

STUDENT LED School Community Meeting Protocol

This protocol is designed to help students and staff organize an ongoing meeting/gathering that celebrates community, works through logistics and solves problems while embracing innovation, creating inspiration, and building community.

Some schools call it a community meeting, some call it a town hall others call it “Pick me ups”, what you call it is up to you. The protocol is to help create a starting point or to inspire new ideas. Inviting students and staff in the design and delivery is what makes the process engaging, meaningful, and manageable.

Time

20-60 minutes, 1 meeting per week

Essential Features

- Work with the students and staff to determine how often you would have community meetings. The practical range is up to you; some have them once a week and some once a month.
- Establish a set schedule, determine what day of the week with a start and end time. Schools do it differently; one school does it every Friday at the end of the day from 2:30-3:15. Another school does it every Wednesday morning for 30 minutes.
- Encourage advisories (students and staff) to help plan or add something to the schedule. Students and staff often share talents, projects, challenges, service learning ideas, mini-lessons, college and career opportunities and so forth. Some schools create a rotation of advisories that lead the meeting.
- Consider bringing in community experts or community members to share insight, inspiration and connect careers/learning to the real world.
- Create rituals. Some common rituals are to always begin with a welcome by students or alumni. This is often followed by student recognitions and what some schools call “Shout Outs” which are frequently recognitions to anyone who did something positive. One favorite ritual is to honor local heroes in the community once a year that often get overlooked for their contribution to the community.
- Designate an area for a stage; this can be simply marking off an area with tape to building a formal stage with a microphone(s). Once you create a stage, no matter how simple it is, you have created a special space that activates the creative process.

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- When possible, encourage student and staff performances of music, art, theatre and dance.
- Encourage students, staff and community members to display projects, ideas & posters in a designated “Gallery” and encourage people to walk through the gallery.
- Encourage individuals and teams to make short videos to share at the community meeting. Videos, writings and displaying work help shy and introverted people contribute to the community meeting.
- Consider including quick surveys that ask just a few questions. These “Pulse Surveys” are great to build voice, engagement and focus. Example #1: What is one thing that is happening on our community that you love or is working for you that we want to keep doing? What is one thing in our community we need to work on? Example #2: Ask questions that are on a scale of 1-5 that can be quickly summarized and shared. In the first example you want to ask for help in compiling the results and reporting the findings, this could be done by volunteers, student council members or as a class project. Be sure to share the findings to reinforce participation.

**** Other possible items to include:**

- Have a parking lot where items can be added to the agenda by anyone throughout the week.
- Encourage discussion about issues that affect the entire school. Use restorative justice practices.
- Create a community calendar for the week that highlights major school events/activities so everyone knows the common goals.