

# TOOL BOX

## CORE VALUES EXERCISE

<b>Time Allotted</b>	1 hour 45 minutes
<b>Resources</b>	Paper and pencil for participants Flip charts and markers
<b>Setting</b>	Large-group with break out space for smaller groups of 5-8
<b>Purpose</b>	1. To identify the core values of this school 2. To determine how and to what extent these core values are currently expressed in the actions of the school community 3. To identify misalignments

### **Part 1: Values Identification** (*Recorder storyboards all responses*)

#### **Participants**

Without discussion, take two to three minutes to list what you think are the three most important core values of this school on the paper provided. In other words, what are the heart and soul of the matter here in how we perform our work and manage our relationships with each other and the world beyond our doorstep? Think about values as they relate to:

- The core processes of our work (these are processes that are critical to the performance of mission)
- Our current students, families, faculty/staff/administration
- Our future students, families, faculty, staff and administration, and the world beyond our door
- The services we provide

Prompt your thinking with phrases like: We believe... We believe in... We care most deeply about...

#### **Facilitator with the group**

1. Storyboard values in rounds, with each person reporting his/her first (top of mind) value, then the second value, then the third.
2. Reduce the list to no more than five key values on which the group can agree.



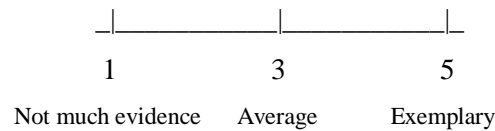
## Part 2: Value Wheel: Walking the Talk - Do Our Deeds Match Our Beliefs?

Answer the following question for each of the values your group agreed are core:

What is the evidence that we possess this value as a school community? In other words, what are the concrete signs that we “walk the talk?”

Method:

1. Using a hub-and-spokes design format, write each value in the middle of a circle - the ‘hub’ - and as evidence is offered, add a spoke. The more spokes that a value wheel displays, the more evidence that the school community’s actions are aligned with that particular ideal.
2. Then rate your school’s overall performance on each value, taking into consideration all the evidence. Using a grading system of 1-5 (with 5 being exemplary and 1 being not much evidence), how does the group rate the evidence that this value is lived on a daily basis in relationships, service delivery, and decision-making? Each group member assigns a rating; ratings are added and averaged for a final score.



Note: The core values that score 5 or 4 are the values that show the most alignment, a desirable state of overall well-being where beliefs and actions are congruent. Values with a rating of 3 or below indicate areas that a strategic plan can help bring future decisions and actions into closer alignment with what the school holds most dear.

## Part 3. Sustainability...What’s missing?

While a value cannot be grafted onto an institution, change can happen in the campus culture when there is widespread agreement that the school needs to ascribe more worth to a critically important value for its future success. It can then create structures and processes to result in behaviors that over time will build the desired culture change.

You can determine your school’s need for and readiness to adopt a new core value by asking the group a final question:

“If these values are being fully lived into, are they sufficient to ensure our sustainability of our school over the next 30 years?”

