

Imagine Our Future: A Visioning Activity

Overview and purpose

This activity allows participants to explore the many aspects of a healthy school community. Participants will listen to a script and imagine their ideal healthy school community, drawing pictures or writing words to describe it. In groups, they will then share their ideas, noting similarities and differences.

Participants

Junior and senior high school students, staff, parents, community partners

Time needed

60 minutes

Materials

- Piece of paper for each participant
- Pen, pencil or marker for each participant
- Flipchart paper and marker
- Masking tape
- Dot stickers (optional)

Leader preparation before the activity

- Leaders may want to review the *Creating a Shared Vision* resource¹ for background information and guidance on creating a shared vision for your school.
- Ideas generated from this activity can be used to create or inform your school's shared vision. Considering the student voice throughout the process of building a healthy school community supports long-term success of work in this area.
- If time is limited, consider removing the small group discussion.

Instructions

A. Introduction and activity (20 minutes)

1. Provide each participant with a piece of paper and a pen or pencil.
2. Introduce the activity by explaining that you are going to read a script about a school community.
3. Tell participants to listen to the questions within the script and write down or draw their ideal healthy school community with any ideas that come to mind.
4. When finished reading the script, allow participants 5-10 minutes to finish capturing their ideas on paper.

B. Small group discussion (10-20 minutes)

- Divide participants into small groups and post the questions below to start a discussion. Have each small group write their ideas on flip chart paper.
- Describe the ideal healthy school community that you captured on your paper.
 - How is your ideal healthy school community similar to others in your group? How is it different?
 - Of all the ideas shared, which ideas about healthy school communities does your group like most?

C. Activity and large group discussion (20 minutes)

1. Instruct participants to post their flip chart paper on the wall.
2. Explain that each group will take part in a “gallery tour” by moving around the room to view all the healthy school community ideas posted on the wall. Instruct each group to start on their left and move in a clockwise direction. Encourage the groups to move from poster to poster by

¹ To find the *Creating a Shared Vision* resource, visit <http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/7123.asp>

performing a different locomotion each time (e.g., skipping, hopping, shuffling, walking on tip-toes). Allow a few minutes at each station before instructing the group to move to the next poster. Once each group has visited all the healthy school community posters, ask the participants to return to their seats.

3. Use the questions below to facilitate a larger group discussion:

- *What common themes or ideas did you notice during the “gallery tour”?*
- *What are we already doing to support these ideas and themes?*
- *What could we work towards in the future?*
- *What are our next steps?*

The information gathered from the participants can be used to inform your shared vision, generate ideas for creating a healthier school community, or identify key priorities to focus on. Ensure participants are aware of next steps and how their ideas will be used.

Source

Adapted from A Toolbox for Creating Healthy Places to Learn, Work and Play. Brisbane North Public Health Unit, Queensland Health, Fortitude Valley, Queensland, Australia, 2001



Visioning Script

Speak slowly, pausing to allow participants time to visualize.

We're now going to take a trip into a school community where students and staff have the best possible opportunities and conditions for learning and working. As we take this trip, try to picture your school as the ideal school community. Think about your school as you would like it to be.

Make yourself comfortable, perhaps close your eyes.

Now, imagine that we're hovering above the school in a hot-air balloon. The first bell has rung and students and staff are getting ready to start the day. From your position above the school, you're able to take in the whole school environment. Look at the buildings, the grounds, the play areas, the students, the teachers. What do you see? What sounds do you hear from the school? What smells come up to meet you?

Now the balloon is descending slowly into the centre of the schoolyard. We've landed. We're leaving the balloon and wandering around the grounds. Look around you. What impresses you most about what you see? What is the general environment like? What sort of buildings and equipment are available in this school? Are the grounds attractive and well-kept? What makes them look this way? Can you tell what types of behavior are encouraged in the school? Is it peaceful and organized? How do students and staff members act when they are in the school?

We're now going into the school building – the office, the staff room, the washrooms, the walkways, the library, and other areas. What's your first impression? What helped you form that impression? What do you see as you make your way through the building? Are the rooms clean, comfortable and welcoming? What tells you that this school values the well-being of its members? Are there certain areas or rooms set aside for specific groups to work, such as parents, staff or school partners?

Classes have started and we're going to have a look at the classrooms. As we enter one classroom after another, take notice of the students' surroundings and the general atmosphere of each room. Pay attention to the lighting, temperature, and room layout. Do the students look interested and involved in the activities offered in their classrooms? How would you describe the way teachers are working with their students? How are the students relating to their teachers? Do you see students participating in class decision making? What sorts of values are being communicated through the interaction of teachers and students, and students with one another?

The lunch bell has sounded and it is time for students and staff to eat. Where do students eat their lunch? Is it a comfortable space where they can talk with others? How much time is available for them to enjoy their meal? What type of food is available from the school? When lunch is finished, how do students spend their time? Are there opportunities for students to participate in intramurals, clubs, or other outdoor or indoor activities? Who participates in these activities?



Let's jump forward to the end of the school day. What extra-curricular programs are available to students? Are there a variety of activities that appeal to students different interests? Who helps to run these programs? How are staff, students, community members, or parent volunteers involved?

As students travel home, they may be picked up by parents or caregivers, walking, riding bikes or even skateboarding. What sort of safety rules are in place? What is the atmosphere on the buses as they pull away? How are students interacting? Is the students' departure from the school grounds supervised by teachers, parents or other road safety personnel?

When students arrive home, what do they do? Do the students talk about their day and the things they did and learned with their families? What information is shared between the school and the home and how is it shared? Do families have a positive attitude toward the school?

The day has ended and it's now time to reflect on all that you've seen and heard. Think about the things that pleased you as you moved about the school environment. What are the things that really impressed you?

Now that we have finished our trip, you can open your eyes. Now we will share some of our visions for our ideal school with each other.