

# Focus Group

## Assessment of Current Reality:

**Gather information from what you have: The Meitler Study, Middle States Report, NCEA surveys, demographic material, state and federal government forms, foundation documents (Mission, Vision, Philosophy), research committee (9) area assessment sheets.**

- REVIEW PRESENT AND PAST HISTORY- Why SAC? Why Strategic Planning?
- USE SAMPLE PURPLE MISSION STATEMENT DIRECTIVE SHEET
- REVIEW MISSION STATEMENT
- ACHIEVE CONSENSUS ON MISSION STATEMENT with school, parish and local community
- AFFIRM/REVISE MISSION STATEMENT
- PROCLAIM MISSION STATEMENT
- MISSION STATEMENT BECOMES THE ENTITY THROUGH WHICH ALL INFORMATION FLOWS

## *Focus Group: a COMPONENT OF DATA GATHERING*

### Prior to the date for the gathering:

A written letter to internal and external stakeholders including:

1. Choose and communicate the date, place and time for a Focus Group Meeting.
2. Give an explanation that the school is gathering information in the development of a Strategic Plan.
3. List that there are 9 areas of interest and briefly explain each one.
4. These stakeholders are asked which 3 focus areas they would feel most comfortable in having a discussion. They return a prioritized RSVP to the sender.
5. A meeting reminder is sent to those who will attend the focus session.

\*\*The communication does not contain which group they will participate in but that this will be assigned that evening.

\*\*Focus groups are accomplished in one session.

- 10-20 people (ideally) are assigned to each of the 9 focus areas.
- It is necessary to practice with your facilitator and interviewer prior to the event.
- The focus session is no more than 1 to 1 1/2 hours long.

On the date of the focus group:

- Greet your stakeholders and thank them for participating. (Coming and Going)
- When the stakeholders arrive, it is then that the committee person shares with them which table they will be joining. (Try to even out your numbers with each table.)
- Refreshments are available for all participants.
- A sign designating the table is set up so stakeholders can report to discuss questions.
- Ideally, there is a Committee member but absolutely a Facilitator and a Scribe at each table.
- The facilitator ensures that the time is spent efficiently, that the discussion stays on topic and that every stakeholder gets an opportunity to speak.
- The scribe takes down all information as presented. The scribe does not analyze.
- A member (chair or not) from the Advisory Council, needs to be a part of the focus research group on that date.
- It is critical that *open-ended questions* are asked of the stakeholders by the facilitator/committee member (your best communicator). Not the scribe, s/he is too busy.

***These are sample questions that **MAY BE ADAPTED FOR ALL 9 AREAS AND FOR THE UNIQUENESS OF YOUR SCHOOL:*****

For an example, the following are reformatted for the curriculum group:

- + What are your overall impressions of: (St.) \_\_\_\_\_(curriculum)?
- + In (curriculum), where are we doing well? What are our strengths?
- + How can we improve?
- + What opportunities or challenges do you see for our school in the area of (curriculum) over the next 3 years?
- + In (curriculum), what programs or initiatives do you imagine the school will pursue in the months/years ahead?
- + Are there other helpful ideas that you have in the area of (curriculum) that you would like to share?