

# APPENDIX D: SAMPLE ACTIVITIES FOR PARENT GROUPS

## D.1. How to Inspire and Lead with Clarity

This is an example of an introductory group exercise to provide an opportunity for parents to practice their public speaking skills as well as create a sense of shared purpose and community within the group.

In this exercise, each group member will prepare a two minute speech about the goals they wish to accomplish as part of the group. The speech should be about what each person envisions for the future success of the entire group. Everyone gets 15 minutes to write a brief answer to each of the questions below and then each group member will have two minutes to give their speech.

In your speech share with us...

- What motivated you to join the group?
- What do you want to accomplish as part of the group?
- What positive change will take place if you are successful in achieving your goals?
- How does that positive change align to the entire group's mission OR how do your goals relate to your life and the greater needs of the community.
- What specific support do you need from others in the group to help achieve your goals?
- What talents, abilities, or qualities will you bring to the work you do?

This exercise should be repeated multiple times with the group. The purpose of the exercise is to bring clarity to the goals of the group as a whole, create a unified vision, and sustain a strong sense of direction for the group, and to highlight group members' strengths and abilities.

## D.2. Alternative Education Sample One-to-One Conversation Agenda

Welcome (2 minutes)

Thank you for accepting my invitation, I really appreciate your time

Credential (3 minutes)

My name is (your name) and I am a parent from the PTA at (name of school). I am part of an effort that is meant to inform the community about school funds and the lack of a unified system to govern how our alternative schools should operate for the benefit of our students.

- Share your story here

Purpose of meeting (5 minutes)

Share about how alternative schools currently operate and the impact on our students.

Icebreaker (15 minutes)

Questions if you are speaking to a parent

- What are the thoughts shared by your child or other parents about alternative schools in our county?
- To your knowledge, what kind of services or resources do they offer? Which ones are missing?
- Have you had any experience or know someone with experience at one of these schools?

Questions if you are speaking to a student

- What are your dreams? What would you like to see more support for in your school to help motivate your goals for your future?
- Do you think there are enough supports and resources invested in alternative schools for the students who are referred to these schools?
- What would you do to make sure your friends, schoolmates, or even you, could achieve their dreams even when they go to an alternative school?
- What is the reputation of alternative schools? What is your opinion about them?

Share with your guest about biggest problems within our alternative school system. (20 minutes) Use personal notes that you prepared ahead of time to guide your conversation

Discuss questions after sharing the information with your guest (15 minutes)

- What priorities should be taken into account to establish a quality education in our alternative schools? For example, new policies to establish the roles of each type of alternative school, the county and the state in monitoring them, better monitoring the progress of students entering these schools, shared responsibility between alternative schools and comprehensive (original) schools of students, more counseling services...
- What if I told you that right now you have the power over \$33 million dollars to alleviate the problems you mentioned? How do you think that money should be spent?

#### Call to action (5 minutes)

Invite the person to a forum or board meeting and to the LCFF / LCAP public hearing of your school / district.

- Forum date 1
- Forum date 2
- Hearing (May/June \_\_, 2019)
- Another event (Any)
- Do you know anyone else I should talk to about this or who would be interested in attending a forum or event to contribute their ideas on how school funds should be used to solve problems within alternative education?

#### Closing (10 minutes)

Final closing question: How do you feel after learning about LCFF and LCAP as an opportunity to improve the problems within alternative education? Do you think you will do something different after learning this information?

Closing activity: ask your guest to share a word that describes how he/she feels and you do the same


Total time: 1 hour 15 minutes

You should definitely practice role-playing your planned one-to-one conversation at least once for 10 minutes with another parent from the group you are representing so that you can get constructive feedback before you conduct your one-to-ones. You can use the evaluation sheet on the next page to collect that feedback.

## One-to-one conversation reflection and evaluation

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please circle the number that best represents your level of agreement with the following statements:		Completely agree			Somewhat disagree			Not applicable
		Agree	Somewhat agree	Disagree	Completely disagree			
a.	<b>Eye contact:</b> maintained good eye contact, the other person feels that they are being heard.	1	2	3	4	5	6	n/a
b.	<b>Focus:</b> led the conversation according to the objectives, re-directed in a respectful and effective way if the person got distracted	1	2	3	4	5	6	n/a
c.	<b>Clarity:</b> did not have prolonged pauses, could be heard well (appropriate volume of voice), the conversation had logical order and flow (the conversation made sense).	1	2	3	4	5	6	n/a
d.	<b>Credential:</b> shared name, name of organization or employer, and name of community/city	1	2	3	4	5	6	n/a
f.	<b>Purpose:</b> explained objectives for the one-to-one conversation clearly	1	2	3	4	5	6	n/a
	<b>Shared his/her story:</b> briefly but in a genuine way to inspire trust	1	2	3	4	5	6	n/a
g.	<b>Icebreaker questions:</b> asked questions to get to know the person a little more and make them comfortable.	1	2	3	4	5	6	n/a
h.	<b>Explored areas of concern:</b> Listened adequately (70% listening/30% speaking) and asked relevant questions to the topic.	1	2	3	4	5	6	n/a
i.	<b>Explored social and leadership networks:</b> asked about others to talk to and acquired contact information	1	2	3	4	5	6	n/a
j.	<b>Invitation:</b> invited the person to take action in the community, to attend a meeting, to participate in an event, etc.	1	2	3	4	5	6	n/a



Additional comments:

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### D.3. How to Practice Advocating for Non-punitive Discipline Practices

In this activity parents will learn how to identify suspension and expulsion offenses and brainstorm alternative, non-punitive discipline practices to suggest to a school official. The activity is ideal for a large group of people, in this example a large group of 16 will break up into smaller groups of four.

To prepare for this activity, you will need to print out at least eight images depicting inappropriate student conduct at school. Some examples are:

- A student listening to music loudly in class
- A student sleeping in class
- A student throwing paper airplanes in class
- A student stealing school or other students' property
- A student damaging school property, such as by doing graffiti
- Students physically fighting
- An image of an inappropriate controlled substance such as marijuana
- An image of an object not allowed in school, such as a knife or explosive

You can also write these examples as sentences. The key aspect is to choose an array of examples from minor to major offenses that would trigger traditional discipline consequences at school. You will also need writing utensils for notes for each group, preferably a large flipchart paper and marker.

1. Ask your participants to break up into four groups of four.
2. Instruct each group to choose two leaders. Explain that these leaders will play the role of "parents" to two different children with discipline problems at school. Furthermore, that these parents requested a meeting with the school principal in order to propose a non-punitive approach to disciplining their children.
3. Hand out to each of the four groups a flipchart paper and marker. Also distribute three images reflecting the behavior of each of the two students that triggered a disciplinary action to be taken or planned to be taken by the school. You may wish to label each set of three images as "student one" and "student two".
4. Ask each group to analyze the images to identify the type of offense committed. They may reference Education code section 48900.
5. After identifying the types of offenses, have the parents generate ideas for alternative, restorative, non-punitive discipline measures in preparation for the meeting that the parents will have with the school principal.
6. Have the groups take note of their ideas on the flipchart paper. **(Refer to Chapter 2, pages 8 and 17, for some ideas on restorative discipline practices)**
7. After giving enough time to the group for discussion, have the two individuals initially assigned the role of the "parent" stand up to present to everyone their groups' ideas for alternative discipline practices, and how they would go about sharing those ideas with the school principal at the meeting.

You can take this activity a level up by having two volunteers role play the actual conversation between the school principal and one of the parents!

## D.4. How to Prepare for a SARB Hearing

This is another role-play activity that can help your group of parents feel confident and prepared for a SARB hearing by knowing what to expect when they are called to one by the county.

For the activity you will need ten volunteers for the following roles (leading roles in bold):

- A **parent**
- A **student**
- A **rep. of school district**
- A rep. of county probation
- A rep. of county welfare department
- A **rep. of county superintendent of schools (possible hearing chair)**
- A rep. of law enforcement agencies
- A rep. of community based youth service centers
- A rep. of school guidance personnel
- A rep. of child welfare and attendance personnel
- A rep. of school or county health care personnel
- A rep. of school, county, or community mental health personnel
- A **rep. of county district attorney's office (possible hearing chair)**
- A rep. of county public defender's office

The leading roles are the parent, the student, the school representative, and the chair (this could be the county superintendent of schools representative or the district attorney's office representative). You want your group to imagine how it would be to be physically present at a SARB hearing. Have all volunteers except for the parent and student, sit on one side of the room facing the parent and student on the opposite end of the room or side of the table. Then ask them, how does this room feel? What do you think about the fact that all these different representatives are on one side of the table and the parent and student are alone in the other? These questions show that even our physical surroundings can impact how we feel when we step into a meeting. The setup of hearings in particular can be frightening, especially to a family that does not fully understand the purpose of the SARB hearing but attended because it was expected of them to attend. After having this discussion and having acknowledged these factors, you may proceed to explain the SARB hearing typical agenda and have the group role play the hearing. Explain to the group that the SARB hearing has the following main components:

1. Welcome and introductions.
2. Verification of the family's phone numbers and addresses.
3. A brief explanation of what a SARB hearing is, its purpose, and an explanation of the outcomes that could be expected from the hearing.
4. Presentation of the case against the child by a school representative.
5. The student and family are given an opportunity to respond and suggest ideas that could help them improve the child's attendance problems.

6. Deliberation of the case by the panel, at which point the family may be asked to leave the room.
7. Decisions made by the panel are shared with the family.
8. A summary of the meeting and expectations for the student and family are reinforced.

To role play, simply have either the county superintendent of schools' representative or the district attorney's office representative serve as the chair of the meeting and start leading the group through the main components of the hearing. When you arrive to number three (presentation of the case) then the chair invites the school representative to participate and the school representative should step in to build the case against the child by describing how a low attendance is impacting the child's performance in school. After the school representative, the volunteers playing the student and parent roles will respond to the allegations. The actors can be creative, the family for example could be homeless, or child could have a disability or have other hardships interfering with the child's ability to attend school. Finally the panel will discuss the facts presented and they can decide to:

- Dismiss the case (because the attendance problem has been resolved etc).
- Choose to monitor the case without any action other than to schedule a future date to reconvene and check in again on the child's attendance.
- Issue directives that the parent and student must follow under a contract. Failure to abide by the directives could result in prosecution.
- Immediate recommendation for prosecution to the District Attorney's office if the child has had chronic absenteeism, it is a second SARB hearing and there is no progress.

After the role play concludes, explain to the group that knowing the SARB hearing process can be a great advantage to any family that is called to one. The SARB process is meant to be helpful to the student by allowing one last chance to identify obstacles for the child as well as solutions to help the child improve attendance. The outcome can be the opposite however, as it can be intimidating to share information with all the different representatives involved. Families must do their best to take advantage of the opportunity by sharing any information about challenges that the family is having that could be impacting the child's attendance.