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Speak Out, Listen Up! Tools for using student perspectives and local data for school improvement

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Summary

This toolkit offers three tools that educators can use to gather and analyze local data to listen to students on school-related topics or problems:

- Analyzing Surveys with Kids involves students in analyzing and interpreting survey results and producing suggestions for school improvement.
- Inside-Outside Fishbowl organizes a focus group in which students and educators trade roles as speakers and listeners during a facilitated discussion and jointly develop an action plan.
- Students Studying Students' Stories guides a digital storytelling process in which students produce and analyze videotaped interviews of other students and then host forums with educators to suggest improvements.

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Summary

Listening closely to what students say about their school experiences can be beneficial to educators for understanding and addressing school-related topics and problems and for rethinking policies and practices. This toolkit provides educators a purposeful and systematic means to gather and analyze local data by eliciting and listening to student voice to inform school improvement efforts.

School improvement is complex work that relies on multiple sources of information to frame challenges and address and monitor change efforts. Student voice brings an additional, important source of information to these efforts. The toolkit offers three tools:

- Analyzing Surveys with Kids involves students in analyzing and interpreting survey results associated with a school-related topic or problem and then in producing suggestions for school improvement.
- Inside-Outside Fishbowl organizes a special kind of focus group in which students and educators trade roles as speakers and listeners during a facilitated discussion of a school-related topic or problem and then jointly develop an action plan.
- Students Studying Students' Stories guides a digital storytelling process in which students produce and analyze videotaped interviews of other students about a school-related topic or problem and then host forums with educators to suggest improvements.

The toolkit includes detailed information on how the tools work, the questions they address, the number and types of participants needed, the amount of time required, space and materials considerations, and directions for using the tools. It also includes a tool template so schools and districts can create new student voice tools appropriate to their particular needs and interests.

Contents

School improvement has taken center stage in the national discussion about education, but the viewpoints of students—those most directly affected by school change—are seldom heard. In recent years listening to students has emerged as a potential strategy for strengthening school change efforts of all kinds. When students "speak out" and adults "listen up," much can be learned about making real and lasting change (Mitra, 2008; Osberg, Pope, & Galloway, 2006; Fletcher, 2004a; O'Donoghue, Kirshner, & McLaughlin, 2003). The *Speak Out, Listen Up!* toolkit was designed to help students and educators work together in new ways to improve schools.

What is the *Speak Out, Listen Up!* toolkit?

The *Speak Out, Listen Up!* toolkit is a set of tools that educators and other adults can use to elicit students' ideas about school-related issues, listen to what they have to say, and use their input to help shape change. It was originally developed by the Nevada Education Research Alliance, of which the Regional Educational Laboratory West at WestEd is a member, to evaluate its dropout prevention efforts. Its use has expanded to help strengthen academic interventions and social emotional learning activities. The tools included in this toolkit are:

- Adapted from or inspired by published tools used in schools nationwide (Burgoa, Izu, & Hillenberg, 2010; Griffith & Gill, 2006; Fletcher, 2005; Fletcher, 2004b; School Change Collaborative, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c, 2000d; Houle, 1997; Soohoo, 1993).
- Focused on using local data.
- Intended to help educators and students collaboratively produce solutions.
- Designed to be adaptable to addressing a variety of school improvement issues.

Educators ready, willing, and able to try new ways to explore important topics or solve persistent problems are invited to use this toolkit to join in asking students to speak their minds. This introduction to the *Speak Out, Listen Up!* toolkit explains the concept of student voice, why and how using student voice can be a useful strategy for implementing change in schools, and how to use the tools most effectively to facilitate school change.

What is student voice?

In this toolkit listening to student voice requires educators to intentionally, purposefully, and systematically elicit student viewpoints on a specific topic for school improvement purposes. The term *student voice* is defined as:

- Students planning actions and making decisions that positively affect students and others.
- Students engaged in ongoing, meaningful discourse with adults about critical issues pertaining to the improvement of their school.
- Students involved in actions that address current school improvement challenges.
- Students and adults sharing decisionmaking power, playing the roles of both teacher and learner, and viewing each other as assets and resources.

Why listen to student voice?

Listening closely to what students say about their school experiences can be beneficial to adults and educators for understanding topics or problems and for rethinking practices (Mitra, 2008; Cook-Sather, 2002). Student voice can:

- Engage students in taking responsibility for school change.

- Bring fresh perspectives to school topics and problems.
- Create a synergy of ideas for improvement that transcends what either students or educators could accomplish alone.
- Promote ownership for change.
- Demonstrate that students possess valuable knowledge and perspectives about topics, problems, and solutions.
- Raise issues of equity and other difficult topics that may go unnoticed, misunderstood, or avoided by adults.
- Provide educators with greater access to information about, and relationships with, marginalized student groups, families, and community groups.

Listening to student voice also can benefit students. It creates opportunities for adults and educators to provide students important developmental supports, such as expressing caring, conveying high expectations, and offering meaningful participation in school. It can also help students develop confidence, a sense of purpose in their education, and competencies needed to move into adulthood, such as identifying, investigating, and addressing the challenges they face (Mitra, 2008; Fletcher, 2004a; Soohoo, 1993).

Listening to student voice is taking notice of and acting on what students have to say about school from their point of view

What does it mean to listen?

Listening to student voice is taking notice of and acting on what students have to say about school from their point of view. To become effective listeners to student voice, educators and other adults must often shift their mindset so that they can:

- View students as legitimate, crucial contributors to school improvement.
- Ask students what they think, feel, and experience.
- Provide students opportunities to take responsibility for addressing school improvement issues, through such activities as planning and decisionmaking.
- Involve students as valued partners to effect positive school change.

As students take on new roles in the school—as planners, teachers, researchers, evaluators, decisionmakers, and advocates—adults must learn to engage with them in new ways. Ultimately, adults can come to value students' viewpoints about school topics, problems, and solutions as part of working together for real and lasting change.

What does listening to student voice look like in practice?

Student voice efforts can take many forms. They can be a single event on a specific topic, a step-by-step course of action, or a long-term process of inquiry and discovery, depending on the complexity and sensitivity of the topics and problems schools confront. For example, at some schools educators listen to student voice to redesign curriculum, assess learning, or revise the mission of the instruction program altogether. At other schools educators listen to better understand student perspectives on policies and practices, critical challenges or incidents, or even routine issues including budget, facilities, and hiring decisions.

In practice, the most common ways adults and educators listen to student voice are through survey and focus-group responses, panel presentations, and student representation on planning committees. In these examples, student voices are viewed primarily as information sources on issues that adults consider important.

Listening to student voice becomes more consequential when it involves educators and students working together to define and address school-related topics and problems. This could involve jointly developing data collection tools, collecting data, interpreting data, recommending solutions based on data, or taking action. In these instances student participation and viewpoints are considered key to setting priorities and making decisions about allocation of resources and formulating solutions. See box 1 for examples of student voice contributing to school improvement efforts.

The least common and most intensive types of student voice efforts are those that build the capacity of students to initiate and lead school improvement efforts. Student-led planning, research, evaluation, and advocacy are more challenging to carry out in practice but can be the most substantive in terms of listening to and incorporating student viewpoints to inform school decisions.

What are the *Speak Out, Listen Up!* tools?

The three tools included in this toolkit tools are used to collect information directly from students about their needs, interests, perceptions, ideas, and experiences related to school topics or problems

The three tools included in this toolkit are Analyzing Surveys with Kids (ASK), Inside-Outside Fishbowl, and Students Studying Students' Stories (S^4). They were selected because they reflect different approaches to eliciting and listening to student voice in terms of process, time commitment, and degree of student involvement in decisionmaking. All the tools are used to collect information directly from students about their needs, interests, perceptions, ideas, and experiences related to school topics or problems.

ASK is a tool for involving students in the analysis and interpretation of survey or other descriptive data tied to school improvement. It provides step-by-step directions and materials for teaching students how to summarize tabulated or graphically displayed data and convert those data into narrative statements. Then, through facilitated small- and whole-group activities, students learn to interpret the data by exploring the results from their viewpoints, generating possible explanations, and making recommendations for improving the situations described by the data. ASK also provides opportunities for

Box 1. Examples of student voice being sought in schools and leading to change

Students as researchers (Poughkeepsie, New York)	Students as decisionmakers (Puyallup, Washington)	Students as advocates (Portland, Oregon)
When the district was confronted with a budget crisis, a group of students developed a 57 item survey and administered it to their classmates to elicit solutions. The survey had a response rate of 50 percent. The students hand-tabulated and analyzed the results and presented a budget report that reflected student priorities such as increased funding for college and career preparation to the board of education. The resulting budget reflected student priorities and included an unprecedented line item for student initiatives.	When the community was presented with an opportunity to build a new high school, students partnered with educators to create the school. Serving as voting members of decisionmaking committees, students co-wrote the school's mission and constitution and helped select course offerings, including a required daily leadership class, and reviewed architectural plans, resulting in customized classrooms for new advanced technology courses.	When free transportation by school bus was largely discontinued, high school absenteeism rose. A student-led survey administered to more than 2,000 students indicated that the cost of transportation was an impediment to attendance, and a group of students advocated for free transportation from the city's transit company. Their successful campaign resulted in free public bus passes for all students who qualified for the free or reduced-price school lunch program.

Source: Adapted from Fletcher (2004b).

students to work jointly with educators to use results and recommendations to plan for action steps.

Inside-Outside Fishbowl is a tool for engaging students and educators in a dialogue about school-related topics or problems. Expanding on conventional focus-group and listening-circle tools used in schools (Burgoa, Izu, & Hillenberg, 2010; School Change Collaborative, 2000d), it provides step-by-step directions and materials for carrying out a process in which a group of students responds to a set of school-related questions by sharing their perceptions, opinions, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences about the topic or problem while educators listen. Then, roles are reversed: Educators become the speakers, reflecting on what the students said, and students become the listeners. Through facilitated small- and whole-group activities, students and educators identify priorities for follow-up action to address the issue.

S^4 is a tool for deeply exploring the nature of a school-related topic or problem so that adults better understand it from the perspective of students who directly experience its consequences. It was inspired by schools that have used students as co-researchers to study problems and by the use of narrative storytelling as a journalistic approach to describe real situations (Griffith & Gill, 2006; Soohoo, 1993). This tool brings together multiple viewpoints to create a larger understanding of complex topics or problems. S^4 provides step-by-step directions and materials for students to conduct interviews and develop and produce a digital story based on carefully structured, videotaped interviews with other students who are affected by challenging situations. Then, the students who produced the video join educators to host forums in which the video is shown, and post-viewing discussions are conducted to generate recommendations for improving supports for affected students. The use of this tool requires a semester-long commitment from the principal, two instructors, and a class of students as well as a significant amount of pre-planning.

School improvement is complex work and is based on multiple sources of information to frame the challenges and address and monitor change efforts. Student voice brings an additional source of information to these efforts

What are the limitations of the tools?

School improvement is complex work and is based on multiple sources of information to frame the challenges and address and monitor change efforts. Student voice brings an additional source of information to these efforts. Because these tools generally involve only small numbers of students, the results they generate need to be viewed in a proper perspective. That is, the resulting ideas of 10–12 students do not necessarily represent the viewpoints of a full school or district student body. Instead, these data-gathering opportunities add student perspective to generating hypotheses and suggesting approaches for school improvement.

How is the toolkit organized?

Within this toolkit, the three tools are ordered from the least complex to plan and implement to the most complex. For each tool, the toolkit includes an overview of its specific characteristics, including information on how the tool works, the questions it addresses, the numbers and types of participants needed, the amount of time required, space and materials considerations, general directions for using the tool, and other ideas about ways that the tool might be useful. The overview is followed by practical directions for using the tool. The directions are presented in three parts: how to plan for using the tool, including a detailed checklist of all materials needed; how to use the tool to collect data on student

perspectives; and how to take follow-up action based on results generated using the tool. Also included are some helpful hints for using each tool.

To encourage customization, the toolkit includes a blank, "make-your-own" tool template that schools or districts can use to adapt the tools for new needs and interests—or to create a new data collection tool "from scratch." Additionally, the Student Voice Reflection Worksheet in appendix A can be used to organize ideas from initial brainstorming about whether or how to use one of the tools or to create a new one. Also included is an annotated list of resources on student voice in the context of school improvement for further reference.

How are the tools used?

Each of the three tools in the *Speak Out, Listen Up!* toolkit provides educators and students an approach for gathering data on student perspective to inform school improvement initiatives. Using any of these tools requires educators to formulate two or three overarching questions to guide the investigation and to map out detailed logistics for how each tool will elicit and intentionally use student voice to answer those questions.

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Since the tools can be used to address pressing or sensitive issues, they must be used sensibly. It is essential that the following behaviors be followed in order for the toolkit to be used appropriately and effectively to listen to student voice:

- Enlist students interested in or affected by a pressing school issue from classes, clubs, academic or social groups, or nominations from other students or teachers.
- Include both resilient and at-risk students in the project.
- Prepare students and educators to use the tools.
- Ensure confidentiality of what participants say.
- Secure written parent/guardian consent for student participation.
- Listen attentively.
- Be respectful of differing opinions and perspectives.
- Reframe topics or problems to be solutions-oriented.
- Use personal names only if you are saying something positive.
- Speak the truth as you understand it.
- Commit to follow up with action.

The *Speak Out, Listen Up!* toolkit is designed to help adults elicit student voice in ways that make the most of students' experiences and perspectives, viewing their role as more than just an information source. Using these tools to engage students and adults as partners in understanding school-related topics or problems is well worth the time and energy it takes. These collaborative efforts can generate more creative and effective solutions and build shared responsibility for their success.

Analyzing Surveys with Kids (ASK) Tool

Overview

Description

Students analyze and interpret survey results on a school-related topic or problem and then produce suggestions for school improvement that can be acted on.

Overarching questions you want to answer

Develop two or three overarching questions, aligned with the survey topics, that guide your investigation as you use the ASK tool.

What you need

1. Participants
   - About 10–15 students who have a stake in the topic or problem.
   - An adult facilitator.
2. Time (excluding open-ended steps)
   - Plan: 6–7 hours.
   - Conduct: 2.5 hours.
   - Act: 8 hours.
3. Space
   - A room with adequate space for students to work in small and large groups.
4. Materials
   - Tabulated and graphically displayed summary data from the survey.
   - Worksheets: Narrative Statements, Why?, More or Less, and Action Planning.

Process

I. Plan
   - Step 1. Clearly state the overarching questions.
   - Step 2. Arrange logistics.
   - Step 3. Recruit participants.

II. Conduct
   - Step 1. Prepare students.
   - Step 2. Analyze and interpret data.
   - Step 3. Generate solutions and recommend actions.

III. Act
   - Step 1. Form an action team.
   - Step 2. Implement action plan.
   - Step 3. Monitor progress.

Ideas for using this tool

- Use ASK for surveys involving issues of school climate, curriculum, interventions, perceived effectiveness of school- or districtwide initiatives, or community activities.
- Consider having older or more-skilled students look at data across student, parent, and staff surveys on a single topic or question.
- Use ASK for analyzing and interpreting other forms of student, teacher, or stakeholder perception data, such as transcripts of interviews or focus groups.

Directions

ASK is a tool for involving students in the analysis and interpretation of survey or other descriptive data tied to school improvement. Adapted from a different student voice tool used in schools (School Change Collaborative, 2000a), it provides step-by-step directions and materials for teaching students how to summarize tabulated or graphically displayed data and convert those data into narrative statements. Then, through facilitated small- and whole-group activities, students learn to interpret the data by exploring the results from their viewpoints, generating possible explanations, and making recommendations for improving the situations described by the data. ASK also provides opportunities for students to work jointly with educators to use results and recommendations to plan for and participate in action steps.

Part I. Plan

Step 1. Clearly state the overarching questions

Time: Open-ended

Clearly state two or three overarching questions that address a school-related topic or problem. Be sure that these questions can be addressed using the ASK tool and with available survey data. They must be general enough to generate ideas for addressing the topic or problem and to support thoughtful discussion and not so specific that they limit dialogue and possible solution ideas.

Sample of an overarching question that is too general: Do students feel safe at our school?

Sample of an overarching question that is too specific: Will having teachers in the hallways during passing time help students feel safe?

Sample of a balanced overarching question: Under what conditions do students feel safe and welcome at our school?

Step 2. Arrange logistics

Time: 2–3 hours

Secure the participants, space, and materials in the following logistics checklist.

Logistics checklist

- ☐ About 10–15 students who have a stake in the topic or problem at hand and an adult facilitator.
- ☐ A room with adequate space for the students to work in small and large groups.
- ☐ Easels, chart paper, and markers.
- ☐ Data tables and graphs summarizing the survey responses.
- ☐ Copies of the following worksheets: Narrative Statements, Why?, More or Less, and Action Planning.
- ☐ Incentive for student participation.
- ☐ Signed parent/guardian consent for student participation.

Step 3. Recruit participants

Time: 4 hours

Identify and recruit an adult facilitator and student participants.

Identify an adult facilitator with the following skills and experiences:

- Facilitating groups.
- Working with youth.
- Helping students and educators reframe negative perspectives and experiences into positive suggestions.
- Clarifying or reframing student and educator responses so they become actionable.

District or school administrators and the facilitator will recruit 10–15 students to invite to participate in ASK. Students must meet all the following criteria:

- Have some background, knowledge of, or interest in, the question you want to answer.
- Express interest and volunteer to participate.
- Secure a signed parent/guardian consent to participate.

Part II. Conduct

Step 1. Prepare students

Time: 45 minutes

Teach students how to summarize a set of tabulated data and to convert the results into narrative statements.

Directions:

1. Review the overarching questions with students so they understand what school-related topic or problem they are examining and why it is important.
2. Distribute the Narrative Statements Worksheet.
3. Ask each student to share with others one thing the data show—for example, 50 percent of all students report that there is an adult at school they can turn to for help.
4. Teach students to convert the data results into narrative statements.
   - Explain that narrative statements are short sentences that focus on the most important facts and describe positive and negative findings and trends.
   - Use the fill-in-the-blank examples in the Narrative Statements Worksheet to model converting results into statements.
   - Practice writing a few narrative statements as a large group and individually.
   - Have students share their practice narrative statements with the large group.

Time: 1 hour

Step 2. Analyze and interpret data

Teach students to provide explanations for the data results, based on their analysis and interpretation.

Directions:

1. Briefly review the process described in this step.
2. Divide students into pairs or small groups.
3. Give each small group a subset of tabulated survey data. All items can be examined by at least one group of students, or the facilitator can focus on specific items of interest.
4. Ask the small groups to examine their data and write three to five narrative statements that summarize the data. Refer to the Narrative Statements Worksheet just completed and provide new examples based on the survey students are analyzing.
5. Depending on the nature of the data and the way the data tables are constructed, ask the small groups to look for trends or patterns.
6. Ask the small groups to interpret the data by listing several possible explanations for the results, using their knowledge and experiences to make meaning of the data.
7. Distribute the Why? Worksheet to the small groups.
8. Have the small groups use the Why? Worksheet to consider why the survey produced certain results and to narrow the list of possible explanations to those most supported by the data.

9. Ask students to identify and list topics or problems that schools should address.

Step 3. Generate solutions and recommend actions

Time: 45 minutes

Teach students how to use data to make recommendations.

Directions:

1. Distribute the More or Less Worksheet to the small groups.
2. Use the More or Less Worksheet to record the issues identified in the Why? Worksheet and recommended actions for schools and the district and to advise schools and the district to do more or less of each individual action to address the issues.
3. Ask each small group to briefly share with the large group the recommendations that they identified in the More or Less Worksheet.

Part III. Act

Step 1. Form an action team

Time: 2 hours

Identify students and adults for membership in and joint leadership of an action team.

Directions:

1. Begin recruiting an action team by involving the students who participated in ASK.
2. Invite members of the original leadership team or group who initiated the survey as well as other educators and community members, as appropriate.
3. Identify a student and an educator to co-lead the action team.
4. Set up an action team meeting soon after conducting ASK.
5. Enlist the action team to prioritize goals and plans.

Step 2. Implement action plan

Time: 6 hours (plan); open-ended (implement)

Create, carry out, and communicate action steps within the larger community.

Directions:

1. Set up regular action team meetings.
2. Use the Action Planning Worksheet to organize action steps and a timeline.
3. Encourage completion of one action step at a time—before moving to the next step—within the established timeline.
4. Use multiple methods to communicate to the larger school or district community the actions that have resulted from student analysis and interpretation of the survey data. Examples of possible methods:
   - Announcements.
   - Assemblies.
   - School newsletters.
   - School websites.
   - Meetings with students, school faculty, district administrators, parents, and school board members.

Step 3. Monitor progress

Time: Open-ended

Review the school's or district's use of student voice to inform school issues and of the ASK tool as a means to collect data.

Directions:

1. Debrief at action team meetings about how students and adults experience the use of the tool, and revise the tool as needed.

2. Work with district administrators to determine whether using the tool addressed the overarching questions that you wanted to answer.
3. Review progress of the action plan regularly and revise the action steps as needed.
4. Monitor changes over time by using the tool to periodically collect and analyze new data.

Helpful hints!

- Recruit students early in planning.
- Prepare data in simple tables that show trends and patterns.
- Remind students that explanations for the results are thoughtful guesses based on their experiences and knowledge and that some explanations are more plausible than others.
- Before showing students the tabulated data, ask them to call out their predictions of the results of a few items to engage their interest in discovering the real results.
- Remind students to speak their minds and that the district commits to no reprisals for honesty and making suggestions.
- Provide students a meaningful incentive to participate (for example, extra class credit, certificate of appreciation, recognition in school assemblies and newsletters, lunch parties, gift certificates).

Narrative Statements Worksheet

Narrative statements are factual statements that:

- Communicate a single idea about what the data show.
- Are short, clear sentences.
- Explain important parts of the data.
- Describe positive and negative trends.

Sample student survey results: Percentages of students who experience caring and support

Survey item	Response option	Boys	Girls	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Overall average
There is an adult at school I can turn to for help	Agree	46	52	45	53	65	50
	Disagree	29	24	30	23	21	26
	Don't know	25	24	25	24	14	24
Teachers try to get to know me	Agree	28	36	29	34	60	32
	Disagree	37	33	34	35	20	34
	Don't know	35	31	37	31	20	34

Complete the narrative statements by filling in the blanks below.

1. Girls are more likely than boys to report that _____ _____ .

2. A larger percentage of boys than girls disagree that _____ _____ .

3. Students in grade 12 are more likely than students in grades 10 and 11 to report that _____ _____ .

4. Half of all students agree that _____ _____ .

Make up other narrative statements yourself.

Why? Worksheet

From the narrative statements you developed based on the survey results, select one to three that you want to address. For each narrative statement you select, use each of the three "because" sections to list your explanations for why the survey question produced the results it did. Then, list a few topics or problems you think the school should address.

Narrative statement _____

Because students:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Because schools or teachers:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Because community or society:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Some topics or problems schools should address:

- _____
- _____
- _____

Source: Adapted from School Change Collaborative (2000a).

More or Less Worksheet

As topics or problems are identified for the schools to address, students discuss and record:

- Activities students think schools should do more of.
- Activities students think schools should do less of.

Topics or problems identified	Students suggest do more of this	Students suggest do less of this

Source: Adapted from School Change Collaborative (2000a).

Action Planning Worksheet

How can students and adults work together to make changes happen?

Fill in the boxes with ideas and suggestions.

Topic or problem	Possible action steps	Who needs to be involved	Timeline for next steps

Source: Adapted from School Change Collaborative (2000a).

Inside-Outside Fishbowl Tool

Overview

Description

In this special kind of focus group, students and educators trade roles as speakers and listeners during a facilitated discussion of a school-related topic or problem and jointly develop a plan of action.

Overarching questions you want to answer

Develop two or three overarching questions that will guide your investigation and that can be addressed using the Inside-Outside Fishbowl tool.

What you need

1. Participants
   - About 8–12 students who have a stake in the topic or problem.
   - About 15 school or district leaders.
   - An adult facilitator.
2. Time (excluding open-ended steps)
   - Plan: 6–7 hours.
   - Conduct: 6–9 hours.
   - Act: 8 hours.
3. Space
   - A room large enough for two concentric circles of chairs.
4. Materials
   - A set of focus-group questions for students and educators.
   - Action Planning Worksheet.

Process

I. Plan
   - Step 1. Clearly state the overarching questions.
   - Step 2. Arrange logistics.
   - Step 3. Recruit participants.
   - Step 4. Formulate fishbowl questions for students and educators.

II. Conduct
   - Step 1. Prepare participants.
   - Step 2. Facilitate Inside-Outside Fishbowl.
   - Step 3. Identify priorities and debrief.

III. Act
   - Step 1. Form an action team.
   - Step 2. Implement action plan.
   - Step 3. Monitor progress.

Other district ideas for using this tool

- Consider using Inside-Outside Fishbowl with different groups of students (freshmen and seniors; English language learner students and students fluent in English), addressing the same set of questions.
- Use the tool to dig deeper into data before determining a course of action.
- Conduct Inside-Outside Fishbowl multiple times with the same group of students over the course of an initiative to understand longitudinally how actions are working out.
- Add family or community members to the adult side.

Directions

In this special kind of focus group, students and educators trade roles as speakers and listeners during a facilitated discussion of an issue related to school improvement and jointly develop and carry out a plan of action. In an initial session, students meet with the facilitator to develop thoughtful responses to a set of questions, which they then share during the fishbowl with the adult participants, who listen and then reflect on what they hear. This carefully structured dialogue allows students to voice opinions, concerns, and ideas in a safe environment where they might, for the first time, be seen as contributing ideas to address an important school topic or problem.

Part I. Plan

Step 1. Clearly state the overarching questions

Time: Open-ended

Clearly state two or three overarching questions for a given school-related topic. Be sure that these questions can be addressed using the Inside-Outside Fishbowl tool and the data collected during student and adult interviews. They must be general enough to generate ideas for addressing the topic or problem and to support thoughtful discussion yet specific enough to inform action taken to address the topic or problem.

Sample overarching questions

- What school-based services and supports are available to students experiencing academic difficulties?
- What factors lead students to participate in an after-school tutoring program?

Sample of related Inside-Outside Fishbowl questions

- When you have struggled with your school work, what type of services and supports did you use at your school?
- When friends or classmates have struggled with their schoolwork, what type of services and supports did they use? Are there services and support that you and your friends don't use? Explain.
- Why do you think some students participate in the after-school tutoring program and others don't?
- How can your school improve the after-school tutoring program?
- What else besides the services discussed so far do students need in order to be successful in school? Think about specific things your school could add or do better to help students who are struggling with their school work.

Step 2. Arrange logistics

Time: 2–3 hours

Secure the participants, space, and materials in the following logistics checklist.

Logistics checklist

- ☐ About 8–12 students with a stake in the school-related topic or problem, about 15 school or district leaders, and an adult facilitator.
- ☐ A room large enough to accommodate two concentric circles of chairs for participants.
- ☐ Easels, chart paper, and markers.
- ☐ 5×7-inch note cards in multiple colors.
- ☐ Chart paper on which ground rules are written.
- ☐ A set of focus-group questions for students and educators.
- ☐ Copies of the Action Planning Worksheet.
- ☐ Incentive for student participation.
- ☐ Signed parent/guardian consent for student participation.

Step 3. Recruit participants

Time: 4 hours

Identify and recruit an adult facilitator, adult participants, and student participants.

District or site administrators will identify an adult facilitator with the following skills and experiences:

- Facilitating groups.
- Preparing written or audio/visual documentation of meetings and events.
- Working with youth.
- Helping students and educators reframe negative perspectives and experiences as positive suggestions for change.
- Clarifying and reframing student and educator responses so that they can be acted on.

District or site administrators and the facilitator will select about 15 educators to participate in Inside-Outside Fishbowl, based on their roles as leaders in schools or the district. It is critical that these educators have a basic understanding of existing school policies and practices and are positioned to influence change.

District or site administrators and the facilitator will select about 8–12 students to be invited to participate in Inside-Outside Fishbowl. Students must meet all the following criteria:

- Express interest and volunteer to participate.
- Commit to participating in a two-and-a-half-hour training session.
- Confirm that they are available to participate.
- Secure signed parent/guardian consent to participate, prior to the first preparation meeting.

Step 4. Formulate fishbowl questions for students and educators

Time: 1 hour

Using the prompts below as a guide, formulate a set of focus group questions for students and use the provided questions for educators. Make sure that both sets of questions are aligned with the overarching questions and will generate specific information and ideas to address the topic or problem.

Questions during students inside the fishbowl, educators outside

1. Begin by describing the topic or problem. Ask students to describe their own experience relative to the topic or problem.
2. Ask students how their experience with this topic or problem is similar to or different from the experiences of other students they know.
3. Ask what the school has done to help students deal with this topic or address this problem.
4. Ask what additional steps the school could take to help students deal with this topic or address this problem.
5. Ask students if there is anything else that they would like to tell the adults in the room about their school experience or about this specific topic or problem.

Questions during educators outside the fishbowl, students inside

1. What are some of the key things you learned from the student discussion about (this topic)? Was anything surprising? Confirming?
2. Based on what the students said, what policies, practices, and programs are in place to help students with this topic or problem, and how can they be strengthened?
3. Based on what the students said, which priorities still need to be addressed to help students address this topic or problem?
4. Are there topics or problems the students raised that you'd like to learn more about?

Part II. Conduct

Step 1. Prepare participants

Time: 3–4 hours (total for both adult and student training sessions)

Schedule a two-and-a-half-hour training session for students and a one-hour training session for educators on how to participate in Inside-Outside Fishbowl.

Student training session

Time: 2–3 hours

Directions:

1. Prepare the room with an inner and outer circle of chairs, each circle facing inwards, arranged as they will be for Inside-Outside Fishbowl.
2. Seat students in the inner circle with you.
3. Describe the problem to be solved or topic to be addressed, state the overarching questions, and provide detailed information about the process.
4. Review the ground rules.
5. Help students prepare their responses to each of the student fishbowl questions by following steps 6–11.
6. Distribute a set of note cards of multiple colors to each student; students will use a card of a particular color on which to write their responses to a specific question.
7. Read the first question and ask students to write down several brief responses.
8. Ask students to share their responses aloud by going around the circle.
9. Help students to reframe their responses so that they are not just "yes" or "no" answers.
10. Encourage students to add explanations, specific details, and suggestions as a way to help generate solutions.
11. Repeat until all the questions have been shared and answered.
12. Conduct a practice demonstration of the process, to allow students to rehearse introducing themselves, responding to questions, and using their note cards to guide responses.
13. Provide feedback about voice, tone, body language, and content of the responses.

Educator training session

Time: 1 hour

Directions:

1. Describe the topic or to be addressed or the problem to be solved, state the overarching questions and provide detailed information about the process.
2. Review the ground rules.
3. Preview the questions the students will answer, and explain that educators will be asked to reflect aloud on student responses during the Inside-Outside Fishbowl, based on the educator questions listed on page 20.
4. Ask educators to frame their responses so that they are not just "yes" or "no" answers.

5. Encourage educators to focus their responses on solutions by adding explanations, specific details, and suggestions to their responses.
6. Provide background information on using this tool and how using it might benefit students. For example, students who participate in Inside-Outside Fishbowl activities may be involved in caring relationships with adults, experience adult expectations for high achievement, and have meaningful opportunities for participation and decision-making, as they express their ideas and feelings about school-related topics or problems.
7. Remind educators that listening to students using this tool is different from listening to students in classrooms and schools. In those settings educators generally direct the dialogue, but for this process, their role is to listen silently and attentively while students speak.

Step 2. Facilitate Inside-Outside Fishbowl

Time: 3 hours

Facilitate the fishbowl process with students seated in the inside circle first.

Students inside the fishbowl, educators outside

Time: 1 hour

Directions:

1. Seat students in a tightly arranged inner circle of chairs facing inwards, and seat educators in an outer circle of chairs.
2. Post the ground rules below on chart paper. Review them with participants and make sure everyone agrees to them.
3. Briefly review the Inside-Outside Fishbowl process.
4. Designate an educator to list ideas from the discussion on chart paper.
5. Read the first of the student fishbowl group questions and ask students to refer to their note cards and share their responses.
6. Go around the circle until all students have spoken.
7. Before moving to the next question, ask if there are additional comments.
8. Move on to the next question, and repeat the process until all questions have been addressed.
9. Thank students for responding and educators for listening silently.

Ground rules for Inside-Outside Fishbowl

- Silence phones.
- Stay for the entire process.
- Focus on what you like, want, and need.
- Be respectful of each other.
- Listen attentively.
- Use names only when making positive comments.
- Follow the instructions of the facilitator.
- Speak the truth as you understand it.
- Commit to follow up with action.

Educators outside the fishbowl, students inside

Time: 1 hour

Directions:

1. Designate a student to list ideas from the discussion on chart paper.
2. Have educators and students swap seats. Remind students to remain silent while the educator discussion is facilitated.
3. Repeat the process (using steps 5–9 from the students inside the fishbowl, educators outside activity), asking educators to address the educator fishbowl group questions that reflect on what the students said and probing for understanding of topics, problems, and solution ideas.
4. Thank educators for responding and students for listening silently.

Step 3. Identify priorities and debrief

Time: 1 hour

Facilitate a process in which students and educators set priorities for follow-up action and debrief on use of the Inside-Outside Fishbowl tool.

Directions:

1. Ask students and educators to move chairs and pair off or make small groups, each of which includes students and adults.
2. Direct each pair or small group to identify up to three ideas for change that make sense, given priorities and resources.
3. Have each pair or small group share its ideas for change with the large group.
4. Explain that this work is not the endpoint for addressing a topic or problem but the beginning of developing an action planning process.
5. Ask students how it feels to be listened to by adults in a new way, and ask adults how it feels to listen to students in a new way.

Part III. Act

Step 1. Form an action team

Time: 2 hours

Identify students and adults for membership and joint leadership of an action team.

Directions:

1. Use a sign-up sheet at the end of Inside-Outside Fishbowl to recruit an action team.
2. Work with colleagues and district and site administrators to identify potential additional team members.
3. Identify a student and an educator to co-lead the action team.
4. Set up an action team meeting soon after conducting Inside-Outside Fishbowl.
5. Enlist the team to propose and prioritize goals and plans.

Step 2. Implement action plan

Time: 6 hours (plan); open-ended (implement)

Create, carry out, and communicate action steps.

Directions:

1. Set up regular action team meetings.
2. Use the Action Planning Worksheet to organize action steps and a timeline.
3. Encourage completion of one action step at a time—before moving on to the next—within the established timeline.
4. Use multiple methods to communicate to the larger school or district community about the actions taken by the school or district based on results from Inside-Outside Fishbowl. Examples of methods:
   - Announcements.
   - Assemblies.
   - School newsletters.
   - School websites.
   - Meetings with students, school faculty, district administrators, parents, and school board.

Step 3. Monitor progress

Time: Open-ended

Review the school's or district's use of student voice to inform school-related topics or problems and the Inside-Outside Fishbowl tool as a means for collecting data.

Directions:

1. Debrief at action team meetings about how students and adults experience the use of the tool, and revise the tool as needed.
2. Work with district or site administrators to determine whether the tool addressed the overarching questions that you wanted to answer.
3. Review progress of the action plan regularly and revise the action steps as needed.
4. Monitor changes over time by using the tool with the same group of students to periodically collect and analyze new data.

Helpful hints!

- Recruit students early in planning.
- Aim for a balanced mix of students from different gender, age, and ethnic groups; also include both resilient and at-risk students.
- Designate students and adults to be timekeepers and note takers to help with facilitation.
- Help students reframe topics, problems, and criticisms into specific ideas and suggestions for improvements.
- Remind students to speak their minds and that the district commits to no reprisals for honesty and making suggestions.
- Provide students a meaningful incentive to participate (for example, extra class credit, certificate of appreciation, recognition in school assemblies and newsletters, lunch parties, gift certificates).

Action Planning Worksheet

How can students and adults work together to make changes happen?

Fill in the boxes with ideas and suggestions.

Topic or problem	Possible action steps	Who needs to be involved	Timeline for next steps

Source: Adapted from School Change Collaborative (2000a).

Students Studying Students' Stories (S^4) Tool

Overview

Description

In this digital storytelling process students conduct interviews, develop and produce a set of videotaped interviews of other students about a school-related topic or problem, and host forums that lead to suggestions for improvement.

Overarching questions you want to answer

Develop two or three overarching questions that will guide your investigation and can be addressed using the S^4 tool.

What you need

1. Participants
   - A group of students (for example, members of a leadership class) to serve as interviewers and video producers.
   - About 5–7 other students who volunteer to be interviewed.
   - Two adult facilitators, one with videotaping and video editing skills.
2. Time (excluding open-ended steps)
   - Plan: 11–14 hours.
   - Conduct: 1 semester.
   - Act: 4–6 hours for forums.
3. Space
   - A classroom.
   - Meeting room with overhead projector.
4. Materials
   - Video equipment and video editing software.
   - A set of draft interview questions for students to review.
   - Raw Footage Tally Worksheet.

Process

I. Plan
   - Step 1. Clearly state and discuss the overarching questions.
   - Step 2. Arrange logistics.
   - Step 3. Recruit participants.

II. Conduct
   - Step 1. Prepare students.
   - Step 2. Collect data.
   - Step 3. Summarize findings into a single digital story.

III. Act
   - Step 1. Prepare for video forums.
   - Step 2. Facilitate video forums.
   - Step 3. Debrief video forums.

Other district ideas for using this tool

- Create documentary-style descriptions of student population groups involved with different topics or issues.
- Offer a semester- or year-long enrichment class or senior project option that teaches students basic research skills, including developing research questions, interviewing subjects, collecting data, analyzing data, and synthesizing the findings to construct a story.

Directions

S^4 is a digital storytelling process in which students conduct interviews, develop and produce a set of videotaped interviews of other students about a school-related topic or problem, and host forums that lead to suggestions for addressing the issue. This is the most complex of the three student voice tools and requires significant preparation and at least a semester-long time commitment. This tool also has the greatest potential to engage and empower students as researchers and problem solvers because they take the lead in defining the topic or problem and gathering the data and in helping educators, students, community members, and other stakeholders make sense of the information and generate and carry out possible actions.

Part I. Plan

Step 1. Clearly state the overarching questions

Time: Open-ended

Clearly state two or three overarching questions to guide your investigation of a school-related topic or problem. Be sure that these questions can be addressed using the S^4 tool. They must be general enough to generate ideas for addressing the topic or problem and to support thoughtful discussion yet specific enough to inform appropriate action.

Sample overarching questions

1. How does our school encourage all students to graduate?
2. In what ways do our school culture, policies, or programs contribute to our school's dropout rate?

The sample interview questions below elicit student viewpoints by probing more deeply into the overarching questions.

Sample interview questions related to the overarching questions

1. What do the adults (for example, teachers, administrators, counselors, coaches) at your school say or do to encourage you to stay in school and graduate? Without naming names, can you give me an example of what that looks like?
2. Do they say or do the same thing for all students, including those who are struggling with their school work or have behavior challenges? Can you give me an example of what that looks like?
3. What do the adults (for example, teachers, administrators, counselors, coaches) at your school say or do that might discourage you from staying in school and graduating? Can you give me an example of what that looks like?
4. How might your school's culture, policies, or programs discourage some students—especially those who are struggling with their school work or have behavior challenges—from staying in school? Can you give me an example of what that looks like?
5. Is there anything your school could or should do to better support students and help them stay in school and graduate?

Step 2. Arrange logistics

Time: 7–10 hours

Secure the participants, space, and materials in the following logistics checklist.

Logistics checklist

- ☐ Class time for S^4 project, scheduled with district or site administrators.
- ☐ A group of students (for example, the members of a leadership class) who will serve as interviewers and video producers, about 5–7 other students to be interviewed, and two adult facilitators.
- ☐ Signed parent/guardian consent for student participation.
- ☐ Video equipment and editing software.

- ☐ Venues for interviews with students.
- ☐ A set of draft interview questions for the practice student interviews.
- ☐ Copies of the Raw Footage Tally Worksheet with the themes added.
- ☐ Meeting rooms with overhead projector for forums.
- ☐ Chart paper on which ground rules are written for forums.
- ☐ Easels, chart paper, and markers.
- ☐ Incentive for student participation in the interviews.

Step 3. Recruit participants

Time: 4 hours

Identify and recruit two adult facilitators, an existing leadership class or other appropriate class or group, and 5–7 volunteer student participants to serve as interview subjects.

District or site administrators will identify two adult facilitators with the following skills and experiences:

- Facilitating groups.
- Working with youth.
- Helping students and educators reframe negative perspectives and experiences into positive suggestions.
- Videotaping and video editing skills.
- Collecting, analyzing, and presenting data.

District or site administrators and the facilitators will recruit a group of students to be the S^4 researchers. Ideally, the students would be members of an existing class or group. Students must meet both of the following criteria:

- Express interest and volunteer to participate.
- Secure signed parent/guardian consent to participate.

District or site administrators and the facilitators will select about 5–7 other students to be interviewed in the video. These students must meet all the following criteria:

- Have a stake in the topic or problem being investigated.
- Express interest and volunteer to participate.
- Secure signed parent/guardian consent before being videotaped.

Part II. Conduct

Step 1. Prepare students

Time: 3–4 weeks

Teach students how to conduct and videotape interviews and give them opportunities to practice.

Directions:

1. Explain how S[4] provides the school or district with student perspectives on the topic or problem being investigated. Discuss the overarching questions.
2. Describe the student roles of interviewer, videographer, and editor.
3. Select two-thirds of the students in the group to serve as interviewers and one-third of the students in the group to serve as videographers. If some students are unable to serve in these roles, then assign extra responsibilities to those students during the editing process.
4. Introduce basic interview techniques.
   - Have students identify recorded interviews in which the interviewer is visible, from YouTube, television news, or talk shows.
   - Select several examples of video recorded interviews to share with the class.
   - After playing a recording through once, play it again, stopping periodically to ask students questions about the wording of questions, body language, and techniques used by the interviewer to elicit details, explanations, or examples.
   - Have students describe and take notes on what they thought worked well or needed improvement in conducting the interviews and in filming them.
5. Teach the student videographers how to use the video equipment.
   - Provide hands-on instruction about the basic functionality of the video equipment, including locating the power-on switch and recording button, operating the zoom capabilities of the lens, using a tripod, adjusting sound levels, changing batteries, and editing video and sound files.
   - Explain filming techniques such as checking for distracting noises, removing distracting objects from the background, or adjusting lighting that is causing unwanted shadows.
   - Provide multiple opportunities for students to practice videotaping and review their practice footage.
6. Teach the student interviewers how to construct interview questions.
   - Prepare a draft set of interview questions for the student interviews on the topic or question being investigated.
   - Have students review the questions to make sure that they are open-ended; worded clearly and neutrally; focused on behaviors, opinions, feelings, knowledge, and personal experiences; and sequenced in a way that starts with the student's present situation before asking about the past or future.
   - Ask the students to finalize the set of interview questions by adding or deleting questions, putting them in a logical order, rewording them for simplicity and clarity, and suggesting areas where questions could be elaborated on.
7. Have the class practice conducting interviews.
   - From the students' final list of interview questions, provide a small number of practice interview questions that address student interests, beliefs, experiences,

ideas, or goals related to the topic or problem being investigated, or have the students use their own practice questions.
- Divide the class into small groups consisting of interviewers, interview subjects, and videographers.
- Have the small groups conduct and videotape the practice interviews.
- Ask the small groups to review the videos, focusing on good interviewing skills: asking one question at a time; knowing your questions well; remaining neutral in tone and body language; showing curiosity and interest; using eye contact; allowing natural pauses and silences to occur without jumping in; encouraging responses by asking for elaboration, clarification, or specific examples; and avoiding talking about oneself.

Step 2. Collect data

Time: 5–6 weeks

Facilitate the videotaping of student interviews.

Directions:

1. Schedule one to two hours per video shoot (add travel time to and from the interview location). Each interview will require one or more video shoots.
2. Select multiple venues in which to conduct the interviews, depending on the suggestions of the students being interviewed and locales that best illustrate their stories—for example, on school campuses, in community settings, or at places of employment.
3. Arrange for transportation to venues, if needed.
4. Organize teams of two interviewers and one videographer, as well as an adult facilitator, per video shoot.
5. Instruct student interviewers to:
   - Stay in their roles as interviewers.
   - Follow the questions in the interview.
   - Ask for elaboration, clarification, or examples.
   - Direct the conversation to focus on solutions to problems.
   - Remind the students being interviewed to speak the truth as they understand it and that the district is committed to no reprisals for honesty and making suggestions.
   - Encourage answers to all questions but move to another question if the student being interviewed seems uncomfortable or gets stuck.
6. Conduct the interview.
7. Videotape without stops until the interview is complete.

Step 3. Summarize findings into a single digital story

Time: 5–6 weeks

Teach students how to use the raw video footage as a data source for developing a narrative that addresses the questions.

Directions:

1. Generate several themes that surface from the interviews and add them to the Raw Footage Tally Worksheet.
2. Divide the class into three groups.
3. Assign each group to review the raw footage of the videotaped interviews of two or more students.
4. Distribute the Raw Footage Tally Worksheet and explain how to use it to document themes that emerge from each interview.
5. Have each group view its assigned videotaped interviews.
6. Encourage students to pause the interviews at any time in order to take notes and document the emergence of themes in interviewee comments for each interview, having them add other themes to the Raw Footage Tally Worksheet as needed.
7. As a whole group, discuss the videotaped interviews and the data recorded on the Raw Footage Tally Worksheets to identify differences and similarities across the interviews.
8. Help each student group:
   - Develop a list of the themes they heard for each of the people they interviewed.
   - Compare the lists of themes across all the people interviewed to see which themes repeat.
   - Decide which footage to use to tell a compelling story, either by following an individual person through several themes, following an individual theme as expressed by several people, or by combining both these types of storytelling.
   - Put together a rough story about the topic or problem they're investigating, by listing, in order, pieces of raw video footage, identified by theme and person interviewed.
9. Help each student group import its video footage into a digital editing program.
10. Help students cut, paste, and sequence the video clips according to the final, sequential list of video footage.
11. Help each group insert and edit sound.
12. Help each group review and revise the edited video.
13. Help student videographers combine all the edited videos into a single video and save it in DVD format.

Part III. Act

Step 1. Prepare for video forums

Time: 3–4 hours

Work with students to organize three groups, each of which will be responsible for one of the forums for presenting the videos. Each group will rehearse facilitating follow-up discussions with teachers, administrators, or other stakeholder groups.

Directions:

1. Assign the group to draft a one-page promotional flyer for the video. The flyer should include a brief overview of the video and the purpose of the forums, and blank space in which to fill in the logistics of date, time, and place when those are set (see 7 below).
2. Divide the class into three groups.
3. Designate the preparation of one forum per group. For example, group 1 could be assigned a forum for faculty and staff, group 2 could be assigned a forum for district administrators and support training staff, and group 3 could be assigned a forum for community members.
4. Instruct each group to designate members to play each of three roles for presenting the forums. Roles include:
   - Student scheduler: One student is responsible for working with the facilitator to arrange the date, time, and place for hosting each forum.
   - Student speakers: Two or three students are responsible for introducing the video and facilitating a brief discussion at each forum.
   - Student equipment operator: One student is responsible for bringing the video and operating the equipment to show the video at each forum.
5. Prepare student speakers to present at the forums. Students can rehearse:
   - Describing the purpose of the video, how it was made, and its main messages.
   - Presenting with a clear voice, making eye contact, and asking for and responding to audience questions.
   - Facilitating questions from the audience about video content or process.
6. Identify contact people for each forum audience that student schedulers should contact to get input about good dates, times, and places for the forums.
7. Help student schedulers send emails to the contact people to arrange and confirm the dates, times, and places of the forums. Students will attach the promotional flyer to the email messages.
8. Arrange transportation for students to and from the forums.

Step 2. Facilitate video forums

Time: 1–2 hours, plus travel time

Help students present the video and lead the follow-up discussions at the forums.

Directions:

1. Before each forum begins, the student equipment operator will prepare the video to be played.
2. The student speakers will make a brief presentation about the video and briefly describe the format for the follow-up discussion.
3. The student speakers will review the ground rules for the video viewing and discussion (see below), which will be posted on chart paper in the room.
4. The student equipment operator will show the video.
5. The student speakers will lead follow-up discussions that address the following questions:
   - What did you learn about this topic or problem from listening to student voices?
   - What did you hear that confirmed your thinking about this school-related topic or problem?
   - What priorities should schools focus on to address this topic or problem?
6. The adult facilitator will record the discussion responses on chart paper and email a typed copy to forum participants.

Ground rules for S^4 forums

- Silence phones.
- Stay for the entire process.
- Focus on what you learned.
- Be respectful of each other.
- Listen attentively.
- Use names only when making positive comments.
- Follow the instructions of the facilitator.
- Speak the truth as you understand it.
- Commit to follow-up action.

Step 3. Debrief video forums

Time: Open-ended

Review how well the S^4 tool worked to help organize and carry out the project.

Directions:

1. Debrief in the class or group about how students and adults experienced the use of the tool, and revise the tool as needed.
2. Work with district or school site administrators to identify and address one or more priority action steps.
3. Have district or site administrators review how well the videos and forums students produced using the S^4 tool addressed the questions that the leadership or other class or group attempted to answer.

Helpful hints!

- Confirm that the principal, facilitators, and students are committed to a semester-long project.
- Recruit students early in the semester to be interviewed.
- Focus the interviews on the positive policies and practices that schools have in place to address the topic or problem.
- Encourage students to experience multiple aspects of the S^4 process: developing questions, interviewing students, editing video, presenting to adults, and contributing to action steps.
- Arrange for the raw footage of the videotaped interviews to be available on computers so that the small groups can work together on storyboarding and editing. If possible, provide earphones so that the footage of multiple interviews can be reviewed simultaneously in the same classroom.
- Remind students to speak their minds and that the district commits to no reprisals for honesty and making suggestions.
- Provide students who are interviewed with a meaningful incentive to participate (for example, extra class credit, certificate of appreciation, recognition in school assemblies and newsletters, lunch parties, gift certificates).
- Target various audiences with the authority to help make change to participate in the forums.
- Post the videos on the district website so that they can be used in other forums or professional development events.

Raw Footage Tally Worksheet

Mark the tally worksheet each time a student being interviewed talks about a theme. Check (+) if the student says something positive about the theme, (–) if the student says something negative about the theme, or (0) if the student did not mention the theme. After you complete your tally, write brief notes about what you think the student's response to each theme means.

Name of student interviewed ______________________________

Themes **What did you hear them say?**	**How many times did you hear it?**	**What do you think this means?**
Use the boxes in this column to list various themes you hear in the interviewee's responses.	+ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ – ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 0 ☐	
Theme:	+ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ – ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 0 ☐	
Theme:	+ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ – ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 0 ☐	
Theme:	+ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ – ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 0 ☐	
Theme:	+ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ – ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 0 ☐	
Theme:	+ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ – ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 0 ☐	
Theme:	+ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ – ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 0 ☐	
Theme:	+ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ – ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 0 ☐	
Theme:	+ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ – ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 0 ☐	
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Theme:	+ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ – ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ 0 ☐	

What themes should be highlighted in the final video? Base your answers on the number of times a theme was mentioned or how important the theme seemed to be to the student interviewed.

Make-Your-Own Tool

Overview

Description

[Description of tool here].

Overarching questions you want to answer

[Add questions here].

What you need

1. Participants
   - [Describe participants].
2. Time (excluding open-ended steps)
   - Plan: [time required].
   - Conduct: [time required].
   - Act: [time required].
3. Space
   - [Describe the kind of space needed].
4. Materials
   - [List the materials needed].

Process

I. Plan [describe steps below]
   Step 1.
   Step 2.
   Step 3.

II. Conduct [describe steps below]
   Step 1.
   Step 2.
   Step 3.

III. Act [describe steps below]
   Step 1.
   Step 2.
   Step 3.

Other ideas for using this tool

- [List other ideas here].

Directions

[Provide directions here]

Part I. Planning

Step 1. Clearly state the overarching questions

Time required:

Topic/problem:

Questions:

Step 2. Arrange logistics

Time required:

Create a checklist of the people, space, and materials the tool process will require.

Logistics checklist

- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐
- ☐

Step 3. Recruit participants

Time required:

Task description:

Part II. Conducting

Step 1.

Time required:

Task description:

Step 2.

Time required:

Task description:

Step 3.

Time required:

Task description:

Part III. Taking action

Step 1. Form an action team

Time required:

Task description:

Step 2. Implement action plan

Time required:

Task description:

Step 3. Monitor progress

Time required:

Task description:

Helpful hints!

- [Add helpful hints here]
-
-
-
-
-
-

Appendix A. Student Voice Reflection Worksheet

What problems are you exploring or questions are you trying to answer?

As you review the tools, fill in the boxes with reflections and ideas.

Reflection questions	Analyzing Surveys with Kids	Inside-Outside Fishbowl	Students Studying Students' Stories
What are the advantages of using this tool to explore our problems or answer our questions?			
What are the disadvantages of using this tool to explore our problems or answer our questions?			
How might we need to adapt this tool to explore our problems or answer our questions?			

If we were to create our own tool, what might we use from each of these tools?

Appendix B. Annotated list of resources

The annotated list of resources includes abstracts written by the authors and publishers of the cited sources, and links to the full documents, where available. For documents without a published abstract, Regional Educational Laboratory West added a brief summary. The references all address student voice in the context of school improvement efforts. Also listed are summary descriptions of tools that specifically use student voice to inform school reform.

References

Benard, B., & Slade, S. (2009). Listening to students: Moving from resilience research to youth development practice and school connectedness. In M. Furlong, R. Gilman, & S. Huebner (Eds.), *The handbook of positive psychology in schools* (pp. 353–369). New York: Routledge. Retrieved January 25, 2012, from http://chks.wested.org/resources/ListeningTo-Students.pdf

Abstract: This chapter focuses on the role of schools in the turnaround process. It illustrates how we have facilitated schools moving from a deficit perspective to a position of resilience using youth development as a practice that partners with students in improving their schools. This approach makes optimal use of strengths-based survey data grounded in resilience theory and research, resilience and data-use training, and partnering with students for program improvement. We also highlight how the resiliency framework is effective in interactions with all students and not only those deemed by some to be "at risk." The underlying theme is that everyone harbors resilience and is able to learn and develop the skills and understandings associated with resilience theory. When this approach is taken, everyone benefits—the individual, the school setting, and the community.

Campbell, T. (2009). *Leadership and student voice at one high school: An action research study*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation. Pullman, WA: Washington State University. Retrieved from http://www.dissertations.wsu.edu/Dissertations/Spring2009/t_campbell_050509.pdf

Abstract: The purpose of this action research study is to explore how student voice is expressed at one high school with a reputation for promoting meaningful voice and to identify the role the principal plays in promoting a culture of student voice. Questions guiding this study include (a) How does student voice live at the school? (b) What are the beliefs and actions of administrators, specifically the principal, in promoting voice at the school? (c) How can student voice be enhanced at the school and, by extension, at other district high schools? This action research study relied on qualitative methods including focus group interviews for students and individual interviews and observations of teachers and administrators. Additionally, students participated in this study as co-researchers by collecting interview data from other students at the school. Data were analyzed collaboratively with the school's administrative team, which comprised the principal and principal assistant.

The students at the high school described a culture wherein student voice is promoted by staff who (a) signal they are listening to students, (b) know and care about students, (c) act on student insights with real changes in school practices and policy, and (d) ensure those

changes improve the school and student learning. The perceptions of students, teachers, and the administrators paint a picture of a principal who plays a significant role in creating a school culture for voice at the school. Students, teachers, and administrators describe a school culture wherein the principal and the administrative team have a vision for student voice. Acting on this vision, the principal and the administrative team model a "firstness" to students in an informal culture that is absent the typical power dynamics found between adults and students in many schools. The school principal encourages teacher use of student-centered instruction strategies to personalize learning, while decisionmaking is shared between students and teachers in an environment of respect and kindness. School structures that support and enhance voice complement these practices throughout the school.

Cervone, B., & Cushman, K. (2002). Moving youth participation into the classroom: Students as allies. *New Directions for Youth Development: Theory, Practice and Research, 96*(Winter), 83–99.

Abstract: The experiences of urban public high school students, told in their own words, offer new and veteran teachers guidance on how to reach adolescent learners and illustrate what youth-adult partnerships in the classroom might look like.

Cook-Sather, A. (2002). Authorizing students' perspectives: Toward trust, dialogue, and change in education. *Educational Researcher, 31*(4), 3–14.

Abstract: This article argues for attending to the perspectives of those most directly affected by, but least often consulted about, education policy and practice: students. The argument for authorizing student perspectives runs counter to U.S. reform efforts, which have been based on adults' ideas about the conceptualization and practice of education. This article outlines and critiques a variety of recent attempts to listen to students, including constructivist and critical pedagogies, postmodern and poststructural feminisms, education researchers' and social critics' work, and recent developments in the medical and legal realms, almost all of which continue to unfold within and reinforce adults' frames of reference. This discussion contextualizes what the author argues are the twin challenges of authorizing student perspectives: a change in mindset and changes in the structures in education relationships and institutions.

Fletcher, A. (2003a). *Meaningful student involvement: Guide to inclusive school change*. Olympia, WA: SoundOut. Retrieved May 9, 2012, from http://www.soundout.org/MSIInclusiveGuide.pdf

Summary: This guidebook provides training, research, and technical assistance to schools that promote meaningful student involvement in school change efforts. It defines student involvement and describes reported benefits to students and schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels. Additionally, it provides examples of its application in the context of students as researchers, planners, teachers, evaluators, decisionmakers, and advocates.

Fletcher, A. (2003b). *Meaningful student involvement: Resource guide*. Olympia, WA: SoundOut. Retrieved May 9, 2012, from http://www.soundout.org/MSIResources.pdf

Summary: This guidebook provides brief summaries of international research and practice documents on meaningful student involvement, maintenance of authentic student voice, and changing student roles through school change efforts. Additionally, it provides examples of tools used to elicit student voice in the context of students as researchers, planners, teachers, evaluators, decisionmakers, and advocates.

Fletcher, A. (2004a). *Meaningful student involvement: Research guide*. Olympia, WA: SoundOut. Retrieved May 9, 2012, from http://www.soundout.org/MSIResearch.pdf

Summary: This guidebook provides brief summaries of international research on listening to student voice in the context of school change efforts. It examines activities, outcomes, and barriers to meaningful student involvement.

Holcomb, E. (2006). *Students are stakeholders, too! Including every voice in authentic high school reform.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Abstract: Based on real events that have yielded positive results for both school culture and student achievement, this inspiring story introduces the students and staff of Knownwell High School and involves you in their journey of school improvement. *Students Are Stakeholders Too*! captures students' uncanny insights in their own words and illustrates how a responsive principal involves all student segments, creates an audience for their ideas and suggestions, and engages their authentic participation with staff in decisionmaking. Using only existing resources, educators can practice real democracy within their school community by inviting students to discuss their interests, needs, and preferences about school matters. This resource outlines eight levels of student participation, provides questions for reflection, and introduces "Content for Consideration" sections drawn from research on high school reform, challenging the beliefs and practices of individual readers and collaborative groups of educators. Edie L. Holcomb provides school leaders with practical strategies for promoting greater interaction between adults and students through every phase of the school improvement process.

Joselowsky, F. (2007). Youth engagement, high school reform and improved learning outcomes: Building systemic approaches for youth engagement. *NASSP Bulletin: The Official Journal of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, 91*(3), 257–276.

Abstract: This article explores what it takes to develop systemic strategies and structures that engage youth as co-constructors of their learning environment and experience. It looks at efforts nationwide to engage young people in education change endeavors, draws on lessons learned from a national high school reform initiative, and addresses some challenges faced by educators and students attempting this work. Finally, it examines groundbreaking youth-engagement work in New York that has successfully motivated students to increase academic achievement and graduation, college-going, and retention rates.

Kushman, J. (Ed). (1997). *Look who's talking now: Student views of restructuring schools*. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest. Retrieved May 9, 2012, from http://www.eric.ed.gov/PDFS/ED404752.pdf

Abstract: This book is the story of a collaborative project that included researchers, teachers, administrators, students, university professors, and parents who explored how to find out what students think about school. Seven case studies were conducted that represented the views of more than 1,000 students from across the nation. The findings offer a broad palette of information for school reformers, and include suggestions about including students' experiences, ideas, and opinions in school change.

Mitra, D. (2004). The significance of students: Can increasing "student voice" in schools lead to gains in youth development? *Teachers College Record, 106*(4), 651–688.

Abstract: The notion of "student voice," or a student role in the decisionmaking and change efforts of schools, has emerged in the new millennium as a potential strategy for improving the success of school reform efforts. Yet few studies have examined this construct either theoretically or empirically. Grounded in a sociocultural perspective, this article provides some of the first empirical data on youth participation in student voice efforts by identifying how student voice opportunities appear to contribute to "youth development" outcomes in young people. The article finds that student voice activities can create meaningful experiences for youth that help meet fundamental developmental needs—especially for students who otherwise do not find meaning in their school experiences. Specifically, this research finds a marked consistency in the growth of agency, belonging, and competence—three assets that are central to youth development. While these outcomes were consistent across the students in this study, the data demonstrate how the structure of student voice efforts and nature of adult–student relations fundamentally influence the forms of youth development outcomes that emerge.

Mitra, D. (2006). Increasing student voice and moving toward youth leadership. *Prevention Researcher, 13*(1), 7–10.

Abstract: "Student voice" describes the many ways in which youth might have the opportunity to participate in school decisions that will shape their lives and the lives of their peers. Student voice opportunities allow students to work with teachers and administrators to co-create the path of reform, it enables youth to meet their own developmental needs, and it can strengthen student ownership of the change process. This article describes the progression of youth development opportunities available to youth, from "being heard," to collaborating with adults, to building capacity for leadership.

Mitra, D. (2008a). Balancing power in communities of practice: An examination of increasing student voice through school-based youth-adult partnerships. *Journal of Educational Change, 9*(3), 221–242.

Abstract: This article examines how power imbalances influence the formation of student voice initiatives, which are defined as school-based youth-adult partnerships that consist

of youth and adults contributing to decisionmaking processes, learning from one another, and promoting change. Using the concept of "community of practice" as a lens, the paper examines the ways in which power influences the mutual engagement, shared repertoire, and joint enterprise of youth-adult partnerships. Specifically, the study finds that the following strategies can strengthen student voice initiatives: building meaningful roles based on mutual responsibility and respect among all members, developing shared language and norms, and developing joint enterprises aimed at fostering voices that have previously been silenced from decision-making and knowledge-building processes.

Mitra, D. (2008b). *Student voice in school reform: Building youth-adult partnerships that strengthen schools and empower youth*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Abstract: High schools continue to be places that isolate, alienate, and disengage students. But what would happen if students were viewed as part of the solution in schools rather than part of the problem? This book examines the emergence of "student voice" at one high school in the San Francisco Bay Area where educators went straight to the source and asked the students to help.

Struggling, like many high schools, with how to improve student outcomes, educators at Whitman High School decided to invite students to participate in the reform process. Dana L. Mitra describes the evolution of student voice at Whitman, showing that the students enthusiastically created partnerships with teachers and administrators, engaged in meaningful discussion about why so many failed or dropped out, and partnered with teachers and principals to improve learning for themselves and their peers. In documenting the difference that student voice made, this book helps expand ideas of distributed leadership, professional learning communities, and collaboration. The book also contributes much needed research on what student voice initiatives look like in practice and provides powerful evidence of ways in which young people can increase their sense of agency and their sense of belonging in school.

O'Donoghue, J., Kirshner, B., & McLaughlin, M. (2003). Moving youth participation forward. *New Directions for Youth Development: Theory, Practice and Research,* 96(Winter), 15–26.

Abstract: Youth participation is a key piece of positive youth development—and perhaps the most challenging one. In using the term youth participation, we refer to a constellation of activities that empower adolescents to participate in decisionmaking that affects their lives and to take action on issues they care about. Unlike other practices connected to the youth development approach, such as caring relationships or safe environments, youth participation pushes against long-held, culturally specific ideas about adolescence, as well as institutional barriers to youth involvement. And yet there is a growing effort in youth organizations, community development, and schools and other public institutions to include young people in leadership, decisionmaking, social justice and change, and evaluation. These efforts, which for the most part have been overlooked by academic scholarship, deserve careful analysis and support. This volume of New Directions for Youth Development takes a step in that direction by offering an assessment of the field, as well

as specific chapters that chronicle efforts to achieve youth participation across a variety of settings and dimensions.

Osberg, J., Pope, D., & Galloway, M. (2006). Students matter in school reform: Leaving fingerprints and becoming leaders. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 9*(4), 363–367.

Abstract: Our examination of three schools demonstrates how students can be involved in school reform by giving input about problems, helping design the reform, and sharing implementation responsibilities with adult leaders. Their involvement affects both the reform—as students leave their fingerprints on it—and the students themselves, who show signs of emerging leadership.

Smyth, J. (2006). When students have power: Student engagement, student voice, and the possibilities for school reform around "dropping out" of school. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 9*(4), 285–298.

Abstract: It is no coincidence that disengagement from school by young adolescents has intensified at precisely the same time as there has been a hardening of education policy regimes that have made schools less hospitable places for students and teachers. There can be little doubt from research evidence that as conditions conducive of learning in schools deteriorate through emphasis on accountability, standards, measurement, and high stakes testing, that increasing numbers of students of color, from urban, working class, and minority backgrounds are making active choices that school is not for them. When students feel that their lives, experiences, cultures, and aspirations are ignored, trivialized, or denigrated, they develop a hostility to the institution of schooling. They feel that schooling is simply not worth the emotional and psychological investment necessary to warrant their serious involvement. This paper argues that producing the circumstances necessary to turn this situation around requires invoking a radically different kind of ethos and education leadership—one that encourages and promotes the speaking into existence of authentic forms of student voice.

Wilson, B., & Corbett, H. (2001). *Listening to urban kids: School reform and the teachers they want*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

Abstract: This book provides a broad account of what middle school students at several low-performing schools think about their education. Based on the three-year study conducted by Wilson and Corbett in five Philadelphia middle schools, the authors conclude that successful school reform should become noticeable in what students say about school. They argue that students' input should be an important part of planning, implementing, and adjusting reform.

Burgoa, C., Izu, J., & Hillenberg, J. (2010). *Guide to a student-family-school-community partnership: Using a student and data driven process to improve school environments and promote student success*. San Francisco, CA: WestEd. Retrieved January 25, 2012, from http://chcks.wested.org/resources/StudentFamilySchoolCommunity.pdf

Summary: This guide presents detailed information on the school-community forum process, including how to plan and conduct the forum, as well as carry out the resulting ideas and plans. The forum process is a structured way for families, community members, and educators to learn from students by listening to what they say about school experiences and improvement priorities and strategies. Utilizing listening circles, a special type of focus group, small groups of students are asked to respond to questions that emerge from school-level data and address specific topics such as the relevancy of the curriculum, relationships with teachers, dropout prevention, and school climate. During this process, students speak while adults listen, followed by a facilitated dialogue between students and adults to generate recommendations and action steps. This process is based on resilience theory, which suggests that school environments rich in the protective factors of caring relationships, high expectation messages, and opportunities to make meaningful contributions help students build social and academic competencies. The forum is intended to be a catalyst for schools to utilize youth voice in reform efforts more generally.

Fletcher, A. (2004b). *Meaningful student involvement: Stories*. Olympia, WA: SoundOut. Retrieved May 9, 2012, from http://www.soundout.org/MSIStories.pdf

Summary: This document presents a general overview of meaningful student involvement in the context of school change efforts, and detailed descriptions of its goals and applications. Specifically, it includes several short vignettes of what students as researchers, planners, teachers, evaluators, decisionmakers, and advocates look like in practice at various schools. Each vignette describes a tool to elicit student voice to address a particular school challenge. Examples include students from Oakland, California, designing, administering, and analyzing surveys about teaching, counseling, and safety at three high schools; students from Anne Arundel County, Maryland, serving as voting members on the district board of education and all advisory, curriculum, and study committees; students from Portland, Oregon, developing and delivering a successful campaign to secure free public transportation to school for all students eligible for free or reduced-price school meals; students from Puyallup, Washington, co-creating with local educators the mission, guiding principles, and constitution of a new high school; and students from Bear Valley, California, conducting a year-long student-driven research process to explore student views of learning.

Fletcher, A. (2005). *Meaningful student involvement: Guide to students as partners in school change*. Olympia, WA: SoundOut. Retrieved May 9, 2012, from http://www.soundout.org/MSIGuide.pdf

Summary: This document describes the elements of meaningful student involvement in the context of school change efforts and presents a five-step cycle of listening, validating,

authorizing, mobilizing, and reflecting on student voice; a tool to measure the quality of activities involving student voice; and several examples of what students as researchers, planners, teachers, evaluators, decisionmakers, and advocates look like in practice, at elementary, middle, and high schools. These tools include student-created district budgets, decisionmaking roles for students on committees for hiring teachers and principals, and student-led forums and conferences. Additionally, it presents barriers to implementing this type of reform and possible strategies to meet these challenges.

Griffith, A., & Gill, P. (2006). Including student voice in the design process. *Journal of At-Risk Issues, 12*(2), 1–6.

Summary: This document describes narrative storytelling as a tool to elicit student voice. An interviewer asks multiple school stakeholders individually to reconstruct their experiences and give their perspective on a particular issue, as a means to better understand school policy and practice. In this study, dropouts and other at-risk students with histories in the juvenile justice and mental health systems provide detailed descriptions of their experiences transitioning from alternative education settings to the traditional high school. This information was combined into what the authors call a "design conversation," a way of weaving varying perspectives on the same topic together to create a story that can guide priorities and strategies for school improvement efforts.

Houle, K. (1997). *Turn up the volume: The students speak toolkit.* Lexington, KY: Roberts & Kay, Inc. Retrieved June 23, 2012, from http://www.robertsandkay.com/toolkits.html

Summary: This toolkit was developed by the Jessamine County School District in Kentucky to help educators increase the use of student voice in school improvement and is based on research that examined how middle and high school students viewed their school experiences. It includes detailed information about planning and implementing student focus groups and engaging students in analyzing, interpreting, and using data.

School Change Collaborative. (2000a). *Listening to student voices: Analyzing surveys with kids tool guidebook.* Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest.

Summary: This guidebook is part of Listening to Student Voices, a toolkit for K–12 education leaders and school-based teams interested in including students in continuous school improvement. It provides directions and materials for implementing the Analyzing Surveys with Kids tool, a step-by-step process for involving students as participants in the collection, analysis, and interpretation of student survey data. Students are taught how to summarize graphically displayed data into narrative statements, report findings to the broader student community, discuss results, compile a schoolwide report, and make recommendations for improvements. It also describes the intended benefits and implementation challenges of the process.

School Change Collaborative. (2000b). *Listening to student voices: Data in a day tool guidebook*. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest.

Summary: This guidebook is part of Listening to Student Voices, a toolkit for K–12 education leaders and school-based teams interested in including students in continuous school improvement. It provides directions and materials for implementing the Data in a Day tool. Using this intensive school self-study process, multiple research teams comprising students and adults conduct observations throughout the school on a specified day on a topic of concern such as how the school conveys caring and high expectation messages, uses a specific instruction or behavior strategy, or supports at-risk students. Teams come together to summarize the data gathered earlier in the day and are then regrouped into analysis teams that prepare feedback to the school, which are, in turn, regrouped into planning teams to determine implications of the data in relation to school improvement goals. This guidebook describes the intended benefits and implementation challenges of the process.

School Change Collaborative. (2000c). *Listening to student voices: Structured reflection protocol tool guidebook*. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest.

Summary: This guidebook is part of Listening to Student Voices, a toolkit for K–12 education leaders and school-based teams interested in including students in continuous school improvement. It provides directions and materials for implementing the Structured Reflection Protocol tool. This tool is a process that uses student work as a data source for structured student–teacher small group discussions. It is intended to elicit insight about student work so instruction efforts can be improved and student learning enhanced. The process entails having some students think out loud about a piece of student work while others listen, followed by the listeners providing feedback about what they heard and sharing their perspectives. The tool also describes the intended benefits and implementation challenges of the process.

School Change Collaborative. (2000d). *Listening to student voices: Student-led focus groups tool guidebook*. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest.

Summary: This guidebook is part of Listening to Student Voices, a toolkit for K–12 education leaders and school-based teams interested in including students in continuous school improvement. It provides detailed directions and materials for implementing the Student-led Focus Group tool. This tool uses the basic focus group structure but with students playing key roles in leading the focus group with assistance from an adult facilitator. Other adult stakeholders observe the dialogue silently. Additionally, it describes intended benefits and implementation challenges.

Soohoo, S. (1993). Students as partners in research and restructuring schools. *The Educational Forum, 57*(4), 386–393.

Summary: This document describes co-researching as a tool to elicit student voice. It is a form of action research that pairs an adult, in this case a professional researcher, with a team of students who can help frame the research questions, methods, analysis, and reporting. As part of the data collection to understand everyday life at one middle school, the co-researchers in this study used multiple data sources, including shadowing of students, classroom observations, journal entries, photographs and drawings, and individual and group interviews. Together the co-researchers investigated learning conditions at their school and identified problems related to the classroom learning environment, care and connection between students and teachers, and valuing of individuals. Their recommendations were used in school improvement efforts.

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Fletcher, A. (2005). *Meaningful student involvement: Guide to students as partners in school change*. Olympia, WA: SoundOut. Retrieved May 9, 2012, from http://www.soundout.org/MSIGuide.pdf

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Houle, K. (1997). *Turn up the volume: The students speak toolkit*. Lexington, KY: Roberts & Kay, Inc. Retrieved June 23, 2012, from http://www.robertsandkay.com/toolkits.html

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O'Donoghue, J., Kirshner, B., & McLaughlin, M. (2003). Moving youth participation forward. *New Directions for Youth Development: Theory, Practice and Research*, 96(Winter), 15–26.

Osberg, J., Pope, D., & Galloway, M. (2006). Students matter in school reform: Leaving fingerprints and becoming leaders. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 9*(4), 363–367. http://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ830189

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School Change Collaborative. (2000b). *Listening to student voices: Data in a day tool guidebook*. Portland, OR: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Northwest.

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