

**Community Conversations: Building Relationships in
Support of Public Education
Minnesota Spring Conference 2010
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Planning Community Engagement Processes

Determining the Purpose of the Event

- What is the decision to be made? Clarify the issue between the public and the school district: form agreement on the problem/opportunity. Where does staff fit into this process?
- Define the role of the public or community in relation to the decision making process—how can they contribute in a meaningful way?
- Identify the level of public participation using the Participation Spectrum. To which level is the board and superintendent willing to commit?
- Formulate specific goals that describe the public role.
- Set specific objectives for each step of the decision making process.

Practical considerations

- Who needs to assist with the planning and implementation of the community engagement process?
- Who needs to be invited to change the conversation? Do you need to create distinct invitations for different stakeholders? Who do you need to call on to assist with extending invitations?

- Is there a facility available to meet the needs of your engagement process? Are there costs associated with securing this facility for your event? If so, are there other organizations with which you might partner to sponsor a community engagement event? What kind of refreshments will you provide? Are there transportation issues to consider? Are there other community events that need to be considered for scheduling? Do you need to provide child care?
- Is there an education component to your community engagement process? How will you communicate this information to the public? Sent out ahead of time? Web site? Presentation at event? How much time do you need to present? If it takes more than 30 minutes to present information, consider providing access to information in another format or breaking up the event into multiple meetings. Do include a brief time at the beginning of each meeting to ground people in the event.

Other Planning Questions

- How much time do you have to devote to the planning and implementation of the community engagement process?
- How do you plan to collect data in this process?
- How do you plan to analyze the data collected in this process?
- How do you plan to share the information gathered in your community engagement process with the community?