

How Well is Your School Sharing Power and Practicing Democracy?

Consulting Families About Decisions		<i>Check one for each question</i>			
1	The school has a governance council that has a voice in all major decisions and that includes parent representatives elected by a broad base of parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
2	Parents and community members sit on the principal selection committee.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
3	The school does an annual survey of parents to get their ideas about programs and policies. The survey is co-designed and tallied by parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
Building a Strong, Broad-Based Parent Organization		<i>Check one for each question</i>			
4	The parent group is focused on improving achievement for all students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
5	Surveys and focus groups are some of the ways that the parent association reaches out to families, builds its membership, and draws out their ideas and concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
6	The PTA or parent organization invites the principal to report on student academic performance, review the school's scores on the state test, and describe how the school plans to improve.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
Developing Social And Political Connections		<i>Check one for each question</i>			
7	Families can learn how to vote and get a voter registration form in the school office.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
8	The school or parent group invites candidates for office to speak at the school and actively encourages and prepares parents to bring up their issues and concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
9	Parent leadership and other training is offered, either by the school or by community groups, in collaboration with the school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
Drawing on Community Resources		<i>Check one for each question</i>			
10	The school works closely with local public libraries and takes families on field trips to get library cards and borrow books and media.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
11	A family resource center, school social worker, and/or other staff help families make connections to social services such as a food bank, a medical clinic, or housing assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
12	The school taps local businesses and community institutions for technical services, job opportunities for families and students, reduced fees, tutoring and mentoring, and training.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
Collaborating with Community Organizers		<i>Check one for each question</i>			
13	Teachers and parents work with community organizers to research solutions to problems that families and students face, such as bullying, traffic hazards, and gang activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
14	The school hosts "accountability sessions" with local elected officials, so that families can raise their concerns about public services, such as street lights, community policing, drug trafficking, or poor trash collection.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
15	If community organizers raise issues like class size, teacher qualifications, achievement gaps, and crumbling facilities, the school is willing to work with them to make improvements. If community organizers have not approached the school, the school reaches out to them.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already Doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard

Use the following questions to reflect on the answers from your checklist.

In which areas are you doing well?

Which areas need more work?

In what ways does your school share power with parents and build their social and political connections?

What are your concerns?

What steps could you take to make your school a laboratory of democracy?

Right now?

Over the long term?