



**SCHOOL OF
EXCELLENCE**

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Excellence Lesson VIII

Checking Back with Your Community in Step #3

Introduction: Thanks for tuning into this Excellence Lesson covering the final part of Step #3. As a reminder, you began Step #3 by creating and implementing your Excellence Action Plan and now, in the final stage, you will once again gather community feedback using the required questions and methods as provided by National PTA. This training will also cover analyzing the feedback you gather!



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Excellence Lesson VIII Agenda

- **Requirements to Know**
 - **Process Assessment and Improvement**
 - **Methods for Gathering Community Feedback**
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This Lesson will briefly overview requirements and methods for completing this highly important element in the School of Excellence program. We will also explore how you can assess your process for gathering feedback from Step #2 to find opportunities for improvement this time around. We will conclude with a look at analyzing your results to help you in completing the Community Impact Form, or Step #4.

Checking Back with Your Community in Step #3

Requirements

- Replicating the survey process from Step #2 allows for 1 to 1 comparison from the fall results.
- Use at least the same set of required community feedback questions
 - Goal 1 and Goal 2 (52 Questions)
 - Goal 1 (26 Questions)
 - Goal 2 (26 Questions)
- There is no minimum number of responses required.
 - Set a goal to surpass your initial numbers.



In gathering community feedback in Step #3, your paramount concern is collecting results that reflect your PTA's efforts in creating and implementing your Excellence Action Plan based on your survey results from Step #2. As such, it makes sense that you will need to use the same questions you collected in the fall to understand your progress. Accordingly, this is a required aspect of completing Step #3.

As you know, National PTA provides two methods for gathering feedback from your community – deploying a Community Feedback Survey and conducting a Community Feedback Listening Session. You are still able to use a whatever method, or combination of methods, works best for your community. However, because you need to be gathering comparative results from the Fall it is highly recommended that you at least use the same method you used in the fall. For example, if your PTA use only listening sessions in the Fall, you will want to do the same to ask the same discussion prompts that National PTA requires. However, if you can also deploy one of the required sets of survey questions in case you want to expand your outreach.

Similarly, if you used a survey in the Fall you would use surveys once again and use the same question set – either Goal 1 or Goal 2. If your PTA deployed the full set of 52 questions in the Fall, you are welcome to select only (1) set of questions to deploy in the Spring if the smaller set is easier for your community and especially if they are relevant to your PTA's Excellence Action Plan. However, **you will need to use the full set of either Goal 1 or Goal 2 questions – you cannot pick and choose.**

As a reminder, there is no minimum number of responses required. However, your PTA should aim to collect as many responses as possible, so you have enough information to inform your action plan. A minimum your PTA can strive for is 20 responses from both PTA and non-PTA members alike.

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Process Assessment and Improvement

- **Begin by assessing the process, successes and hurdles faced earlier in the program.**
 - Review your responses to the Community Feedback Form for a refresher on your efforts.
- **Brainstorm with your Excellence Team to find opportunities for improvement**
 - How (e.g., tools, methods) did we share and promote the survey or listening session?
 - Consider how successful you were. What worked and what didn't. Be specific.
 - Who was missing in our respondents? How can we better engage these groups?
 - Consider demographics (e.g., race, gender, PTA membership).
 - Did we include additional questions (e.g., open-ended questions, demographics)?
 - Consider the added information you gathered and how it supported your PTA's efforts.

As you will be replicating much of your process and efforts from Step #2, it is a great idea to begin preparing for gathering feedback once again by assessing what you did in the fall. As part of the Community Feedback Form in Step #2 you outlined how you engaged your community and discussed who was represented in your results, think especially around demographics like age, race, PTA affiliated, etc. As a refresher, review your response and then begin to brainstorm the following questions to uncover potential opportunities for improvement.

- What tools or methods did you use to share and promote with my school community the survey or listening session? What tools or methods were most successful and what were least successful in reaching and collecting feedback from our entire school community?
- What school communities did you miss in your respondents? If you did not ask for demographics, consider broad trends in your school and reach of the methods you used. For example, if you only shared the survey in PTA newsletters it may be that you missed out on non-PTA affiliated families in your school.
- Consider how you can improve your connection with these communities to collect their feedback this time around. For example, for groups that speak a language other than English, host listening sessions with someone to facilitate and note-take in the session in the preferred language. This shows you value engaging that specific community and can help you collect more representative feedback for your community.

Once you have assessed and set improvement goals it will be time to gather feedback. As a refresher, let's look at the two required options you have for gathering feedback – hosting a listening session or deploying a survey.



Host a Listening Session

• Benefits—

- Opening space for specific and focused discussions about school improvement
- Community building through meaningful conversations and reducing survey fatigue

• Considerations—

- In-person or digital sessions can influence turnout and leave out certain families
- Each session requires a facilitator and a note taker
- Many attendees in one session and reduce depth of feedback

• Use the Excellence Listening Session Guide

- Provides provide tips for planning and hosting
- Includes the required feedback questions National PTA provides for listening sessions

• Be sure to outline roles for the session

- Who will facilitate, who will take thorough, organized notes, who will provide follow up.

• Document the following for verification:

- Attendance to the listening session
- Thorough and comprehensive notes from the discussions that took place
- Evidence of the listening session for verification – this could be photos from the session or of the attendance sheet, your recorded notes from the session and/or your presentation/overview for the session.

A great way to receive direct feedback from your school community is by hosting a listening session! As a reminder, our Listening Session Guide contains the required feedback questions to address during this session, but also includes helpful tips and suggestions for hosting the session for your community.

Opening a dialogue with families and students will foster an inclusive and welcoming environment at your school. It also gives a smooth change of pace from surveys while still being able to collect the required feedback from others.

If planning on hosting a listening session, please consider the following criteria:

- Will people most likely attend in person? If online, how would that look like?
- Could we host an online and in-person session to be most inclusive of different schedules?
- What is a good attendance number to allow open and helpful conversation?

Great meetings come with planning ahead, and that includes communication among team members. Assigning roles and having organized notes will make follow up after the listening session a lot easier to track. Additionally, you will be required to share information about the session in your Community Impact Form, so be sure to document

- Number of attendees
- Main questions and highlights shared with families
- How was impact verified? The attendance sheet, photos, an overview of the session, and recorded notes are all great ways to show your community feedback.

Now let's look at deploying a survey.



Deploy a Survey

• Benefits—

- Allows for more private and potentially accurate responses
- Larger reach in community
- Ability to analyze numbers to

• Considerations—

- Survey fatigue
- Fewer in-depth details and perspectives
- In-person or digital surveys have different benefits and reach

• Use different formats to collect responses across your school community

- Paper surveys at in-person events
- Digital surveys shared in a newsletter and social media
 - Hint: Use the template Google Form versions provided in the Excellence Toolkit

• Find the total number of survey respondents

- Combine numbers from all the methods used
- Online surveys: Download the results collected to an Excel workbook or PDF file
- Paper Surveys: Create a tally sheet and upload a picture or the file. Share a photo of the surveys you received back.

As you know, for this method, National PTA has provided a set of survey questions that align to each of the six National Standards for Family-School Partnerships and the goals outlined for each Standard. You are required to use the survey questions as provided by National PTA to ensure your feedback can be easily connected to the National Standards and best practices in family engagement.

Your PTA can use at-home or in-person surveys, or any combination of both. We recommend trying a combination of styles because digital and paper surveys can reach different groups in your school. For example, a QR code to a digital survey might help capture busy parents in the drop-off line, but paper surveys might be better for in-person PTA meetings or end of the school year events.

Just as you did in Step #2, you will be required to verify your method in the Community Impact Form, so be sure to document how many responses you collected in total, including paper and online responses, and save a download of your digital responses, how you tallied your paper responses, or similar.

Ultimately, this information is collected to ensure you are meeting program requirements, but it is also best practice to keep good data records in your community so that your PTA is able to assess your progress and efforts over time. For example, as your PTA starts programming for next year, it will be helpful to have a collection of data that can help guide decisions to be as close to your community needs as possible.

Checking Back with Your Community in Step #3

Considerations

- Provide context about the program and your efforts to inform survey responses
- Opportunities to outline additional context include
 - Create a one-page handout
 - Record a short video to include in digital surveys, media or meetings
 - Include a brief letter along with paper surveys
 - Kick off listening sessions with a brief overview presentation



Find a customizable English and Spanish letter in the Excellence Toolkit!

Let's now go over some useful considerations for your PTA as you work to check back with your community.

First, it is highly recommended that you provide guiding context to your community about the program, the community feedback questions and the work your PTA has done this year. This context will help to inform the responses you collect as PTAs will be reminded of the specific efforts or your PTA and will have more information around how those efforts connect to the National Standards. The added context will also help with receiving more responses as people will feel more comfortable responding to a survey when they know their responses are being put to good use.

You can provide context in a bunch of different ways to best align with your community feedback methods. For example, if you are using paper surveys you could launch your efforts to gather feedback in a PTA meeting where you present on the program and your efforts in the program and hand out the survey to be collected at the end of the meeting. Or if you are using digital listening sessions you could record a brief video overview to provide to attendees in advance of the session, so you can dive into informed conversations.

Or, if you want something simpler, an addendum include with the questions is also a great option! You can download and customize a survey addendum provided by National PTA in the Excellence Toolkit to guide your work!

Checking Back with Your Community in Step #3

Considerations

- Combine methods to find what work best for your community
 - Use paper surveys during PTA Meetings, but digital surveys with a QR code during pick-up/drop-off
 - Include a listening session as part of an existing PTA Meeting, but offer a digital option for busy families
- Include additional questions to better understand
 - Respondent demographics
 - Specific areas related to your action plan
 - New ways opportunities for next year



Next, while you are required to use at least the same method you used in the fall to gather feedback, it is recommended that you combine methods to best reach your whole community. For example, you might use paper surveys and listening sessions during PTA Meetings to capture feedback from your methods, but to capture feedback from families not affiliated with the PTA you might use a digital surveys with a QR code during pick-up/drop-off and host a digital listening session for the whole community.

Lastly, in addition to the required questions, we recommend including additional questions to help gather specific insight into your community. You might include demographic questions to help understand who your respondents are, which can help you better understand the data you collect. For example, if all your feedback is collected from people for whom English is their primary language, you might be missing insights and opportunities among families who speak another language.

Additional questions can also help your PTA dig into the work you did in the program. Here you can add open-ended responses related to specific areas of work you did in your action plan, this can help you dig into the efforts of your PTA and find out what was successful and what might have missed the mark.

In the Excellence Toolkit, you can find sample additional questions that you can incorporate into your survey or help inspire you as you develop your own questions to include.

Checking Back with Your Community in Step #3

Today we covered:

- Gathering community feedback in Step #3 to understand the impact of your action plan
- The requirements for gathering community feedback in Step #3
 - Use at least the same set of required community feedback questions
- Ways to improve your process and efforts to gather community feedback
- Tips and recommendations for using the required methods for gathering community feedback
 - Host a Listening Session
 - Deploy a Survey

Thanks for tuning in for this Excellence Lesson!

Email Excellence@PTA.org with any questions!

To recap on today's lesson:

- We discussed how to gather community feedback in Step #3 and understand the impact of your action plan
- We highlighted the required data to collect at your school by using the same questions and methods as used in Step #2
- We shared helpful tips and best practices on hosting a listening session and deploying your school of Excellence survey

Please contact us at Excellence@PTA.org for any questions.

Thanks again and stay tuned for our next Excellence Lesson!