

HOW TO GIVE A VOICE TO YOUR PARENT COMMUNITY DREAMS Parent Liaison Institute February 4, 2009

BACKGROUND

ECIC sponsored a Harwood Institute Lab learning opportunity attended by ECIC staff and 6 GSCs and GSPCs were invited. The material presented is a small portion of what was presented at the Harwood Learning Lab.

Harwood is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that endeavors to inspire individuals to create elemental change and arouse authentic hope in local communities.

Public Knowledge

Is about understanding the community

- It comes from people's lives
- It tells us what people talk about and
- How they talk about what is important to them
- It tells us how people define issues
- It presents the web of concerns people have
- It is pivotal if we want to understand the community

Expert Knowledge

Expert knowledge may be obtained by surveys or polls which ask questions and you choose the answer

Expert knowledge is statistics, data, measured results

Expert knowledge alone does not give deep understanding of the community

It does not give us the depth and complexity of understanding needed to understand a community

Public knowledge and expert knowledge complement each other. Public and expert knowledge combined create a shared understanding and knowledge of the community.

Benefits of public knowledge

Public knowledge balances expert knowledge to make the best decisions for a community

Public knowledge gives direction of work

Public knowledge creates condition for change and produces impact

Public knowledge is used to make judgments on how to best make a difference by asking:

Will this decision take us where we want to be?

How close do we come to it at the end of the day?

WHAT CAN PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE DO FOR YOU/COMMUNITY?

- For PL – it can help develop a more effective annual plan and engagement of parents
- For GSC – combination of public knowledge and expert knowledge add depth to the strategic plan and action agenda
- For Community – offers present “pulse” on the needs of the community provide

Process for Gathering Public Knowledge

Turn outward to the community and provide opportunities for people to talk about their aspirations.

TURNING OUTWARD

- Turning outward is a series of choices and about developing a practice
- Turning outward means talking to people we don't know
- Turning outward means going to places we have not been rather
- Turning outward can be uncomfortable
- Turning outward is acting with the community.
- Turning outward is about making hope real

TURNING INWARD

- Turning inward is being more interested in programs than the community
 - Turning inward is more about planning than progress
 - Turning inward is being activity happy and action deprived
 - Turning inward is more about focusing on "own" initiatives than on the community
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ASPIRATIONS ARE

- Things within ourselves

- Things that matter about the future
- What we care about
- What we will go to bat for

Turning outward gets to aspirations which that leads to public knowledge that can create change and impact.

PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE TEST QUESTIONS

Can you stand in a room full of people, and speak genuinely about their concerns and aspiration and have them believe you and trust you. Can they hear themselves in what you said? Can they see themselves in your eyes? Would the believe you? Do they see that “you get them”?

If the answer is yes to each question and you can stand in front of the group and reflect their reality back to them, you have gained public knowledge.

If the answer is ‘No’ you have more work to do.

COMBINING PUBLIC AND EXPERT KNOWLEDGE

- Bring people together to review public knowledge and expert knowledge. These meetings should be ongoing for building relationships
- Invite those with real power in the community and who will support the work
- Discuss what you have learned and implement knowledge gained from public and expert knowledge. Identify the 2-3 most significant issues.

- Invite people early on, you want them to know what you are doing and why. You want them to learn about the results you get.
- Help people see the possibilities from what you learned. They need to understand where you are and why you are moving in a certain direction.
- If someone feels that you have all the information needed, ask them to take the public knowledge test questions.

Now, more than ever, communities need parents to take a leadership role; all communities need parents to reach that potential.

The Parent Coalitions are very naturally positioned to gather the community's public knowledge.

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

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HANDOUTS

- Ownership and ground rules
- Public knowledge test question
- Harwood Helps People Change
- 'Ask Greater Lansing' questions
- 'Ask Greater Lansing' observation sheet

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