Stop, Collaborate, and Listen

Stout Field Elementary

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Our school is organized into four strategic initiative teams.

GAP Initiative Team
Looks at any GAP in our school that might need to be addressed both in opportunity or learning.

Strong Schools Initiative Team
Committed to "Give Learning some Legs"

Student Initiative Team
Creates fun/engaging opportunities for students across our school in positive ways

Community Initiative Team
Works to build staff and student community

Background Leading to Inquiry

"My school's leaders ask for my opinion about how the school should function."

School initiative teams often solicit feedback from various stakeholders, however as we examined our survey data and specifically looked at survey question 1.6, **"My school's leaders ask for my opinion about how the school should function."** we realized that we weren't asking our students for feedback regarding these opportunities.

Purpose of Inquiry

We believed we were a school that allowed students to "guide their own learning." Yet, as we reflected on our student survey data we realized, we don't have structures in place to get feedback from the most important stakeholder -- our children.

Our Wondering Questions

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With this purpose we wondered, how would collecting student opinions and feedback impact staff decision making and initiative planning?

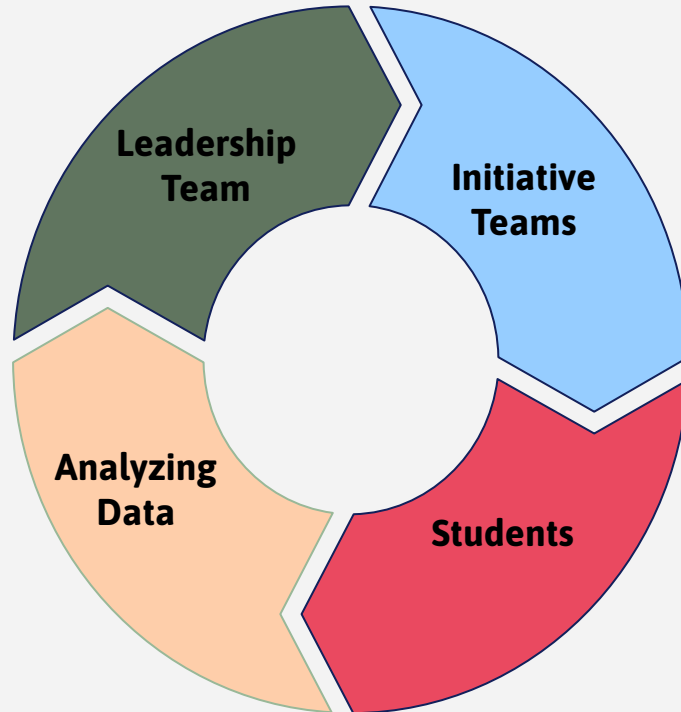**?**

How did different teams solicit and collect feedback?

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How did the different teams utilize this feedback to make decisions/plan?

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What impact did that shift in practice have on student experience?

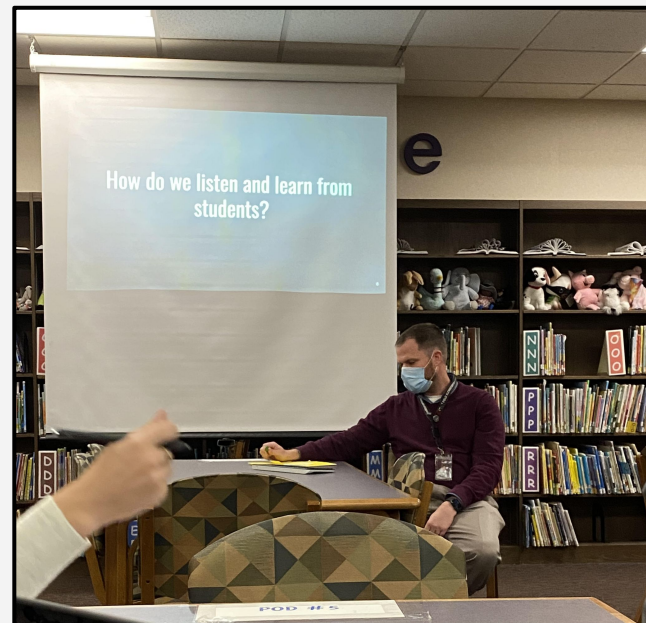# The Process

Data Collection

1 Leadership Team Members

Event #1: <u>STEM Celebration</u>   Date: <u>September 2021</u>

How does your team plan to solicit and collect feedback from stakeholders?	
Students	Staff
3-6 Google Survey 1-2 Verbal Survey	The SFE Student Initiatives vertical team provided overall feedback following the event. Staff members shared their perspective of the event, gave positive feedback, and provided ideas for future events.

Feedback Collected:

Students	Staff
(survey results table)	Staff members liked the idea of having another STEM event this school year. They offered some ideas for consistency in relation to the stations students attended.

Questions	1st & 2nd Graders Yes	3rd-6th Graders Yes
Did you agree with the STEM table rules?	96%	92%
Do you feel like you had enough time to play with the STEM activities?	74%	55%
Did you like the STEM activities?	99%	96%
Do you think the SFE STEM celebration was a good way to celebrate students?	97%	94%

Data Collection

2 Evidence of change in events

Data From Student Feedback Survey	K-2	3-6
	Yes	Yes
Did you agree with the STEM table rules?	96%	92%
Do you feel like you had enough time to play with the STEM activities?	74%	55%
Did you like the STEM activities?	99%	96%
Do you think the SFE STEM celebration was a good way to celebrate students?	97%	94%

What other ways could we celebrate SFE students?

1st & 2nd Graders	3rd - 6th Graders
- Crafts, Slime, Color, Paint - Read New Books - Play Outside - Puzzles & Games - Science Experiments - Make Things	- Digging For Gems - Make Things - Arts & Crafts - Breakfast With Teachers - Science Explorations - Outdoor Stations Similar to Colt's Day - Lynhurst Pool Trip - Movie Night

Data Collection

3 Intentional communication to students

Data Collection

4 Initiative Team Notes

- New Event!
  - After surveying students following our STEM event, we learned that they want more! Feedback indicated that they wanted to work with their hands and to create things. We will be adding an additional school wide event: **Creation Station.** This event will take place the week of February 14.
- Change in Events
  - Feedback also indicated the desire for more STEM activities. Because board games require more volunteers than we have available, **we have decided to switch our spring event from board games to an additional STEM day.** It will take place the week of May 16.

Data Collection

5 "My school's leaders ask for my opinion about how the school should function."
What impact did our schoolwide shift in practice have on your students and overall student experience?

"I think this shift in practice increases student engagement and ownership in our classroom and school culture. Students seem to feel like their voice is heard and that it matters in our classroom and school environment. I have seen an increase in work quality and in pride of their accomplishments."

"I consider the moments I have heard "This is the best day ever" or "I love this time of day" they always center on student choice/voice. When students are asked for their feedback on the processes of our school or classroom, they realize that they have true value. They aren't just students, they are stakeholders. They are an integral part of the process. Involving students in decision making, when able, shifts us away a bit from a tradition hierarchy or totem pole of school "people" and into a more integrated team approach."

Data Collection

6 What impact did this shift in thinking have on you / your thinking?

I have taken student feedback and opinions into my practice through engaging more in finding out what students are interested in and working to find books and resources that can match those interests.

-ENL Interventionist

This shift made me start to think about other areas in which I could ask for student feedback and opinions in my classroom. When I reflected, I realized that I typically didn't ask for student feedback on a regular basis in the past, so I started making more of an effort to do that this year. One example is when we were able to order the new classroom books. I spoke with each pod of students in my class and asked them which books they would most like to have added to our classroom library. I was able to include at least one choice from every student in my book order.

- 4th Grade Teacher

I've sprinkled more choice and voice in the ways I'm able: free-writing in journals, choosing books to read within the structure of developmentally appropriate texts, and students are always at the helm when deciding how we will celebrate our class stargrams. I know I can do more if I'm intentional about asking students what they like and hope for and how they learn best.

-Kindergarten Teacher

Our Discoveries

Learning Statement 1

Often times our past tradition, routines or practices would create a barrier to actually listening and responding to students

Learning Statement 2

Although this was a school wide effort it impacted individual teachers approaches and learning in their own classrooms.

Learning Statement 3

That even with every effort to listen, take feedback and respond it is possible students may not realize the impact their voice had. Communication about how we used their feedback is critical.

Where Are We Headed Next?

Continue to monitor student feedback and use this to inform future events.

Maintain and implement this process for future initiative plans.

Look for additional ways we can utilize student feedback to ensure student voice is a consistent part of our planning process.

Bibliography

Marzano, Robert, Warrick, Phil. (2014). *A Handbook for High Reliability Schools.* Bloomington: Marzano Resources.

Noguera, Pedro. (2007) How Listening to Students Can Help Schools to Improve. *Theory Into Practice.* Vol. 46 Issue 3, p 205-211.

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Background Leading to Our Inquiry (Slide 2-3)

Our School is composed of 4 unique initiative teams and every certified staff member is involved in at least one team. These teams, plan, organize and facilitate opportunities for our students throughout the year. These teams are led by a team of leaders who also serve on our schools "leadership team".

These school initiative teams often solicit feedback from various stakeholders, however as we examined our survey data and specifically looked at survey question 1.6, "My school's leaders ask for my opinion about how the school should function," we realized that we weren't asking our students for feedback regarding these opportunities.

These teams served as an anchor and catalyst for our project. We challenged each of these teams to engage in the process with us and the work they were already doing in initiative planning was the focus

The Purpose of Our Inquiry (Slide 4)

We believed we were a school that allowed students to "guide their own learning." Yet, as we reflected on our student survey data we realized, we don't have the structures in place to get feedback from the most important stakeholder – our children.

Our Wondering (Slide 5)

With this purpose, we wondered how would collecting student opinions and feedback impact staff decision making and initiative planning?

A few other important questions we held included:
- How did different teams solicit and collect feedback?
- How did different teams utilize this feedback to make decisions and plan?
- What impact did that shift in practice have on student experience?

Our Actions (Slide 6)

Our process was cyclical in nature and included discussions with our leadership team, this then led to them bringing these conversations to our initiative teams, we then utilized the plans or collected the feedback with students, and we took that data and returned to our leadership teams to discuss again.

Data Collection (Slide 7-12)

We had six different elements of data we attempted to collect or facilitate.
1. Feedback from leadership team members.
2. Evidence of shifts/changes in initiatives.
3. Intentional communication to students.
4. Initiative team notes and planning documents.
5. We asked some targeted questions to teachers to gather data. We wanted both evidence of how it impacted collective and individual practice.

Our Data (Slides 7-12)

Our leadership team met monthly and we created a form to collect their feedback and gather data. We had some basic questions on this form including, "How does your team plan to solicit and collect feedback from stakeholders?" We also asked for evidence of the feedback collected from both staff and students.

Our initiative teams became more intentional in asking students for feedback after initiative events. On one particular STEM station event we asked students if they agreed with the rules, did they have time for the ativities, did you like the activities, and what other ways could we help celebrate. On this event we found that over 95% of students thought it was a good way to celebrate students and at the same time they gave us feedback that could improve the event.

Another key challenge was how intentional and explicit we needed to be in telling students they were the reason for the revision. We intentionally found ways to tell students that we heard them and because we heard them we were responding.

We also searched our initiative team notes to find evidence of our success. One example of notes from a meeting with our student intitiatve team.

> "After surveying student following our STEM event, we learned that they want more! Feedback indicated that they wanted to work with their hands and to create things. We will be adding an additional school wide event: Creation Station. This event will take place the week of February 14th."

We also asked teachers what impact our schoolwide shift in practice had on their students and overall student experience. Below were a few examples of what we heard from them.

> "I think this shift in practice increases student engagement and ownership in our classroom and school culture. Students seem to feel like their voice is heard and that it matters in our classroom and school environment. I have seen an increase in work quality and in pride of their accomplishments."

> "I consider the moments I have heard "This is the best day ever" or "I love this time of day" they always center on student choice/voice. When students are asked for their feedback on the processes of our school or classroom, they realize that they have true value. They aren't just students, they are stakeholders. They are an integral part of the process. Involving

students in decision making, when able, shifts us away a bit from a tradition hierarchy or totem pole of school "people" and into a more integrated team approach."

We also asked teachers what impact did this shift in thinking have on you or your thinking? Below were a few of the comments we received.

I have taken student feedback and opinions into my practice through engaging more in finding out what students are interested in and working to find books and resources that can match those interests. -ENL Interventionist

This shift made me start to think about other areas in which I could ask for student feedback and opinions in my classroom. When I reflected, I realized that I typically didn't ask for student feedback on a regular basis in the past, so I started making more of an effort to do that this year. One example is when we were able to order the new classroom books. I spoke with each pod of students in my class and asked them which books they would most like to have added to our classroom library. I was able to include at least one choice from every student in my book order. - 4th Grade Teacher

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Our Discoveries (Slide 13)

As we considered what we learned we were able to summarize it into the three statements below.
- Learning Statement One: Often times our past tradition, routines or practices would create a barrier to actually listening and responding to students
- Learning Statement Two: Although this was a school wide effort it impacted individual teachers approaches and learning in their own classrooms.
- Learning Statement Three: That even with every effort to listen, take feedback and respond it is possible students may not realize the impact their voice had. Communication about how we used their feedback is critical.

Where We Are Headed Next (Slide 14)

As we consider our learning and where we are headed we will commit to the following.
- Continue to monitor student feedback and use this to inform future events.
- Maintain and implement this process for future initiative plans.
- Look for additional ways we can utlize student feedback to ensure student voice is a consistent part of our planning process.

Bibliography (Slide 15)

Marzano, Robert, Warrick, Phil. (2014). A Handbook for High Reliability
    Schools. Bloomington: Marzano Resources.

Noguera, Pedro. (2007) How Listening to Students Can Help Schools to
        Improve. *Theory Into Practice.* Vol. 46 Issue 3, p 205-211.
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