teachers and administrators)

TIME:

45 minutes

OUTCOME(S):

As a result of this activity, we will have:

- An increased understanding of a youth development approach
- An increased understanding of how youth development is critical to learning and instruction

MATERIALS:

- A post-it pad for each table group
- Flip charts and markers for each table group
- A board or whole-group flip chart
- Youth Development Overview PowerPoint (slides 3 and 4)
- (Optional) Additional youth development handouts:
 - What is Youth Development?
 - What Does Youth Development Look Like in Action?
 - Motivation Menu of Sample Strategies
 - Youth Development Rubrics

INTRODUCTION: (10 MINUTES)

- Key frame. While participants might not be familiar with the term "youth development" the principles and practices are related to things they already know are important to learning. Since schools are focused on learning, it's important to frame youth development within the context of learning and instruction.
- 2. Engage the participants in a self-reflection activity
 - Ask participants to think about an environment where they really felt engaged, ready, and motivated to learn.
 - Say: "Think about the characteristics of this environment that made you feel ready to learn. What was it about yourself? The other people in this environment? The structures/processes or resources that allowed you to be engaged, ready and motivated to learn?"
 - Ask participants to write each characteristic on a separate post-it.



ACTIVITY: (25 MINUTES)

- Share-out post-it ideas in small groups, going around and reading one post-it idea at a time until all ideas are exhausted. As post-it ideas are read, have participants post similar ideas together on a flip chart.
- 2. Have group members summarize each group of similar ideas into one summarizing statement on a new post-it.
- 3. Share out small group summarizing statements with the large group, by having each group share one summarizing idea at a time until all ideas are exhausted. Post similar ideas together on a whole-group flip chart or board.
- 4. *Key frame*. What young people need to be ready to learn is similar to our own needs.
- 5. Present the Youth Development Overview slide 3 that summarizes what we know young people need to be motivated to learn.

In order to be engaged, ready and motivated to learn, young people need to feel:

- Physically and psychologically safe
- They belong, are known, cared about and supported
- They are capable of achieving
- They have control over their ability to achieve
- Challenged and engaged by meaningful instruction
- 6. Present the Youth Development Overview slide 4 summarizing the different categories of a youth development approach:
 - Physical and Psychological Safety
 - Caring Community (Supportive Relationships)
 - Support for Autonomy
 - Meaningful Skill-Building Experiences
- 7. Help participants to see that a youth development approach is related to what they already know about:
 - Motivation
 - The importance of a caring and supportive school climate to learning
 - Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
 - Effective instructional pedagogy

- Adolescence as a vulnerable transition period—a time
 of critical brain development, emotional, social, and
 physical changes, when young people need to develop
 coping strategies and need to develop more say in their
 learning and learning environment.
- These aspects of instruction can fall by the wayside in high pressure/stressful times, but are critical to student learning and ability to achieve academically.

ACTIVITY CLOSING: (10 MINUTES)

- 1. Ask participants to compare their own grouped ideas to the youth development categories to see where they might fit.
- 2. Ask participants to identify characteristics that don't fit under these categories. (See sample table of how responses can be grouped into these categories.)
- 3. (Optional) Share the handout on "What is Youth Development?" and one or more of the following handouts which provide examples of youth development practices:
 - What Does Youth Development Look Like?
 - Motivation Menu of Sample Strategies
 - Youth Development Rubrics



Facilitator Tip

This activity can be done in many different ways. We also did this as a Chalk Talk activity with a small group of 10 participants who silently wrote what they need to be ready and motivated to learn on butcher paper and drew connections between their ideas.

This activity logically leads into a follow-up activity on the youth development practices schools already have in place and where they might strengthen their practices. The youth development rubrics can help in this analysis and planning.

SAMPLE TABLE OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES CATEGORIZED BY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT AREA

Area of Youth Development	Staff Responses		
	Students learn when		
Physical and Psychological	• They feel emotionally, socially and physically safe, and stress-free. Their basic needs have		
Safety	to be met.		
	There is an expectation of trial and error and mistakes are part of the process.		
Caring Community (Supportive Relationships)	They feel good about themselves, feel like they belong, and know they are liked and cared about by the teacher and others.		
	The environment is relaxed and fun.		
	There is better connection with the teacher, and students get individualized attention and actually know each other as people.		
Support for Autonomy	They own what is being taught		
	They have choice over what/how they learn.		
Meaning Skill-Building Experiences	A caring adult is encouraging and also pushing them to learn and has high expectations.		
	 Content is meaningful, relevant, applicable, concrete, and has some connection to stu- dents, and they understand why they are learning it. Teachers tap into students' innate curiosity and mentor and guide this process. 		
	There is a need to know the information/skill.		

Our School's Youth Development Strengths and Dreams

What are we already doing that's aligned with a youth development approach and what else can we do?



PURPOSE:

This activity identifies existing youth development strategies upon which schools can expand.

AUDIENCE:

School staff

TIME:

1 hour 10 minutes - 1 hour 25 minutes

OUTCOME(S):

As a result of this activity, we will have a shared understanding of:

- Youth development strategies already being used in our school
- Ideas of how we can further expand our youth development approach whole school

MATERIALS:

- What Does Youth Development Look Like in Action? handout for participants
- Youth Development Strengths and Dreams at My School handout for participants
- Youth Development Strengths and Dreams Facilitator Directions handout for table facilitators
- A slide or flip chart of leadership-identified criteria for new policies/practices
- Flip charts for each small group
- Markers for each small group

OTHER PREPARATION:

Prior to doing this activity, it's important that participants have an understanding of youth development. We therefore, recommend that this activity follow the Dreams for our Youth (Work Area 1) and Youth Development and Learning (Work Area 2) activities.

This activity allows participants to practice shared decision-making, which is an important skill in a collaborative culture. It is helpful, therefore, for each small group to be facilitated by a group member who has experience facilitating collaborative decision making processes, if possible. It is also important that school administrators or leadership team identify key criteria for decisions ahead of time to help guide decisions to be aligned with the school vision, priorities and resources and ensure that new change efforts are effective. Some examples of criteria might be that all new policies/practices must:

- Align with the school vision to ensure that all students are successful in high school, in life, and as democratic citizens
- 2. Be something that all staff can apply in their individual settings (e.g., the classroom)
- 3. Link to a specific measurable youth development goal
- 4. Be research-based
- 5. Be continuous and systemic rather than a one-time event

INTRODUCTION: (10 MINUTES)

- 1. Key frame. Many school members may not have thought about some of the strategies they use as youth development, but as explored in the Youth Development and Learning activity, they are likely already doing many things that are aligned with youth development. Just as a positive youth development approach seeks to see youth as assets and help build on their strengths, so too do we want to build on participants' strengths.
- Review the different areas of youth development and what they mean using the What Does Youth Development Look Like in Action? handout.
- Discuss any questions the group has about the youth development categories. Come to shared understanding about the meaning of the four categories and identify where the group needs additional information from outside experts or resources.



This activity develops an understanding of a youth development approach and its importance to learning.

- 1. Form small heterogeneous groups representing school members in different roles.
- 2. Assign a different youth development category to each small group.
- 3. Ask participants to individually use the *Youth Development Strengths and Dreams* at My School Participant handout to list existing practices, policies, traditions, or other rituals and additional dreams for their assigned category.
- 4. Have each small group identify a facilitator, recorder and reporter.
- 5. Ask facilitators to use the *Youth Development Strengths and Dreams Facilitator Directions* to guide their share out and consensus on one or two key practices or policies they'd like to see their school employ (By consensus, we mean that all members can live with and support the final decision).

CLOSING: (25-35 MINUTES, DEPENDING ON THE NUMBER OF SMALL GROUPS)

- Share out small group proposed practices or policies. As they present, ask other groups to assess proposed ideas against the given criteria.
- 2. After each group has presented, invite two or three people to provide feedback using the following format:
 - One thing they liked about a presented idea in terms of how it aligned with the criteria
 - One question they have in terms of what they wonder about or are curious about that might need more clarification, particularly in how it aligns with the criteria
- 3. (Optional) Further narrow the proposed practices and policies, by taking the total number of suggestions and dividing this number by three as the number of votes each person is given. Alternatively, the administrators or leadership team can take the proposed whole-group list, assess it by the criteria and provide feedback to the whole staff on up to three policies around which they can commit resources, guidance and support.

Facilitator Tip

Rather than taking the problem-solution approach often used in strategic planning by focusing on organizational problems and trying to find solutions, we opted to use Appreciative Inquiry techniques. Appreciative Inquiry focuses on the strengths of individuals and their organizations and tends to generate positive energy toward making change. We found this approach to be particularly effective with teachers, who told us that they feel like professional development efforts often begin with a problem within their practice that needs to be "fixed." With YiM, however, teachers reported that the meetings were so positive that they left them feeling reenergized. These strengths-based activities also established participants' shared experiences as crucial to the learning of the whole group and engaged staff in different roles as equal partners, collaboratively creating a shared vision based on their individual and collective strengths. The following resources offer more information on Appreciative Inquiry.

- Appreciative Inquiry resources:
 Appreciative Inquiry Commons is a
 worldwide portal for resources, research
 and practical applications of Appreciative
 Inquiry http://appreciativeinquiry.case.
 edu/
- An organization that uses Appreciative Inquiry (AI) with schools: Positive Change Core partners with schools and youth to build on the best of what already exists and create the brightest, most imaginative future possible. They offer AI workshops, a listserv and conferences to delve deeper into this approach. http://www.positivechangecore.org/

Youth Development Strengths and Dreams Facilitator Directions

What are we already doing that is aligned with a youth development approach and what else can we do?

PURPOSE:

- To build on our strengths (in terms of youth development aligned practices and policies our school already has)
- To identify additional practices and policies that will help us be more intentional in taking a school-wide youth development approach

AUDIENCE: School staff

ACTIVITY SHARE OUT DIRECTIONS: (15 MINUTES)

- Identify a group facilitator, recorder, and reporter. The following directions are written for the group facilitator.
- Ask each small group member to share one current school practice that falls under your given youth development category in round robin fashion until all ideas of the group are exhausted. Ask the recorder to chart these ideas as they are shared.
- 3. Repeat this process for members' dreams for your category.

ACTIVITY CONSENSUS DIRECTIONS: (15 MINUTES)

In looking at the dreams, lead the group in coming to consensus on one or two key practices or policies you'd like your school to implement (By consensus, we mean that all members can live with and support the final decision). This can be done through the following suggested narrowing and decision-making process. Alternatively you can use other consensus-building strategies with which you are familiar.

- Clarification: Ask if there are any ideas that participants need clarified. The person who offered an idea that needs clarification can then provide it.
- **2. Grouping**: Ask the group if there are any ideas that can be grouped together, because they are similar in nature, and begin to narrow the list.
- 3. Assess items next to the given criteria: Ask the group to use the given criteria to assess the remaining items. Are there any items that don't meet the criteria that would either need to be changed or eliminated? (Before eliminating, give those who feel strongly about an idea the opportunity to advocate for their idea and to propose modifications to fit the given criteria.)

- Vote: Ask each member to vote for two items they are most passionate about seeing occur in their school.
- 5. **Eliminate**: If there are any items that didn't get votes, ask if anyone disagrees with eliminating those ideas.
- 6. Come to Consensus: At this point, there are hopefully one or two ideas that stand out as having the most energy from the group based on the number of votes. Use a thumbs check to see if the group can come to consensus on presenting these top two ideas as the groups suggestions.
 - Thumbs Check: Participants put thumbs up if they strongly agree with and can support the decision. They put thumbs in the middle if they do not fully agree, but can live with and support the decision. A thumbs down indicates they cannot live with and support the decision. Anyone who puts their thumbs down needs to propose an alternative solution that they could live with and support. It could be that the group then agrees to either further combine ideas or propose three ideas as a compromise.
- **7. Share Out**: Ask your reporter to present the agreed upon ideas to the whole group.

Youth Development Strengths and Dreams At My School

What are we already doing that is aligned with a youth development approach and what else can we do?

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS:

- 1. Focus on the one youth development area assigned to your table group.
- 2. List one or two strengths (reflection) your school has in this area.
- 3. List one or two dreams for your school you have in this area.

Youth Development Area	Strengths : What my school is currently doing to support this area	·
	(Current practices, policies, traditions, rituals or celebrations on which my school can build)	ing in this area (New practices, policies or strategies for intentionally taking a youth development approach whole school)
Physical and Emotional Safety		g y
Caring Community (Supportive Relationships)		
Support for Autonomy		
Meaningful Skill-Building Experiences		

Identifying Youth Development Target Areas

On what aspect of youth development should we begin?

PURPOSE:

This activity guides school members to find a starting point for their work.

AUDIENCE:

School leadership team (with administrator, community school, teacher, after-school, and, ideally, parent and student representation)

TIME:

1 hour 15 minutes - 1 hour 45 minutes

OUTCOME(S):

As a result of this activity, we will have:

Agreement on the one to four key youth development areas of focus

MATERIALS:

- A slide or chart of the school vision/goal for this process
- Criteria for action as suggested in Our School's Youth Development Strengths and Dreams (from Work Area 2, if the group has created these)
- Compiled school member data organized by youth development category (See Kennedy Middle School sample and Other Preparation)
- Highlighter pens in two different colors for each participant
- A board or whole-group flip chart
- (Optional) Youth Development Outcome Ranking Sheet

OTHER PREPARATION:

Prior to doing this activity, school leaders will need to gather and compile data from other school members including representative parents, students, and all staff. These data should capture what other school members see as the greatest areas of need at the school. These data might include:

- School members' dreams for their school from Our School's Youth Development Strengths and Dreams (Work Area 2).
- School members' scoring of one or more of the Youth Development Rubrics (Work Area 2).
- Existing youth development results from existing surveys such as the California Healthy Kids Survey.
- Resulting themes from the Paired Interviews activity focused on A Collaborative Vision for Supporting Youth (Work Area 1).



These data can be collected formally and broadly or through informal representative focus groups. Ideally, there would be at least one meeting involving representative administrators, teachers, afterschool staff, parents, and students where diverse school members jointly explore their dreams for their school, hear each others' perspectives, and collectively identify key areas of priority.

Examples of compiled data from multiple sources organized by youth development category are included at the end of this activity.

INTRODUCTION: (15-20 MINUTES DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE GROUP)

- 1. Ask each participant to share one result they hope will come out of the visioning/strategic planning process.
- 2. Summarize the group's ideas into key themes.
- Review the school's vision/purpose for engaging in this process in comparison with that of the individual participants. If the group has also created criteria for actions (as suggested in Our School's Youth Development Strengths and Dreams), review these also.
- 4. Remind the group of the visioning process they have engaged in thus far.
- 5. Key frame. Participants have increased their understanding of youth development and have collected data on diverse school members' perceived needs at the school. They can now reflect on these data and narrow their focus on one to four starting areas.

ACTIVITY: (45-60 MINUTES BUT THIS CAN VARY GREATLY DEPENDING ON HOW LONG IT TAKES TO COME TO CONSENSUS)

- Ask school members to review their compiled data and highlight data points that strike them as important to address. Ask participants to use a different color to highlight two data points that meet the group's criteria for action and are issues they feel are of highest priority.
- In Round Robin style ask each person to share their two selected data points and the reason they feel those two data points are critical to address.
- 3. Group similar ideas with agreement from participants to proposed groupings.
- 4. Ask the group to identify any items that do not meet their criteria for action. Eliminate these with consensus from the group.
- 5. Divide the number of total responses by three as the number of votes each person is given. If the number of responses is less than six, give everyone two votes. Ask participants to use dot stickers or checks to vote.
 - **Note**: Voting is not decisive of the final outcome but only a method for showing the location of the group's energy. It is important that the group come to consensus on the final topics, as all will need to be passionate about the focus areas in order to persist through the difficult implementation phase. By consensus, we mean that all members can live with and support the final decision.
- 6. Allow participants to advocate for the importance of any topic that received few or no votes. (Listening to advocates may change others' feelings about the importance of those topics, or advocates may concede that other topics seem more important to the group. If the latter, you might be able to eliminate topics, if the group agrees to do so.)
- 7. Identify the top one or two topics that received the most votes and ask if anyone disagrees to these topics being included in the final areas of focus.
- 8. At this point, you may be able to propose one to four final topics of focus. Ask if anyone would object to focusing on those areas. (It's important to allow participants to advocate for ideas that might be eliminated to see if that changes the group's perceptions.)
- 9. Help the group come to compromise by combining ideas or expanding the areas of focus.

- 10. Assure that there is a true consensus in the group by doing either a five-finger or thumbs check:
 - **Five-Finger Consensus**: Participants hold up the number of fingers that show their level of support for the group's decision. A four or a five indicates that they strongly agree with and can support the decision. A three means they do not fully agree, but they can live with and support the decision. A one or two indicates that they cannot live with and support the decision.
 - Thumbs Check: Participants put thumbs up if they strongly agree with and can support the decision. They put thumbs in the middle if they do not fully agree, but can live with and support the decision. A thumbs down indicates they cannot live with and support the decision.
 - Anyone who holds up a one, two or thumbs down needs to propose an alternative solution that they could live with and support.
- 11. Continue this process until the group comes to consensus on a decision.

Facilitator Tip

We did this activity at the end of one school year in preparation for the work of the following school year. The topics became the foci of small, inquiry-focused groups.

When topic areas were brought to teachers at Kennedy as focal areas for their small groups, there was a group of teachers who felt strongly about focusing on a topic that was not previously identified. The leadership team allowed them to add this additional focus area so long as it met their identified criteria, and they could connect it back to improving student motivation (the mission for that year). This empowered the group to take action on something they felt was not being addressed and helped them to buy in to the process. We found that leadership's clearly defined criteria were critical in this process of allowing for school member ownership while guiding all toward a common youth-centered vision.

CLOSING: (25-35 MINUTES DEPENDING ON THE NUMBER OF SMALL GROUPS)

- 1. Discuss strategies for gaining buy-in from all school members to work on these focus areas. Some strategies we found helpful in this process include:
 - Describing the process used and show school members how their input was used.
 - Asking school members to rank the focus topic areas in order of priority to further assess priorities. (See the Sample of Final Topics and School Member Rankings at the end of this activity).
 - Asking staff members to choose one of the topics selected to work on collectively in small groups.
 - Allowing others to add focus areas that fit with the leadership-identified criteria and vision.
- 2. Identify clear next steps of who will do what by when to engage other school members.

SAMPLE OF COMPILED DATA

Note: The data in this sample handout are modified from Kennedy's data. They used these data to help narrow their focus. Data were pulled from the adult and youth focus group/workshop activities that are described in the Our School's Youth Development Strengths and Dreams activity in Work Area 2 and the Paired Interviews activity in Work Area 1 that focused on A Collaborative Vision for Supporting Youth. Data were also pulled from youth findings collected in previous years through the Youth Engaged in Leadership (YELL) program, which the JGC co-developed and ran with this school. Students in this program conducted action research around school or community issues about which they were concerned, collected data on this issue and made recommendations to school and community leaders based on their findings. All data herein are based on input from 16 staff, parents, and youth in 2008 focus groups unless otherwise noted.

FOCUS GROUP RESULTS

	Adult Focus Group/Workshop Data	Youth Focus Group/Activity Data
Systems to Support School-Wide Youth Development	 Five representatives voted to focus entire organization on a single vision Four representatives voted for structures that increase teamwork Seven representatives voted to improve overall communication 	
Physical and Emotional Safety	 Parent focus group (n=5) expressed a need for school security Five representatives voted to improve equity School staff have expressed concern about barriers between youth and adults School staff observed a lack of unity: divisions going on between teachers and students and between students Three KMS representatives voted that all staff need to be student centered 	 In 2004-05, YELL youth focused on concerns about gangs, and through 240 surveys, found that a majority of students are not in gangs, but know someone who is In 2003-2004, YELL youth focused on concerns around bullying and found in a survey of 134 students, 65% of 6th graders, 48% of 7th graders and 50% of 8th graders have been bullied at school 2005-2006 YELL youth focused on concerns about consistent enforcement of dress code and lock ou In 2004-2005, YELL youth focused on concerns about stereotyping and cliques
Caring Community (Supportive Relationships)	 Three representatives voted to strengthen relationships Four representatives voted to increase communication with students School staff have expressed a need for students to feel known School staff have expressed concern that some school staff are focused on negative 	 56% of surveyed youth (n=68) agree that adults in the school care about them and their future. 70% of surveyed youth (n=41) agree at least two adults know them well. 45% of surveyed youth (n=68) agree that they feel respected by their teachers. A 2008 top recommendation from youth involved in focus group (one of eight) is for respect between all people, because they feel it increases motivation to go to school, helps people feel good about themselves, and creates a more positive environment
Support for Autonomy	School staff expressed a need for more opportunities for every student to have and feel ownership over the school .	 More than ½ (6 of 11) of surveyed youth (n=11 in 2008 agree that adults listen to them. Surveyed youth (n=11) said that what they are learning and doing at their school right now will help them to: Help others (10 of 11) Get involved in their community (8 of 11)
Meaningful Skill-Building Opportunities	School staff expressed a need for more opportunities for youth to be involved in the community	 A youth 2008 top recommendation (4 of 8) is fo opportunities to be involved in: sports, foreign language classes, sex education and health classes and financial classes 5 of 11 of 2008 surveyed youth (n=11) agree their classes are interesting. In 2003-2004, YELL Youth found in a survey of 251 students, that 60% believe there are not enough after-school activities. 65% said they are not involved in an activity after-school. In 2004-2005, YELL Youth also recommended more after-school activities as a gang prevention strategy.

SAMPLE OF COMPILED DATA (CONTINUED)

The following are additional school sample data that can inform the process in identifying youth development target areas of focus.

PERCENT OF 7TH GRADE STUDENTS IN OUR SCHOOL WHO SCORED HIGH IN THE FOLLOWING ASSETS ON THE CALIFORNIA HEALTHY KIDS SURVEY

School Environment	2005	2007
Caring Relationships: Adult in School (Test items include: At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who really cares about me; who tells me when I do a good job; who notices when I'm not there)		43%
High Expectations: Adult in School (Test items include: At my school, there is a teacher or some other adultwho always wants me to do my best; who believes that I will be a success)		65%
Meaningful Participation (Test items include: At my school, there is a teacher or some other adult who listens to me when I have something to say. At schoolI do interesting activities; I help decide things like class activities or rules; I do things that make a difference.)		21%

HOW 7[™] GRADE STUDENTS AT OUR SCHOOL RATED THE LEVEL OF SAFETY OF THE SCHOOL

School Environment	2005	2007
Very safe	25%	28%
Safe	36%	37%
Neither safe nor unsafe	27%	28%
Unsafe	7%	5%
Very unsafe	5%	3%

Youth Development Outcome Ranking Sheet

Where is our energy around strengthening our youth development approach?

ACTIVITY DIRECTIONS

- 1. List the four or five youth development areas that your school has identified as being most pressing to address and aligned with your criteria for action.
- 2. Rank the order of importance of these areas from one to five according to our criteria for action and your perspective of the most pressing needs in our school.

OUR CRITERIA FOR ACTION

1.	Must align with our vision to:
2.	
3.	

Rank (1-5)	Priority Youth Development Areas of Focus

SAMPLE OF FINAL FOCUS TOPICS AND SCHOOL MEMBER RANKING

After participants identified the following four areas of focus, they asked other staff and students to rank these four areas in order of importance to help identify one or more areas of priority.

	Ranked 1st	Ranked 2nd	Ranked 3rd	Ranked 4th
Building respect throughout the school	21	8	5	4
(youth-adult, adult-adult)				
Increasing student motivation	9	15	6	8
Strengthening relationships	5	11	11	11
Equity, increasing tolerance and broadening perspectives	5	4	15	14

What is Youth Development?

Mary K. Hofstedt

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IS...

- The **processes and stages of growing up** from pre-teen through to adulthood
- The **practices** that support youth to make healthy transitions to adulthood, and to become successful members of society
- An **area of scholarship** that seeks to understand adolescent's intellectual, emotional, social, and physical growth processes, and to identify practices and environments that support these processes in positive ways

WHEN SOMEONE IS 'DOING' YOUTH DEVELOPMENT, THEY ARE GENERALLY

- Focusing on the strengths of adolescents, rather than only addressing the risks or problems
- Enlisting youth as partners in learning, decision making, and their own personal growth
- Engaging youth as resources and fellow community members with important ideas/insights
- Collaborating with others to support youth across settings and giving them positive, consistent messages about their value and potential

Youth development seeks to understand how we as a society can best work together to realize what we want for our young people and their dreams for themselves. It is a field that unites social service providers, teachers, program leaders, artists, activists, civic leaders, parents, community organizers, and young people themselves under one unified umbrella. After all, one child may need prevention, enrichment, intervention, academic challenge, and personal support at different junctures in their development—and sometimes all at the same time!

WHAT WE KNOW

In 2002 the National Academy of Sciences published a report called "Community Programs that Promote Youth Development." This report is a review and synthesis of the available research on youth development and what practices best support their well-being. It is the definitive research publication in the field. In addition, the Search Institute identified 40 assets that help youth to thrive. There are many other resources, but these are two of the most commonly referenced. From the National Academy of Sciences we know that development happens across (at least) four domains: Physical, Emotional, Social, and Cognitive. In each area, individuals can develop strengths, or assets, that equip them to be independent, connected, and contributing people.

- Having more assets is better than having few. Although strong assets in one category can offset weak assets in another category, life is easier to manage if one has assets in all four domains.
- Individuals do not necessarily need the entire range of assets to thrive; in fact, various combinations of assets across domains reflect equally positive adolescent development.
- Continued exposure to positive experiences, settings, and people, as well as opportunities to gain and refine life skills, supports young people in the acquisition and growth of these assets.
- Environments that support the development of assets provide physical and emotional safety, opportunities to belong and participate, support for youth to matter and make a difference, positive relationships, positive social norms, appropriate structures, and integration of family, school, and community.
- After-school programs can expand the opportunities for youth to acquire personal and social assets.
- Adolescents who spend time in communities that are rich in developmental opportunities for them experience less risk and show evidence of higher rates of positive development. A diversity of opportunities in each community is more likely to support broad adolescent development and attract the interest of and meet the needs of a greater number of youth.

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Educator Definitions of Youth Development

In order for a school to move toward a youth development approach, school members need to make their own meaning of youth development by putting it in their own words. Some schools might call it "teaching the whole child," for example. The following are examples of definitions that Youth in the Middle participants came up with for themselves.

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT IS...

- An approach to working with young people that is youth centered and focused on building relationships
- Understanding, awareness and knowledge of where youth are developmentally, emotionally, physically, and socially
- Supporting young people through a difficult time in their lives—listening to where they are coming from, and helping to make them better citizens
- Establishing a fair and respectful teaching environment by creating trust and listening to students so they are bought in and motivated
- Getting past the filter caused by anxiety, feeling unsafe, and self esteem that we all have and that prohibits/hurts learning
- About connections, respect, communication, collaboration and community involvement.
- About providing increased opportunities for student choice and voice:
 - o Giving youth power, including them in conversations in decisions that affect them, and shared decision-making
 - Choice in how and what they learn
- Helping youth to believe in themselves
- Providing freedom to fail
- Multi-faceted: The approaches are diverse and the interpretation is varied
- Looks different in the classroom than after school
- Hard, messy and requires persistence
- Vital to the learning process: Students must feel emotionally and physically safe, a sense of connection, care, and belonging, and believe that they are capable of achieving and have control over their ability to achieve in order to be motivated and ready to learn
- Teaching young people Algebra as opposed to teaching Algebra the focus is on learning instead of teaching.

What Does Youth Development Look Like in Action?

Youth Develop- ment Area	What It Means	What It Looks Like	Examples of In-School Practices and Activities
Physical and Psychological Safety	Youth feel safe from physical harm, confident that surrounding adults will protect them from harm and assist them if they are feeling threatened. Youth know that there are rules that govern behavior that will be consistently and fairly enforced. Youth feel safe to make mistakes without fear of teasing, harassment, or ostracism; that racial and	Safe and health-promoting facilities	 Safety and emergency response plans known by entire school All incoming youth have a "go to" buddy for support and guidance
		Practices that increase safe peer group interaction and decrease unsafe or confrontational peer interactions	 Peer conflict resolution programs All members of the school community pay attention to and address negative behavior (such as bullying) immediately Adults and youth trained in facilitation skills conduct student and student-staff dialogues to safely share their thoughts
	cultural differences between individuals are embraced.	Limit setting, clear and consistent boundaries and expectations	 All members of the school community understand the school rules and enforce them fairly and consistently Clear systems and processes are in
			place to provide clear, consistent, and respectful enforcement of rules Staff are held accountable to the same rules of conduct as students
		Age-appropriate monitoring	 Adults recognize the development stages of middle school students and provide supervised opportunities for guided exploration
Caring Community (Supportive Relationships)	Youth feel known and cared about by adults and other youth. Youth feel secure that they will be valued and accepted by the group; that they can participate fully and they will be treated with respect. Youth feel connected to their school and to the people in their school. Youth receive consistent messages from all adults.	Opportunities for meaningful inclusion, regardless of one's gender, ethnicity, sexual identity, or disabilities	Staff facilitate equal interactions between different groups and cooperative activities toward a shared goal rather than competition between groups Adults address racism and engage students in productive conversations that raise awareness about racism/discrimination
		Communication and responsiveness	 Adults connect with students on school and non-school matters Staff notice and respond to student needs Adults explain to students the reasons behind a lesson or decision
		Coordination and synergy among family, school and community	 Staff develop systems that support clear/consistent communication between all adults (family, after- school, school, community) Engaged parents/caregivers in identi-
			fying strengths and expertise to contribute to student activities, projects and individual growth School has one or more community program components

Youth Develop- ment Area	What It Means	What It Looks Like	Examples of In-School Practices and Activities		
Support for Autonomy	self-directed, make responsible choices about how to use their time and participate	self-directed, make responsible choices about how to use their time and participate	choices about how to use	Opportunities for meaningful inclusion	Students involved in helping to define school rules that take into account the different experience and challenges students their age face
	as group members in making decisions that influence the larger program or school climate. Youth feel a sense		Youth conducting research activities with their peers to identify ways for all youth to feel connected to each other and to adults at the school		
	of belonging and ownership in the program, classroom or school and that their contri- butions are valued.	Practices that focus on improvement rather than on relative current performance levels	Developing a broad definition of leadership with students that includes a broad array of "entry points" for service, formal decision making, event planning etc. where you are making a positive impact		
			Giving students choice, opportunities to learn from mistakes and praising effort instead of intelligence (linked to motivation)		
		Opportunities for problem solving, decision making, planning, goal setting and helping	Peer mentoring activities based on youth-identified "expertise"		
		others	Student involvement opportunities with clear roles and expectations for issues that affect them and for which they can see the results of their work		
Meaningful Skill-Building	students the opportunity to develop life skills, that challenge them and are relevant. These experiences also increase their knowledge of and contribution to their community.	difference	Opportunities for students to be involved in community projects		
experiences		 Opportunities to learn physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social skills 	 Providing numerous enrichment opportunities for students in sports, arts, foreign languages, financial management, health, goal setting, career planning and life skills during the school day and after school 		
		 Opportunities for social and cultural identity formation/cultural and bicultural competence 	Activities engaging all students in learning with their family and com- munity and connecting it to classroom learning and sharing among peers		
			Structured dialogues between teachers and parents (and youth and parents, and others) regarding their values and definitions of success for their students/children		
		 Activities that students feel is challenging and relevant and in which they believe they can be successful 	students' "real world" experiences, culture and interests		
			Students are engaged in deep cognitive thinking and activities that ask them to construct their own knowledge.		
			Adults differentiate instruction to meet the individual needs of students		

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National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002) *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development.* Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth. Eccles, J. & Gootman, J.A. (Eds.) Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

Youth Development Goals and Skills

GOALS FOR OUR YOUTH

- Physical and Psychological Well-Being: Whereby youth are experiencing safe, health-promoting facilities and safe, structured peer
 group interactions which support positive communications strategies and problem solving
- Intellectual and Vocational Competency: All youth should expect as adults to be able to support themselves and their families, and to have some resources beyond basic survival needs. They should have decent jobs and the education or access to education to improve or change jobs
- **Social Connectedness:** Young people should grow up to be physically and mentally healthy, be supportive parents if they have children, and have positive family and friendship networks
- **Meaningful Contributions:** Can take many forms, but we hope that our young people will look to do more than be taxpayers and law-abiders—to contribute at a level where they contribute to their community, however they define their community.

SKILLS/ASSETS OUR YOUTH WILL NEED

Physical and Psychological	Intellectual and Vocational	Social Connectedness	Meaningful Contributions
Well-Being	Competency		
 Good health habits Risk management skills Positive self-regard Social identity Strong moral character 	 School success Knowledge of vocational skills Critical thinking skills Communication skills Sense of responsibility 	 Connectedness and trust with family members and peers Self-confidence Communication skills Conflict resolution skills 	 Attachment to community organizations Sense of larger purpose in life Strong moral character Commitment to civic engagement Leadership skills

Systems to Support School-Wide Youth Development and Shared Responsibility Rubric

PURPOSE OF THE SCHOOL-WIDE SYSTEMS RUBRIC

The following rubric attempts to describe the key indicators of the systems that are needed to support and sustain a school-wide youth development focus. They describe what the systems might look like at different stages of development to help gauge the current state as well as progress towards meetings your goals. Being able to track progress is important, as the work is hard and requires persistence. It's easy to fall back into old habits that are not aligned with your vision. In fact, it's important to realize that this process is not necessarily linear, as circumstances can lead to setbacks. We hope this tool can serve as a helpful reminder of where you want to be and help to maintain optimism and persistence in working toward that vision.

BACKGROUND

Why Do School-Wide Systems Matter?

The following rubric is based on the school-wide systems that are needed to support and sustain any school change effort. While not specific to a youth development approach, we do integrate principles important to community school change efforts (such as shared leadership) as well as research-based effective professional development and school reform efforts. These school-wide systems are vital to constructing the organizational supports necessary for building and sustaining whole-school change.

Rubric Descriptors

This rubric attempts to describe what is happening at different stages of school-change: What you might see and what members might feel at these different stages. It does not, however, give specific strategies for achieving these changes because each school's unique conditions and populations will affect the process. Other parts of the guide provide research-based effective practices that might inform your school's strategies as well as activities your school might adapt or use as you work toward your vision.

We suggest using this rubric in conjunction with the Caring and Supportive Community Rubric, which describes the development of skills in working productively through conflict and engaging in collaborative decision-making, critical to the success of shared responsibility systems.

The descriptors are adapted from what we know from other school change efforts, such as the Bay Area School Reform Coalition (BASRC), the work of the Children's Aid Society, and the John W. Gardner Center's prior work on Stages of Development in Community School, as well as the current research on Professional Learning Communities.

Definition of School-Wide Systems: School-wide systems are structures (e.g., schedules, buildings), infrastructure (e.g., new or refined collaborative or decision-making bodies); cultural norms (e.g., norms of behavior, values, and beliefs of school community members); and processes (e.g., how meetings are run, internal communication processes) that govern the interactions and decisions of all members of the school community (all staff, students, and parents).

Underlying Principles of This Rubric

The school change principles underlying the following descriptors are:

- The school change process takes time and persistence. Typically any organizational change effort requires at least three to five years before new norms and practices are operationalized.
- School change is most effective when there is:
 - o Strong support from leadership and a number of vocal champions in the school
 - o A known sense of direction that is clearly and consistently communicated
 - o Structures, processes, norms and practices that are aligned with this vision
 - o A long-term commitment to work toward this vision in incremental, doable steps
- When leadership is shared among school members who follow ideals rather than a person, individuals are self-motivated and self-directed in their work and perform at a higher level.
- The use of data based on student outcomes and perspectives has helped schools to continually improve, build shared
 accountability, ensure the success of all students, protect effective practices/programs and improve or eliminate ineffective practices.

In addition, some descriptors are also based on the following research-based youth development principles related to collaboration and shared responsibility:

- Adult relationships and connections to one another affect youth:
 - $_{
 m O}$ When adults feel connected and supported, they want to be at school and are more engaged in their work
 - o Adults are role models for youth and set the tone for the school
- When youth see evidence that their voice or actions have an impact in their immediate settings (e.g., classroom, school, home, after-school program), they are more likely to be engaged and intrinsically motivated to learn and they develop important decision-making, communication and leadership skills necessary to becoming productive, contributing adults.
- When youth are engaged in projects and activities tied to their personal interests and to their culture or background, they are more likely to be engaged in school and they develop important leadership skills and sense of belonging important in their growth into healthy adults.

Pre-Conditions to Change →	Trail Blazing →	Building Momentum →	Thriving	
The following descriptors help to paint a picture of what a school might look like prior to a change effort or during times of stress when setbacks can occur.	At this stage, a group of leaders begins to form and define a vision for their school. Individuals in the school begin to experiment with changes in individual practices and school norms and practices.	At this stage, a critical mass (at least a third of school staff) act as vocal champions for the vision and begin to establish norms, structures, and processes that support this vision.	At this stage, norms of collaboration, community and care are operationalized as "the way we do business," and all members (students, all staff and parents) act and feel as described.	
Shared Responsibility Around a Shared Vision				
 In the school, you see that: A vision, school policies, practices, decisions, structures, and processes may be in place, but are established at the top with little or no input from others in the school community Even if the vision includes the importance of meeting students' physical, emotional, and social needs, this vision is seldom communicated, and the school norms, structures, and strategies focus primarily on academic achievement with little or no attention to other areas of development There are many methods of communication between different school members* (e.g., meetings, newsletters, events) but there is not a cohesive approach to communicating with all school members (all staff, parents, students) and communication is primarily one-way (top-down) In general, school members* feel they do not have input into school policies that affect them. 	In the school, you see that: At least one group of school leaders representing different school groups** begins to work together toward one cohesive, student-centered vision and measurable goals around some aspects of students' physical, social and emotional well-being as well as academic achievement. These leaders begin to identify the types of data that can best inform progress and effectiveness of strategies toward these goals Administrators and other school leaders begin to continuously communicate the school vision and how policies/activities connect to/support this vision Administrators begin to seek input from some school members on policies that affect them School leaders begin to analyze their existing communication mechanisms in terms of their purpose, audiences and flow and begin to define a more cohesive system that supports collaboration between all school members* In general, school members* feel they have some input into school policies and direction.	 In the school, you see that: A critical mass of school staff at all levels as well as parent and student leaders vocally and actively lead work toward one cohesive, student-centered vision and measurable goals around the physical, social, emotional, and academic wellbeing of all students. Staff are expected to also work collaboratively toward these goals. There are structures and supports (e.g., collaborative teams, professional development, materials, processes) in place to support staff in working toward these goals and school policy decisions are tied to this vision. School staff collect and analyze data from multiple perspectives (including students and parents of all socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds) to measure progress on goals and to evaluate the effectiveness of strategies in working toward these goals Most members of the school staff at all levels as well as many students and parents communicate the school vision and how school policies/strategies support this vision. This group knows the process for giving input into school decisions. School leaders create and begin to implement a cohesive communication system that includes formal mechanisms for two-way communication among all school members* and clear, collaborative decision-making processes. In general, school members* feel they have some input into school decisions that affect them and can see how their input informs and improves school practices. 	 In the school, you see that: Almost all school members* work together across different groups** to shape the school policies, practices, structures, and processes aligned with one cohesive, student-centered vision and measurable physical, emotional, social, and academic goals for all students School members across groups collect, analyze and reflect or data from many sources to inform practices most effective in achieving shared goals. School members routinely adapt their strategies based on input and data and thus are able to meet the needs of a changing population. There is a cohesive communication system among all school community members (students, all staff and parents) that includes formal mechanisms for all members to give input into key governance decisions and strategies and to be regularly informed of decisions and progress toward the school vision. In general, school members* including parents and students feel they have input into school decisions and see how their input affects school decisions. 	
Collaborative Relationships				
 In the school, you see that: School members tend to work primarily in isolation or in teams of like roles (teachers, after-school, students, parents, administrators) The primary connection between classroom, after-school, school events and home activities is teacher-defined homework Staff must find time to collaborate outside of school time, and often this time is spent discussing problems with little plan for solutions 	 In the school, you see that: Some individuals representing different groups** begin to work together to try to make connections between their respective settings. (e.g., classroom/after-school curricular connections; classroom activities that make family/cultural connections/involve family members) School leaders begin to define different structures and processes for collaboration across school groups, which begin to explore the use of data to inform practices around student-centered goals 	 In the school, you see that: School leaders identify or create collaboration time, structures and support that allow a critical mass of representatives of different groups** regular school time to collaborate on activities and strategies for meeting shared student social, emotional, physical and academic goals and that draw connections between student cultures and school activities/instruction Different groups participate in events hosted by other groups 	 In the school, you see that: Collaboration and reflection time is operationalized. There is regular, sanctioned and paid staff collaboration/reflection time as part of the normal school day. Staff use this time to collaborate/reflect and often involve parents/ youth as appropriate. There are connections made between school members' passions, family, and cultures, and school activities and instruction Different groups** co-host events together 	

^{*} By "school members" we mean all administrators, staff, parents, students, and community partners with whom you interact

** By "groups" we mean different roles (students, parents, teachers, after-school staff, administrators) as well as other differences such as ethnicity, socio-economic background, ability levels, etc.

Physical and Psychological Safety Rubric

PURPOSE OF THE PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY RUBRIC

The following rubric describes the key indicators of what a safe school might look like at different stages of implementation. The intent of this tool is to help gauge the current state of the school, identify areas of focus, and track progress towards meeting your goals. Being able to track progress is important, as the work is hard and requires persistence. It's easy to fall back into old habits that are not aligned with your vision. In fact, it's important to realize that this process is not necessarily linear, as circumstances can lead to setbacks. We hope this tool can serve as a helpful reminder of where you want to be and help to maintain optimism and persistence in working toward that vision.

BACKGROUND

Underlying Principles of This Rubric

The research-based principles underlying the rubric indicators and descriptors are:

- Youth must feel physically and emotionally safe to be ready to learn
- Youth are intrinsically motivated to learn when they believe they can be successful and feel it is safe to make mistakes

Rubric Descriptors

This rubric attempts to describe what is happening at different stages of establishing a school-wide culture of safety. It captures the adult actions that you might see at each stage which take a school from a reactionary/instruction focused model to a preventative/whole child-focused model and related youth indicators.

The rubric does not give specific strategies for achieving these changes because each school's unique conditions and populations will support different solutions. However, the following is a short list of examples of specific strategies that could be used to address safety issues in a school, which might spark additional ideas for your school.

Examples of practices and policies that support a safe environment include:

- Safety and emergency response plans known by all school members
- Buddies for all incoming youth who provide support and guidance
- Peer conflict resolution programs
- School therapists, counselors, or outreach teachers who provide one-on-one and small group therapy sessions for troubled students
- A safe place where students who are misbehaving can go to "cool down" or talk through issues with trained support staff
- School-wide grading policies that reward effort by requiring teachers to provide feedback on homework and giving students the opportunity to correct and improve work

What are the Key Components of a Safe School?

This rubric is broken down into the following key components for building a safe school environment:

- Adult Actions to Create a Safe Environment
 - o Rules and Rule Enforcement
 - o Discipline
 - Physical/Social/Emotional Well-Being
 - o Safety to Make Mistakes
- Student Actions and Perception/Experience of Safety

Since it is not possible to really know how safe students feel without asking students themselves, staff will likely want to collect student data to help inform the school safety plan/policies. This can be done through surveys, interviews, focus groups, or other data collection methods. The sample can be representative of the entire school population, as long as it truly represents all students. Data can also be drawn from existing sources such as the California Healthy Kids Survey.

Preventing Safety Problems Reacting to Problems Beginning a Safety Plan Culture of Safety The following descriptors help to paint a picture of what a school At this stage, processes and norms of safety are operationalized by At this stage, school members begin to look critically at youth At this stage most staff work collectively on implementing the that is not safe might look like prior to a change effort or during outcomes related to safety, question the adequacy of their safety school safety plan, feel that their campus is safe, and are collecting all school members as "the way we do business." times of stress when setbacks can occur. policies, and develop new safety policies. data to improve these polices/practices. Adult Actions to Create a Safe Environment Rules and Rule Enforcement School leaders and staff begin to: Most school staff: Almost all school members* In general: Rules, norms for behavior, and rule enforcement vary by Define what safety looks like at the school Enforce a consistent set of rules and norms for behavior in Understand the school rules developed in partnership with all location (eq., classrooms, programs, school yard) and are Develop rules, norms for behavior, and rule enforcement for all school contexts developed by administrators, teachers, school members including students enforced inconsistently the school with student input and after-school staff (eq., classrooms, after-school programs, Enforce them fairly and consistently using school-wide There is a lack of clear behavior expectations for staff or the Work with school staff to teach and enforce these rules established systems and processes school yard, etc.) staff expectations are not enforced Use school-wide established systems and processes to Are concerned about the safety of students all hours of the School administrators feel that unsafe activity that occurs off Develop norms for staff behavior at school-wide meetings enforce these rules day, whether they are on campus or not of school property and after-school hours is not the concern Model and enforce norms for staff behavior Are concerned about the safety of students to and from Adults and students are held accountable to the same rules of the school. Develop partnerships with police to begin to cultivate a school as well as on campus of conduct Most school members* report that they do not feel welcome safety plan for the school Agree to norms of behavior for staff and begin to hold each Report that they feel welcome and safe at the school or safe at the school Immediately stop unsafe student behavior** other accountable to these All staff immediately stop unsafe student or adult behavior** Police are called to punish students Immediately stop unsafe student behavior** In general: School staff also investigate and work to resolve the conflicts that Many staff ignore or even participate in/encourage unsafe behavior.** Rules may still vary between after-school programs and School leaders: lead up to these unsafe behaviors. Staff may: school-day contexts or between individual classrooms. Investigate and work to resolve the conflicts that lead up to Police are seen as school partners and work closely with all school most of these unsafe behaviors • Fail to step in when students are physically, verbally, Staff begin to become more conscious of the things they members to help maintain safety for students and families at psychologically or sexually harassed/bullied say about students (and other school members) and begin Regularly communicate with police to help ensure that Ignore rumors of unsafe behavior, etc. to speak more respectfully of and to all students (and other students make it to and from school safely school and in their community. Allow students to be excluded school members) Police are seen as school partners and are regularly called in Make discriminatory remarks about students to other staff, to help to prevent gang activity and see that students make it in front of other students or directly to students (eg., "These home safely. low kids aren't going to achieve anyway. They don't want to learn. Their parents don't care.") Discipline Many staff tend to discipline students by: School leaders and some staff begin to: Most school staff: Almost all school members*: Publicly criticizing students Identify students who chronically disobey the rules and Develop relationships with students and families to under-Work collectively to identify student strengths, provide provide additional supports for these students stand individual student challenges and to connect students needed supports and teach and model expectations within Yelling at students and across all contexts Develop stronger relationships with students and try to to community school supports Threatening to punish students Providing rewards or consequences often inconsistently and understand underlying causes behind misbehavior Work collaboratively to understand individual student Often communicate about student positive behavior/ publicly and as the primary discipline method Teach and recognize desired behaviors challenges and to provide needed supports accomplishments Teach, model, and encourage desired behaviors Engage students to support each other's success Address behavior (not the person) with empathy and Privately discuss behavior choices and consequences with Guide students in developing strategies for working through without judgment Use private correction/ behavior improvement plans students without judgment conflict by mentoring them through choices, lessons learned, Explain reasons for rules and consequences Privately praise/acknowledge student effort and and how they might apply those in future positive behavior

^{*} By "school members" we mean all administrators, staff, parents, students, and community partners with whom you interact

^{**} By "unsafe behavior" we mean all forms of bullying and harassment including physical intimidation/fighting, verbal harassment (teasing, discriminatory remarks, name-calling, threats), psychological harassment (spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, non-verbal teasing/intimidation, exclusion), and sexual harassment as well as gang dress/activity and possession of weapons/illegal substances.

Reacting to Problems →	Beginning a Safety Plan →	Preventing Safety Problems →	Culture of Safety
Adult Actions to Create a Safe Environment			
Physical/Emotional/Social Well-Being			
 Most staff: Feel that their job is only to educate students Tend to ignore physical, emotional or social concerns that they observe such as students who are hungry, angry, withdrawn, depressed, etc. 	School leaders: Connect students with obvious needs to appropriate school resources to address basic needs or emotional concerns Make staff aware of available supports for students and referral processes Some staff begin to refer students to available services/ supports.	Most school staff: Recognize student depression, anger, exclusion, and other concerns Quickly address emotional concerns by showing care, referring students to available supports, and following up with support staff Work to include students who are alone or excluded Are available to students to talk through social challenges	Almost all school members*: Work collaboratively to collectively address student emotional, social and physical needs Are aware of and regularly use the supports available to students and the processes for accessing these supports
Safety to Make Mistakes			
 In general: Students struggle to acknowledge mistakes Only students who know the right answer are called upon when students are not paying attention or get an answer wrong, they are often publicly shamed or ridiculed 	School leaders: Communicate the importance of effort and safety to make mistakes in order for students to learn Some staff begin to: Consciously praise effort Model learning from mistakes Provide feedback to students on learning Use low-stakes ways for students to show what they know (eg., Think/Pair/Share, one-on-one conversations)	School leaders: Establish and enforce school-wide policies (e.g., grades, honor roll, participation in extra-curricular activities) that reward and celebrate effort Most school staff: Establish classroom/program policies (e.g., homework, assignments, assessments) that reward and encourage effort and allow students to learn from mistakes Reassure students that fear of failure/ inadequacy is okay and normal and feel safe to expose their own mistakes with students and staff in order to learn	Almost all school members*: Show genuine appreciation for effort Frame "mistakes" as valuable opportunities for learning and growth by asking youth why they think they got a particular result and what they might do differently next time. Seek challenges for themselves and all students so that they can learn and grow Trust that it is okay to make mistakes, to say, "I don't know," to expose weaknesses and receive feedback in order to learn
Student Actions and Perception/Experience of Safety***			
No school members: • Are aware of student perceptions about safety at the school Students tend to • Ignore, participate in, and encourage unsafe behavior**	School leaders and some staff begin to: Collect data on student indicators of safety (such as discipline referrals/ suspensions/ expulsions) These data are used to track progress but don't inform practice In general, students: Follow the school rules Refrain from engaging in unsafe behavior** Alert an adult when they witness unsafe behavior	 Many school staff: Individually collect data on student perceptions of safety at the school Use these data to inform and improve the effectiveness of safety policies/practices Most students: Indicate that they feel safe at the school Model behavior that is aligned with the rules, which they help to define Discourage fellow students from engaging in unsafe behavior** 	Almost all school members*: Collectively use multiple data sources to track progress over time and constantly improve shared school practices and policies. Indicate that they feel safe at the school and know what to do when they observe unsafe behavior.** Almost all students: Model and enforce safe behavior with each other and with other school members. Help define and improve school rules and safety policies.

^{*} By "school members" we mean all administrators, staff, parents, students, and community partners with whom you interact

** By "unsafe behavior" we mean all forms of bullying and harassment including physical intimidation/fighting, verbal harassment (teasing, discriminatory remarks, name-calling, threats), psychological harassment (spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships, non-verbal teasing/intimidation, exclusion), and sexual harassment as well as gang dress/activity and possession of weapons/illegal substances

*** Student perceptions can be assessed using surveys, interviews, focus groups, or existing data already being collected such as the California Healthy Kids Survey.

Supportive and Caring Community Rubric

PURPOSE OF THE SUPPORTIVE AND CARING COMMUNITY RUBRIC

The following rubric attempts to capture the key indicators of what a "caring and supportive school community" might look like at different stages of development to help you gauge where you are today, where you would like to be at the end of the year and in years to come, and to track your progress as you move toward this goal. This is important, as the work you are doing is hard and requires persistence. It's easy to fall back into old habits that are not aligned with your vision. In fact, it's important to realize that this process is not necessarily linear, as circumstances can lead to setbacks. We are hopeful that this tool can serve as a helpful reminder of where you want to be and help to maintain optimism and persistence in working toward that vision.

BACKGROUND

What Is A Supportive and Caring School Community?

Thinking about your own life experiences, when have you felt most engaged and excited about your work as an adult or as a student at a school?

What was it about you and the people around you that made that possible?

What did they do and say that made you feel this way?

When asked these questions, most tend to recall times when we worked as part of a collaborative team or group where we felt accepted, valued, supported, and cared about. From these experiences, we know how this sense of community affects our energy level and engagement in our work and how that, in turn, allows us to perform at our very best. This is true for adults and even more so for youth during the difficult transition of adolescence.

Definition of Community: We are defining community as inclusive of all school members (students, staff, parents) who are committed to a common vision that they all collectively help to shape and carry out. Communities help define a school climate which doesn't rely on individual members and continues to thrive through transitions.

Underlying Principles of This Rubric

The fundamental youth development research-based principles underlying these rubric descriptors are that:

- When youth are in a community where they feel cared for, known and supported by adults and peers, they are more likely to attend school and are more likely to be engaged and motivated to learn
- Adult relationships and connections to one another affect youth:
 - o When adults feel connected and supported, they want to be at school and are more engaged in their work
 - o Adults are role models for youth and set the tone for the school

Rubric Descriptors

This rubric attempts to describe what is happening at different stages of community building—what you might hear, see, and what members might feel at these different stages. It does not, however, give specific strategies for how these behaviors are achieved, because this could look very different for each school's unique conditions and populations. Other parts of the guide provide research-based effective practices that might inform your school's strategies as well as activities your school might adapt or use as you work toward your vision. The descriptors come both from research and from our observations of the process at Kennedy Middle School.

It is not possible to know if students feel cared about and supported without asking them. Therefore, staff will likely want to collect student data to help assess student feelings of care and support. This can be done through surveys, interviews, focus groups or other methods. The sample can be representative of the school population, as long as it truly represents all students. Data can also be drawn from existing sources such as the California Healthy Kids Survey.

Pre-Conditions to Change Trail Blazing **Building Momentum** Thriving \rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow A Caring School Community In the school, you tend to hear school members*: Some of the time, you hear school members*: Almost all of the time, you hear school members*: Most of the time, you hear school members*: Use disrespectful language (swearing, offensive jokes, yelling Begin to use more respectful and positive language Use respectful and positive language Speak of members of other groups** with respect, appreciation, at or belittling youth or other school members) Consciously begin to question and test their own and others' Seek to understand members of other groups** by actively and admiration seeking their input and ideas in collaborative problem Work collaboratively (across all staff roles, and in partnership Share personal information about other school members in assumptions about other groups, begin to respectfully confront disrespectful behavior in others, and work through differences solving with students and parents of all socio-economic backgrounds public areas. Blame or complain about members in other groups** Constructively work through conflict using productive conversations or mediation. and ethnicities) to solve problems proactively and to come to Begin to talk about strategies they can control in their Actively seek to understand the strengths, supports, challenges consensus on important school policies/practices In general, school members feel: and needs of youth and parents of all socio-economic and specific contexts. Work through conflicts in a constructive way through productive Alone, isolated, unwelcome, disrespected, unappreciated, ethnic backgrounds conversations and mediation afraid, like they do not belong, and/or like they are not In general, school members feel: Work collaboratively (across all staff roles) to meet the needs Describe their school as a family That at least one other person in the school cares about them capable of success of all students Frustrated and that they lack control over addressing and understands their struggles/challenges In general, school members feel: They are treated fairly and equitably challenges in the school • That they have at least one or a few others in the school that In general, school members feel: Unsupported and that there are very few or no other members they can go to for support, advice or needed resources Connected to their school and to each other Welcome and supported at the school of the school they could go to for support, advice, or needed They have an increased understanding/ appreciation of Respected by members of other groups and that they trust That other school members really know them, and what's resources. (Most students cannot identify a supportive adult to members of other groups ** each other going on with them go to for help with school or personal matters.) Motivated to try new strategies Supported and cared for and can identify at least one person That they have many different people they could go to for help. (All students can identify multiple adults that they can they can go to in the school for support. (All students can In the school, you see that: In the school, you see: identify at least one adult they can go to for support with go to for support with school or personal issues.) When school members are in conflict, they tend to avoid Administrators and school leaders begin to model, communicate, school or personal problems and most students feel cared for, Confident in themselves and in each other interaction with one another, complain to others or attack encourage, and enforce norms of respect, collaboration, and known and that they belong.) holding each other accountable through productive conversation. each other In the school, you see: Capable of being successful Norms of respect, collaboration, productive communication, When a school member says something disrespectful or Some school members begin to intentionally try to connect points blame at another school member or group, other staff with other school members, particularly of other groups. For and conflict resolution are operationalized as "the way we do In the school, you see: Shared agreements on how school members treat each other members agree, ignore or complain to others but do not example: things here." confront the individual Adults begin to seek to understand the social and Norms and processes begin to form for large groups (e.g., Processes and systems for supporting all school members Accountability is primarily on an individual level. Individuals emotional challenges youth are facing teams, committees, whole staff) to address and work through and for welcoming and incorporating new school members have personal goals, and everyone is only responsible for Individuals ensure that students who need additional conflict productively and to make collaborative decisions are in place That school members care for and have compassion for one taking care of themselves academic support receive it Staff and students tend to hold each other accountable to Staff begin to seek to understand parents'/other There tends to be "cliques" of both adults and students from these norms and agreements another and are connected across groups staff members' struggles and begin to problem solve which others are excluded Supports (e.g., mediators, conflict resolution training) to help All school members go out of their way to help each other, school members work through conflict and to practice and are flexible, listen to all school members' perspectives and Administrators check in with staff and begin to find compromises around a shared vision use new strategies identify supports and resources staff might need Processes begin to develop for all school members to seek to address challenges or to facilitate communication needed support and resources

and collaboration

70

staff and students

The beginning of systems for welcoming and supporting new

^{*} By "school members" we mean all administrators, staff, parents, students, and community partners with whom you interact.

^{**} By "groups" we mean different school roles (students, parents, teachers, after-school staff, administrators) as well as other differences such as ethnicity, socio-economic background, ability levels etc.

Support for Autonomy Rubric

PURPOSE OF THE SUPPORT FOR AUTONOMY RUBRIC

The following rubric describes the key indicators of a school that embraces meaningful youth participation at different stages of implementation. The intent of this tool is to help gauge the current state of the school, identify areas of focus, and to track progress towards meeting your goals. Being able to track progress is important, as the work is hard and requires persistence. We hope this tool can serve as a helpful reminder of where you want to be and help to maintain optimism and persistence in working toward that vision.

BACKGROUND

What Is A Support for Autonomy?

When do you feel most engaged in your school? Most of us feel engaged in our school when we have input into the things that affect us and have some freedom to make choices about how to carry out the school vision. This is equally true for youth. Support for autonomy results when youth are given opportunities to make meaningful choices, to provide input or to take action that results in a noticeable impact on their personal development as well as their immediate environment.

A meaningful choice is one in which there are authentic differences between the options. For example, students may be given different ways to demonstrate competency in a particular concept through art, music, a written report, or oral presentation. A choice that is not meaningful is one in which the options are basically the same, such as writing a report or writing responses to questions. Admittedly, schools that face many demands and pressures because of test scores, may feel they don't have a lot of freedom to give choices. Given the importance of youth participation, it is important to look for where choices can be provided such as lunch-time or exploratory activities.

Why Does Support for Autonomy Matter?

Support for autonomy helps young people develop the skills and confidence to participate as productive partners in decisions affecting them individually and collectively. As a result, youth feel empowered, connected, and valued by adults, peers, and communities, and they develop life skills crucial to their development into healthy, stable, contributing adult citizens.

Underlying Principles of This Rubric

The research-based principles underlying the rubric indicators and descriptors are:

- When youth have meaningful choices in things that affect them and when they see evidence that their voice or
 actions have an impact in their immediate settings (e.g., classroom, school, home, after-school program, neighborhood),
 they are more likely to be engaged and intrinsically motivated to learn and develop important decision-making, communication, and leadership skills necessary to becoming productive, contributing adults.
- When youth are engaged in projects and activities tied to their personal interests and to their culture or background, they are more likely to be engaged in school and they develop important leadership skills and sense of belonging important in their growth into healthy adults.

Rubric Descriptors

This rubric attempts to capture the practices and policies that you might see at different stages of moving a school from an adult-led model to an adult-youth co-leadership model.

It is anticipated that while some individual staff members may already be using "Adult-Guided Youth Leadership" strategies or "Co-Leadership" strategies, it will take more time to move the majority of staff to these areas. Many of us did not grow up in a culture that valued and encouraged meaningful youth participation. As adults, we need to see successful examples of meaningful youth participation and to have opportunities to experiment with youth participation and to gradually move through the continuum on an individual level.

What Additional Youth Indicators Can Help Inform this Rubric?

To truly assess whether student participation and choice in your school is meaningful, it is important to hear from students. This can be done through surveys, focus groups or interviews. Data can also be drawn from existing sources such as the California Healthy Kids Survey.

Adult Run Youth Input/Emerging Participation Adult-Guided Youth Leadership Youth/Adult Co-Leadership The following descriptors describe what a school that provides At this stage, school members begin to collect youth data and At this stage, members establish whole-school policies and At this stage, processes and norms of meaningful youth participalittle or no meaningful youth participation might look like prior to seek youth perspectives to inform school programs, policies, and quidelines for integrating meaningful choice and participation into tion are operationalized by all school members as "the way we a change effort or during times of stress when setbacks can occur instruction and begin to intentionally provide increased opportunities most school instruction and activities and guided opportunities for do business," and youth are represented in some school policy (The locus of control lies in adults). for student choice and participation (The locus of control begins to choice/leadership with increasing levels of responsibility (The locus decision-making (The locus of control shifts between youth and shift to youth, but is still primarily with adults). of control is primarily in youth with adult support and guidance). adults depending on the activity). **Youth Choice** Most school staff: Almost all school members**: In general In their individual programs/settings, many staff: Students are given few or no meaningful choices* in class/ Begin to give students meaningful choices* in some of the Regularly give students meaningful choices* in school/ Regularly give students meaningful choices* in all facets of school/instructional/program activities/ projects, behavior rules instructional/ program activities/projects, as well as behavior their learning including their teachers, classes, instructional program/activities/ projects rules, behavior improvement strategies/plans and individual If students are given choices, they tend to be choices of or conflict resolution strategies pacing, and level of additional support based on their extra-curricular activities/school events or choices between Provide general instructional variety and some teacherindividual needs goal-setting plans essentially identical options selected choices to address different learning styles, personal Work with students to assess their own individual needs, Are aware of the passions, interests, strengths, cultural strengths, learning styles, personal interests, and cultural backgrounds, and learning needs of all students and work All students in a given class or program are given the same interests or to connect to student culture or background. (e.g., instruction, instructional support and assignments teachers select cultures and representatives of those cultures backgrounds and provide meaningful student-driven choices, in partnership with students to help meet these needs. Restrictions (e.g., physical barriers or rigid rules around to study) differentiated assignments, and support that allow students Students and adults share responsibility for student learning activities) of school space and activities limit student choices to develop self awareness/personal interests and leverage and growth. In general: during non-class times to one main area in the school. their strengths (e.g., students choose cultures and cultural • Students have more than one area on the school grounds In general: Student space is separate from adult space representatives to study). available to them during non-class times and have a number Students and staff co-habitate the school. The majority of The underlying message is, "Students are not capable of of activities they can participate in, but some physical barriers In general: the school grounds are open to students at all times, and making good decisions about their personal behavior/ still exist (e.g., some teachers may open their classrooms at • Students have many choices of spaces and activities in which students and adults regularly engage in conversation and growth. lunch or after school). they can engage during non-class time with other students fun activities together. The underlying message is, "Middle school students are The underlying message is, "Middle school youth are and adults capable of making some decisions when given limited The underlying message is, "Middle school students are capable of sharing responsibility for decisions affecting adult-defined choices." capable of making decisions when given general guidelines their personal development." and adult support." **Youth Participation** Most school staff: In general: In their individual programs/settings, many staff: Most school staff:

- Adults make all decisions about school rules, policies and activities without input from youth
- When youth voice an opinion, it is ignored, discouraged or even belittled
- The underlying message is, "It doesn't matter what middle school students think. Students should do what adults say, because adults are in charge and know what is best for students."
- Begin to seek youth data/input/perspective, but may not use these to inform rules/instruction/ policies or show youth how their input was used
- Begin to listen to youth voiced opinions and either validate that opinion as worthy of consideration or explain why a different decision was made
- Provide adult-directed youth leadership opportunities (e.g., student presentations/ performances, tutoring, or student aid opportunities)
- In general:
 - Leadership opportunities are provided after school or in special groups (student council)
 - The underlying message is, "Youth are worthy of respect and have valuable ideas to contribute."

- Regularly seek youth input and perspective, which is seen as essential in informing their practices and policies. Youth regularly see the impact of their input.
- Provide adult-guided youth leadership opportunities (e.g., students teaching small groups, writing/ directing school performances, planning/ implementing school events)
- In general:
 - The school has established school-wide norms, policies and processes for integrating youth input/involvement in school policies and practices. (e.g., youth representatives speak/give input at some staff meetings or a youth advisory board gives input on policies.)
 - The underlying message is, "Students' perspectives are essential in designing policies/practices to meet their needs."

- Involve youth in the co-development of school activities/ instruction/ practices and policies
- Provide independent or co-leadership opportunities for youth (e.g., co-teaching a lesson/activity, partner with adults, or work independently on school events)
- Actively seek ways to give every student leadership opportunities in and outside of class
- In general:
 - Youth are authentically engaged in decision-making in the school through established school-wide structures (e.g., youth representatives sit on school committees as appropriate; or student council has decision-making authority over some policies)
 - o The underlying message is, "students are partners in leading our school."

72

^{*} By "meaningful choice" we mean a choice in which there are authentic differences between given options. For example, students may be given different ways to demonstrate competency in a particular concept through art, music, a written report, or oral presentation. A choice that would not be meaningful would be one in which the options are basically the same, such as students calling their parents.

^{**} By "school members" we mean all administrators, staff, parents, students, and community partners with whom you interact.

Meaningful Skill-Building Experiences Rubric

PURPOSE OF THE MEANINGFUL SKILL-BUILDING EXPERIENCES RUBRIC

The following rubric describes the key indicators of a school that embraces challenging and engaging learning experiences at different stages of implementation. The intent of this tool is to help gauge the current state of the school, identify areas of focus, and to track progress toward meeting your goals. Being able to track progress is important, as the work is hard and requires persistence. We hope this tool can serve as a helpful reminder of where you want to be and help to maintain optimism and persistence in working toward that vision.

BACKGROUND

What Are Meaningful Skill-Building Experiences?

Think about a time when you were so engaged in learning that you didn't notice time passing—a time when you were motivated to hone a particular skill or understand a particular concept. What was it about that experience that made it challenging and engaging?

For many of us, we tend to be most engaged in learning, when we are interested in the subject/skill, when we see a purpose for learning the subject/skill and when we are challenged to think deeply and apply knowledge or skills. How often do we hear students complain that they are bored or don't understand why they need to know something? These are indicators that instruction is not challenging and engaging. As educators at schools facing pressures around standardized testing and budgetary struggles, this area may feel particularly challenging to address. Test preparation/lack of resources may cause schools to feel like they do not have a lot of latitude to teach content deeply or to help students apply concepts to real life. Yet when students are challenged to apply concepts to real-life situations and learn concepts deeply, they tend to be more motivated to learn and they retain knowledge during and long after testing, which allows them to build on this knowledge and apply it in their lives. This translates not only into improved test scores but also life-long learning.

Meaningful skill-building experiences also include a wealth of courses or activities that allow middle school students a chance to explore and develop different interests. During this exploratory time in their lives, it is important that middle school students have the opportunity to experience the arts, sports, and leadership as well as other life skills all crucial to the development of their personal identities and skills they will need as productive adults.

Underlying Principles of This Rubric

The research-based principle underlying the rubric indicators and descriptors is:

• When youth have the opportunity to explore their passions and develop new skills through a variety of challenging activities, particularly those that have real-world applications and/or contribute to their community, they are more likely to be engaged and intrinsically motivated to learn and they develop critical thinking skills important to their development as future citizens.

Examples of Meaningful Skill-Building Instructional Practices

The rubric does not give specific instructional methods because each school's unique conditions and populations will support different solutions. However, the following is a short list of examples of specific instructional strategies that could be used to provide challenging and engaging learning experiences in a school, which might spark additional ideas for your school.

- *General Instructional Practices:* Problem-based learning and project-based learning, collaborative learning, connection to current events, student interests, and community involvement
- Science and Math Instruction: Scientific inquiry, design challenges, discovery learning, hands-on
- Social Studies Instruction. Simulations, debates, role play
- Language Arts Instruction. Critical study of literature, self expression through writing/art/computer applications, etc.

Rubric Descriptors

This rubric attempts to capture the practices and policies that you might see at different stages of moving from a school that offers few opportunities for some students to participate in meaningful skill-building experiences to one that offers a wide variety of experiences to all students.

What Additional Youth Indicators Can Help Inform this Rubric?

To truly assess whether learning experiences in your program/class are meaningful and challenging, it is important to receive feedback from students. This can be done through surveys, focus groups or interviews.

Pre-Conditions to Change Trail Blazing **Building Momentum Thriving** At this stage, school members begin to realize the importance of At this stage, processes and norms of challenging and engaging The following descriptors describe what a school that provides At this stage, school staff establish whole-school policies and guidelittle or no challenging and engaging learning experiences providing opportunities for youth to explore and develop life skills lines for integrating challenging and engaging learning experiences learning experiences are operationalized by all school members as might look like prior to a change effort or during times of stress and personal interests and begin to integrate this into individual into most school instruction and activities and for helping to involve "the way we do business." when setbacks can occur. programs/instruction. students in a variety of after-school and exploratory activities. In general: In general: In general: In general: There are a wealth of opportunities for all students to explore • There are little or no opportunities for students to: There are some exploratory activities available through There are many exploratory activities available through electives, lunch-time clubs/activities, and after school electives, lunch-time clubs/activities and after school Make connections between the curriculum and personal interests/passions and to develop physical, social, students' experiences, prior knowledge, personal accessible to most students accessible to most students emotional, and life skills through all of their classes as well questions, interests or future life applications The school forms and begins to communicate a vision around The school regularly communicates a vision around preparing as a wide variety of electives and after-school programs/ Explore interests or develop skills in real-life applicapreparing students to be productive, contributing adults, and students to be productive, contributing adults, and engages activities tions (e.g., engineering, business, computer skills, civic begins to shift toward this vision as evidenced by: all staff in this vision as evidenced by: The overarching goal toward which the school culture is focused o Some school staff begin to look at other data in addio All school staff begin to look at other data in addition engagement, etc.) is preparing students to be productive adults as evidenced by: To explore personal interests/passions (e.g., art, music, tion to standardized test to inform instruction to standardized test to inform instruction o Multiple forms of data inform instruction and adapta-Some instructional time spent on creatively bringing theater, sports, leadership, etc.) An increase in instructional time spent teaching tion of instruction to the needs of all students To develop physical, social, emotional, and life skills standards-based concepts alive by either starting with standards-based concepts deeply, with an emphasis Significant instructional time spent on enduring (e.g., goal setting, time/financial management, health, a student question and linking this to standards or on connections to students' interests/life skills/prior conceptual understandings and important skill decommunication skills, critical thinking skills, etc.) starting with a standard and allowing students to knowledge and higher order thinking skills that will velopment (e.g., communication, cooperation, critical thinking, problem solving, creativity, higher order The overarching goal toward which the school culture is explore that standard in directions of interest to them result in enduring understandings focused is test preparation evidenced by: Some meeting time spent on reflection on data and Increased meeting time spent on reflection on data, thinking skills, etc.) through connections to students' Standardized test data as the only form of evidence that research to inform instructional practices research, and outside observations to inform interests/cultural background and experiences preparing them to perform well on standardized tests as well as in informs instruction Communication/actions begin to reflect a growing trust instructional practices Communication/actions reflect trust between most Significant instructional time spent on test-taking between school members* who begin to de-privatize real-world applications strategies and factual knowledge their practices, share their fears, and challenge each school members* who regularly challenge each other's o Significant meeting time spent reflecting on data/ research/observations to inform instructional practices other's assumptions and beliefs Significant meeting time spent on completing forms and assumptions with data and regularly try and share requirements for testing Students report that they have some opportunities to explore results of new practices o Communication/actions reflect trust and safety between Communication/actions reflect general fear of personal interest and skills they will need as adults, but that Students report that they enjoy a wide variety of engaging all school members* to take risks and find innovative they would like to have more opportunities. activities that allow them to explore their interests and that solutions in supporting all students punishment Students receive little or no specific, individual feedback on they feel that the things they are learning in school will help Students regularly receive individual written and verbal In their individual programs/ settings, some school staff begin to: feedback on learning, understand the need for learning each how to improve their learning them in life Provide some individual feedback to students on how concept/skill, are aware of supports available to them, and Exploratory opportunities are primarily available after school they might improve their learning, usually through written IIn their individual programs/ settings, most school staff: and are not accessible to all students actively seek help when they need it Provide individual feedback and guidance to students on Students report that they don't understand why they need to Students have individualized goals and differentiated improving their learning both verbally and in writing Adjust instruction to the needs/levels of different students learn something and that they find school boring. In general, assignments based on these goals, which are frequently by providing more challenging assignments to students who Adjust instruction to the needs of students based on collabstudents do not show a natural curiosity about what they are assessed and adjusted through student reflection on their quickly master a new skill or concept and additional supports orative reflection with students, which results in accelerated learning, do not persist through challenges and do not show progress in partnership with teachers or adjusted assignments for students who struggle with a learning and frequent adjustments or placements of students pride in their work. All school members actively encourage every student to new skill/concept Provide opportunities for students to explore personal pursue and develop individual interests. Students are Encourage students who seem disengaged to explore interests and encourage and recognize these passions recognized for their passions and talents, and allowed to personal interests through exploratory, lunch-time, or afterin their students explore and develop many different interests. school programs Students demonstrate their love of school through their steady attendance and high participation in after-school activities. They show a natural curiosity about the topics they are studying, show pride in their work, and work hard to learn tough concepts/skills because they see how it will help them in their life goals.

^{*} By "school members" we mean all administrators, staff, parents, students, and community partners with whom you interact.