# Whole School Meaningful Student Involvement Survey

How meaningful can a school be? The following is a brief survey of the best practices educators and students can create, sustain, and expand on in order to herald fully meaningful schools. These ten traits and the characteristics that define them represent the highest bar for Meaningful Student Involvement in an individual school building.

## Trait 1: Meaningful Involvement for ALL Learners

| Characteristics | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. There are no exclusive student involvement activities in my school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. All students in all grades in my school experiences meaningful involvement. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. Every student experiences meaningful involvement everyday in my school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. Tokenistic gestures of student involvement are not acceptable in my school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. Student voice is not longer limited to voting only anywhere in my school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 6. All students experience obviously meaningful activities including dialogue, peer-driven conflict resolution and interactive learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 7. A democratic culture and education serves as the decision-making apparatus once facilitated by student councils. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

## Trait 2: No More Tokenism

| Characteristics | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 8. There are no single seats for students on any school building committees—every activity includes multiple students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 9. All school committees at all levels are operated in ways that deliberately engage members as equitable partners. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 10. All education meetings use techniques that are engaging for all participants. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 11. All decision-making includes equitable positions for students, including training and authority. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

## Trait 3: Student/Adult Courts Rule

| Characteristics | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 12. Educators learn to use school rules as interactive educational tools. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 13. Schools engage students and adults together in determining appropriate outcomes for infractions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 14. Punitive punishments have been replaced by positive approaches in every interaction for any infraction. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 15. No corporal punishment is allowed. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

## Trait 4: Student-Driven Learning

| Characteristics | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. Self-guided educational practices are normalized throughout all levels of my school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 17. All students in my school can design aspects their own academic program. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 18. Learning experiences are always used as educational and democratic processes. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 19. Student-driven learning is used in a constructivist fashion in all of my school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

## Trait 5: Constructivist Democratic Learning

| Characteristics | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20. Student engagement is a stated, measured goal for every class in every subject. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 21. Student voice is built on students' previous knowledge and is imbued with their cultural norms. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 22. Students facilitate peer-to-peer conflict resolution, personal decision-making and democratic group learning experiences. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| | | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 23. | Students regularly conduct original research on their schools, complete regular self- and teacher-evaluations, and participate in building-wide decision-making activities for credit. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 24. | Students should have established clear and equitable relationships with adults throughout schools in order to participate in full student/adult partnerships. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

## Trait 6: Reciprocal Accountability

| | Characteristics | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| 25. | Mutual evaluations are regularly sought and provided among students and adults throughout school | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 26. | Students are not afraid of punishment for sharing student voice, sharing evaluations or otherwise giving feedback to adults. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 27. | Evaluations and assessments are given from students to adults to promote professional development and cultural transformation in education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 28. | Schools acknowledge positive student behavior and learning in a variety of ways. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 29. | Educators continue to move past expectations with students as partners. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

## Trait 7: Full-Court Press

| Characteristics | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 30. All student voice–positive negative and otherwise—is allowed space and opportunity within my school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 31. All student voice is used towards teaching and learning. Diverse and divergent student voice is encouraged to give educators opportunities to embrace the potential of student-learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

## Trait 8: Equity and Equality

| Characteristics | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 32. All student involvement aims for complete equity between students and adults. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 33. Equity is seen as the just, fair and most successful route to take throughout my school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 34. Equity is about fairness in my school, equality of access in learning, recognizing inequalities throughout education and taking steps to address them. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

| 35. School culture and structures are transformed to ensure equally accessible to all students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
|---|---|---|---|---|

## Trait 9: Make Meaning from Living

| Characteristics | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 36. Curriculum is based in every students' experience of daily life. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 37. Curriculum prepares students for tomorrow so that schools meet the purpose of enriching the present as well as enlightening the future. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 38. Student ideas, experiences, wisdom and knowledge are validated constantly throughout education. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 39. Schools ultimately and regularly position student voice as central throughout learning. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 40. The depth and meaning of democracy is enacted, explored and critically examined constantly, which will secure learning for life, and a commitment to democracy among students and adults. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

## Trait 10: Public Or Nothing At All

| Characteristics | Always | Usually | Sometimes | Never |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 41. Every member of the learning community recognizes that democracy is inherently about inclusion. | | | | |
| 42. Public, transparent and accessible boards and committees make student voice apparent and inspirational. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 43. Forceful, peaceful and powerful advocacy by students, parents and educators is encouraged and acknowledged. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

# Related Content

- *The Guide to Meaningful Student Involvement* at https://soundout.org/series-on-meaningful-student-involvement/
- *SoundOut Assessment and Evaluation Tools* at https://soundout.org/soundout-evaluation-tools/
- "Examples of Whole School Meaningful Student Involvement" at http://soundout.org/whole-school-meaningful-student-involvement/
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