

Focus Groups

Student focus groups are an excellent source of leading and lagging data. They can be used to measure the fidelity and impact of strategic actions, gain additional insights into survey responses or growth and achievement data, and to gain advice on strategic action adjustment. To ensure consistency throughout the district, please utilize the following protocols when assembling and working with student focus groups:

1. **Group Size:** The ideal focus group size is 6-8 students.
2. **Group Make-Up:** Whenever possible, groups should represent no more than two grade levels/bands, and proportionally represent the demographic makeup of your buildings. Band examples include 3-4, 5-6, 7-8, 9-10, 11-12. This will mean that you are not touching every grade level every cycle.
3. **K-2:** It is recommended that we not utilize K-2 students for focus groups at this time.
4. **Student Selection:** A list of participant names within needed grade bands will be provided by the teachers at each school site at those grade levels. Site administrators will then narrow the list to 6-8.
5. **Parent Permission:** Once students are selected, please obtain passive consent from parents (or the student if they are 18), prior to their participation in the focus group. Communication with families can be electronic. Recommended language [CAN BE FOUND HERE](#).
6. **Facilitation:** Facilitation of the focus groups should be conducted by SIT members (including administration) whenever possible. Facilitators should feel free to keep the conversations flowing naturally, asking follow-up questions when appropriate. Please ensure there is a designated note-taker who is different from the primary facilitator, to ensure separate focus on asking questions and recording responses.
7. **Questions:** Focus group questions should draw directly from the data collected from other sources. For example, if you were looking to learn more about student survey responses, you would review your building data when available to determine your **one-two highest** and **two lowest** survey statement areas, developing probing questions that get at the information you need. You should plan for no more than six questions total for each focus group session. **Further details on this example can be found in the chart below.**
8. Use this [FACILITATOR SCRIPT TEMPLATE](#)
9. **Data Collection:** Ideally responses would be audio recorded and transcribed. If a note-taker is used, please ensure the note-taker is someone different than the facilitator. [THIS DOCUMENT](#) highlights protocols for working with the data to develop themes.

Focus Group Timeline:

We will utilize the following timeline for conducting of focus groups:

Focus Group #1	November/December
Focus Group #2	February
Focus Group #3	April



Grade 5-12 Gallup Example:

Gallup Statement	Highest Area	Lowest Area
At this school, I get to do what I do best every day.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When you hear the phrase “at this school, I get to do what I do best every day,” what things come to mind? What is one example of a way you get to do what you do best in school every day? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When you hear the phrase “at this school, I get to do what I do best every day,” what two things come to mind? What is one example of a way in which you are prevented from doing what you do best in school every day?
My teachers make me feel my schoolwork is important.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Why is schoolwork important to you? What is one way your teachers help make your schoolwork feel important? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When does your schoolwork feel most important? When does your schoolwork feel unimportant?
I feel safe in this school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When you hear the phrase “I feel safe at this school,” what are two things that come to mind? What is one thing we should keep doing to maintain safety at school? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When you hear the phrase “I feel safe at this school,” what are two things that come to mind? What is one thing we can do to make our school safer?
I have fun at school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When responding to the phrase “I have fun at school,” what two things come to mind when you think of the word fun? What should we keep doing that helps students have fun? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When responding to the phrase “I have fun at school,” what two things come to mind when you think of the word fun? What is one way we could make our school more fun?
I have a best friend at school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How easy is it to make friends in school? What is one thing our school does to help support friendships? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How easy is it to make friends in our school? What is one thing we can do to help support friendships?
In the last seven days, someone has told me I have done good work at school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Who at school most supports your school work? Who tells you when you are doing a good job in school? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How often do you receive compliments from an adult in the building on your school work? What is one thing we can do to help you feel you are doing good work in school?
In the last seven days, I have learned something interesting at school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When responding to the phrase “In the last seven days, I have learned something interesting at school,” what two things come to mind when you think of the word interesting? What is one thing that makes our school an interesting place to learn? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When responding to the phrase “In the last seven days, I have learned something interesting at school,” what two things come to mind when you think of the word interesting? What is one thing we can do to make school more interesting for you?



The adults at my school care about me.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do you know the adults in our building care about you and your success? What do they do or say? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do you know when an adult in the building cares about you and your success? Please provide an example of a time when you have felt like the adults in the building haven't cared about you and your success?
I have at least one teacher who makes me excited about the future.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What do our teachers do to make you feel excited about the future? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What about school makes you excited about your future? What is one thing we can do to help you feel more excited about the future?

Grade 3-4

Studer Statement	Highest Area	Lowest Area
Learning is important in my school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Why is learning at school important to you? What is one thing your teacher does to make learning at school feel important? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When does learning feel most important to you at school? When does learning not feel important to you at school?
My teacher cares about me.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do you know when a teacher in your building wants you to be successful? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How do you know when a teacher in your building wants you to be successful? Have there been times when you have felt like the adults in school don't care about you? What has made you feel that way?
I feel safe at my school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When you hear the phrase "I feel safe at my school," what are two things that come to mind? What is one thing we should keep doing to maintain safety at school? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When you hear the phrase "I feel safe at my school," what are two things that come to mind? What is one thing we can do to make our school safer?
School rules are fair.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which school rules are the fairest? Which school rules do you consider unfair? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Which school rules are the fairest? Which school rules do you consider unfair?
When I have a problem, I know how to get help.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When you face a problem in school, where do you go when you need help? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When you face a problem in school, where do you go when you need help? What would prevent you from asking for help?
I set learning goals and track my progress.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> What types of goals do you set in the classroom? How do you know if you are making progress towards your goals? 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> How frequently do you set goals in school? What is one example? When are goal setting and monitoring most valuable in school?



		3. When are goal setting and monitoring not valuable?
My teachers challenge me to think.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What are some examples of challenging learning activities that you have worked through successfully?2. What do you do when you are asked to complete an activity that is challenging, or that you don't have an immediate answer for?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What percent of your day do you feel challenged in school?2. What do you do when you are asked to complete an activity that is challenging, or that you don't know the answer to right away?
My teachers ask me how I learn best.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How do you learn best in school?2. What are examples of ways you have been able to learn that way?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. How do you learn best in school?2. How often do you engage in activities that use that type of learning?
I like going to my school each day.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What do you like most about coming to school?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What do you like most about coming to school?2. What do you like least about coming to school?
Learning is fun at my school.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What makes learning at our school fun?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What makes learning at our school fun?2. How could we make it more fun to learn at our school?