

# Jefferies Educational Services, LLC

## Campus Informal Needs Assessment

### Instructions

The Campus Informal Needs Assessment activity is a relative quick way to identify the needs of a campus as perceived by the staff. The data collected can be processed by small groups of the same staff right after the data collection. The data can also be collected and processed by administrative teams later. My preference is to have the staff process the data right after the collection process. The basic process is simple and engages the staff in identifying perceived needs and developing workable solutions at the same time.

1. Collect enough 5X7 index cards with ruled lines on one side and blank on the other so each of your staff members can have three to five cards. The more cards you give them, the more information they and you will have to process. In most cases three cards are plenty, especially if you have a large staff. Also, bring enough yellow tablets so each group of three to four teachers will have a yellow tablet.
2. Call a meeting of the faculty in the school library or cafeteria so teachers will have tables they can use when writing on the cards.
3. As they enter the room, give each of them three to five cards on which to write their comments. Let them sit wherever they desire.
4. **Give them the following instructions:** Today, you are going to help me/us to identify the main concerns that this staff has about this school. I want each of you to write down one concern about this school on the ruled side of each index card. Your concern can be about anything relevant to this school. For example, curriculum, discipline, facilities, duty schedule, lack of supplies, equipment issues, etc. Please be sure that you are clear about your concern. Do not write anyone's name on the card. Cards with names will be discarded. Once you have written a concern on each card, flip the cards over and categorize your concerns. For example, if you write: "The air conditioning system never works correctly in my classroom," flip the card over and write "Facilities" or "Maintenance." If you write, "Students who misbehave in this school are not held accountable and continue to misbehave," flip the card over and write "Discipline." Once you have completed all your cards, or all that you want to do, please stack your cards by category on the table (or other designated location) at the side of the room.
5. When everyone is finished and all the cards have been collected and stacked, take a few minutes for you and two or three other staff members to review each stack and make sure the cards are in the correct stack. For example, a "discipline" card should not be in the "curriculum" stack. Then relocate each stack so the shortest stack is on the left and the tallest stack is on the right. Read out the category name on each stack to the entire group. This will give everyone an idea of which concerns are shared by the most staff members.
6. At this point, have the staff members number off so you can divide them into groups of three to five each. This will break up the cliques.
7. Divide the stacks of cards among the groups so each group has one category or part of a category. The larger categories will need to be divided among more than one group of teachers.

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8. Instruct the groups to read all the cards aloud within the group. Once all the cards have been read, discuss the comments, and come to a consensus about the concerns. List each concern on a separate sheet of paper. A yellow tablet works well for this part of the activity.
9. Each group discusses each concern separately and develops a solution, response, set of recommendations, etc. for each concern. Write the groups' response on the sheet of paper for each concern.
10. When everyone is finished, have each group give a short report on their findings.
11. Inform the staff that you appreciate their cooperation and input. Explain the actions you will take on their recommendations and that you will keep them informed as you make progress.
12. Collect all the cards and consensus documents and have a secretary type all the information. Maintain a record of the activity.

Once you have completed this process, you can do several things with the data and recommendations. For example, you can process them through your campus leadership team and include the more important issues in some type of improvement plan. The main thing is to follow up with action on the issues and report back to the staff your progress on each one. This activity can help a new principal identify the main concerns of a staff within a school and begin to solve problems that teachers have concerns about.

I have also used this process on each campus in a district shortly after becoming the new superintendent in a district. It told me something about the perceptions of the teachers in each school and the campus leadership on each campus.

Don Jefferies, MA