

Family Support Long Island @ Molloy College



FAMILY & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND ENGAGEMENT ORGANIZATIONAL REFLECTION TOOL FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS *How Receptive Are We?*

This Tool was designed by Family Support LI as a framework for organizations and school districts to reflect on and assess how they are integrating family support and community development principles¹ into their organizational culture, programs, policies and practices. It is based on a scan of a number of assessment tools used in early childhood, youth development and public health venues including those developed by ACT for Youth, Center of Excellence at Cornell University, New York State Afterschool Network (NYSAN) and the Family Voices' Family-Centered Self-Assessment Tool funded by the U.S. Department of Maternal and Child Health.

Purpose

The Tool should be used primarily to assess program quality and effectiveness, and identify tangible ways to deepen an organization's engagement with families and communities. It is important to note that the Tool is not intended to evaluate staff or target individuals or programs in any way. Rather, it should be introduced as a way to reflect upon and self-assess their work, with an eye to building upon successes and filling gaps in services. Assessment using this Tool should take place via informal conversations and include key organizational stakeholders, such as teachers, children and youth, counselors, administrators, youth workers, librarians, parents, and anyone else who interacts, either in school or during out-of-school time, with children and youth.

Organization

The Tool is organized around four principles associated with strong family and community engagement. The principles include:

1. Family, Community Support, Development and Engagement
2. Creating an Organizational Culture that supports families and communities
3. Engaging Families
4. Community Engagement

Each principle is divided into sections with questions which ask you to assess where your school falls along a scale. Following each scale is a section where notes/comments can be documented as well as questions that ask stakeholders to articulate areas which they would like to target, action steps they would need to take, and how long it would take to reach their goal. Realistically, no school will rank consistently on the high end of the scale. As a practical application when determining action, schools

¹For more information on this tool, contact AZimmerman@Molloy.edu

may want to select practices in which they consistently rank in the middle, or the lower end, and want to improve based on their capacity and interest.

PRINCIPLES

Principle #1: Family and Community Support, Development & Engagement

FOCUS AREA # 1: GENERAL

In the grid below, check off where your organization falls within the spectrum

How well do we:	Not yet	Needs significant work	Could use additional focus	A current area of strength	Not sure
Acknowledge the family as the constant in a child's life?					
Build on family strengths?					
Recognize the importance of community and school-based services?					
Encourage family-to-family and peer support?					
Develop policies, practices, and systems within the school that are family friendly and family centered?					
Celebrate successes?					
Structure opportunities for families to get to connect and learn from each other and share their experiences and perspectives?					
Totals					

Actionable Items:

Notes/Comments:

Actions: In what ways can we improve Family Support within our school?

When can we realistically accomplish this change?

___now ___in six months ___in a year

What are some ways we can begin to accomplish this change?

Principle #1: Family and Community Support, Development & Engagement (Continued)

FOCUS AREA # 2: STRENGTHEN TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR SKILLS

In the grid below, check off where your organization falls within the spectrum

How well do we:	not yet	needs significant work	could use additional focus	current area of strength	not sure
Provide opportunities for parents to explore how they were parented and introduce new practices?					
Provide information to families about a child's healthy development, such as written information, classes or other opportunities within the school or in collaboration with community organizations?					
Create opportunities to foster positive parent/child interaction?					
Reinforce parental authority and positive parenting through interactions between the school and families?					
Encourage parents to reflect on their experiences with school personnel and programs?					
Sensitively and proactively address our concerns about parenting techniques or behaviors with our families?					
Totals					

Actionable Items:

Notes/Comments:

Actions: How can we strengthen Parenting Skills and the interaction between schools and families?

When can we realistically accomplish this change?

___now ___in six months ___in a year

What are some ways we can begin to accomplish this change?

Principle #1: Family and Community Support, Development & Engagement

(Continued)

FOCUS AREA # 3: RESPOND TO FAMILY CRISIS

In the grid below, check off where your organization falls within the spectrum

How well do we:	not yet	needs significant work	could use additional focus	current area of strength	not sure
Communicate to families that we are available in the event of a crisis?					
Proactively respond to signs of family distress?					
Respond to family crisis in a timely manner?					
Directly provide or link families to appropriate resources to respond to the crisis?					
Talk to parents about helping their children in times of crisis?					
Affirm the role of parents in a child's life?					
Provide parents opportunities for personal growth, leadership, input into school operations and decision-making?					
Totals					

Actionable Items:

Notes/Comments:

Actions: In what ways can we improve our response to Family Crisis at our School?

When can we realistically accomplish this change?

__now __in six months __in a year

What are some ways we can begin to accomplish this change?

Principle #2:

Creating an Organizational Culture that Supports Families and Communities (Continued)

FOCUS AREA # 1: OPENNESS

In the grid below, check off where your organization falls within the spectrum

How well do we:	not yet	needs significant work	could use additional focus	current area of strength	not sure
Maintain a non-threatening and inclusive workplace?					
Commit resources and the necessary follow-up to ensure that staff can resolve conflicts effectively?					
Value our staff for who they are as people, not just for the jobs that they fill?					
Provide professional development and create a culture of learning?					
Provide opportunities for staff to share their experiences and competencies (outside of formal staff meetings)?					
Totals					

Actionable Items:

Notes/Comments:

Actions: In what ways can we improve our School Culture?

When can we realistically accomplish this change?

___now ___in six months ___in a year

What are some ways we can begin to accomplish this change?

Principle #2:

Creating an Organizational Culture that Supports Families and Communities (continued)

FOCUS AREA # 2: INCLUSION

In the grid below, check off where your organization falls within the spectrum

How well do we:	not yet	needs significant work	could use additional focus	current area of strength	not sure
Empower staff to make work-related decisions on their own?					
Value staff ideas for how to do things better?					
Encourage staff to offer ideas on how to improve operations outside of their own areas?					
Respect and support staff's social and cultural background?					
Facilitate Inter-group relations (i.e., between different races, workgroups, age groups, etc.) within the school?					
Respect and support children, youth and parents' social and cultural background and school traditions?					
Respect gender differences as well as sexual preference/orientation of staff, parents and children?					
Follow through with what our school states publicly?					
Embrace the cultural diversity that staff and families bring to the school and district?					
Totals					

Actionable Items:

Notes/Comments:

Actions: In what ways can we improve inclusion at our school/district? When can we realistically accomplish this change?

__now __in six months __in a year

What are some ways we can begin to accomplish this change?

Principle #2:

Creating an Organizational Culture that Supports Families and Communities (continued)

FOCUS AREA # 3: LEADERSHIP

In the grid below, check off where your organization falls within the spectrum

How well do we:	not yet	needs significant work	could use additional focus	current area of strength	not sure
As leaders, support staff even when we are in a tough situation at work?					
Foster enthusiasm and work satisfaction?					
Provide school staff with leadership opportunities such as participating or chairing committees or task forces in the school and/or community?					
Totals					

Actionable Items:

Notes/Comments:

Actions: In what ways can we improve leadership at our school?

When can we realistically accomplish this change?

__now __in six months __in a year

What are some ways we can begin to accomplish this change?

Principle #3: Engaging Families

FOCUS AREA # 1: GENERAL

In the grid below, check off where your organization falls within the spectrum

How well do we:	not yet	needs significant work	could use additional focus	current area of strength	not sure
Focus on building relationships with children, youth and their families to nurture their strengths and potential?					
Make sure our school is a welcoming space for all families?					
Provide positive role models for young people and families?					
Use strengths-based assessment tools to engage children, youth and families?					
Articulate family members' roles and responsibilities in the development and education of children and youth?					
Prepare staff to work with families as equal partners?					
Educate young people and families about the services and supports available in the school and community to support and strengthen families?					
Outreach materials to families are translated into the languages of the community?					
Totals					

Actionable Items:

Notes/Comments:

Actions: In what ways can we improve Engaging Families at our School?

When can we realistically accomplish this change?

__now __in six months __in a year

What are some ways we can begin to accomplish this change?

Principle #4: Community Engagement

FOCUS AREA # 1: GENERAL

In the grid below, check off where your organization falls within the spectrum

How well do we:	not yet	needs significant work	could use additional focus	current area of strength	not sure
Build partnerships with community organizations and groups in order to provide families with the support they need?					
Advocate for families at the school and/or community level (e.g. changes in school or community practices)?					
Reflect the cultural diversity of the community we serve through our public relations materials?					
Encourage our school staff and administrators to join community boards, committees and events?					
Hire new staff from the community we serve (as appropriate)?					
Link with community organizations to provide family development/engagement training and opportunities for collaborative program development?					
Totals					

Actionable Items:

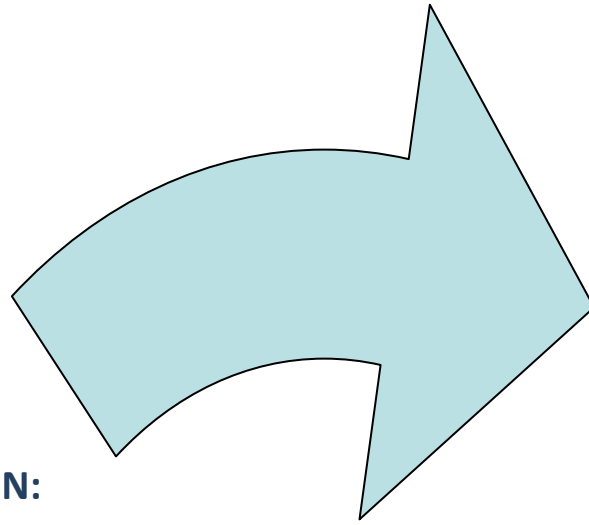
Notes/Comments:

Actions: In what ways can we improve Community Engagement at our School?

When can we realistically accomplish this change?

___now ___in six months ___in a year

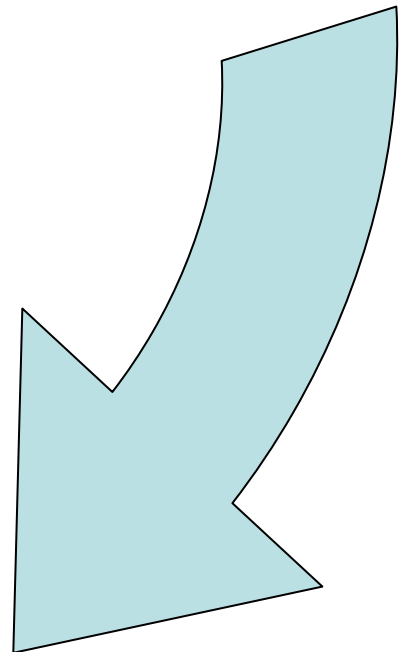
What are some ways we can begin to accomplish this change?



TRANSFORMATION:
Input into Program
Design, Resource
Development and
Organizational
Culture

PREPARATION:
School Philosophy,
Culture and Policy

**School &
Community
Resources,
Strengths,
Interests and
Assets**



ENGAGEMENT:
School-Based
Programs and
Opportunities

