

Practice:

Take action in response to evaluation results

Key Action:

Make program and policy changes



SAMPLE MATERIAL: Planning Dialogues With Community Stakeholders

Purpose:

Reviewing these sample materials can help you make plans for engaging in dialogue about evaluation findings with staff, families, and community partners. Such dialogues help you update these stakeholder groups about progress, and elicit their feedback to inform planning.

Source:

Adapted from WestEd's External Evaluator Project (2004), which supported schools and districts in planning and implementing reform efforts.

Planning Community Dialogues about Evaluation Results

Assign Responsibilities and Tasks

1. Identify a planning team to take responsibility for and help with organizing these meetings with stakeholders. Because this is an opportunity to build support for change, the team will want to make every effort to recruit as many staff, families, and community members as possible to attend.
2. Clearly communicate the purpose and reason for staff, families, and community members to attend. It is unlikely that they will attend for personal benefit, so help them understand how their attendance and input will inform ongoing reform efforts and benefit students.
 - Send letter on school letterhead home in advance and translated in different languages, if necessary.
 - Include in the letter questions to be addressed at the meeting.
 - Include ways to send comments to school based on the questions in the letter if attendance is not possible.
 - Ask each teacher to identify and possibly phone 3-5 families who might not attend without a personal invitation. If teachers can't call, try recruiting a committee to call these families.
3. If family involvement and/or attendance at school meetings has been a problem in the past, the planning team can brainstorm different ways to build attendance for this meeting.
 - Phone trees
 - Personal invitations by teachers, staff members, administrators, local church leaders, chamber of commerce, other families, and community members
 - Knocking on doors
 - Written invitations from students
 - Incentives for attending (e.g., raffle, door prizes, a "no-homework pass" for students whose parents attend)
4. Provide translators for every major language group represented at the school so all families and community members may participate in the meeting.
5. Remove as many barriers to participation as possible by using multiple means of communication, providing child care during the meeting, as well as meals or snacks, and possibly transportation to and from meeting.
6. Select several facilitators and recorders in advance to facilitate each of the small group discussions and take notes. Individuals' suggestions should be recorded publicly in speaker's native language, when possible.
7. Prepare facilitators and recorders for their responsibilities with training in advance of the meeting.

Roles of Community Dialogue Facilitator, Recorder, and Participants

Participant

- Participates and adds ideas to the discussion
- Allows others "equal time"
- Listens carefully to others and tries to understand their views
- Helps keep the discussion focused on the discussion question
- Asks for clarification when necessary
- Communicates needs to the facilitator

Facilitator

- Guides the process of the small group
- Remains neutral
- Clarifies when necessary
- Ensures that members feel comfortable and respected
- Includes all group members in the conversation
- Keeps the group focused on the discussion questions
- Is prepared to report group ideas to the larger group

Recorder

- Charts each participant's comments, using participant's words
- Summarizes when necessary, maintaining participant's intent
- Clarifies when necessary to ensure recording of participant's intent is accurate
- Writes clearly and legibly

Draft Community Dialogue Agenda with Notes for Principal and Evaluator

Exemplary Elementary
Agenda Notes

<i>Time</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Person Responsible</i>
5:30	Dinner and refreshments , greeting of parents as they arrive Facilitators help direct participants to language group areas	Facilitators
6:00	Welcome and Introduction a) Explain why we're here b) Introduction of planning team members and special guests (i.e. board or community members). c) Encourage participation in process d) Review agenda	Principal
6:15	Overview of the evaluation process	
6:30	Key findings from the evaluation Describe non-findings, negative findings.	Evaluator
6:45	Transition to Small Groups Explain "Participant Log" (handout) Explain ground rules for discussion Provide directions for participants to efficiently move to their groups.	Principal
7:00	Begin process in small groups Explain the role of the facilitator and group members Explain the process for recording unanswered questions or issues Introduction of group members: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name • Role in community (parent, volunteer, teacher, neighbor) • Grades of children in this school (if parent, guardian, or care giver) Respond to the questions in the Participant Log Facilitated discussion of participants' responses to those questions	Facilitators
7:45	Gallery walk or brief sharing of charted responses	
8:15	Next Steps, Raffle and Closing Summary of comments What will be done with the information and when Encourage all to become part of planning process and explain how A reminder to turn in Participant Logs Raffle Thank you and goodnight	Facilitators Principal

Practice:

Take action in response to evaluation results

Key Action:

Make program and policy changes

Planning Checklist for Community Dialogue

Before the Dialogue	Person Responsible	By When	Done!
Select Date			
Create Invitation and Questions with Translation if Needed			
Send out Letter & Questions			
Invite Community Members			
Organize Phone Tree			
Select Facilitators and Recorders			
Create Facilitators' Guide and Train Facilitators			
Engage Translators			
Design and copy handouts, sign in, etc.			
Find set up/clean up people			
Organize child care			
Gather Materials (poster paper, pens, index/note cards, name tags, snacks)			

Participant's Log

ABC Elementary

Community Dialogue

Date

Role: (Check one.)

- Parent
 Staff
 Community Member
 Student
 District Office
 Other: _____

1. Which aspects of the evaluation results are most interesting or valuable to you, and why?
2. What important information was not included in the evaluation report? Why is it needed?
3. What further information do we need before we use these evaluation results for program planning?
4. What questions do you have about the evaluation process?

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
5. I felt comfortable sharing my opinions at this meeting.	1	2	3	4
6. Meetings like this are a good way to get input from parents and the community.	1	2	3	4
7. After tonight's meeting, I believe our suggestions will be used to make ABC Elementary a better school.	1	2	3	4
8. I would like more community dialogues like this one to keep me informed.	1	2	3	4

Comments: