

# Youth Activation Assessment

Key Elements that Support and Encourage Authentic Youth Activation

School: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*The Youth Activation Culture (YAC) Assessment helps schools identify the baseline of the YAC at their school. To get the most accurate data, consider administering the assessment as a survey to a random selection of staff and students. Once you have a range of responses, you can aggregate and average the responses to identify areas most primed for growth and action.*

<b>1</b> The school hasn't started work in this area.	<b>2</b> Plans are in place to implement this at the school.	<b>3</b> This is in place, and there is evidence that it occurs.	<b>4</b> This is the school's routine, it works, and they even model it for others.
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**Consider each element below as you determine whether a high school evidences authentic youth activation in its culture and policies. Mature schools will warrant ratings of 3 or 4 for each item below.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Asset-based** language is employed across all levels of the school. Staff and faculty talk about students as problem solvers, rather than problems to be solved. The community in which the school sits is spoken about with reverence and respect so that the school exists in partnership with the community, rather than separate from it. Discussions about students' futures involve strengthening the community, instead of "escaping" from it.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Faculty perceive students as partners** that can drive school and community results in meaningful ways. Adults recognize that students have agency, bring valuable perspectives to the classroom, and shape school culture. Students are not seen as bystanders of their own education, but rather as co-creators who can share constructive feedback and effect positive change in the school and classroom communities.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Students recognize their own power and agency.** They see themselves as leaders who can make immediate and lasting change. They do not simply accept the status quo and are comfortable approaching adults with issues or recommendations. They are not intimidated or afraid to speak in a room full of adults. Their contributions to the conversation are nuanced, thoughtful, and solutions oriented, extending beyond an airing of grievances to a tangible proposal for change.

**OVER >>>**

1

The school hasn't started work in this area.

2

Plans are in place to implement this at the school.

3

This is in place, and there is evidence that it occurs.

4

This is the school's routine, it works, and they even model it for others.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Students have opportunities to engage** in school or district governance through formalized structures like Student Government Association, Teen Schoolboard, school-wide polls, votes, task forces, etc. Students are engaged in the entire lifecycle of a school or district's issues, participating equally in the problem identification, brainstorming, and decision-making processes.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Decision making structures** are designed so that students and adults have equal representation. Students are not just consulted or informed about changes in the school, but rather they actively participate in defining what, how, and when changes will occur.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Students and adults form a team OVER** to run campaigns in their school or community. Campaigns address challenges or inequities in students' experience. Together, the team designs and implements activities and events to raise awareness and effect change in their communities.

\_\_\_\_\_ **A wide range** of students are involved in campaigns so that a diversity of student experiences is represented. This coalition expands beyond the stereotypical student leaders (like Class President or Honor Roll students) to include a wider swath of the school community.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Clear policies and procedures** are in place for campaign teams to coordinate and negotiate with faculty and school leadership. Teams are aware of pertinent school policies and know how to properly request and obtain resources. Policies are designed to enable more participation rather than discourage it.

\_\_\_\_\_ **SMART goals** concretize the campaign-focused work of students and adults. Goals are specific to the campaigns, attainable within a designated timeframe, and relevant to the school community. Every campaign and campaign event have designated SMART goals to drive the work of the team.

\_\_\_\_\_ **Metrics** clearly define what success looks like from the outset of a campaign. Teams collect, share, and analyze data to measure success and inform next steps. Data is shared across students, faculty, and administration equally to ensure alignment across all levels of the school.