

**SPEAK  
OUT,**

**LISTEN UP!**

## **Tools for Bringing Student Ideas into School Change**



**Washoe County School District**  
Every Child, By Name And Face, To Graduation



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The Nevada Education Research Alliance has member groups. The southern work group includes Clark County School District (Las Vegas) and institutions of higher education (IHEs) in that county. The northern work group includes Washoe County School District (Reno) and IHEs in that county. The Alliance also intends to work with the state's rural districts. The Regional Educational Laboratory West (REL West) regularly convenes an advisory panel for the Alliance to review progress of work groups, recommend next steps, and determine how to share lessons learned.

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# INTRODUCTION

School improvement has taken center stage in the national discussion about education, but the viewpoints of students—those most directly affected by school change—are seldom heard. In recent years, listening to students has emerged as a potential strategy for strengthening school change efforts of all kinds. When students “speak out” and adults “listen up,” much can be learned about making real and lasting change. The *Speak Out, Listen Up!* toolkit was designed to help students and educators work together in new ways to improve schools.

## WHAT IS THE *SPEAK OUT, LISTEN UP!* TOOLKIT?

The *Speak Out, Listen Up!* toolkit is a set of tools that educators and other adults can use to elicit students’ ideas about school issues, listen to what they have to say, and use their input to help shape change. It reflects Washoe County School District’s commitment to partnering with students to better understand school challenges and possible solutions from their perspectives. Developed for the initial purpose of supporting the district’s High School Graduation Initiative, the tools included in this toolkit are:

- selected by Washoe County School District educators;
- adapted for the district from published tools used in schools nationwide;
- focused on using local data;
- intended to help educators and students produce solutions; and
- designed to be adaptable to addressing a variety of school improvement issues.

Washoe County School District is ready, willing, and able to try new ways to solve persistent problems. Teachers, school administrators, and others in the district are invited to join in asking students to speak their minds. This introduction to the *Speak Out, Listen Up!* toolkit explains the concept of student voice, and why and how utilizing student voice can be an effective strategy for implementing change in schools.

## WHAT IS STUDENT VOICE?

In this toolkit, listening to student voice is the practice of educators intentionally, purposefully, and systematically eliciting student viewpoints on a specific topic for improvement purposes. The term *student voice* is defined as:

- students planning and making decisions that affect students and others;
- students involved in actions that address current school challenges; and
- students and adults sharing decision-making power, and both being viewed as teachers and learners and as assets and resources.

## WHY LISTEN TO STUDENT VOICE?

Listening closely to what students say about their school experiences can be beneficial to adults and educators for understanding problems and rethinking solutions. Student voice can:

- engage students in taking responsibility for school change;
- bring fresh perspectives to school issues and priorities;
- create a synergy of ideas for improvement that transcends what either students or educators could accomplish alone;
- promote buy-in for change;
- demonstrate that students possess valuable knowledge and perspectives about problems and solutions;
- raise issues of equity and other difficult topics that go unnoticed, misunderstood, or avoided by adults; and
- provide educators with greater access to information about, and relationships with, marginalized student groups, families, and community groups.

Listening to student voice also can benefit students. It creates opportunities for adults and educators to provide students important developmental supports, such as expressing caring, conveying high expectations, and offering meaningful participation in school. It can also help students develop confidence, a sense of purpose in their education, and competencies needed to move into adulthood, such as identifying, investigating, and addressing the challenges they face.

## **WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LISTEN?**

Listening to student voice is taking notice of and acting on what students have to say about school from their point of view. To become effective listeners to student voice, educators and other adults must often shift their mindset so that they can:

- view students as legitimate, crucial contributors to school improvement;
- ask students what they think, feel, and experience;
- provide students with opportunities for planning and decision-making; and
- involve students as valued partners to effect positive school change.

As students take on new roles in the school—as planners, teachers, researchers, evaluators, decision-makers, and advocates—adults must learn to engage with them in new ways. Ultimately, adults can come to value students’ viewpoints about school problems and solutions as part of working together for real and lasting change.

## **WHAT DOES LISTENING TO STUDENT VOICE LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE?**

Student voice efforts can take many forms. They can be a single event on a specific topic, a step-by-step course of action, or a long-term process of inquiry and discovery, depending upon the complexity and contentiousness of the issues schools confront. For example, educators at some schools listen to student voice to redesign curriculum, assess learning, or revise the mission of the instructional program altogether. At other schools, educators listen to better understand student perspectives on policies and practices, critical challenges or incidents, or even routine issues including budget, facilities, and hiring decisions.

In practice, the most common ways adults and educators listen to student voice are through survey and focus-group responses, panel presentations, and representation on committees. In

these examples, student voices are viewed primarily as information sources on issues that adults consider important.

Listening to student voice becomes more consequential when it involves educators and students working together to define and address school problems. This could involve jointly developing data collection tools, collecting data, interpreting data, recommending solutions, and/or taking action. In these instances student participation and viewpoints are considered key to setting priorities and making decisions about resources and solutions.

The least common and most intensive types of student voice efforts are those that build the capacity of students for initiating and leading improvement efforts at school. Student-led planning, research, evaluation, and advocacy are more challenging to carry out in practice, but can be the most far-reaching in terms of listening to and incorporating student viewpoints to inform school decisions.

## **WHAT ARE THE *SPEAK OUT, LISTEN UP!* TOOLS?**

The three tools included in this toolkit are ASK (Analyzing Surveys with Kids), Inside-Outside Fishbowl, and S<sup>4</sup> (Students Studying Students' Stories). While each tool offers a different approach to eliciting and listening to student voice, they are all used to collect firsthand information from students about their needs, interests, and experiences.

ASK is a tool for involving students in the analysis and interpretation of survey or other descriptive data tied to school improvement. Adapted from a student voice tool used in schools,<sup>1</sup> it provides step-by-step directions and materials for teaching students how to summarize tabulated or graphically displayed data and convert these data into narrative statements. Then, through facilitated small- and whole-group activities, students learn to interpret the data by exploring the results from their viewpoints, generating possible explanations, and making recommendations for improving the situations described by the data. ASK also provides opportunities for students to work jointly with educators to use results and recommendations to plan for action steps.

Inside-Outside Fishbowl is a tool for engaging students and educators in a dialogue about school issues. Adapted from conventional focus-group and listening-circle tools used in schools,<sup>2</sup> it provides step-by-step directions and materials for carrying out a process in which, first, a group of students responds to a set of school-related questions by sharing the students' perceptions, opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences about the issue while educators listen. Then, roles are reversed: educators become the speakers, reflecting on what the students said, and students become the listeners. Through facilitated small- and whole-group activities, small groups comprising both students and educators identify priorities for follow-up action to address the issue.

S<sup>4</sup> is a tool for deeply exploring the nature of an issue so that adults better understand it from the perspective of students who directly experience its consequences. It was inspired by schools that have used students as co-researchers to study problems and by the use of narrative storytelling as a journalistic approach to describe real situations.<sup>3</sup> This tool brings together multiple viewpoints to create a larger understanding of complex issues. S<sup>4</sup> provides step-by-step

directions and materials for students to conduct, develop, and produce a digital story based on carefully structured videotaped interviews with other students who are affected by challenging situations. Then, the students who produced the video join educators to host forums in which the video is shown and post-viewing discussions are conducted to generate recommendations for improving supports for affected students. The use of this tool requires a semester-long commitment from the principal, two instructors, and a class of students.

## **HOW IS THE TOOLKIT ORGANIZED?**

Within this toolkit, the three tools are ordered from the least complex to plan and implement to the most complex. For each tool, the toolkit includes a one-page overview of its specific characteristics, with sections for information about the tool's purpose, the questions it addresses, the numbers and types of participants needed, the amount of time required, space and materials considerations, general directions for using the tool, and other good ideas for additional ways that the tool might be useful in the district. The overview is followed by practical directions for using each tool. The directions are presented in three parts: how to plan for using the tool, including a detailed checklist of all materials needed; how to conduct using the tool; and how to take follow-up action steps based upon using the tool. Also included are some helpful hints for using each tool.

## **HOW ARE THE TOOLS USED?**

The basic structure of each tool is generic in the sense that educators can use its core elements to create a customized tool for any issue, grade level, or school type. For example, in the overview for each tool, the "Purpose," "Question You Want to Answer," and "What You Need" sections, and others, can be filled in to create a tool to elicit student voice to address a particular school improvement issue. To encourage customization, the toolkit includes a "make-your-own" tool template that can be used for this purpose (see page 37).

By way of example, this toolkit presents each of the three tools as specifically customized for Washoe County School District's current High School Graduation Initiative, a multi-year, multi-site intervention to decrease dropout rates and increase high school graduation. The data collected using the tools will be used to inform related interventions.

Since the tools can be used to address pressing or sensitive issues, they must be used sensibly. It is essential that the following behaviors be followed in order for the toolkit to be respectfully and productively used to listen to student voice:

- enlist students to address relevant and pressing issues;
- include both resilient and at-risk students in the project;
- prepare students and educators to use the tools;
- ensure confidentiality of what participants say;
- secure written parent/guardian consent for student participation;
- listen attentively;
- be respectful;
- reframe problems to be solutions-oriented;

- only use personal names if you are saying something positive,
- speak the truth as you understand it, and
- commit to follow up with action.

Providing students opportunities to speak their minds and providing adults opportunities to listen are not completely new practices in the district. The *Speak Out, Listen Up!* toolkit is designed to help adults elicit student voice in ways that make the most of students' experiences and perspectives, using them as more than just an information source. The toolkit is posted on the Washoe County School District website to serve as an initial set of tools. Educators are encouraged to add their own tools for eliciting student voice, as well as helpful hints for using the toolkit effectively.

For more information, contact Jennifer Harris at 775-333-3766 or [jharris@washoeschools.net](mailto:jharris@washoeschools.net).

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> School Change Collaborative. (2000). *Listening to student voices: Analyzing Surveys with Kids tool guidebook*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

<sup>2</sup> Burgoa, C., Izu, J., and Hillenberg, J. (2010). *Guide to a student-family-school-community partnership: Using a student & data driven process to improve school environments & promote student success*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd. Retrieved January 25, 2012, from <http://chks.wested.org/resources/StudentFamilySchoolCommunity.pdf>; School Change Collaborative. (2000). *Listening to student voices: Student-led focus groups tool guidebook*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

<sup>3</sup> Griffith, A., and Gill, P. (2006). Including student voice in the design process. *Journal of At-Risk Issues*, 12(2), 1–6; Soohoo, S. (1993). Students as partners in research and restructuring schools. *The Educational Forum*, 57(4), 386–393.



## ASK TOOL: OVERVIEW



TOOL	ASK (Analyzing Surveys with Kids)
DESCRIPTION	This process involves students in the analysis and interpretation of survey results, and produces suggestions for school improvement that can be acted on.



PURPOSE
To explore school conditions and practices affecting the persistence of students at risk of dropping out. This information will be used by school reengagement teams to improve interventions for students who reenroll in their zoned high schools after dropping out, enrolling in alternative schools, or both.



WHAT YOU NEED
<b>1. PARTICIPANTS</b>
About 10 to 15 students currently reenrolled in their zoned high schools after previously dropping out, enrolling in alternative schools, or both An adult facilitator
<b>2. TIME</b>
Plan: 6 to 7 hours Conduct: 2.5 hours Take action: 8 hours
<b>3. SPACE</b>
A room with adequate space for students to work in small and large groups
<b>4. MATERIALS</b>
Tabulated and graphically displayed summary data from the Reengagement Inventory Worksheets: Narrative Statements (page 13), Why (Y) (page 14), More or Less (page 15), and Action Planning (page 16)



QUESTION YOU WANT TO ANSWER
What school conditions and practices affect persistence of students who reenroll in zoned high schools after previously dropping out, enrolling in alternative schools, or both?



PROCESS		
I. Plan ASK Step 1. Describe the purpose Step 2. Arrange logistics Step 3. Recruit participants	II. Conduct ASK Step 1. Prepare students Step 2. Analyze and interpret data Step 3. Generate solutions and recommend actions	III. Take Action Step 1. Form an action team Step 2. Implement action plan Step 3. Monitor progress



OTHER IDEAS FOR USING THIS TOOL
Tripod, CASEL, and School Climate survey results, including relationships between school climate attributes and student academic outcomes School-level data to help the Achievement Steering Committees to set school reform priorities

# ASK TOOL: DIRECTIONS

## PART I. PLAN ASK

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### STEP 1. DESCRIBE THE PURPOSE

**TIME:** Open-ended

Describe the school's or district's intended purpose for eliciting student voice to inform school issues, and the use of the ASK tool to address the questions in the ASK overview.

Washoe County School District has developed successful strategies for reengaging dropouts and reenrolling them in alternative schools. The next step is to reenroll these students in their zoned schools to complete high school graduation requirements. In 2011/12, 670 students reenrolled in their zoned high schools after dropping out, enrolling in an alternative school, or both. Of those students, 17% (115) dropped out again by the end of the year. Students appear to be most vulnerable to dropping out during the first eight weeks following the transition back to zoned schools.

Students who transition to their zoned schools after dropping out, enrolling in an alternative school, or both have a valuable perspective about persistence and dropping out, especially during the weeks immediately following the transition. Information gathered from the Reengagement Inventory (page 9), a 10-item survey administered weekly by the reengagement teams to each transitioning student for the first eight weeks of the transition, can be used to inform policies and practices for strengthening persistence.

### STEP 2. ARRANGE LOGISTICS

**TIME:** 2–3 hours

Secure the participants, space, and materials in the following Logistics Checklist.

#### LOGISTICS CHECKLIST

- |                          |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | About 10–15 students currently reenrolled in their zoned high schools after previously dropping out, enrolling in alternative schools, or both; and an adult facilitator |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | A room with adequate space for the students to work in small and large groups  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Easels, chart paper, and markers   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Data tables and graphs summarizing the Reengagement Inventory results  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Copies of the following worksheets: Narrative Statements (page 13), Why (Y) (page 14), More or Less (page 15), and Action Planning (page 16)                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Incentive for student participation  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Written parent/guardian consent for student participation  |

### STEP 3. RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

TIME: 4 hours

Identify and recruit an adult facilitator and student participants.

District administrators will identify an adult facilitator with the following skills and experiences:

- facilitating groups;
- working with youth;
- helping students and educators to reframe negative perspectives and experiences into positive suggestions; and
- clarifying or reframing student and educator responses so they become actionable.

District administrators and the facilitator will select 10–15 students to invite to participate in ASK. Students must meet all of the following criteria:

- reenrolled in their zoned high schools after previously dropping out, enrolling in alternative schools, or both;
- express interest and volunteer to participate; and
- have written parent/guardian consent to participate.

## PART II. CONDUCT ASK

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### STEP 1. PREPARE STUDENTS

TIME: 45 minutes

Teach students how to summarize a set of tabulated data that was collected using the Reengagement Inventory and to convert the results into narrative statements. Directions:

1. Distribute the Narrative Statements Worksheet (page 13), which includes a table of fictitious student data.

The image shows a worksheet titled "NARRATIVE STATEMENTS WORKSHEET". It includes a table with columns for "Gender", "Age", "Grade", "Reenrollment Status", and "Parent/Guardian Consent". The table contains data for 15 students. Below the table, there are instructions for converting the data into narrative statements, including a fill-in-the-blank example: "I am a \_\_\_\_\_ year old \_\_\_\_\_ student who \_\_\_\_\_." and a list of questions to guide the student's response.

2. Ask each student to share with others one thing the data show. Example: 50% of all students report that there is an adult at school they can turn to for help.
3. Teach students to convert the data results into narrative statements.
  - Explain that narrative statements are short sentences that focus on the most important parts of the data, report the facts, and describe positive and negative findings and trends.
  - Use the fill-in-the-blank examples in the Narrative Statements Worksheet to model converting results into statements.

- Practice writing a few narrative statements as a large group and individually.
- Have students share their practice narrative statements with the large group.

### THE REENGAGEMENT INVENTORY

At this school, I think that . . .	Yes	No	Don't Know
I have teachers and administrators who care about me			
I am treated fairly by teachers and administrators			
I belong here			
I have the academic support I need			
I have the personal support I need			
I am safe			
I am not threatened by gang members			
I am involved in an extracurricular activity that I like			
I have teachers and administrators who help me stay on track to graduate			
I have friends who help me make good choices			

### STEP 2. ANALYZE AND INTERPRET DATA

TIME: 1 hour

Teach students to provide explanations for the data results, based upon their analysis and interpretation. Directions:

1. Briefly review the process described in this step.
2. Divide students into pairs or small groups.
3. Give each small group a subset of tabulated Reengagement Inventory data. All items can be examined by at least one group of students, or the facilitator can focus on specific items of interest.
4. Ask the small groups to examine their data and write three to five narrative statements that summarize the data. Examples: \_\_\_% of students report that they have teachers and administrators to help them stay on track to graduate; \_\_\_% of students report that they have the personal support they need, but only \_\_\_% report that they have the academic support they need.
5. Depending upon the data and the way the data tables are constructed, ask the small groups to look for trends or patterns. Examples: Over time, a smaller percentage of students report having friends who help them make good choices; the percentage of students who report being safe at school (increases or decreases) by \_\_\_% from week 1 to week 8.
6. Ask small groups to interpret the data by listing several possible explanations for the results, using their knowledge and experiences to make meaning of the data.

- Distribute the Why (Y) Worksheet (page 14) to the small groups.

The diagram is a Y-shape. The top branch is labeled 'Reasons why'. The bottom-left branch is labeled 'Schools that should address'. The bottom-right branch is labeled 'District that should address'. All three branches converge at a central point labeled 'Reengagement Inventory'. Below this central point, there is a section for 'Recommendations for schools and district'.

- Have small groups use the Why (Y) Worksheet to consider why the Reengagement Inventory produced certain results and to narrow the list of possible explanations to those most supported by the data.
- Ask students to identify and list issues that schools should address.

### STEP 3. GENERATE SOLUTIONS AND RECOMMEND ACTIONS

**TIME:** 45 minutes

Teach students how to utilize data to make recommendations. Directions:

- Distribute the More or Less Worksheet (page 15) to the small groups.

The worksheet is a table with three main columns: 'Issue Identified', 'Schools that should address', and 'District that should address'. Each column has several rows for recording information. There are also sections for 'Recommendations for schools' and 'Recommendations for district'.

- Use the More or Less Worksheet to record the issues identified in the Why (Y) Worksheet and recommended actions for schools and the district, and to advise schools and the district to do more or less of each individual action to address the issues.
- Ask each small group to briefly share the recommendations that they identified in the More or Less Worksheet with the large group.

## PART III. TAKE ACTION

### STEP 1. FORM AN ACTION TEAM

**TIME:** 2 hours

Identify students and adults for membership in and joint leadership of an action team.

Directions:

- Begin recruiting an action team by involving the students who participated in ASK.
- Work with the school reengagement teams to identify other students who returned to zoned schools to join the action team.

3. Invite members of the reengagement teams and other educators from zoned schools to join the action team.
4. Identify a student and an educator to co-lead the action team.
5. Set up an action team meeting soon after conducting ASK.
6. Enlist the action team to prioritize goals and plans.

## STEP 2. IMPLEMENT ACTION PLAN

**TIME:** 6 hours (plan); open-ended (implement)

Create, carry out, and communicate action steps within the larger community. Directions:

1. Set up regular action team meetings.
2. Use the Action Planning Worksheet (page 16) for organizing action steps and a timeline.

The image shows a template for an 'ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET'. It includes a title at the top, a brief instruction, and a table with four columns: 'Action Step', 'Responsible Person', 'Start Date', and 'Due Date'. The table has several rows for planning. Below the table, there is a section for 'Notes' and a footer with the text '© 2018 Student Leadership'.

3. Encourage completion of one action step at a time—before moving to the next step—within the established timeline.
4. Use multiple methods to communicate to the larger school or district community the actions that have resulted from student analysis and interpretation of the Reengagement Inventory data. Examples of possible methods:
  - announcements;
  - assemblies;
  - school newsletters;
  - school websites; and
  - meetings with students, school faculty, reengagement teams, district administrators, and parents.

## STEP 3. MONITOR PROGRESS

**TIME:** Open-ended

Review the school's or district's use of student voice to inform school issues, and of the ASK tool as a means to collect data. Directions:

1. Debrief at action team meetings about how students and adults experience the use of the tool, and revise the tool as needed.
2. Work with district administrators to determine if the tool addressed the High School Graduation Initiative question that you wanted to answer and that is listed in the ASK overview.
3. Review progress of the action plan regularly and revise the action steps as needed.

4. Monitor changes over time by using the tool to periodically collect and analyze new data.

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### **H E L P F U L   H I N T S !**

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Recruit students early in planning for ASK.

Prepare data in simple tables that show trends and patterns.

Remind students that explanations for the results are thoughtful guesses based upon their experiences and knowledge, and that some explanations are more plausible than others.

Before showing students the tabulated data, ask them to call out their predictions of the results of a few items to engage their interest in the real results.

Remind students to speak their minds and that there are no reprisals for honesty and making suggestions.

Provide students with meaningful incentives to participate.

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## NARRATIVE STATEMENTS WORKSHEET

Narrative statements are factual statements that:

- Communicate a single idea about what the data show;
- Are short, clear sentences;
- Explain important parts of the data; and
- Describe positive and negative trends.

*Sample Student Survey Results: Percentages of Students Who Experience Caring and Support*

Fictitious Survey		Gender		Grade			Total
		Male	Female	10	11	12	
There is an adult at school I can turn to for help	Agree	46	53	45	53	64	50
	Disagree	29	24	30	23	21	26
	Don't Know	25	24	25	24	14	24
Teachers try to get to know me	Agree	28	36	29	34	60	32
	Disagree	36	33	34	35	20	34
	Don't Know	35	31	37	31	20	34

*Fill In the Blanks*

Complete the narrative statements by filling in the blanks below.

1. Girls are more likely than boys to report that \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A larger percentage of boys disagree that \_\_\_\_\_ than girls.
3. Students in grade 12 are more likely than students in grades 10 and 11 to report that \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Half of all students agree that \_\_\_\_\_.

Make up other narrative statements yourself!



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## WHY (Y) WORKSHEET

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From the narrative statement(s) you developed based on the Reengagement Inventory results, select one to three you want to address. For each narrative statement you select, use each of the three “because” sections of the “Y” to list your explanations for why the Inventory produced the results it did. Then, list a few issues you think the schools should address.

**Narrative statement(s)** \_\_\_\_\_

Because students:

- 
- 
- 

Because community or society:

- 
- 
- 

Because schools or teachers:

- 
- 
- 

**Some issues schools should address:**

- 
- 

Adapted from: School Change Collaborative. (2000). *Listening to student voices: Analyzing Surveys with Kids tool guidebook*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

## M O R E   O R   L E S S   W O R K S H E E T

As issues are identified for the school to address, students discuss and record:

- Current activities to address the issues
- Activities schools should do more of
- Activities schools should do less of

Issues identified	Student suggestions	
	Do more of this . . .	And do less of this . . .
1. _____ _____ _____ Current activities to address it:		
2. _____ _____ _____ Current activities to address it:		
3. _____ _____ _____ Current activities to address it:		

Adapted from: School Change Collaborative. (2000). *Listening to student voices: Analyzing Surveys with Kids tool guidebook*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

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## ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

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How can students and adults work together to make changes happen?

Fill in the boxes with ideas and suggestions.

Problems	Possible action steps	Who needs to be involved	Timeline for next steps

Adapted from: School Change Collaborative. (2000). *Listening to student voices: Analyzing Surveys with Kids tool guidebook*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

# INSIDE-OUTSIDE FISHBOWL TOOL: OVERVIEW

	<b>TOOL</b>	<b>Inside-Outside Fishbowl</b>	
	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	In this special kind of focus group, students and educators trade roles as speakers and listeners during a facilitated discussion of an issue related to school improvement, and jointly develop a plan of action.	
	<b>PURPOSE</b>		
	To explore the reasons for students enrolling in alternative high schools late in their senior year and the school practices that support persistence through graduation. This information may lead to strengthening school learning supports and introducing practices that prevent dropout and reengage students in school.		
	<b>QUESTIONS YOU WANT TO ANSWER</b>		
	1. What factors lead some students to enroll in an alternative high school during their senior year? 2. What factors are associated with school persistence among students who enter an alternative high school during their senior year?		
	<b>WHAT YOU NEED</b>		
	<b>1. PARTICIPANTS</b>		
	About 8 to 12 students who entered an alternative high school during the second half of their senior year and are currently enrolled About 15 school or district leaders An adult facilitator		
	<b>2. TIME</b>		
	Plan: 6 to 7 hours Conduct: 6 to 9 hours Act: 8 hours		
	<b>3. SPACE</b>		
	A room large enough for two concentric circles of chairs		
	<b>4. MATERIALS</b>		
	A set of focus-group questions for students and educators Action Planning Worksheet (page 25)		
	<b>PROCESS</b>		
	I. Plan Inside-Outside Fishbowl Step 1. Describe the purpose Step 2. Arrange logistics Step 3. Recruit participants	II. Conduct Inside-Outside Fishbowl Step 1. Prepare participants Step 2. Facilitate Inside-Outside Fishbowl Step 3. Identify priorities and debrief	III. Take Action Step 1. Form an action team Step 2. Implement action plan Step 3. Monitor progress
	<b>OTHER IDEAS FOR USING THIS TOOL</b>		
	Door-to-door campaign to reduce dropout Mind the Gap Campaign to reduce bullying behavior Review of Academic Personalized Plan Review of credit recovery options, including the A+ online learning program Critical issues: fifth-year seniors, English learners, cultural competence, fairness in school discipline practices, school climate, and the economic divides among groups of students in Incline Village		

To explore the reasons for students enrolling in alternative high schools late in their senior year and the school practices that support persistence through graduation. This information may lead to strengthening school learning supports and introducing practices that prevent dropout and reengage students in school.

1. What factors lead some students to enroll in an alternative high school during their senior year?
2. What factors are associated with school persistence among students who enter an alternative high school during their senior year?

## WHAT YOU NEED

### 1. PARTICIPANTS

About 8 to 12 students who entered an alternative high school during the second half of their senior year and are currently enrolled  
About 15 school or district leaders  
An adult facilitator

### 2. TIME

Plan: 6 to 7 hours  
Conduct: 6 to 9 hours  
Act: 8 hours

### 3. SPACE

A room large enough for two concentric circles of chairs

### 4. MATERIALS

A set of focus-group questions for students and educators  
Action Planning Worksheet (page 25)

## PROCESS

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <b>I. Plan Inside-Outside Fishbowl</b><br>Step 1. Describe the purpose<br>Step 2. Arrange logistics<br>Step 3. Recruit participants | <b>II. Conduct Inside-Outside Fishbowl</b><br>Step 1. Prepare participants<br>Step 2. Facilitate Inside-Outside Fishbowl<br>Step 3. Identify priorities and debrief | <b>III. Take Action</b><br>Step 1. Form an action team<br>Step 2. Implement action plan<br>Step 3. Monitor progress |
|---|---|---|

## OTHER IDEAS FOR USING THIS TOOL

Door-to-door campaign to reduce dropout  
Mind the Gap Campaign to reduce bullying behavior  
Review of Academic Personalized Plan  
Review of credit recovery options, including the A+ online learning program  
Critical issues: fifth-year seniors, English learners, cultural competence, fairness in school discipline practices, school climate, and the economic divides among groups of students in Incline Village

# INSIDE-OUTSIDE FISHBOWL TOOL: DIRECTIONS

## PART I. PLAN THE INSIDE-OUTSIDE FISHBOWL

---

### STEP 1. DESCRIBE THE PURPOSE

**TIME:** Open-ended

Describe the use of student voice to inform school issues, and the use of the Inside-Outside Fishbowl tool as a means for collecting data.

In 2011/12, 91 students enrolled in Washoe Innovations High School, Washoe County School District's alternative high school, during the second half of their senior year. The majority of these students entered deficient in credits (80%) and had not passed all four of the state exit exams (98%). Despite these challenges to meet graduation requirements, several students (7) graduated on time, and many others (41) enrolled in 2012/13 to continue as fifth-year seniors.

The students who stayed in school and graduated despite the hurdles they faced have valuable perspectives about school persistence. WSCSD leaders can use information about the reasons for students enrolling in an alternative high school during their senior year, as well as school practices that support persistence, to strengthen policies and practices related to dropout prevention and reengagement.

### STEP 2. ARRANGE LOGISTICS

**TIME:** 2–3 hours

Secure the participants, space, and materials in the following Logistics Checklist.

#### LOGISTICS CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/>	About 8 to 12 students who entered an alternative high school during the second half of their senior year and are currently enrolled; about 15 school or district leaders; and an adult facilitator
<input type="checkbox"/>	A room large enough to arrange two concentric circles of chairs for participants to sit in
<input type="checkbox"/>	Easels, chart paper, and markers
<input type="checkbox"/>	5-x-7-inch note cards in multiple colors
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chart paper on which ground rules are written (see box on page 18)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Focus-group questions for students (page 21) and educators (page 22)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copies of the Action Planning Worksheet (page 25)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Incentive for student participation, e.g., gift card
<input type="checkbox"/>	Signed parent/guardian consent for student participation

### **STEP 3. RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS**

**TIME:** 4 hours

Identify and recruit an adult facilitator, adult participants, and student participants.

District administrators will identify an adult facilitator with the following skills and experiences:

- facilitating groups;
- working with youth;
- helping students and educators to reframe negative perspectives and experiences into positive suggestions; and
- clarifying and reframing student and educator responses so that they are acted on.

District administrators, the facilitator, and the principal at Washoe Innovations High School will select about 15 educators to participate in Inside-Outside Fishbowl, based on their roles as leaders in schools or the district. It is critical that these educators have a basic understanding of existing school policies and practices, and are positioned to influence change.

District administrators, the facilitator, and the principal at Washoe Innovations High School will select about 8–12 students to be invited to participate in Inside-Outside Fishbowl. Students must meet all of the following criteria:

- entered an alternative high school during the second half of their senior year;
- are currently enrolled in the district;
- express interest and volunteer to participate;
- commit to participating in a two-and-a-half-hour training session;
- are available to participate in Inside-Outside Fishbowl; and
- have secured signed parent/guardian consent to participate prior to the first preparation meeting.

## **PART II. CONDUCT INSIDE-OUTSIDE FISHBOWL**

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### **STEP 1. PREPARE PARTICIPANTS**

**TIME:** 4–6 hours (total for both adult and student training sessions)

Schedule a two-and-a-half-hour training session for students and a one-hour training session for educators about how to participate in Inside-Outside Fishbowl. Directions:

#### **STUDENT TRAINING SESSION**

**TIME:** 2–3 hours

1. Prepare the room with an inner and outer circle of chairs, arranged as they will be for Inside-Outside Fishbowl.
2. Seat students in the inner circle with you.
3. Provide detailed information about the process.

4. Review the ground rules.
5. Help students prepare their responses to each of the focus-group questions.
  - Distribute a set of different-colored note cards to each student; cards of particular colors will be used to write responses to specific questions.
  - Read the first question and ask students to write down several brief responses.
  - Ask students to share their responses aloud by going around the circle.
  - Help students to reframe their responses so that they are not “yes” or “no” answers.
  - Encourage students to add explanations, specific details, and suggestions as a way to help generate solutions.
  - Repeat until all of the questions have been shared and answered.
6. Conduct a practice demonstration of the process, to allow students to rehearse introducing themselves, responding to questions, and using their note cards to guide responses.
7. Provide feedback about voice, tone, body language, and content of the responses.

### **EDUCATOR TRAINING SESSION**

**TIME:** 2–3 hours

1. Provide detailed information about the process.
2. Review the ground rules.
3. Preview the questions the students will answer, and explain that educators will be asked to reflect aloud on student responses during Inside-Outside Fishbowl.
4. Ask educators to frame their responses so that they are not “yes” or “no” answers.
5. Encourage educators to focus their responses on solutions by adding explanations, specific details, and suggestions to their responses.
6. Provide background information on using this tool and on factors that support student resilience, such as caring relationships with adults, high expectations from educators, and meaningful opportunities for participation and decision-making that support students to express their ideas and feelings about school.
7. Remind educators that listening to students using this tool is different from listening to students in classrooms and schools. In those settings, educators generally direct the dialogue, but for this process, their role is to listen silently and attentively while students speak.

## **STEP 2. FACILITATE INSIDE-OUTSIDE FISHBOWL**

**TIME:** 3 hours

Facilitate the fishbowl process with students seated in the inside circle first. Directions:

### **INSIDE FISHBOWL**

**TIME:** 1 Hour

1. Seat students in a tightly arranged inner circle of chairs, and seat educators in an outer circle of chairs.

2. Review the following ground rules on box below and make sure all participants agree to them. Post them on chart paper.
3. Briefly review the Inside-Outside Fishbowl process.
4. Designate an educator to list ideas from the discussion on chart paper.
5. Read the first focus-group questions (see student question list below) and ask students to refer to their note cards and share their responses.
6. Go around the circle until all students have spoken.
7. Before moving to the next question, ask if there are additional comments.
8. Move on to the next question, and repeat the process until all questions have been addressed.
9. Thank students for responding and educators for listening silently.

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#### **GROUND RULES FOR INSIDE-OUTSIDE FISHBOWL**

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**Silence phones;**  
**Stay for the entire process;**  
**Focus on what you like, want, and need;**  
**Be respectful of each other;**  
**Listen attentively;**  
**Use names only when making positive comments;**  
**Follow the instructions of the facilitator;**  
**Speak the truth as you understand it; and**  
**Commit to follow up with action.**

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#### **OUTSIDE FISHBOWL**

**TIME:** 1 hour

10. Designate a student to list ideas from the discussion on chart paper.
11. Have educators and students swap seats. Remind students to remain silent while the educator discussion is facilitated.
12. Repeat the process (instructions 5 through 9 from the Inside Fishbowl), asking educators to address focus-group questions (see educator question list below) that reflect upon what the students said, and probing for understanding of problems and solution ideas.
13. Thank educators for responding and students for listening silently

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#### **STUDENT FISHBOWL QUESTIONS**

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1. Each of you enrolled in Washoe Innovations High School during your senior year. Most of you transferred because you were behind in credits and were still working to pass the exit exams. Please tell us why you left your old school, and why you waited until senior year to transfer.



2. You all know students in similar circumstances who dropped out. Given your school experience, what makes you different? Why are you staying in school?
3. All of you have made the decision to graduate. What have schools done to help you to reach your goal?
4. What else do students like you, who find themselves behind in credits their senior year, need in order to stay on track to graduate? Think about specific things schools can do to better support your personal lives, academic progress, and connection to school.
5. Lastly, if there is one thing you could change about your school experience before transferring to Washoe Innovations High School, what would it be, and why might it have helped you to make better progress toward graduation?

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#### **EDUCATOR FISHBOWL QUESTIONS**

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1. What are some of the key things you learned from the student discussion about dropout prevention and transferring to alternative schools during senior year? Was anything surprising? Confirming?
  2. Based on what the students said, what policies, practices, and programs are in place to help students at risk of dropping out persist in school, and how can they be strengthened?
  3. Based on what the students said, what priorities still need to be addressed to help students at risk of dropping out persist in school?
  4. Are there issues the students raised that you'd like to learn more about?
- 
- 

### **STEP 3. IDENTIFY PRIORITIES AND DEBRIEF**

**TIME:** 1 hour

Facilitate a process in which students and educators set priorities for follow-up action and debrief on the tool. Directions:

1. Ask students and educators to move chairs and pair off or make small groups, each of which includes students and adults.
2. Direct each small group to identify up to three ideas for change that make sense, given priorities and resources.
3. Have each small group share its ideas for change with the large group.
4. Explain that this work is not the endpoint for addressing an issue but the start of developing an action planning process.
5. Ask students how it feels to be listened to by adults in a new way, and ask adults how it feels to listen to students in a new way.

## PART III. TAKE ACTION

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### STEP 1. FORM AN ACTION TEAM

TIME: 2 hours

Identify students and adults for membership and joint leadership of an action team.

Directions:

1. Use a sign-up sheet at the end of Inside-Outside Fishbowl to recruit an action team.
2. Work with colleagues and district administrators to identify potential additional team members.
3. Identify a student and educator to co-lead the action team.
4. Set up an action team meeting soon after conducting Inside-Outside Fishbowl.
5. Enlist the team to propose and prioritize goals and plans.

### STEP 2. IMPLEMENT ACTION PLAN

TIME: 6 hours (plan); open-ended (implement)

Create, carry out, and communicate action steps. Directions:

1. Set up regular action team meetings.
2. Use the Action Planning Worksheet (page 25) for organizing action steps and a timeline.



The image shows a worksheet titled "ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET". It contains a table with four columns: "ACTION STEP", "WHO WILL DO IT?", "WHEN?", and "HOW?". There are five rows for planning. Below the table, there is a section for "NOTES" and a footer with the text "© 2018 Inside-Outside Fishbowl" and "www.insideoutsidefishbowl.org".

3. Encourage completion of one action step at a time—before moving on to the next—within the established timeline.
4. Use multiple methods to communicate to the larger school or district community about the actions taken by the school or district based on results from Inside-Outside-Fishbowl. Examples of methods:
  - announcements;
  - assemblies;
  - school newsletters;
  - school websites; and
  - meetings with students, school faculty, reengagement teams, district administrators, and parents.

### STEP 3. MONITOR PROGRESS

**TIME:** Open-ended

Review the school's or district's use of student voice to inform school issues and the Inside-Outside Fishbowl tool as a means for collecting data. Directions:

1. Debrief at action team meetings about how students and adults experience the use of the tool, and revise the tool as needed.
2. Work with district administrators to determine if the tool addressed the High School Graduation Initiative questions that you wanted to answer and that are listed in the Inside-Outside Fishbowl overview.
3. Review progress of the action plan regularly and revise the action steps as needed.
4. Monitor changes over time by using the tool to periodically collect and analyze new data.

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#### HELPFUL HINTS!

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Recruit students early in planning for Inside-Outside Fishbowl.

Aim for a balanced mix of students from different gender, age, and ethnic groups; also include both resilient and at-risk students.

Designate students and adults to be timekeepers and note takers to help with facilitation of Inside-Outside Fishbowl.

Help students reframe problems and criticisms into specific ideas and suggestions for improvements.

Remind students to speak their minds and that the district commits to no reprisals for honesty and making suggestions.

Provide students with meaningful incentives to participate.

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## ACTION PLANNING WORKSHEET

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How can students and adults work together to make changes happen?

Fill in the boxes with ideas and suggestions.

Problems	Possible action steps	Who needs to be involved	Timeline for next steps

Adapted from: School Change Collaborative. (2000). *Listening to student voices: Analyzing Surveys with Kids tool guidebook*. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

## S<sup>4</sup> TOOL: OVERVIEW



TOOL	S <sup>4</sup> (Students Studying Students' Stories)
DESCRIPTION	This digital storytelling process involves students conducting, developing, and producing a set of videotaped interviews of students, and hosting forums that lead to suggestions for improvement.



PURPOSE
To capture, in students' own words, the range of personal and academic experiences students at risk of dropping out face as they persist in school and aim to graduate. This information will be shared with various school and district audiences to improve graduation outcomes of students at risk of dropping out.



WHAT YOU NEED
<b>1. PARTICIPANTS</b>
All students currently enrolled in the leadership course at Washoe Innovations High School to serve as interviewers and video producers About 5–7 other students currently enrolled in Washoe Innovations High School who volunteer to be interviewed Two adult facilitators, one with videotaping and video editing skills
<b>2. TIME</b>
Plan: 6 to 9 hours Conduct: 1 semester Act: 4–6 hours for forums
<b>3. SPACE</b>
A classroom Meeting room with overhead projector
<b>4. MATERIALS</b>
Video equipment and video editing software A set of draft interview questions for students to review Raw Footage Tally Worksheet (pp. 34–35)



QUESTIONS YOU WANT TO ANSWER
1. What are the personal stories of dropout and persistence among students who remain enrolled in school and make progress toward graduation despite challenges?
2. What are the school policies and practices that affect persistence?



PROCESS		
I. Plan S <sup>4</sup> Step 1. Describe the purpose Step 2. Arrange logistics Step 3. Recruit participants	II. Conduct S <sup>4</sup> Step 1. Prepare students Step 2. Collect data Step 3. Summarize findings into a digital story	III. Take Action Step 1. Prepare for video forums Step 2. Facilitate video forums Step 3. Debrief video forums



OTHER IDEAS FOR USING THIS TOOL
Documentary-style descriptions of student population groups who face significant challenges to graduating, including students without homes or in the child welfare system Semester- or year-long enrichment class, career/technical education class, or senior project option that teaches basic research skills, including developing research questions, interviewing subjects, collecting data, analyzing data, and synthesizing the findings to construct a story

# S<sup>4</sup> TOOL: DIRECTIONS

## PART I. PLAN S<sup>4</sup>

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### STEP 1. DESCRIBE THE PURPOSE

**TIME:** Open-ended

Describe the purpose of using student voice and this tool to address the questions you want to answer, using information provided on the S<sup>4</sup> overview page.

As a way to decrease the number of high school dropouts, WCSD wishes to better understand the reasons why some students who are at risk of dropping out manage to persist in school and successfully graduate in the expected four-year timeframe. Of the 3,904 students in the cohort who were enrolled throughout grade 9 during 2008–09, 23% (898) earned fewer than five credits that year, a district-validated predictor of academic failure and dropout. Yet, from among those students, 19% (171) graduated.

Students who are at risk of dropping out of high school but who are nevertheless on track to graduate despite substantial personal, social, and academic obstacles have valuable perspectives about the school policies and practices that support them to reach their goals. Using this tool, the reasons they persist and the ways in which schools support their persistence through graduation will be presented in a documentary-style video made by and with students. Information about obstacles to graduation and factors that support successful persistence to graduate can be used by WCSD leaders to strengthen dropout prevention and reengagement policies and practices.

### STEP 2. ARRANGE LOGISTICS

**TIME:** 7–10 hours

Secure the participants, space, and materials in the following Logistics Checklist.

## LOGISTICS CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/>	Class time for S <sup>4</sup> project, scheduled with the leadership course instructors
<input type="checkbox"/>	All students enrolled in the Washoe Innovations High School leadership class, about 5 to 7 other students to be interviewed, and two adult facilitators
<input type="checkbox"/>	Signed parent/guardian consent for student participation
<input type="checkbox"/>	Video equipment and editing software
<input type="checkbox"/>	Venues for interviews with students
<input type="checkbox"/>	A set of draft interview questions for the student interviews
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copies of the Raw Footage Tally Worksheet (see pp. 34–35)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Meeting rooms with overhead projector for forums
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chart paper on which ground rules are written for forums (see box on page 33)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Easels, chart paper, and markers
<input type="checkbox"/>	Incentive for student participation in the interviews

### STEP 3. RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

**TIME:** 4 hours

Identify and recruit two adult facilitators, a leadership class, and 5 to 7 volunteer student participants to serve as interview subjects.

District administrators will identify two adult facilitators with the following skills and experiences:

- facilitating groups;
- working with youth;
- helping students and educators to reframe negative perspectives and experiences into positive suggestions;
- videotaping and video editing skills; and
- basic research skills.

District administrators, the facilitators, and the principal at Washoe Innovations High School will recruit the entire class of students enrolled in the leadership class at the high school to be the S<sup>4</sup> researchers. Students must meet all of the following criteria:

- are currently enrolled in the leadership class at Washoe Innovations High School;
- express interest and volunteer to participate; and
- have signed parent/guardian consent to participate.

District administrators, the facilitators, and the principal at Washoe Innovations High School will select about 5 to 7 other students to be interviewed in the video. These students must meet all of the following criteria:

- are currently enrolled in Washoe Innovations High School;

- have met the district’s risk index for being at risk of dropping out or have previously dropped out;
- are currently on track to graduate;
- express interest and volunteer to participate; and
- have secured signed parent/guardian consent before being videotaped, ensuring full compliance with district policy.

## **PART II. CONDUCT S<sup>4</sup>**

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### **STEP 1. PREPARE STUDENTS**

**TIME:** 3–4 weeks

Teach students how to conduct and videotape interviews and give them opportunities to practice. Directions:

1. Explain how S<sup>4</sup> meets the requirements of the leadership course and provides the district with student perspectives on dropout prevention.
2. Describe the student roles of interviewer, videographer, and editor.
3. Select two-thirds of the students in the class to serve as interviewers and one-third of the students in the class to serve as videographers. If some students are unable to serve in these roles, then assign extra responsibilities to those students during the editing process.
4. Introduce basic interview techniques.
  - Have students identify recorded interviews in which the interviewer is visible, from YouTube, television news, or talk shows.
  - Select several examples of recorded interviews to share with the class.
  - After playing a recording through once, play it again, stopping periodically to ask students questions about the wording of questions, body language, and techniques used to elicit details, explanations, or examples.
  - Have students describe and take notes on what they thought worked well or needed improvement in the interviews and the filming of the interviews.
5. Teach the student videographers how to use the video equipment.
  - Provide hands-on instruction about the basic functionality of the video equipment, including locating the power-on switch and recording button, inserting and ejecting tapes, operating the zoom capabilities of the lens, using a tripod, adjusting sound levels, and changing batteries.
  - Explain filming techniques such as checking for distracting noises, background obstructions, or lighting that will cause shadows.
  - Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice and review their practice footage.
6. Teach the student interviewers how to construct interview questions.
  - Prepare a draft set of interview questions for the student interviews.
  - Have students review the questions to make sure that they are open-ended; worded clearly and neutrally; focused on behaviors, opinions, feelings, knowledge, and personal experiences; and sequenced in a way that starts in the present before asking about the past or future.



- Ask the students to finalize the set of interview questions by adding or deleting questions, putting them in a logical order, rewording them for simplicity and clarity, and suggesting areas for elaboration.
7. Have the class practice conducting interviews.
    - Provide a small number of practice interview questions that address student interests, beliefs, and goals, or have the students use their own practice questions.
    - Divide the class into small groups consisting of interviewers, interview subjects, and videographers.
    - Have the small groups conduct and videotape the practice interviews.
    - Ask the small groups to review the videos, focusing on good interviewing skills: asking one question at a time; knowing your questions well; remaining neutral in tone and body language; showing curiosity and interest; using eye contact; letting there be natural pauses and silences without jumping in; encouraging responses by asking for elaboration, clarification, or specific examples; and avoiding talking about yourself.

## **STEP 2. COLLECT DATA**

**TIME:** 5–6 weeks

Facilitate the videotaping of student interviews. Directions:

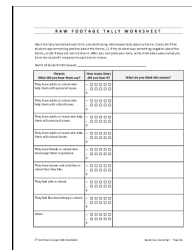
1. Schedule one to two hours per video shoot (add travel time to and from the interview location). Each interview will require one or more video shoots.
2. Select multiple venues to conduct the interviews, depending upon the suggestions of the students being interviewed and based upon where it best illustrates their stories of persistence in school. Examples: on school campuses, in community settings, or at places of employment.
3. Arrange for transportation to venues, if needed.
4. Organize teams of two interviewers and one videographer, as well as an adult facilitator, per video shoot.
5. Instruct student interviewers to:
  - stay in their roles as interviewers;
  - follow the questions in the interview;
  - ask for elaboration, clarification, or examples;
  - direct the conversation to focus on solutions to problems;
  - remind the students being interviewed to speak the truth as they understand it, and that the district is committed to no reprisals for honesty; and
  - encourage answers to all questions, but move to another question if the student being interviewed seems uncomfortable or gets stuck.
6. Conduct the interview.
7. Videotape without stops until the interview is complete.

### STEP 3. SUMMARIZE FINDINGS INTO A SINGLE DIGITAL STORY

TIME: 5–6 weeks

Teach students how to use the raw video footage as a data source for developing a narrative that addresses the questions. Directions:

1. Divide the class into three groups.
2. Assign each group to review the raw footage of the videotaped interviews of two or more students.
3. Distribute the Raw Footage Tally Worksheet (see pp. 34–35) and explain how to use it to document themes that emerge from each interview.



The image shows a 'RAW FOOTAGE TALLY WORKSHEET'. It is a table with multiple rows and columns. The first column is labeled 'Interviewer' and the second is 'Interviewee'. The third column is 'Theme' and the fourth is 'Frequency'. The table is designed for students to record themes and their frequencies from multiple interviews. Below the table, there are instructions: 'For each interview, record the themes that emerge from the interview. Record the frequency of each theme in the Frequency column.' and 'Total the frequency of each theme across all interviews.' The table has 10 rows for themes and 10 columns for frequency.

4. Have each group view its assigned videotaped interviews.
5. Encourage students to pause the interviews at any time in order to take notes and document themes for *each* interview, using a Raw Footage Tally Worksheet as needed.
6. As a whole class, discuss the videotaped interviews and the results of the Raw Footage Tally Worksheets to identify variations and commonalities across the interviews.
7. Assist each student group to develop a storyboard to organize the themes of *each* of its assigned interviews. Examples: themes can be presented sequentially in the order in which the person interviewed expressed them, or by the focus of the content. Have groups rearrange each of their storyboards until there is a coherent story narrative.
8. Assist each student group to import the video footage into a digital editing program.
9. Assist students to cut, paste, and sequence the video clips according to the final storyboard layout.
10. Assist each group to insert and edit sound.
11. Assist each group to review and revise the edited video.
12. Assist student videographers to combine all of the edited videos into a single video and save it in a DVD format.

## PART III. TAKE ACTION

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### STEP 1. PREPARE FOR VIDEO FORUMS

TIME: 3–4 hours

Work with students to organize three forums for presenting the videos, and to rehearse facilitating follow-up discussions with teachers and administrators. Directions:

1. Assign the class to spend one class period drafting a one-page promotional flyer for the video. The flyer should include a brief overview of the video and the purpose of the forums, and blank space in which to fill in the logistics of date, time, and place when those are set (see 7 below).
2. Divide the class into three groups.
3. Designate the preparation of one forum per group. Examples: Group 1 could be assigned a forum for Washoe Innovations High School faculty and staff; Group 2 could be assigned a forum for district administrators and support training staff; and Group 3 could be assigned a forum for the district reengagement committee and school reengagement teams.
4. Instruct each group to designate members to play each of three roles for presenting the forums. Roles include:
  - Student scheduler: One student is responsible for working with the facilitator to arrange the date, time, and place for hosting each forum.
  - Student speakers: Two or three students are responsible for introducing the video and facilitating a brief discussion at each forum.
  - Student equipment operator: One student is responsible for bringing the video and operating equipment to show the video at each forum.
5. Prepare student speakers to present at the forums. Students can rehearse:
  - describing the purpose of the video, how it was made, and its main messages;
  - presenting with a clear voice, making eye contact, and asking for and responding to audience questions; and
  - facilitating reflection questions from the audience.
6. Identify contact people from Washoe Innovations High School, the district, and the reengagement teams that student schedulers should contact to get input about good dates, times, and places for the forums.
7. Assist student schedulers to send emails to the liaisons to arrange and confirm the dates, times, and places of the forums. The flyer will be attached to the email messages.
8. Arrange transportation for students to and from the forums.

## STEP 2. FACILITATE VIDEO FORUMS

**TIME:** 1–2 hours, plus travel time

Assist students to present the video and lead the follow-up discussions at the forums.

Directions:

1. Before each forum begins, the student equipment operator will prepare the video to be played.
2. The student speakers will make a brief presentation about the video, and describe the format for the follow-up discussion.
3. The student speakers will review the ground rules for the viewing of the video and discussion, which will be posted on chart paper in the room (see page 33).
4. The student equipment operator will show the video.
5. The student speakers will lead follow-up discussions that address the following questions:
  - What did you learn about dropout and persistence from listening to student voices?
  - What did you hear that confirmed your thinking about dropout and persistence issues?
  - What priorities should schools focus on to better help students at risk of dropout persist in school and graduate?
6. The adult facilitator will record the discussion responses on chart paper and email a typed copy to forum participants.

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### GROUND RULES FOR S<sup>4</sup> FORUM

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**Silence phones.**

**Stay for the entire process.**

**Focus on what you learned.**

**Be respectful of each other.**

**Listen attentively.**

**Use names only when making positive comments.**

**Follow the instructions of the facilitator.**

**Speak the truth as you understand it.**

**Commit to follow-up action.**

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### STEP 3. DEBRIEF VIDEO FORUMS

**TIME:** Open-ended

Review how well the S<sup>4</sup> tool worked to help organize and carry out the project. Directions:

1. Debrief in the leadership class about how students and adults experienced the use of the tool, and revise the tool as needed.
2. Work with district administrators and reengagement teams to identify and address one or more priority action steps.
3. Have district administrators review how well the videos and forums students produced using the S<sup>4</sup> tool addressed the High School Graduation Initiative questions that the leadership class attempted to answer and that are listed in the S<sup>4</sup> overview.

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#### HELPFUL HINTS!

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Confirm that the principal, leadership class teacher, and students are committed to a semester-long project.

Recruit students early in the semester.

Focus the interviews on student resilience and the positive policies and practices that schools have in place to promote persistence.

Encourage students to experience multiple aspects of S<sup>4</sup>: developing questions, interviewing students, editing video, presenting to adults, and contributing to action steps.

Arrange for the raw footage of the videotaped interviews to be available on computers so that the small groups can work together on storyboarding and editing. If possible, provide earphones so that the footage of multiple interviews can be reviewed simultaneously in the same classroom.

Remind students to speak their minds and that the district commits to no reprisals for honesty and making suggestions.

Provide students who are interviewed with a meaningful incentive to participate.

Target various audiences with the authority to help make change to participate in the forums.

Post the videos on the district website so that they can be used in other forums or professional development events.

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## RAW FOOTAGE TALLY WORKSHEET

Mark the tally worksheet each time a student being interviewed talks about a theme. Check (+) if the student says something positive about the theme, (-) if the student says something negative about the theme, or (0) if the student did not mention the theme. After you complete your tally, write brief notes about what you think the student's response to each theme means.

Name of Student Interviewed \_\_\_\_\_


Themes What did you hear them say?	How many times did you hear it?	What do you think this means?
They have adults at school who help them with personal issues.	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	
They have adults at school who help them with school issues.	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	
They have adults at home who help them with personal issues.	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	
They have adults at home who help them with school issues.	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	
They have friends at school who encourage them to graduate.	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	
They have classes and activities at school that they like.	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	
They feel safe at school.	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	
They feel like they belong at school.	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	
Other:	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	

Themes What did you hear them say?	How many times did you hear it?	What do you think this means?
Other:	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	
Other:	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	
Other:	+ <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> - <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0	


What themes should be highlighted in the final video? Base your answers on the number of times a theme was mentioned or how important the theme seemed to be to the student interviewed.

1.	
2.	
3.	


# MAKE-YOUR-OWN TOOL: OVERVIEW



<b>TOOL</b>	
<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	



**PURPOSE**



**WHAT YOU NEED**


**1. PARTICIPANTS**

**2. TIME**


Plan:  
Conduct:  
Act:

**3. SPACE**


**4. MATERIALS**



**QUESTIONS YOU WANT TO ANSWER**



PROCESS		
I. Plan Step 1. Step 2. Step 3.	II. Conduct Step 1. Step 2. Step 3.	III. Take Action Step 1. Step 2. Step 3.



**OTHER IDEAS FOR USING THIS TOOL**



# MAKE-YOUR-OWN TOOL: DIRECTIONS

## PART I. PLAN

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### STEP 1. DESCRIBE THE PURPOSE

TIME:

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### STEP 2. ARRANGE LOGISTICS

TIME:

Create a checklist of the people, space, and materials the tool process will require.

#### LOGISTICS CHECKLIST

<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
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<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	
<input type="checkbox"/>	

### STEP 3. RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

TIME:

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## **PART II. CONDUCT**

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### **STEP 1.**

**TIME:**

### **STEP 2.**

**TIME:**

### **STEP 3.**

**TIME:**

## **PART III. TAKE ACTION**

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### **STEP 1. FORM AN ACTION TEAM**

**TIME:**

## STEP 2. IMPLEMENT ACTION PLAN

TIME:

## STEP 3. MONITOR PROGRESS

TIME:

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### HELPFUL HINTS!

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