

Student Engagement Conditions Assessment

DESCRIPTION

Are your efforts to engage students effective? The *Student Engagement Conditions Assessment Tool* can help you determine whether the following conditions are intact in your school, classroom, or program. If they are intact, your Student Engagement effort will be successful. By identifying conditions that are not as strong as is required, your program can determine a clear pathway for continued growth.

- I. Culture
- II. Student Involvement
- III. Motivation
- IV. Sustainability
- V. Student Readiness
- VI. Adult Readiness
- VII. Evaluation
- VIII. Barriers

INSTRUCTIONS

Assemble a small group of evaluators, including at least two students and one adult, with no more than six students and four adults. Provide each participant with a copy of the tool. Before completing each section of the *Student Engagement Conditions Assessment Tool* have a brief conversation discussing the condition that you are about to assess. Ask assessors what they think the different terms mean and come to group consensus before you continue. Then have thoughtful conversations about each question, and take as exhaustive answers as possible. When this process is complete, compile participants' notes into a report to share throughout your school or program.

See the last page for more resources on Student Engagement, or visit our website at www.SoundOut.org. SoundOut facilitates assessment! To learn more contact our office at 360-489-9680.

Student Engagement Conditions Assessment

I. CULTURE

Are the basics of Student Engagement intact?

1. Do all students feel safe to speak?
2. Do all students feel safe to participate?
3. How are the perspectives and actions of students being engaged?
4. How are the perspectives and actions of students respected?
5. How are the perspectives and actions of students responded to?

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II. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT

1. Have students - not adults - determined what constitutes engagement and empowerment?
2. Have students identified their own issues, challenges, or problems?
3. Have students worked with adults to identify school issues, challenges, or problems?
4. Have students identified their own possible solutions or goals?
5. Have students worked with adults to identify possible solutions or goals for their communities?
6. Do students feel fully informed about what matters to them?
7. Did students initiate the project ideas and activities?
8. Did students work with adults to initiate project ideas and activities?

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II. STUDENT INVOLVEMENT (continued)

9. Are students engaged in identifying the problems, challenges, or needs to be addressed?

10. Are students engaged in formulating the problem and analyzing the situation?

11. Are students engaged in creating the policy agenda?

12. Are students engaged in adopting the policy?

13. Are students engaged in approving the programs, services, and activities to implement the policy?

14. Are students engaged in monitoring the implementation of the policy?

15. Are students engaged in evaluating the impact of the policy and related programs and activities?

16. Are students equitably involved with adults and other students in deciding spending priorities?

17. Are students equitably involved with adults and other students in allocating budgets and staff?

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III. MOTIVATION

1. Who led the process of developing Student Engagement?
2. In their intention known to everyone involved?
3. Is Student Engagement driven by students?
4. Is Student Engagement driven by adults?
5. Is Student Engagement driven by factors outside the school?

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IV. SUSTAINABILITY

1. Are students engaged in training other students to participate?
2. Is there an active process to recruit new students when others leave?
3. Are students satisfied with their involvement? How do you know?
4. Are adults satisfied with their involvement? How do you know?
5. What steps are taken to overcome student disengagement and fluctuating involvement throughout their school?
6. What steps are taken to overcome adult disengagement and fluctuating involvement with students?

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V. STUDENT READINESS

1. What steps have been taken to ensure that the level of participation is appropriate to the normal level of development of the students involved?

2. Describe the ways that the developmental needs of students are taken into account?
 - a. Is there skills training in decision-making and problem solving?

 - b. Is there skills training in task completion and self-management?

 - c. Is the self-image and confidence of students built appropriately?

 - d. Are “routines” rehearsed with adults?

3. Does the Student Engagement Plan allow for varying levels of engagement from students?

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VI. ADULT READINESS

1. Do adults feel fully informed about the issues, policies, programs, services, and/or activities that affect students?

2. How many adults and how many times do adults speak on behalf of student partners to other adults in the system to persuade them to listen to students by listening to them, returning emails or phone calls, etc.

3. How do adults promote Student Engagement in a way that...
 - Is fun or pleasant?

 - Promotes recognition for positive reinforcement to students?

 - Does not marginalize students to a limited role or set of issues?

 - Allows students to make mistakes?

 - Demonstrates trust in students?

 - Provides time to listen to students as part of this opportunity?

4. How do adults provide emotional support for Student Engagement by... (continued on next page)
 - Paying attention to students feelings?

 - Caring about their personal issues?

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VI. ADULT READINESS (continued)

4. (continued)

- Helping them with their problems?
- Discussing sensitive topics?

5. Do adults provide guidance to participating students by...

- Offering suggestions at meetings?
- Providing students with a range of options to stimulate their ideas?
- Helping students organize their activities?
- Helping students facilitate at meetings?
- Providing timely information?
- Presenting information in real, concrete terms?

6. Do adults teach students about...

- Preparing agendas and taking minutes?
- Creating teams?
- Depersonalizing conflict?

7. Do adults help students to understand...

- The politics and personalities involved?
- The bureaucratic structures and school policy constraints?

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VI. ADULT READINESS (continued)

7. (continued)

- The reasons why students (and other groups) are excluded from decisions?

- Any underlying reasons for personal conflict at meetings?

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VII. EVALUATION

1. How does the class or school provide for formal and informal feedback from students on the process of Student Engagement?
2. How does the class or school assess or evaluate Student Engagement?
3. Are the events, activities, and numbers of students measured?
4. Are the levels, motivations, and impacts of students monitored and reported?
5. Are there formal evaluations of Student Engagement completed by students and adults?
6. Is there a summative impact evaluation of Student Engagement created and widely distributed to students, school staff, parents, and others?
7. Are the views of students collected and distributed to students and adults?

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VIII. BARRIERS

1. Are barriers to Student Engagement being addressed?
2. What steps are taken to ensure that Student Engagement is meaningful?
3. Do students understand the intentions of the process, decision, or outcomes?
4. Do students know who made the decisions about their engagement and why they were made?
5. Is the input of students recorded, reported in writing, and distributed?
6. Do students receive a report (verbal or in writing) on the decisions made in the light of their input?
7. Were false and negative assumptions about students' abilities to participate deliberately addressed by students and/or adults?
8. Are all adults clear about the class or school's intent to foster Student Engagement?

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VIII. BARRIERS (continued)

9. Do adults support Student Engagement?

10. Do adults provide good examples of being personally and systemically engaged?

11. How was students' inexperience addressed?

12. Did students work on issues that they clearly identify as important?

13. Did students participating start with short-term goals and activities?

14. Have students and adults identified and, when possible, corrected negative experiences students have had in participation?

15. What steps were taken to reduce the resistance from adults?

16. Has there been a written policy statement developed from the governing body?

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VIII. BARRIERS (continued)

17. Has there been a memo/document from the school leader stating their support, encouragement, and commitment to Student Engagement?

18. Has the principal or superintendent introduced Student Engagement at a meeting?

19. Have there been social events organized to increase positive interactions between students and adults?

20. Have joint workshops with students and adults been held?

21. Has a plan been put in place to bring students into the mainstream, core activities of the class or school?

22. Have steps been taken to help students fit into adult structures?

23. Have students been placed on an adult decision-making body with support from a designated adult?

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VIII. BARRIERS (continued)

24. Does someone meet with students before meetings to help them clarify their objectives for the meeting?
25. Do students feel comfortable about asking for clarification?
26. What steps have been taken to make the location and times of meetings convenient to students?
- Consulting with the students involved about times/dates of meetings
 - Choosing locations that are accessible to students and public transportation
27. Are there any other initiatives or changes going on in the class or school (new programs, restructuring, etc.) that will compete for attention with the goals and processes of Student Engagement?
28. How are the student members selected so that they are credible to the student body?
29. How do you know that they are credible?

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RESOURCES

Do you want to learn *how* the items in this evaluation were determined? Interested *why* these elements are essential? The following collection of publications from SoundOut can help you understand how and why student engagement matters, and much more.

“Defining Student Engagement: A literature review,” available online at www.soundout.org/student-engagement-AF.pdf

Meaningful Student Involvement Guide to Students as Partners in School Change. Available online at www.soundout.org/MSIGuide.pdf

Meaningful Student Involvement Resource Guide. Available online at www.soundout.org/MSIResources.pdf

Stories of Meaningful Student Involvement. Available online at www.soundout.org/MSIStories.pdf

Meaningful Student Involvement Research Guide. Available online at www.soundout.org/MSIResearch.pdf