

# VC Member Support for Meetings and Conversations

## *Meaningful Group Dialogue*

- ❖ Build rapport; suspend assumptions
- ❖ Pace the interaction
- ❖ Carefully select words, phrases to avoid the negative; Watch rate of speech, tone, and volume. Avoid “why” questions, if possible.
- ❖ Listen more than you talk
- ❖ Gather responses from all in the group
- ❖ Be conscious of nonverbal behavior (gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, body language, positioning)- theirs and yours
- ❖ Start on time; end early

## *Meeting Structure*

- ❖ **In preparation**
  - Room arrangement; Who’s in charge?
  - Translator services? Name tags? Name tents? Nothing?
  - Clarity about big issues on your part (see *Set the stage*)
- ❖ **Introductory remarks**
  - Welcome everyone
  - Introduce VC team members or let them introduce themselves
  - Have participants introduce themselves if the group is not too large. If the group is large, do a hand-raising to determine the group make-up. “Raise your hand if you’re a ...” Consider having folks introduce themselves as they speak.
- ❖ **Set the stage**
  - Confidential (no names, please) and looking for system-wide information as well as specifics
  - We’ll be taking notes only to remember accurately
  - Here are the VC’s areas for clarification/additional information/exploration
  - There will be time for you to add information and ask questions
- ❖ **Guiding norms**
  - All voices need to be heard
  - Ask open-ended, guiding questions
  - Wait time is important
  - Keep listening!
- ❖ **Closing remarks**
  - Thanks. Is there anything else you’d like to share with us that we didn’t talk about? Other questions? (These other questions are often about process and procedures.)
  - More ideas/information, catch us on campus. We can always walk and talk.

## *Discussion Starters*

- ❖ How will you know...?
- ❖ Is there a relationship between ...?
- ❖ How does/will you know if this work meets the needs of ...?
- ❖ What questions did the school/group ask about ...?
- ❖ What lead to the school/group’s conclusion about...?
- ❖ Is this characteristic of ...?
- ❖ We understand from the self-study that ...?
- ❖ How does this fit in with other requirements/initiatives ...?
- ❖ Is there interest/need in finding out more about ...?
- ❖ We recognize that ...
- ❖ What questions did the school/group ask about ...?
- ❖ The VC is struggling with ... Help us understand more about ...
- ❖ What guided your work/conclusions/decisions about ...?

- ❖ Have you considered/thought about ...?
- ❖ We're curious about...
- ❖ If this, ... then ...?
- ❖ What will/can you do to ensure...?
- ❖ What did different groups of stakeholders have to say/feel about ...?
- ❖ What elements of the student/community profile are related to...?
- ❖ In what ways can/will others support ...?
- ❖ If I were a ...? (Great for students and families.)
- ❖ How did the school/group learn from...?
- ❖ What factors contributed to these results?
- ❖ If you want to "tell" the school something, take your statement and turn it into a question. Have you look at the research around...? In looking at ..., what other options/ideas were considered?

### *Suggested Focus/Other Group Questions*

**REMEMBER: the best, most important questions come directly from the self-study. These should help move the understanding of all involved to a deeper, more meaningful place NOT just repeat what's written in the self-study. You can read.**

- ❖ What have you learned about student learning and success? What difference might this make?
- ❖ How do you feel (are you comfortable with) the self-study results & plans for improvement with respect to schoolwide learning results?
- ❖ How will the plan for monitoring progress work from your perspective? How can/will you contribute to its success? Do you think it will work?
- ❖ Always the concern over "all students." Talk a little about how what you provide for your very best students is mirrored for your most needy? What about all those in the middle?
- ❖ Share your/your department's/the school's growth in data analysis.
- ❖ Now that so much is standards-based, how do you differentiate between what were teaching strategies in the past and now?
- ❖ Taking a word from one of the criterion (coherent, relevant, parent involvement, professionalism, rigor), ask about their shared understanding of its meaning for the school.
- ❖ As you analyzed data and/or the criteria, what were some surprises? New learnings? Ahh-haas?
- ❖ From your perspective, which are the most meaningful/helpful/informative pieces of data? Share with us how you use this data as an individual? Department? Small learning community?
- ❖ From the core data, you have x% of students at BB and FBB. What data can you/do you use/have available to identify the more specific needs of these students? Talk about your understandings. How does this affect your own teaching practices? Within the department?
- ❖ How will you know that student learning is improving – especially around your school's agreements about what's important to know, understand, and be able to do by graduation?
- ❖ Learn more about professional development. Who decides the topics? Who plans and carries out activities? What about "individual" professional development?
- ❖ All the work of the self-study and our visit is to make clear (as clear as you/we can now) what are the next big issues for the school to work on as a whole school. Talk about what you see happening after we leave.
- ❖ How will what you learned (the action plan) alter you work at (or relationship with) the school? In your classroom? Within your department?
- ❖ What difference do you think these new understandings (action plan) will make in the school for students in 2 years? 5 years?
- ❖ School celebrates this and this. We do too. And, we'd add these other areas as well.
- ❖ What are you willing and able to do to support the action plan?

*Talk – Listen – Hear – Respond*