

K12 *Insight* 

Listening Tour Agenda Framework

Templates for guiding conversations with
school district stakeholder groups



Preparation is key for a successful listening tour

Highly successful superintendents have one trait in common: their willingness to listen.

A well-executed listening tour can help strengthen your leadership by:

- Building connections with every member of your school community
- Giving you data and *insights* to drive informed decision-making
- Demonstrating your commitment to transparency

With many stakeholders and – sometimes conflicting – interests, one of the challenging aspects of conducting an effective listening tour is setting agendas for meetings.

This Listening Tour Agenda Framework offers six helpful agenda templates with key questions you can customize for your district to guide conversations with school board members, internal staff, families, students, and special interest groups during your listening tour.



Download our Listening Tour Checklist

This checklist walks you through the important steps to take before, during, and after a school listening tour to ensure you collect critical insights to inform your roadmap for district-wide improvement.

[Download Now](#)

School Board Members

As members of the communities they serve, school board members have a pulse of what's happening in your district. Collaboration with each board member is critical to your success, and a listening tour with board members can help you strengthen trust.

Depending on the size of the board, you may consider individual meetings with each member.



It's likely you won't agree with every piece of feedback or idea offered during your listening tour. Use these transitional phrases to acknowledge the person's thoughts before moving on.

- That's an interesting perspective. Thank you for sharing that.
- I appreciate you sharing that idea.
- Thank you for your feedback. I'll be sure to take it into consideration.

Introduction

Reiterate the goals of your listening tour and the role the school board members play in the district.

Key questions

What are the biggest opportunities for growth and improvement in our district?

What would we need to do to make those things happen?

What is the biggest misconception people have about our district?

What concerns are you hearing from your constituents?

What is your vision for our district?

Obstacles

What are the biggest challenges for the district — now or in the next few years?

What is causing that challenge?

Do you see any solutions?

Ideas

If you were me, where would you focus your attention?

What ideas do you have to help us improve our district?

Action items

Review any next steps and take note of any commitments you've made through the course of the meeting.

Internal Staff

Central office team, principals, teachers, and other key school staff

Your frontline staff will have firsthand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities facing your district. Everyday victories and struggles are sometimes out of your earshot. Your listening tour is a chance to get a sense of what day-to-day life is like in your schools, classrooms, and even the hallways.

Depending on your district size, consider planning internal staff listening tour meetings by role type (principals, teachers, support staff, etc.) and/or department (human resources, transportation, etc.), or a mix of the two.



Introduction

Reiterate the goals of your listening tour.

Key questions

What do you like about working here?

What would you like to change?

What are the key projects you're focusing on over the next few months?

What questions do you hear most often from families, students, teachers, staff and/or the community?

Obstacles

What are some of the challenges you're facing in your role?

What are some areas you feel we need more support or resources?

Ideas

What ideas do you have to help us improve our district?

How would you like us to more regularly communicate with school staff to improve the district's culture?

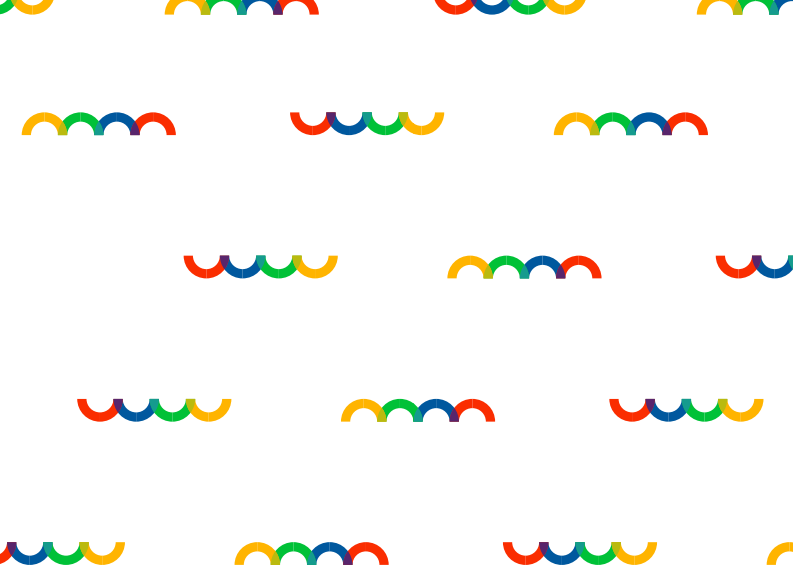
Action items

Review any next steps and take note of any commitments you've made through the course of the meeting.

Families

Today, families are more engaged than ever. Many school districts are seeing more parents and guardians in meetings and conferences, and two-way communication among underserved families has increased.

This is worth celebrating, as family participation in academics is strongly tied to student achievement. And authentic parent engagement — rather than requests for parent feedback that are more about publicity than action — builds trust.



Introduction

Reiterate the goals of your listening tour.

Key questions

Why did you choose to bring your child to our district?

Tell me about the positive experiences you've had in our district.

Tell me about the negative experiences you've had in our district.

What changes would improve the school experience for you and your child?

Obstacles

What are some of the challenges you're facing as a parent or guardian, and how could the district better support you?

What are some areas you feel we need more support or resources?

Ideas

What ideas do you have to help us improve our district?

Action items

Review any next steps and take note of any commitments you've made through the course of the meeting.

Students

The most important part of serving as a superintendent is the success of your students.

Taking the opportunity to meet with students will give you *insight* into their daily challenges and needs. It's also fun to break away from your computer and phone to remember what it's like to be in the classroom.

Students from diverse backgrounds, regions, and schools will have different perspectives on the same issues. Consider simplifying and shortening sessions for younger students.



Download our Listening Tour Toolkit

This toolkit was developed through K12 Insight's work with hundreds of superintendents like you who want to make a difference in their communities. It offers plans and best practices to guide you through a listening tour from start to finish, including action steps that will help you achieve your goals.

[Download Now](#)

Introduction

Explain that you're meeting with students to learn about their experiences.

Key questions

What do you like about your school?

What do you wish you could change?

What would help you be a better student?

How could your school or teachers better prepare you for the future?

Action items

Review any next steps and take note of any commitments you've made through the course of the meeting.

Committees, Associations, and Other Special Interest Groups

There are a broad range of groups that influence your district and its stakeholders — from union groups to PTO/PTA and teacher and education associations. These groups have additional *insights* and perspectives that can help you strengthen relationships with their members and improve educational outcomes.



Introduction

Reiterate the goals of your listening tour.

Key questions

What questions and concerns are you hearing from your organization's constituents in relation to our district?

How would you like to collaborate with district leadership in the coming years?

Obstacles

Are there any obstacles you see us facing as we work together to serve our district?

Ideas

What ideas do you have to help us improve our district?

Action items

Review any next steps and take note of any commitments you've made through the course of the meeting.



Local leaders

Elected officials, business leaders, faith leaders, and grant-making entities

Local leaders who care deeply for your community have the ability to influence other stakeholders. This group is positioned to inspire and take action. They have a deep understanding of specific neighborhoods and can help deploy messages when needed.

Introduction

Reiterate the goals of your listening tour.

Key questions

What concerns are you hearing from your constituents?

What are the biggest opportunities for growth and improvement in our district?

What would we need to do to make those things happen?

How would you like to collaborate with district leadership in the coming years?

Obstacles

What are the biggest challenges for the district — now or in the next few years?

- What is causing that challenge?
- Do you see any solutions?

Ideas

What ideas do you have to help us improve our district?

Action items

Review any next steps and take note of any commitments you've made through the course of the meeting.

A path forward for your district

As you look to build on your vision, K12 Insight is ready to help you. With so much competition for your time and resources, we offer a reliable and secure district-wide solution that offers efficient communication, effective engagement, and predictive analytics.

Our team helps helps superintendents deliver superior customer experience by:

- Upholding your commitment to better communication, collaboration, transparency, and engagement — internally and externally
- Building trust and improving equity and access for all
- Saving time, money, and your sanity

We're confident that taking the time to listen to your community will pay dividends — building trust and support among all your stakeholders.

[Ready to strengthen trust and confidence in your schools?](#)

[Request a Consult](#)

Learn how we can help your district deliver better experiences and engagement.