

How's Your School Doing? Ideas for Promoting Change

Assessing your school can give you ideas for changes that will better meet student needs, the purpose of any high school. You might want to include other students in reviewing with you the following four areas of school daily life and deciding which of the three columns to check for each statement. Working together you will likely come up with some strategies for making change!

The statements below have been made by many people in the field of education, but you may have additional ideas to contribute. Make note of new ideas and you can share them on the forum <http://schooltaleslive.com/forum/>.

Decision-Making	All school participants are included in making decisions to represent diverse perspectives and needs of individuals.	Mostly met at my school now	Some effort, but need more	New idea, worth a try.
	1. Day to day, students are listened to by teachers and accommodations made for students' concerns.			
	2. In classrooms at your school, students are encouraged to make decisions about what they learn (content of interest to them).			
	3. In classrooms at your school, students are encouraged to make decisions about how they learn (different ways to display learning).			
	4. Students are included in the structure of my school's decision-making about school goals, procedures, and problem-solving.			
	5. Decisions in school are not made by one or a few administrators (principal, etc.) only; others are included.			
	6. The schools' decision-making structure includes a diversity of teachers.			
	7. Other support staff (teacher aids, cafeteria workers, bus drivers, etc.) are also involved in decisions made at my school.			
	8. Student-run groups for making decisions (student council, etc.) have impact on changes made in my high school.			
	9. Attention is given to decision-making representation from all social groups (ethnic, income, gender, etc.).			
	10. Generally students think current school rules are fair.			
	11. When there are conflicts between individuals, there is a process set up to find a win/win solution to the problem.			

Self-directed learning	Students develop competence in: assessing what they presently know and would like to know, pursuing inquiry through practitioners in the field, and demonstrating learning in public presentations.	Mostly met at my school now	Some effort, but need more	New idea, worth a try.
1. Time in classes focuses on a wide variety of content of interest to students, beyond what appears on standardized tests.				
2. Students engage enthusiastically in classroom learning activities.				
3. Classroom learning activities include a variety of material that seems relevant to my current life.				
4. Classroom activities help me to develop personal interests and understand who I am.				
5. At the end of a school day, I feel energized by the learning activities I have experienced.				
6. Questions posed in classes are open-ended, meaning my thinking will <u>not</u> be evaluated in terms of right or wrong.				
7. It is okay to make mistakes or fail at a task without being penalized in terms of grades.				
8. I am encouraged to explore interests in a content area which I decide, rather than being directed to material by a teacher.				
9. Teachers encourage each other to try new ways to meet student learning needs.				
10. School personnel do not assign students to classes by categories like basic and advanced.				
11. There are school-sponsored programs for students to learn through internships in the community during the school day.				
12. My high school is assisting me to feel prepared for my next step in life.				
13. I have learned in high school to think for myself.				
14. My teachers show us how to collaborate in group work so everyone contributes.				

Caring relationships	A school community working together through comfortable, empathetic interactions among people of all ages.	Mostly met at my school now	Some effort, but need more	New idea, worth a try.
1. I am comfortable in interactions with adults in school.				
2. I am comfortable interacting with a diversity of people my own age.				
3. Adults in school have plenty of time to address my individual concerns.				
4. Teachers encourage us to get to know our peers and make new friends with people different from ourselves.				
5. Academic classes are not segregated by ethnic background or family income level.				
6. I feel I can trust many people in my school.				
7. My school does a good job dealing with problems such as fights and bullying.				
9. If I had a personal problem, I would you talk it over with a school counselor.				
10. I get to know people in my classes in depth, as a person.				
11. My principal knows who I am and speaks to me.				
12. I know many people at school who are from different backgrounds and beliefs.				
13. I can be my real me with teachers.				
14. Most teachers are enthusiastic, seem to enjoy their job, and reach out to students in a personal way.				
15. Adults in school get along and work well together.				
16. Parents feel welcome in school, are encouraged to sit in on classes, and attend special events.				

Community relationships	Schools are open to working with community businesses and services for the benefit of students.	Mostly met at my school now	Some effort, but need more	New idea, worth a try.
1. Speakers from the community are invited to speak to classes.				
2. Classes visit community businesses and agencies.				
3. There are joint business-school learning projects.				
4. Local college instructors are invited to speak to classes.				
5. The school sponsors trips to college campuses for students to assess interest in the college.				
6. Teachers are active in community events.				
7. Students volunteer in community agencies.				
8. Students have after-school jobs in areas they want to learn about.				
9. Community service agencies (such as the health department, domestic violence shelter, food bank, etc.) send staff to speak with students.				
10. If I wanted help with anxiety or depression, I would know what agency in the community could help me.				
11. I have learned about the history of my community.				
12. I know current community leaders and initiatives they support.				
13. Parents regularly visit my classes and speak with me about the class.				

In each of the four areas, what other factors should be included? Please write a statement for each of your additional ideas and share on this site in the forum.

CONCLUSIONS: From your review of all four areas, identify the top (2, 3, more?) items you think are the most important ones you would like to focus on changing in your school? What ideas do you have for going about making the changes? You could ask others through the forum on this site what has worked at their schools <http://schooltaleslive.com/forum/>.