

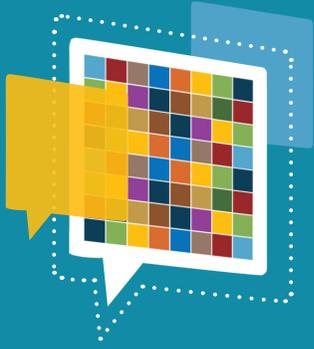


ASCD WHOLE CHILD

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS



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INTRODUCTION



Every child deserves an education that fully prepares him or her for college, career, and citizenship.

That means the basics of reading, writing, and math, of course. But we should expect more from our schools and communities. Research, practice, and common sense confirm that a whole child approach to education

will develop and prepare students for the challenges and opportunities of today and tomorrow by addressing students' comprehensive needs through the shared responsibility of students, families, schools, and communities.

THE WHOLE CHILD INITIATIVE IS AN EFFORT TO CHANGE THE CONVERSATION ABOUT EDUCATION

from a focus on narrowly defined academic achievement to one that promotes the long-term development and success of children. Through the initiative, ASCD helps community members, families, educators, and policymakers move from a vision about educating the whole child to sustainable, collaborative action.



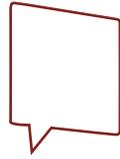
The concept of educating the whole child is not new. ASCD has continued to invest in a nationwide effort to focus attention and action

on this priority. This is not an effort to relax school accountability or downplay the critical importance of reading, writing, and math. It is an effort to ensure that more children receive an education that prepares them for college, career, citizenship, and beyond. And it is an effort to mobilize more external support—

from public agencies such as businesses, health services, faith-based communities, and other community groups—to help schools reach more young people.

MODELS

Models for Conducting Whole Child Community Conversations



Community conversations have a twofold purpose: (1) to inform the public about a whole child approach to education and (2) to empower the local community in developing, crafting, and owning the actions.



Too often, policy takes shape without the public's understanding or support. ASCD believes it is important to understand current issues in local communities first. Does educating the whole child matter? And if it does, what is the community's reaction to ASCD's Whole Child Tenets?

We have developed a framework of guiding themes to find answers to these questions. Our hope is to provide enough flexibility for local sites while preserving consistency in questioning from site to site so that the information gathered can help guide a whole child approach to education.

Think of this guide as a framework upon which to build your community conversations. Study the guiding questions and suggested tools. The tools may be adapted to best meet your community's needs and learning styles. For example, a PowerPoint presentation providing background information may be too formal for smaller groups; a handout may be more appropriate. For larger groups, PowerPoint presentations work well.

DISCUSSION MODELS

ASCD proposes two different approaches for local consideration.

The agenda and content

are the same for both approaches, except that Model A is a one-time event and Model B consists of a series of meetings over a period of

time. Model A requires less long-term investment of organizers' time and resources, while Model B demands more planning.

If both models seem too much to take on at this time, communities may want to consider a series of more informal conversations involving smaller groups of individuals such as students, teachers, parents, and others.



Discussion Model A

A well-publicized, one-time event (held, most likely, in the evening)

A 2.5-hour conversation with community stakeholders (educators, parents, students, business leaders, policymakers, health leaders, arts advocates, etc.)

Small-group conversations based on discussion questions, with plenary sessions at the beginning and end of the meeting

Trained facilitators and recorders

Discussion Model B

Three successive events over a month or two (held, most likely, in the evening)

Sessions of 90 minutes each (with the same participants as shown for Model A)

Small-group conversations based on discussion questions over a period of time

Trained facilitators and recorders



DISCUSSION MODELS

The meetings/conversations initiative should be a balance of information about the overall whole child initiative and the local community's interests. To that end, we recommend guiding themes and a common set of discussion questions that each community can customize, adding questions that are unique to their interests and using local situations and data. For instance, depending on the local political dynamic, Community A



may choose to focus on improved health initiatives, while Community B may focus on expanding the curriculum beyond reading and math. The participants' answers to the discussion questions will provide valuable information for the local

school community teams about areas of agreement, concerns, and possible disconnects. ASCD envisions a three-part discussion to (1) gather the public's point of view about the key components of a college, career, and citizenship education in local communities; (2) introduce the ASCD whole child approach to education; and (3) gather thoughts on what role different sectors of the community see themselves taking to advance the initiative. Whether the planning team opts for Model A or Model B, the discussion questions and tools are largely the same and can be further adapted to meet each site's needs and interests.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Part 1: What Does It Mean to Educate the Whole Child?

These questions would apply to mixed groups and be presented in a session lasting approximately 40 minutes.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What does the phrase “to educate the whole child” mean to you?
- What does a whole child approach to education look like?
- What are some of the questions and issues you have about this approach to education?

TOOLS AND HANDOUTS

- Background/welcome packet
- [Handout](#) describing the whole child initiative
- [One-page handout](#) with national data that helps frame the issue
- [PowerPoint presentation](#) (handout with notes pages)
- Handout with examples of best practices ([The Whole Child Examples Map](#), from the local district; other districts, schools, and states; or a combination)



Part 2: Understanding ASCD's Whole Child Approach to Education

These questions would apply to mixed groups and be presented in a session lasting approximately 40 minutes.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- Now that you have seen the five tenets and the corresponding indicators, what are some of the things that public schools in your community are doing to ensure this whole child approach?
- What components currently exist in your school?
 - Where are the gaps, and what could you do to fill them?
 - Why is it important for your school to implement a whole child approach? What advantages are there to implementing this approach?
 - As you review and begin to understand the tenets and indicators, what resonates with you?

TOOLS AND HANDOUTS

- [Making the Case](#)
- [ASCD's Tenets, Indicators, and Components](#)
- Examples of best practices ([The Whole Child Examples Map](#), from the local district; other districts, schools, and states; or a combination)

Part 3: Future Steps and Recommendations

These questions and tools would apply to role-alike groups and be presented in a session lasting approximately 30 minutes.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

- What are some policy considerations and issues that need to be addressed to educate the whole child?
- What practices need to be implemented or changed to educate the whole child?
- What one thing are you as a group willing to do to help us get there?

TOOLS AND HANDOUTS

- Handout with different strategies for each constituency group



WHOLE CHILD COMMUNITY SAMPLE AGENDA (Model A)

Date _____; Locaton _____; Time _____

Time

Registration

Time

Welcome and Introduction

- Opening remarks and PowerPoint presentation by facilitator to provide context for small-group discussions
- Overview of meeting process and agenda
- Instructions for small-group discussions

Time

Small-Group Discussion: Parts 1 and 2 (Mixed Groups)

- Mixed groups discuss guiding questions (40 minutes each) on Part 1 and Part 2.
- Facilitator helps groups stay on task, clarifies points as needed, and uses handouts to provide context and capture data from the group (e.g., during Part 2, participants may use the Making the Case handout).
- Recorder captures key themes and questions.

Time

Break

Time

Small-Group Discussions: Part 3 (Role-Alike Groups)

- Participants gather in role-alike groups for Part 3 (role-alike groups are made up of individuals representing a specific stakeholder group—e.g., all teachers would sit as a group, all students would sit together, all nonprofit leaders would be together, etc.).
- Role-alike groups discuss what role they may be willing to play to advance the whole child agenda.
- Facilitator keeps groups on task while recorder captures major themes. Handout gives participants ideas of how their stakeholder group can help advance a whole child approach to learning.

WHOLE CHILD COMMUNITY SAMPLE AGENDA

(Model A) *continued*

Time

Time to Vote (Plenary Session)

- Participants vote and share as a group on ASCD's Whole Child Tenets.

Time

Summary and Next Steps

- Facilitator summarizes major findings; discusses next steps; thanks participants for their time; notes that each participant will receive a follow-up memo capturing key themes and next steps; and encourages participants to attend the next community conversation, if applicable.
- Participants fill out meeting evaluation forms, which are collected before they leave.
- Facilitator collects small-group discussion notes, sign-in sheets with participants' contact information, and meeting evaluation forms for review and analysis.

Time

Adjourn



WHOLE CHILD COMMUNITY SAMPLE AGENDA (Model B)

Date _____; Locaton _____; Time _____

DAY 1

Time **Registration**

Time **Welcome and Introduction**

- Opening remarks and PowerPoint presentation by facilitator to provide context for small-group discussions
- Overview of meeting process and agenda
- Instructions for small-group discussions

Time **Small-Group Discussion: Part 1 (Mixed Groups)**

- Mixed groups discuss guiding questions (40 minutes each) on Part 1.
- Facilitator helps groups stay on task, clarifies points as needed, and uses handouts to provide context and capture data from the group (e.g., during Part 1, participants may use the Making the Case handout).
- Recorder captures key themes and questions.

Time **Adjourn**

DAY 2

Time **Small-Group Discussion: Part 2 (Mixed Groups)**

- Short presentation to reiterate findings from previous discussion and provide helpful context and background.
- See notes from Small-Group Discussions: Part 1

Time **Adjourn**

WHOLE CHILD COMMUNITY SAMPLE AGENDA

(Model B) *continued*

DAY 3

Time

Small-Group Discussions: Part 3 (Role-Alike Groups)

- Short presentation to reiterate findings from previous discussion and provide helpful context and background.
- Participants gather in role-alike groups for Part 3 (role-alike groups are made up of individuals representing a specific stakeholder group—e.g., all teachers would sit as a group, all students would sit together, all nonprofit leaders would be together, etc.).
- Role-alike groups discuss what role they may be willing to play to advance the whole child agenda.
- Facilitator keeps groups on task while recorder captures major themes. Handout gives participants ideas of how their stakeholder group can help advance a whole child approach to learning.

Time

Time to Vote (Plenary Session)

- Participants vote and share as a group on [ASCD's Whole Child Tenets](#).

Time

Summary and Next Steps

- Facilitator summarizes major findings; discusses next steps; thanks participants for their time; notes that each participant will receive a follow-up memo capturing key themes and next steps; and encourages participants to attend the next community conversation, if applicable.
- Participants fill out meeting evaluation forms, which are collected before they leave.
- Facilitator collects small-group discussion notes, sign-in sheets with participants' contact information, and meeting evaluation forms for review and analysis.

Time

Adjourn

HANDOUT #1:

What does it mean to educate the whole child?

Date _____; Location _____; Time _____

Part 1: MIXED DISCUSSION GROUP

Facilitator: _____

1. What does the phrase “to educate the whole child” mean to you?
2. What would a whole child education look like?
3. What are some of the questions and issues you have about this type of education?

One Big Idea* _____

** This is what your group will report out to the larger group. Please capture a key point or theme of major importance to your group.*



PLEASE GIVE
ALL COMPLETED
HANDOUTS TO
THE MEETING
COORDINATOR.

TALKING POINTS FOR PUBLIC APPEARANCE

- All children deserve an education that prepares them for college, careers, and citizenship.
- Providing students with the knowledge and skills they need to succeed requires a new way of thinking about public education.
- ASCD's Whole Child Initiative focuses on five tenets:
 - Each student enters school **healthy** and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
 - Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally **safe** for students and adults.
 - Each student is actively **engaged** in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
 - Each student has access to personalized learning and is **supported** by qualified, caring adults.
 - Each student is **challenged** academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.
- This comprehensive focus requires more of our schools and communities. Schools simply cannot do this work alone.
- The goal is to reframe the debate over education accountability. At a time of rapid change and innovation, our schools are struggling to keep pace with this dynamic, digital world.
- That's why a local, nonpartisan coalition composed of educators, business leaders, community advocates, students, and others is hosting a community conversation about what it takes to educate the whole child on [INSERT DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION].
- This conversation will take the community's pulse on policies and practices that nurture the whole child. Do these issues matter to our community? And if so, what are we prepared to do to ensure that every child in [INSERT LOCATION] receives a 21st century education?
- Please join us. For more information, contact [INSERT NAME AND CONTACT INFORMATION].
- Learn more about the national campaign at www.wholechildeducation.org. This interactive website invites visitors to learn more about a whole child approach to education movement and access a wide range of resources to help make the case for a well-balanced education.

PROMOTIONAL TEXT

All children deserve an education that prepares them for college, careers, and citizenship. We invite you to join us on [INSERT DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION] for a community conversation about what educating the whole child means to our schools, our community, and our future. This local effort is spurred by a national initiative by ASCD to focus more attention on providing today's children with a more comprehensive and rich education. The goal the Whole Child Initiative is to reframe the debate over education accountability. At a time of rapid change and innovation, our education system is struggling to keep pace with this dynamic, digital world. Our public schools cannot do this alone. Providing a more comprehensive, well-rounded education is the responsibility of our entire community.

Community members will share their reaction to ASCD's Whole Child Initiative, which focuses on these five tenets:

- Each student enters school **healthy** and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
- Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally **safe** for students and adults.
- Each student is actively **engaged** in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
- Each student has access to personalized learning and is **supported** by qualified, caring adults.
- Each student is **challenged** academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

Join us! To respond to this invitation to participate in the Whole Child Community Conversation, please contact [INSERT CONTACT INFORMATION].

Visit www.wholechilddeducation.org to learn more. This interactive website invites visitors to learn more about the whole child movement and access a wide range of resources to help make the case for a well-balanced education.



SAMPLE NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

[LOCAL ORGANIZATION NAME(S)] TO HOST COMMUNITY CONVERSATION ON EDUCATING THE WHOLE CHILD // Local Event Part of New National Initiative

[CITY, STATE] [(INSERT DATE)] – [LOCAL ORGANIZATION NAME(S)] will host a community conversation to discuss what it means to educate the whole child, as well as implications for the schools and the future of [COMMUNITY NAME]. “By educating the whole child, we mean that all children should be healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and academically challenged,” said [INSERT LOCAL ORGANIZER-CONVENER]. “We’re talking about what it will take for us, as a community, to provide all children with a well-rounded education that prepares them for college, work, and citizenship in the 21st century.”

The event will offer an opportunity for students, parents, educators, and community and business leaders to voice their opinions and explore the policies and practices that can be put into place to nurture the whole child. The event will take place on [INSERT DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION]. The local community conversation is one of a number of such events happening around the country as part of the Whole Child Community Conversations Project, sponsored by ASCD, a 140,000-member nonprofit organization championing common-sense changes to ensure that all children get a great education. ASCD is leading The Whole Child Initiative, which focuses on five tenets:

- Each student enters school **healthy** and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
- Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally **safe** for students and adults.
- Each student is actively **engaged** in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
- Each student has access to personalized learning and is **supported** by qualified, caring adults.
- Each student is **challenged** academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.

The conversation will look at each of these pillars within the local context. “[INSERT QUOTE FROM LOCAL ORGANIZER-CONVENER].” For more information about ASCD’s whole child initiative, see the initiative’s website at www.wholechildeducation.org.

About [LOCAL ORGANIZATION/COALITION] // [INSERT ORGANIZATION’S BOILERPLATE]

SAMPLE OP-ED

The following sample op-ed can be used to help you think about how you might craft your own such piece for consideration by your local news media prior to your whole child community conversation. We encourage you to use your own voice and to mention anything of particular local importance, but be sure to keep your op-ed concise and to the point.

Are we adequately preparing our children to be successful in an increasingly complex and demanding world? Are we ensuring that they are ready for college, career, citizenship, and life? Nationwide, 1.1 million high school students drop out every year. That's one every 29 seconds. On that basis alone, I'd say we're not doing such a great job in this country.

But that is only part of the story. It's not just the dropouts we're failing to educate. We're also failing the students who graduate underprepared for college or careers. Far too many young people, for one reason or another, are not achieving at the levels they could be. There has been a lot of talk about accountability, and we have seen efforts on both a national and local scale to hold our schools more accountable for how much and how well students learn core subjects such as math and reading. These are absolutely essential skills that all of our children must master. But we should expect more than just the basics from our schools and from our community if we want our children to grow into successful adults. We must address the needs of the whole child.

Children want to learn. They are born curious about the world and seek out knowledge that helps them understand it. To nurture this desire and help all young students reach their full potential, we must ensure that each child is healthy, safe, engaged in learning, supported by caring adults, and challenged academically. We must not ignore the importance of a well-rounded education, including physical education, art, and music in the curriculum.

Children cannot succeed academically if they are malnourished or ill; don't feel safe in school; don't have the support of a parent, teacher, or other adult; aren't challenged by a broad range of classes; or have not been encouraged to develop an interest in at least some aspect of their education. The higher purpose of education must be to ignite the desire and the love of learning that will stay with students for a lifetime, not simply make them good test takers.

As adults, how do we respond when we know that one-third of our children are obese or at risk of becoming so? When 40 percent of our schools have at least thought about cutting recess? When about a third of our children say they only rarely or never feel safe at school? When two-thirds of our dropouts say they would have worked harder if they had been challenged more? When 15 million underprivileged children need a mentor but don't have one? And when school after school is eliminating art, music, or civics from the curriculum? National facts such as these make me wonder what's happening here in [COMMUNITY NAME]. If we have gaps, how do we intend to close them?

[ORGANIZATION/COALITION NAME] has joined a national initiative called the Whole Child Initiative spearheaded by ASCD to broaden the debate over education accountability and build support for a comprehensive education that prepares students for a bright future. The young people of our community deserve a chance to fulfill their potential and, just as important, our community needs them to be successful adults and productive citizens.

On [INSERT DATE, TIME, AND LOCATION], [INSERT ORGANIZATION OR COALITION NAME] will host a community conversation to discuss what it means to educate the whole child and implications for the schools and the future of our community. The forum is open to the public and we invite all to attend.

SAMPLE LETTER TO THE EDITOR *The following sample letter to the editor can be used to help you think about how you might craft your own such letter after your whole child community conversation has occurred. If your event received press coverage, be sure to send your letter to the covering publication(s) and reference the coverage. We encourage you to use your own voice and to mention anything of particular local importance in your letter, but be sure to keep your letter concise and to the point.*

Dear Editor:

The community conversation on educating the whole child convened recently by [NAME OF ORGANIZATION OR COALITION] reinforced for me my belief in this community's strong commitment to our children. More than [APPROXIMATE NUMBER] parents, students, community advocates, and business leaders voiced their opinions and explored how our schools and our community can work together to better prepare our kids for college, career, and citizenship.

It is clear that to ensure that our children receive the education they deserve, we all must work together to address the needs of the whole child. We must ensure that each child is healthy, safe, engaged in learning, supported by caring adults, and academically challenged. We must demand more from our schools, our community, and ourselves to support these priorities. I want to thank the community for its support of this important issue. I look forward to working together for our kids' futures and to watching our kids flourish as they grow into successful adults.

Sincerely,

Name, Title, Organization





About ASCD

ASCD is an educational leadership association advancing best practices and policies for the success of each learner.

We Stand for Whole Child Education

In a time of rapid change and innovation, our education system is struggling to keep pace. The global marketplace is a reality; yet as demands for a highly skilled and educated workforce and citizenry grow, too many communities have narrowed the curriculum, eliminated or reduced support for families, and failed to develop the talent of their youth.

We can do better. We must support policies and practices that ensure

- Each student enters school **healthy** and learns about and practices a healthy lifestyle.
- Each student learns in an environment that is physically and emotionally **safe** for students and adults.
- Each student is actively **engaged** in learning and is connected to the school and broader community.
- Each student has access to personalized learning and is **supported** by qualified, caring adults.
- Each student is **challenged** academically and prepared for success in college or further study and for employment and participation in a global environment.



1703 North Beauregard Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22311-1714 USA
Phone: 1-800-933-2723 or 1-703-578-9600
Fax: 1-703-575-5400; www.ascd.org