



Engagement. Voice. Success.

INDICATORS OF SUCCESS FOR SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

The following Indicators are a list of characteristics of School-Community Partnerships at different “levels” of development (beginning, proficient, advanced). **The levels are general and we understand that most partnerships or programs will not fit neatly into one level.** They are meant to be used as a guide by groups working to develop and strengthen School-Community Partnerships.

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Definition:

Youth engagement involves:

- recognizing the strengths, perspectives and experiences youth bring to the learning process;
- ensuring that these are integrated and reflected in the learning environment; and
- The support of adults in the deliberate practice of those strengths, perspective and experiences. (from the Forum for Youth Investment)

Beginning

- Youth are defined as the “clients” and activities or services are provided by adults to address individual problems or pathologies in youth.
- There may be insufficient resources for materials, activities, staff or physical space that are attractive and accessible to youth.
- Youth are not involved in designing or making decisions about activities or goals.
- A small number of youth may have symbolic or token roles sharing youth concerns with adults.

Proficient

- Youth development goals are defined, and the focus is on building youth’s individual competencies. Youth-adult partnerships may also be a goal.
- Sufficient resources exist for age appropriate activities that are accessible, held in safe spaces with caring adults.
- Activities are designed and run by adults who share decisions with youth. Some but not all youth may have opportunities to design or make decisions about activities and goals, or help lead programs for other youth.

Advanced

- Authentic youth leadership opportunities are built into programming and the partnership.
- Youth build skills to be decision makers and problems solvers.

- Civic engagement activities engage youth in analyzing and taking action to solve collective problems.
- Activities are designed to achieve both youth development and community development outcomes.
- All youth have opportunities to design and make decisions about activities and goals based on their interests. Activities may be initiated and designed by youth who inform adults of their decisions.

CULTURAL COMPETENCE AND EDUCATIONAL EQUITY

Definitions:

Cultural competence refers to the practices, attitudes, and policies that support and advance a multi-cultural perspective. It involves having a defined set of values and principles, demonstrated behaviors, attitudes, structures and policies that enable organizations and individuals to work effectively cross-culturally (as defined by the National Center of Cultural Competence, Georgetown University).

Educational Equity is the idea that all young people have the necessary access and opportunity to reach their full academic and social potential.

Beginning

- There may be attitudes, policies, structures, or practices within the partners' school(s)/organization(s) that are destructive to a cultural group, or there may not be capacity to respond effectively to the needs, interests and preferences of culturally and linguistically diverse groups.
- Some but not all staff and leaders of the partnership possess *attitudes and skills* to work effectively with youth and parents from diverse racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds, but these attitudes are not always translated to *actions and altered behaviors*.
- Leaders of the partnership do not reflect the diversity found among youth served by programs
- Some compartmentalized educational opportunities (e.g. workshops) on cultural issues may be offered to staff.

Proficient

- The partners' school(s)/organization(s) promote a policy of "treating all people the same."
- Leaders are aware of their strengths and areas for growth in order to respond effectively to culturally and linguistically diverse populations.
- Most staff and leaders of the partnership or program possess *attitudes and skills* to work effectively with youth and parents from diverse racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds, and many also *take action* reflecting these attitudes.
- Some of the diversity of the youth served is reflected in the leaders of the partnership.
- Educational/professional development opportunities on cultural competency are offered to staff and volunteers.

Advanced

- Acceptance and respect for cultural differences are demonstrated through policies and procedures that integrate cultural and linguistic competence into each core function of the partnership, and through the use of evidence-based practices that are culturally and linguistically competent.
- All or nearly all staff, leaders, and volunteers of the partnership possess attitudes and skills to work effectively with youth and parents from diverse racial, ethnic, sexual, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds. They take action and have altered behavior reflecting this.
- The diversity of the youth served is reflected in the leaders of the partnership.
- Individuals and the partnering institutions participate in on-going efforts to understand cultural competency, beyond compartmentalized workshops or interventions.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Definition:

The processes and procedures set in place by organizations to support the recruiting, placement, supervision, and recognition of volunteers or individuals/groups that provide support for free or limited compensation.

Beginning

- Goals for the purpose of the volunteers and desired numbers are not written or agreed upon by members of the partnership.
- Written volunteer position descriptions do not exist.
- Volunteer recruitment is done by one person using one or two basic outreach methods.
- There is no formal process for volunteer screening/interviewing. Background checks may not take place.
- Volunteers are not oriented/trained for their position, or this is done very informally or inconsistently. There is no written volunteer manual.
- Volunteers may not be closely supervised or know who their “supervisor” is.

Proficient

- Members of the partnership share an understanding of the goal of engaging volunteers in the programs and how many volunteers are needed and can be effectively managed.
- Basic position descriptions exist for most volunteer roles.
- Volunteer recruitment is handled by one person/department and done using several strategies, including one-to-one contact, electronic outreach, and media contacts.
- Volunteers are screened/interviewed. Most complete background checks.
- An orientation and training plan exists and most volunteers complete this process before beginning to volunteer. Policies and procedures are written and handed out to volunteers.

- Volunteers know who their supervisor is and have easy access to their supervisor. Most volunteers feel supported and receive concrete forms of appreciation.

Advanced

- Goals for engaging volunteers and the ideal number of volunteers are agreed upon, written, shared with volunteers, and assessed.
- Detailed volunteer position descriptions exist for all volunteer roles.
- Volunteer recruitment is led by one person/department but all members of the partnership feel responsible to help recruit volunteers. Many strategies to recruit volunteers are used, including one-to-one contact, electronic outreach, and media contacts. Volunteer recruitment is an on-going process.
- All volunteers are formally interviewed, references are checked, and all volunteers complete a background check.
- A thorough and research-based orientation and training program is completed by all volunteers. The training is customized for each volunteer position. Various staff who will come into contact with the volunteers participate in the orientation and training. Policies and procedures are written in a central location (e.g. volunteer manual). On-going training is provided to maintain and improve volunteers' skills. Experienced volunteers can "move up" to more challenging positions or provide leadership to other volunteers.
- The "chain of command" for volunteer supervision is clear to all staff and volunteers. Volunteers meet regularly with their supervisor. All volunteers feel supported and multiple methods are used to celebrate and appreciate volunteers (verbal, written, Volunteer Appreciation event, etc.)

SCHOOL-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Definition:

Collaborative networks of community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, school staff, parents, business leaders, government officials, and youth who are working to ensure that all young people in their community have access to the fundamental resources they need to be successful: caring adults; safe places; a healthy start; effective education; and an opportunity to give back. These partnerships recognize that schools alone cannot educate young people. In addition, they commit to authentically engage youth in the life of the community. The schools and communities that choose to work collaboratively to make these investments possible – accomplish more together than any individual school, city government, or community group could accomplish alone.

Beginning

- The partnership may have a meeting schedule, but does not have an established process for communication between meetings. Members of the partnership are new to each other and/or have only informal communication networks.
- The partnership has no goals or only recently defined goals and has not collected information to measure its progress toward achieving goals.
- The political climate of the partnership is unknown, neutral, or may be negative. The leadership of the partnership is not yet established, is informal, or is unclear.

- The partnership needs many resources, including financial, in-kind, and/or human.
- The partnership does not have a plan for choosing, replacing, or sustaining partners and resources.

Proficient

- The partnership has a meeting schedule and working systems for communication between meetings.
- The partnership has defined its goals, members agree to the goals, and there is a plan to collect data to measure goal achievement.
- The political climate of the partnership is positive. The leadership of the partnership may be limited to a small number of individuals, but is respected.
- The partnership has some, but not all, of its needed resources, including financial, in-kind, and human.
- The partnership has discussed how to sustain, replace, and add partners and resources.

Advanced

- The partnership has open and clear communication. There is an established process for communication between meetings. Members of the partnership feel connected to each other and have informal and formal communication networks at all levels.
- The partnership has clear goals and methods for collecting data. The partnership regularly collects and uses data to measure goal achievement and refine goals as needed.
- The history and environment surrounding power and decision making is positive. The leadership facilitates and supports team building, and capitalizes upon diversity and individual, group and organizational strengths. The partnership understands the community, including its people, cultures, values and habits.
- The partnership has access to needed resources, including financial, in-kind, and human.
- **The partnership has a plan for sustaining partners and resources. This involves partner guidelines and plans for replacement of partners.**

RESOURCES used or referenced in the creation of these Indicators

Youth Engagement

Pittman, K., Martin, S., Williams, A. (2007, July) *Core Principles for Engaging Young People in Community Change*. Washington D.C.: The Forum for Youth Investment, Impact Strategies, Inc. <http://forumforyouthinvestment.org>

Jaskin-Baker, Andrea (2007) "Ladder of Young People's Participation" from "Youth Community Connections – Youth Action Opportunities" (informal paper, adapted from *Youth Participation in Community Planning*).

Saito, Rebecca N. "Exploring the Youth Engagement Frontier" PowerPoint presentation for December 5, 2007 "Minnesota Summit on Youth Development and Graduation" Minneapolis.

High/Scope Educational Research Foundation (2005) "Youth Program Quality Assessment: A tool for positive youth development, Grades 4-12." Ypsilanti, Michigan.
<http://www.highscope.org>

Cultural Competency and Educational Equity

Kennedy, E., Bronte-Tinkew, J., Matthews, G. (2007, February) "Enhancing Cultural Competence in Out-Of-School Time Programs: What is it, and why is it important?" Child Trends, The Atlantic Philanthropies, Publication 2007-03, Research-To-Results Practitioner Insights. http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2007_01_31_RB_CultureCompt.pdf

"Cultural Competence Continuum," National Center for Cultural Competence, Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development, Washington D.C. Downloaded on 1/31/08 from www.ncccurrricula.info/documents/TheContinuumRevised.doc.

Williams, Bonita (2001, December) *Accomplishing Cross Cultural Competence in Youth Development Programs*, Journal of Extension, Volume 39 Number 6, <http://www.joe.org/joe/2001december/iw1.html>.

Volunteer Management

Hands On Twin Cities www.handsontwincities.org. Special thanks to Zeeda Magnuson.

School-Community Partnership Development

Borden, L. and Perkins, D (1999, April) "Assessing Your Collaboration: A Self-Evaluation Tool" Journal of Extension Volume 37 Number 2. <http://www.joe.org/joe/1999april/tt1.html>

Search Institute www.search-institute.org. Special thanks to Nancy Tellett-Royce.

For additional resources on developing School-Community Partnerships, see:

- *School-Family-Community Partnerships resource report*
www.nwrel.org/partnerships/cloak/booklet-one.pdf
- *Community Schools assessment booklet*:
www.communityschools.org/assessmentnew.pdf
- Detailed report on the national standards for School/Family/Community Partnerships:
http://www.doe.state.in.us/publications/pdf_other/SFCPnarrative.pdf
- Short checklist for schools to measure their family-community partnerships:
dpi.wi.gov/fscp/pdf/fchk1st.pdf