Amplifying Student Voice
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Expert Presenters:

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Vickie Reed, superintendent, Murray County Schools, Chatsworth, Ga., and a 2015 Education Week ”Leader To Learn From”

Related Article:
Students' Views on Teachers, Policy Hold Sway in Georgia District
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
Listening to Student Voice

BethAnn Berliner, REL West at WestEd

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Student Voice, Tools, and Examples

- What is student voice
- Why listening can be beneficial
- How it’s different from how we generally listen to students
What is Student Voice?

Listening to student voice is the practice of educators intentionally and systematically eliciting student viewpoints on a specific topic for improvement purposes.

Students:
- Are asked what they think, feel, experience
- Take on new roles
- Are involved in decisions and actions
- Are viewed as partners
Why Listen to Student Voices?

Listening can benefit **educators**...  
- Engage students in taking some responsibility for change  
- Bring fresh perspectives to issues and priorities  
- Create a synergy of ideas  
- Raise issues of equity and other difficult topics

Listening can benefit **students**...  
- Provide developmental supports  
- Develop skills
What It Is, What It Is Not

• Students and educators working together over time to understand problems, rethink solutions, and take action

• One-time, one-way flow of information
The *Speak Out, Listen Up!* Toolkit

A starter toolkit:

1. **ASK** (Analyzing Surveys with Kids)

2. **Inside-Outside Fishbowl**

3. **S4** (Students Studying Students’ Stories)
ASK Tool

Involves students in the analysis and interpretation of survey or other descriptive data tied to school improvement.
Inside-Outside Fishbowl Tool

- Students, in an inner circle, conducting a facilitated conversation with each other.
- Adults listening to student conversation in an outside circle without interrupting or responding to students in the circle.
- Flip-flopping places.
- Followed by a debrief of the experience, and exploration of themes that emerged.
Purpose and Preparation

Purpose

• Elicit student perspectives in a safe space, i.e., without fear of criticism or interruption

• Provide adults in the school community with an opportunity to hear students “tell it like it is”

• Create an opportunity for students and adults to have a deep dialogue about issues concerning the school

Prepare, prepare, prepare!
A digital storytelling process where students conduct, develop, and produce filmed student interviews about a high-stakes issue, and then co-host forums with school and district staff using the film as a learning tool for discussing what students say, experience, and need for making their schools better places.
Listen and Learn

Who? Students talking to students
What? A digital story becomes a learning tool
Why? To generate solution ideas
Legacy? New interventions and a culture of adults listening
District Takeaways

• Students left school because...

• Students persisted because...

• Considerations for better outcomes...
Student Takeaways

- Personal stories mattered
- Adults cared about them
- Part of the solution, not part of the problem
- Gained confidence – they have something to say that others value
So...What’s Happened?

- Organized a district committee – spread the word, help others
- Identified multiple issues to address
- Informed interventions
- Used as a credible data source
- “Strength in Voices: Truth in Student Experiences” institutionalization and celebration
Thanks, and for More Information, Contact:

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The toolkit is available for free at
http://relwest.wested.org/resources/31
Developing Leaders
School Climate
Promoting safety, relationships and teaching and learning!!
School Safety
We want students to feel safe and secure at school.

- District Student Safety Survey
- District and School Student Council Meetings
- School Level Student Council Peer Surveys
Relationships
We want students to feel connected to caring adults.

- School Level Student Panel Meetings
- Student/Teacher Relationship Surveys
- District and School Level Council Meetings with Central Level Staff
Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS)
We want to model and reward positive social behaviors.

- PBIS School, Classroom and Transportation Activities
- PBIS School Store
Students describe activities that keep them engaged in class.

Students describe the classroom environment that keeps them engaged.

Meet with Superintendent throughout the year to discuss school and district goals.
Teaching and Learning
We want students engaged in the learning environment!

* District and School Level Panel
* Council Meetings with Central Level Staff
* State Student Survey
* Peer Tutoring
* End of Year Group Council Presentations
Commit to Graduate (C2G)
We want students to get excited about graduating.

- District/School Level Commit to Graduate Activities
- Community Billboards
- Senior Walk
School Clubs
We want students to explore different career opportunities.

* District/School Level Council Meetings
* Club Organizations
Environment

We want students to be our school system ambassadors.

Annual State of the School System Address
Annual State of the School Address
District Teacher of the Year Banquet
Southern Association of Colleges and Schools
Board of Education Presentations
An on-demand archive of this webinar will be available at www.edweek.org/go/webinar in less than 24 hrs.
Required Reading from *Education Week*:

**Spotlight on Elements of a Successful District**
FREE! Effective district leadership demands a skillful mix of innovation, collaboration, and support. In this Spotlight, read how leaders are fostering innovation, how teachers and students are shaping district policy, and how districts are adopting cutting-edge R&D models.