



Family Engagement for High School Success

Parent Focus Group Protocol

Agenda.

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Group Questions
3. Close and Thank Participants

A few quick suggestions for holding your focus group.

- 6-8 is a great size for a focus group. You don't need a big room full of people to get good information.
- If you need an interpreter your school or Education Alliance of Washoe County can assist with this. Parents that speak a language other than English are an important group to involve in our planning.
- Try to schedule your group at a time that's convenient for families - evenings or weekends may work better than a school day due to parents' work schedules.
- Food helps! If your school has the budget, consider having a snack at the meeting and making this part of your advertisement.
- Many families may be more comfortable talking about issues than writing them down. This focus group relies on the facilitator to take good notes so that parents don't have to work on paper.
- Attention facilitator: it's your job to be neutral, and ask questions to clarify (not participate directly.) Even if you disagree with something, it's important that you consider what's being said and write it down. If your group seems to disagree on issues, make this part of your documentation (for example, circle issues where most of the group agrees). Do not try to solve problems on the spot. Your job is to listen and clarify the issues.

Welcome and Introductions.

Thank you for coming!

Parents and family members are truly important to each student's success. Your school is participating in a planning process to help schools to better partner with families towards increased graduation. We have scheduled an hour to answer 5 questions.

Go around the room and have each person say their name. Write down the number in attendance.



Questions.

Ask each question, and any follow-up questions you need to understand their answers. Write down the participant's answers and ideas on flip chart paper.

1. *We know that parents support and teach their kids in many different and important ways and would like to share these strengths with our planning teams and other parents. What types of things do you do to support your student?*
2. *Do you feel like a partner with your school? What should schools do to better support parents of high school students?*
3. *Do you have the information you need help your child graduate and achieve their college or career goals? If not, what is needed?*
4. *What are ways that you'd like to be involved with the school or your child's academics? What if any barriers (obstacles) exist to participating this way?*
5. *What ideas do you have to improve family involvement in school? How would these ideas help students achieve a better education?*

Closing. *Thank them for their time. Let them know that we are interested that there might be more opportunities to participate in the future—gather contact information of anyone that might be interested. Please send the notes from your meeting to dcrain@washoe.k12.nv.us.*