

If someone were interested in applying to your school and they spoke to several staff members and asked, “What is the adult climate and community like?” how would you want them to describe it?

What are three strengths already present in your adult community that you can see leading to that vision/ideal?

What is a challenge in the adult community that makes that vision/ideal out of reach?

Belonging

Significance

Fun/Engagement

Reinforcing Language: language that recognizes effort and accomplishments

- Warm, professional tone
- Concrete and specific
- Emphasizes description over personal approval
- Applies to all
- Points out approximation, not just mastery
- Reflects important goals and values
- May be followed by a question to extend thinking

Interactive Learning Structures

- Allow staff to engage with the leader, one another, and the content being covered
- Contribute to a positive community if the environment promotes risk-taking and honest, respectful dialogue

Choice

- Increased engagement
- Sense of autonomy
- Allows for differentiation



Morning Meeting

Morning Meeting is a lively, friendly, and powerful way to get each day off to a positive start. During Morning Meeting, everyone in the classroom gathers in a circle for twenty to thirty minutes at the beginning of the day to greet each other, share news, do an activity together, and read a message from the teacher. These purposeful whole-group gatherings help create a sense of community and reinforce academic and social skills in engaging and interactive ways. Morning Meeting gives students a consistent time and place every day to explore and practice social skills and to merge social, emotional, and academic learning.

Morning Meeting has four components, done sequentially:

- **Greeting**—Students greet each other by name, often including handshaking, singing, movement, and other activities.
- **Sharing**—Students share some news or information about themselves or their learning and respond to each other, articulating their questions, thoughts, feelings, and ideas in positive ways.
- **Group Activity**—The whole class does a short, inclusive activity together, reinforcing learning and building class cohesion through active participation.
- **Morning Message**—The teacher writes a message to the class in advance and displays it each morning. As students enter the classroom each day, they read and interact with the message. At Morning Meeting, students practice academic skills and warm up for the day ahead by reading and discussing the message.

Notes:

Staff Morning Meeting Sample Plans

August

Goal: reconnecting staff, building community, sharing the vision.

Ideally, staff are seated in a large circle in adult-sized chairs. Message should be displayed on chart paper or via projector before they arrive.

Also, display school vision and mission.

Greeting: Good Morning to Anyone Who: Announce a category. Anyone who identifies with that category moves to the middle of the circle and greets the others who are there. They return to their original spots and you announce another category. Repeat for several rounds.

Sample categories:

Educators

Anyone who traveled this summer

People who had coffee this morning

Upper grade teachers

Special area teachers

Sharing:

Similar footwear partner: Share a highlight from your summer.

Similar clothing colors partner: Share one way you practiced self-care this summer.

Similar number of pockets: share one thing you love about the grade level/area you teach.

Similar grade level/role/specialty: Share your thoughts about what values you bring to our vision and mission. (Examples: clear communication, trust, empathy...)

Activity: Taking Sides: Staff start by standing at their seats. Announce an either/or statement as you gesture to one side of the room and then the other. Staff moves to the side of the room that indicates the choice they connect most with and talk with a partner about why they chose that side.

For example:

Sweet snacks/Salty snack

Night owl/Morning Person

Read the book/See the movie

Fiction/Non-Fiction

Message: Welcome Back, Dedicated Staff! We are so happy to have you all back under one roof. It's not the same here without you! This morning, we'll kick off our PD days together by reconnecting before you head into your classrooms to set up. By now, you've seen our vision and mission. What values do you bring to that vision and mission? Be ready to share at this morning.

December/January

Goal: Reignite energy, reflect on teacher language

Ideally, staff are seated in a large circle in adult-sized chairs. Message should be displayed on chart paper or projector before they arrive.

Greeting: One-Minute Greeting

Staff greet as many colleagues as they can in one minute.

Sharing: Maître d'

Share a question for staff to consider (see ideas below). After giving a moment to think, give directions for staff to form tables of a certain number to discuss their responses to the question. Repeat for several rounds:

Table for 3: What is a success you have had recently (professionally or personally)?

Table for 4: How have you seen our kindness initiative in action?

Table for 2: What is a challenge you are navigating with students?

Activity: Carousel

Distribute copies of the article [“Reinforcing, Reminding, and Redirecting.”](#) Consider sending them the day before for reading ahead of time. Give staff a few minutes to review the article.

Ahead of time, prepare chart paper with different scenarios involving students—situations that could happen in classrooms, special area classrooms, and common areas—and post them around the room. Prepare enough charts for each small group of staff to have one chart at a time. Scenarios should include both behavior to be reinforced and behavior to be redirected. Also, include situations in which students may need to hear reminding language.

Direct staff to travel with grade-level teams or colleagues with similar roles to add a teacher language statement that would work in that situation. Follow with a museum walk to collect ideas.

Message:

Hello, Thoughtful Staff,

Teacher language is one of the most powerful tools available to educators. Every day, we use spoken and unspoken language to send messages to our students about who they are and what they are capable of. Let's do a check-in today. Private reflection: What aspect of teacher language feels like a strength for you? What area of growth do you see for yourself?

June

Goal: Celebration of community and accomplishments, reflecting on vision/mission and goals
Ideally, staff are seated in a large circle in adult-sized chairs. Message should be displayed on chart paper or projector before they arrive.

Greeting: 1, 2, 3, 4

First, brainstorm categories that include all or many staff members (for example: educators, readers, runners, special area teachers, crafters).

Then, use this chant to structure the greeting:

*“One, two, three, four,
Come on, _____,
Hit the floor!
We’re so glad you’re here today!
Hooray, hooray, hooray!”*

When you get to the blank, add one of the categories. Staff dance or walk to the center of the circle if they fit into that category, then dance or walk back out by the time the verse ends. Repeat for several rounds.

Sharing: Four Corners

Label areas of the room with parts of the vision/mission or key words that relate to schoolwide goals. Ask staff to move to the area of the room that answers each question (see below) for them. Once there, staff talk in small groups about why they chose that area.

Round 1: Which part of the vision (mission/goals) did you strive to support this year?

Round 2: Which part of the vision (mission/goals) do you think most led to student success this year?

Round 3: Which part of the vision (mission/goals) do you think we need to spend more time strengthening as we head into the next school year?

Activity: Encore

Announce a category. In small groups, staff work together for two minutes to list songs that include that word or are clearly about that word. (Sample categories: summer, friends, party). When time is up, each group must sing a line from one of the songs on their list. Continue until each group has sung a line from each song from their list. If another group sings a song from your list, you must cross it off. If your group is out of songs while other groups still have songs, you must sing “Pass!”

Message:

Dear Colleagues,

Summer is near! We are so proud to have worked alongside you and watched you share your amazing gifts with the students of our school. Thank you for the time, energy, thoughtfulness, and dedication you have shown your students. Thank you for rising above the challenges and modeling resilience each day. You inspire us.

As you reflect on the year, be ready to share one gift you shared with your students this year.

Have staff partner up and share the gifts that they shared with students this year—empathy, humor etc. Or, if possible, structure this as an around-the-circle share where each person offers one word about the gift they shared with students.



Responsive Advisory Meeting

Responsive Advisory Meeting is a daily routine that supports students in building positive, meaningful relationships with one or more caring adults at school and with a small group of peers. Advisory can also be a time to practice or review academics, work on a schoolwide service project, or address a schoolwide climate issue. Responsive Advisory Meetings take place at a regular time each day, with sufficient time (at least twenty minutes) to enable a group of students to interact with one another and a teacher in purposeful ways, both formally and informally.

Responsive Advisory Meeting consists of four components:

- ▶ **Arrival Welcome**—The teacher welcomes each student by name into the room, conveying that everyone matters, is due equal respect, and is worthy of being known.
- ▶ **Announcements**—The teacher writes a message in advance and displays it. As students enter the room, they read and interact with the message.
- ▶ **Acknowledgments**—In small groups, students share a piece of news about themselves or share ideas about an assigned topic related to their studies or interests.
- ▶ **Activity**—The whole group does a fun, lively activity that’s focused on a specific purpose of that Advisory meeting, helping students strengthen their sense of belonging and community.

Notes:

Staff Responsive Advisory Meeting

Sample Plans

August/September

Purpose: Build Staff Affiliation

Arrival Welcome: Greet staff as they enter—by name if traffic flow allows—and remind them to read the announcements message.

Announcements:

Welcome back! We are so excited to kick off the 2018-2019 school year together! In the words of J. K. Rowling, “We are only as strong as we are united.” This morning, we’ll discover some things that unite us. Find a seat at any table and think about what you would do if you had one more week of summer vacation.

11:30: Staff lunch

1:45: Flu shot clinic

Acknowledgements: At each table, beginning with the person whose birthday is closest to today, say hello and then share your answer to the prompt from the announcements.

Activity: Distribute [Life Story](#) sheets. Let staff know that they can brainstorm ideas with their table group as they work individually on their Life Story. Give 5 minutes. Plan ahead for a management signal since there are several rounds of this activity.

Section 1: Favorite book character

Section 2: Musical group you’d want to spend a day with

Section 3: A childhood memory

Section 4: A person whom you really respect

Section 5: An activity you’ve never tried but would like to

Section 6: Your dream job (other than education!)

Round 1: Share section 1 with someone you are sitting next to.

Round 2: Share section 2 with someone else at your table.

Round 3: Share section 3 with someone at the table next to you.

Round 4: Share section 4 with someone from the other side of the room.

Round 5: Share section 5 with someone you haven’t talked to yet.

Round 6: Share section 6 with anyone you’d like.

Whole Group Reflection: What connections were you able to make with colleagues today? What interesting facts did you discover? How might knowing more about your colleagues support your work as the school year begins?

January

Purpose: Energize and Re-engage

Arrival Welcome: Greet each person as they enter, by name if traffic flow permits.

Announcements:

Hello Esteemed Colleagues!

It's hard to believe that it's already the end of the second quarter. This can be a hard time of year for educators' energy levels as you face multiple professional demands, flu season, and student challenges.

What advice would you offer a colleague whose energy levels are waning right now? Be ready to share.

Acknowledgments: One-Minute Greeting

Staff greet as many colleagues as they can in one minute. When time is up, tell them to partner with the last person they greeted and share their response to the announcements prompt. Then, they can sit with people in similar grade levels for the activity. Teachers of multiple grade levels can choose one age to focus on.

Activity: Pluses/Challenges

Tell staff that at this time of year, one of the challenges that often zaps our energy is that students are changing—cognitively, physically, socially, and emotionally. The students you met in September are likely very different from the ones you are teaching today. That can bring benefits, but it can be challenging as well, especially if our expectations haven't developed along with the students.

Have each group write the age they teach on a sheet of chart paper. For example, seventh grade teachers could choose 12 or 13 as the age to write on the chart. Each group makes a T-chart and labels the left side "Pluses" and the right side "Challenges." Give 5 minutes to work.

Hang the charts and do a museum walk with this lens: "What patterns do you see across the ages?" "What seems important?"

Then, either distribute *Yardsticks* books if your school has them, the *Yardsticks Guides* if you have them, or, if none of those is available, use the following articles: [The Electric Eleven-Year-Old](#), [The Twixt Twelve-Year-Old](#), [The Thriving Thirteens](#), [The Fervent Fourteens](#).

As teachers explore the resource that matches their age level, they should identify information that can help them with the challenges they listed on the chart. Write key info on sticky notes and add to the chart as a reminder about ways to address the challenges they identified.

Reflection: When we create the conditions to be developmentally responsive to our students, the results usually help motivate both students and teachers, and that restores our energy. How might this time spent examining development support your work during this time of year?

Hang the charts in the staff room for reference over the next few weeks.

June

Purpose: Energize/Reflect

Arrival Welcome: Greet each person as they enter, by name if traffic flow permits.

Announcements:

Hello, Team!

As the year draws to a close, we are taking some time to reflect and celebrate all that has been accomplished this year. What's one personal goal you have achieved this year? Be ready to share.

Reminder: Checkouts time sign-ups will be posted at 10 am.

Acknowledgments: What's the News?

In table groups, one person begins by greeting the person to their left with "Good morning, _____, what's the news?" The person greeted responds, "Good morning, _____. The news is _____" and shares their response to the prompt in the announcements. Continue around the table until each person has been greeted and has shared their response.

Activity: Fact or Fiction

Each person writes three statements about their professional achievements over the school year: two are factual and one is fictional. Do a mix and mingle to music. As you play music, staff mingle around the space with their fact/fiction statements in hand. When the music stops, direct them to partner up with someone close by and take turns sharing the statements on their card. The other partner guesses which is the fictional statement. After each partner has had a chance to share, start the music again to signal a new round is beginning. Repeat for several rounds.

Reflection: Lead a whole-group reflection on the accomplishments that were shared. Ask for volunteers to share connections they noticed in the sharing, or thoughts about what conclusions can be drawn about the adult community based on what was shared.

Next Steps

What is your goal for strengthening the adult community?

Identify up to three action steps that will support that goal. Consider what you know about your staff and what support/resources you will need.

1.

2.

3.

How will you know when this goal has been met?