

Needs Assessment Design Packet

This packet is intended to help you with your Needs Assessment and Resource Inventory. Your needs assessments should be on-going, and should be useful to you. You will want to use a variety of ways to reach a variety of people involved in and connected to your school, and you will want to widen your assessment as time goes on, increasing the numbers and diversity of people involved. You should continually update the information as you go along.

The packet has 4 charts:

1. **How you chose to gather your information**
2. **What you heard from each group**
3. **What you already have in the school**
4. **What you decided you need (based on 2 and 3)**

You should make copies of this form, or keep an electronic blank, and continue to add information as you gather it, dating each one when you fill it in. Keep the form in your files for your team to use whenever it meets, and add to it every time you gather input from another source. You may wish to use these forms as checklists for planning and implementation meetings, and they will be useful in completing reports.

We have included a list of sample questions to help you design your surveys or input groups. You can choose or make up your own questions – these are just suggestions. Be sure to ask questions in a way that is not embarrassing and likely to get an honest answer. For example, you might want to ask students and parents what needs they can see “in their own families or in families they know in the school” rather than asking specifically what they need themselves. Also, you might want to use the word “want” or “hope to have in the school” instead of “need” when you ask some of the questions.

Try to create situations in which folks can be honest. You can invite a neutral person to ask questions, or use anonymous methods. Most important, however, no matter who asks the questions, ALWAYS assure people that their answers will be completely anonymous. Ask them NOT to put their names on anything – instead, ask them to identify their relationship to the school (teacher, parent, administrator, student, etc.) – so it will not be possible to attribute specific comments.

Explanations

- 1) Often people can immediately name a need they see around them. Sometimes they jump straight to identifying programs and services they'd like to see in the school. By “Needs” we mean things that people need and want but might not currently have access to. By “Activities” we mean things that people can do to meet a need. For example, people might say that students have a negative view of their future and need the support of an encouraging adult - the “Activity” they name might be mentors for the students. The “Domains” are the types of needs and activities the charts ask you for (Health/Mental health, etc.) Here are some examples (and there are many more not listed!) from each of the domains used in the charts:

Health and Mental Health:

Needs people might name: asthma, difficulty in finding/paying for/getting to a doctor, parents' medical issues, absence because of illness, substance abuse of students/family members, emotional issues, lead poisoning, anger management, grief, vision/dental problems, etc.

Activities they might name: on-site nurse or doctor available to treat illnesses and avoid absences from class, health education programs (to learn about health concerns such as asthma, substance abuse, etc.), help getting eye glasses or dental treatment for children, more mental health counseling in school, group counseling for grief or violence, etc.

Family Support and Education:

Needs people might name: housing dislocations (evictions), substance abuse issues, difficulty handling teenagers, help with young children and their school readiness, etc.

Activities folks might mention include: parenting support groups, early childhood education programs, family support, help with housing or other basic needs, etc.

Youth Development:

Needs people might name: kids on their own too much during out-of-school-time, students without positive adult guidance, violence and gang issues in neighborhoods, children not connected to positive activities, lack of cultural opportunities, etc.

Activities people might mention: after-school programs, mentoring programs, leadership development programs, gang interventions/conflict resolution skills development, summer programs, etc.

Community Engagement and Development:

Needs that might be mentioned: lack of community engagement in school success, lack of collaboration with community around shared concerns – e.g. violence, trash and crime issues in neighborhood to which young people are seen to contribute negatively, etc.

Activities people might name: community service projects in neighborhood, community organizations utilizing school facilities for community-building and problem-solving activities, volunteer program for community residents to work in school, etc.

Academic Support:

Needs might include: low test scores, students who have been retained, failure to make AYP, failure to complete homework, etc.

Activities might include: after-school programs, summer programs, tutoring services, etc.

- 2) You may feel that there is no time to gather information from all of the relevant stakeholders in your school community. This assessment process is one you should be engaged in over the entire year, refining and planning ahead for the kinds of activities and programs that would respond to identified needs. It will also help you ask for the help you need from district and municipal leaders. Think about scheduling at least one information-gathering activity each month – e.g. visit a, meet with the PTA/PTO, ask for 15 minutes of staff meeting or school improvement team meeting, distribute a survey (give incentives to return it completed!), hold a student/parent forum, etc. Work with your team (school administrators and LP staff, as well as any other existing partners) to review the results and decide on priorities. Although the Site Coordinator might be doing gathering much of the information, priorities must be agreed to by your team.

Sample Questions

Following is a list of sample questions you could ask each group of stakeholders. You should work together as a team to modify them or create your own. You should keep the conversations or surveys short, and do a lot of listening.

For students

1. What are some of the things you like most about your school? What would make it better?
2. What clubs and activities currently exist in the school that you are aware of? And what clubs and activities would you like to see added?
3. Do you or other students you know have any health problems that might get in the way of attending school regularly, ready to learn?
4. Do you or other students you know ever feel like you/they need counseling?
5. Do you or other students have parents who need some help? What kinds of help do you think parents and families need?
6. What kinds of things are good about your neighborhood – and what things would you like to change?
7. Are there programs in the neighborhood that you would like to see come into the school?
8. If you had the opportunity to design an ideal school, what are some of the things that you would include in it?

For parents (and/or other family members)

1. What do you like most about the school your child attends? What would make it better?
2. We know that some students and families have challenges that might get in the way of their success in school. Can you help us identify some of the problems that families you know might have – and what kinds of programs or services might help?
 - a. Are there health needs that students and their families have?
 - b. Are there emotional or psychological needs – would counseling be useful?
 - c. What about other activities for young people?
 - d. Do parents and other adults want adult education programs? How about help with getting ready to work?
 - e. Are there personal issues that come up – like housing problems or other challenges – that people would like to be able to find help for at the school?
 - f. Do parents want help getting their younger children ready for kindergarten?
3. What are some of the most positive things about the neighborhood? What could make it better? Are there some community activities you would like to see in the school building?

For school staff (teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, support staff)

1. We know that some students have personal and social challenges that make it hard for them to learn. Can you help us identify some of these – and what kinds of services or programs would help?
 - a. Are there health needs that students and their families have?
 - b. Are there emotional or psychological needs?
 - c. What about other activities for young people?
 - d. Do parents and other adults want adult education programs? How about help with getting ready to work?
 - e. Are there personal issues that come up – like housing problems or other challenges – that people would like to be able to find help for at school?
 - f. Do parents want help getting their younger children ready for kindergarten?
2. What have your data told you are the school's most significant behavior challenges and the dominant reasons for them?
3. What kinds of community challenges do you see interfering with student success? Can you see any ways the school building might be used to help the community?

For other existing partners

1. We know that some students have personal and social challenges that make it hard for them to learn. Can you help us identify some of these – and what kinds of services or programs would help?

- a. Are there health needs that students and their families have?
 - b. Are there emotional or psychological needs?
 - c. What about other activities for young people?
 - d. Do parents and other adults want adult education programs? How about help with getting ready to work?
 - e. Are there personal issues that come up, like housing problems or other challenges that people would like to be able to find help for at school?
 - f. Do parents want help getting their young children ready for kindergarten?
2. What kinds of community challenges do you see interfering with student success? Can you see any ways the school building might be used to help the community?

For community leaders

1. What are the most pressing needs in this community – ones that might affect the children from this school, prevent them from being as successful as possible?
2. Is the school building a positive facility in your neighborhood? How could it be more of a resource for the community?
3. Are there activities you might be able to offer the community, if you had the right facilities available to host them?

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE INVENTORY (Chart 1 of 4)

Date: _____ Person completing form: _____

1. How did you gather information? (Fill in *number* of people involved in each category.)

	<i>Survey</i>	<i>Focus group or Meeting</i>	<i>Individual interviews</i>	<i>Other</i>
<i>Students (Indicate grade levels)</i>				
<i>Teachers, support staff, paraprofessionals</i>				
<i>Administrative Team: Principal, APs, Specialist</i>				
<i>Parents, other family members</i>				
<i>Community residents, leadership</i>				
<i>Existing Partners</i>				

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE INVENTORY (Chart 2 of 4)

Date: _____ Person completing form: _____

2. What did you learn? (3 pages) Give the *top three Needs* as you heard them from each group. You can also name **Activities** people say they want or need.

	<i>Health – Physical and Mental</i>	<i>Youth Development</i>	<i>Family support services, adult ed</i>	<i>Community Engagement and Development</i>	<i>Academic Support</i>
<i>Students (Indicate grade levels)</i>					

(Chart 2 continued)

Teachers, support staff, paraprofessionals					
Administrative Team: Principal, APs, Specialists					

(Chart 2 continued)

Parents, other family members					
Community residents, leadership					

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE INVENTORY (Chart 3 of 4)

Date: _____ Person completing form: _____

3. What already exists? (First complete Partner Information form for each partner, to gather the information you need to know what is already available in the school for your students, their families, and their neighborhood.) Use as many pages as needed.

<i>Partner name (organization name, program name)</i>	<i>What activities do they provide? (services, programs)</i>	<i>Whom do they serve (include # for each stakeholder group)</i>	<i>How often are they in school?</i>	<i>Which need(s) do they meet (if any)? (Refer to Chart 2)</i>

(Chart 3 continued)

<i>Partner name (organization name, program name)</i>	<i>What activities do they provide? (services, programs)</i>	<i>Whom do they serve (include # for each stakeholder group)</i>	<i>How often are they in school?</i>	<i>Which need(s) do they meet (if any)? (Refer to Chart 2)</i>

NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND RESOURCE INVENTORY (Chart 4 of 4)

Date: _____ Person completing form: _____

4. What do you need? Gap Analysis (5 pages) go over the previous pages with your Team (at least with the principal or designee). Based on what you learned about what people want and need, and what exists already, identify the priority needs that have not yet been met. Indicate partners you know you want to recruit, or ones you need to find.

	<i>Need identified</i>	<i>Activity wanted</i>	<i>Partners we know we want to recruit</i>	<i>Need to identify a partner/resources</i>
<i>Health and Mental Health</i>				

(Chart 4 continued)

Youth Development				
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(Chart 4 continued)

Family Support and Education				
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(Chart 4 continued)

Community Engagement/ Development				
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Academic Support				
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