

Youth Voices Cards

**Your thoughts, your
passions, your experience,
your dream school. Let's
talk about it!**

XQ

Great new ideas for your high school will come from you and your peers.

- You'll want to speak with students who represent the entire student body—go beyond your usual friend group. The goal is to include all types of students.
- You'll want to understand what they need to feel like they can succeed in school, academically and socially/emotionally.
- You'll want to spend time truly analyzing what you've heard.

Think about what you want to learn from the people you'll meet. Look through these cards and choose a few questions to kick off your conversations, or come up with questions on your own.

How To Use These Cards

These cards are intended to guide you and your peers into exploring and amplifying your voices.

Adults are likely to be there to support and help you, but it is ultimately your ideas that matter in this exercise.

You've probably done something like this before. That's great. If not, we're glad you're participating. Here's some help:

Speak openly, fairly, and with respect towards your peers.

Listen intently. Give your peers the space to be heard. Contribute, don't constrict.

It's OK if you don't get to every card, or if you run out of time. Create the space to return and continue.

Lastly, enjoy the time and space you share with people. It's good and important work.

Your Future

XQ

What kind of future do you see for yourself?

Now, imagine that the possibilities are infinite. What other ambitions do you have for your future?

Your Future

XQ

How do you want your life to be like or different from the lives of the people who raised you or the people around you?

Your Future

XQ

What do you want school to provide to help you pursue your dreams?

What is your school doing to help you with your dream today? What is your school not doing for you today?

Your Future

XQ

Do you see yourself continuing your education beyond high school with college or post-secondary career certification?

How well is your high school preparing you for post-secondary education and the career you want?

Your Future

XQ

What kind of job or career do you want to pursue?

**Why does it interest you?
What do you think you need to know—and be able to do—in order to get that career?**

Your Future

XQ

What does the American Dream mean to you?

Is it attainable? What do you need to achieve it? What stands in your way? How can high school help?

Your Future

XQ

**Who are the role models
you admire most?**

**What do you admire
about them? What
stands out for you –their
successful careers,
their characters, their
commitments, other
things? What did it
take for them to be
successful?**

Your Future

XQ

**How do you define
success for yourself?**

**What would help you
achieve that success?
Where can you go to find
that help?**

Your Future

XQ

Think of a question you want to ask your peers about how they envision their future.

Write your question here:

Your Future

XQ

Think of a question you want to ask your peers about how they envision their future.

Write your question here:

Your P@ssion

XQ

**Tell me about something
you're really interested in
right now.**

**How might that topic,
subject, or issue play a role
in your future?**

Your P@ssion

XQ

**What is something you
really care about?**

**Why does it matter to
you? How can you keep
learning more about it?**

Your P@ssion

XQ

If you had to choose one thing to do for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Why does that energize you? What will it take to truly master it?

Your P@ssion

XQ

**What is something you
would love to teach?**

**Why does it fascinate
you? Why do other
people need to learn
about it?**

Your P@ssion

XQ

What are you an expert at?

Where did you learn about it, and what did it take to become an expert? What did it feel like along the way to becoming an expert?

Your P@ssion

XQ

**Finish the sentence:
"I feel alive when**

_____."

Your P@ssion



Tell me about something you learned recently that you found truly interesting.

**What did you learn?
What was so fascinating about it? What else do you want to learn about it?**

Your P@ssion

XQ

**What do you wake up
thinking about every
morning?**

Your P@ssion

XQ

Think of a question you would like to ask your peers about their interests and passions.

Write your question here:

Your P@ssion

XQ

Think of a question you would like to ask your peers about their interests and passions.

Write your question here:

Your Experience

XQ

Do you feel like you belong, that you are noticed, known, and cared about as an individual at your school? Why or why not?

What would you do to make sure that students feel like they belong, that they are noticed, known, and cared about as individuals at your school?

Your Experience

XQ

In what ways, if any do you feel like you have a voice in your own learning and in decisions about your school?

What would you do to make sure students have a voice in their own learning and in decisions about your school?

Your Experience

XQ

In what ways does your school or its educators engage with community partners—meaning organizations or companies in your city?

How would you want your school/educators to engage students with outside partners to work together to solve problems in the community?

Your Experience

XQ

Do you feel like your school is safe, equitable, inclusive, and fair? Why or why not?

What would you do to make sure your school is safe, equitable, inclusive, and fair?

Your Experience

XQ

What opportunities does your school provide you to learn and make decisions about your post-secondary plan?

In what ways would you like your school to introduce you to experiences that await after graduation?

Your Experience

XQ

Does your learning connect to the real world and help you build the knowledge and skills you need for the future?

What would you do to make sure that your learning is connected to the real world and helps you build the knowledge and skills you need for the future?

Your Experience

XQ

Does your school offer learning opportunities beyond the walls of the traditional building?

Where else in your community could learning take place?

Your Experience

XQ

Does your school treat time flexibly to allow for deeper learning and give students the time they need to master subjects?

If you could design your ideal schedule, what would it look like?

Your Experience

XQ

Does your school
make the most of what
technology has to offer?

**How would you like to
see technology used in
your school and your
learning?**

Your Dream School

XQ

Tell me about a time in school when you felt really inspired to learn.

What was that experience like? How could teachers create more moments that inspire you to learn?

Your Dream School

XQ

If you were a school principal, what is one thing you'd change?

How would that make high school better for students? What would you do to get your students excited about learning?

Your Dream School

XQ

If you could add one class that would make you really excited to go to school, what would it be?

How would that class prepare you for the future?

Your Dream School

XQ

Get into your
imagination. Build a
dream school.

**What would it be like to
go there? What kind of
future would it prepare
you for?**

Your Dream School

XQ

If you could build a school that was specifically designed for how you learn, what would it look like? Sound like? Feel like?

Take me through a day at that school...

Your Dream School

XQ

What will getting a high school diploma do for you?

How will it set you up for the next step toward achieving your dreams?

Your Dream School

XQ

How would your dream high school better prepare you for college, a career and a contributor to your community?

What do you think you need to be ready for college?

Your Dream School

XQ

During what part of the day do you learn the most?

What does learning mean to you? What does it mean to your family?

Your Dream School

XQ

Think of a question you want to ask your peers about their “dream” high school. What ingredients do they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally? Or to get them ready for whatever comes after high school?

Write your question here:

Your Dream School

XQ

Think of a question you want to ask your peers about their “dream” high school. What ingredients do they need to thrive academically, socially, and emotionally? Or to get them ready for whatever comes after high school?

Write your question here:

Taking the Next Steps

YOUR VOICE MATTERS:

Share an insight from this conversation with a teacher, parent or friend. Share with them why this mattered to you.

TAKE ACTION:

Identify one thing you can do to make a positive impact change in your school community. Share what would make you feel empowered.

REFLECT:

Take a moment to think back on this conversation. Share with others what you learned about yourself and your peers.

KEEP GOING:

Talk with a teacher or other adult at your school about how you can bring more students to the table. Share why this work is important for your school and community.

Keep It Going

You've engaged and you want to keep going. What's next? Here are some starters you can choose from to help you dive deeper and keep the collaboration flourishing:

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH: How do you take care of your mental health? What support do you need from your school to improve your mental well-being?

YOUR SUPPORT SYSTEM: Who supports you in your learning journey? How can schools better support students like you?

YOUR CHALLENGES: What are the biggest challenges you face in your daily life? How can your school or community help address these challenges?

YOUR CULTURE: How does your culture influence your learning and experiences at school? How can schools be more inclusive and respectful of different cultures?

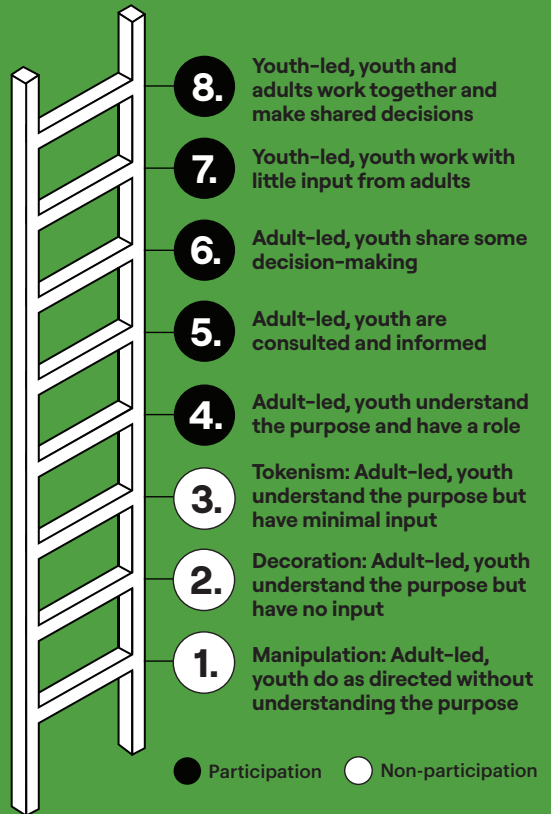
YOUR IDENTITY: How does your identity (e.g., gender, race, sexuality) impact your experiences at school? What can schools do to create a more inclusive environment for all students?

Empower Youth Participation

Use the Ladder of Youth Participation as a guide to assess and improve youth engagement in your school.

This ladder outlines different levels of participation, from low to high.

Aim to create a more student-centered school model by actively involving youth in decision-making processes and empowering them to take the lead.



Adapted from Roger Hart's Ladder of Children's Participation (1992)