

Community Engagement

A Model for 21st
Century Learning

East Syracuse-Minoa Central School District

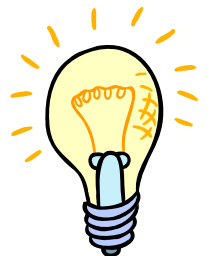
Our District

- 3,800 students in pre-k through 12
- 48 square-miles / suburban
- Comprehensive High School
- 94% Graduation Rate
- \$68 Million Budget
- 28 consecutive years of voter approved budgets
- 75% commercial property tax base
- 29% free and reduced lunch
- 9 member board of education

Community Engagement

Take time to plan an
effective process

ERS Spectrum, Fall 2008



Purpose

Why we needed to engage
our community

Engagement

- What does it mean to be engaged?
- What does it look like to be engaged?

“Effective community engagement requires the creation of strategies that involve all sectors of the community in ongoing deliberations that build a common ground for developing and implementing solutions to the challenges that face today’s schools.” Levine, Fung and Gastil (2005)

Community Engagement

Recruit people by reaching out through various community groups and organizations in order to assemble a large and diverse group.

ERS Spectrum, Fall 2008



Identify Community Stakeholder Groups

- Parents
- Residents
- Staff (teachers, administrators, support staff, instructional, non-instructional)
- Students
- Higher Education
- Community Organization Representatives
- Business Representatives
- Senior Citizens

Facilitated Groups

- World Café
- Focus Forums

“Effective community engagement can be the answer to the very complex question ‘What do we want for our children.’” ERS Spectrum, Fall 2008

World Café

“Awakening and engaging collective intelligence through conversations about questions that matter”

The World Café is an easy-to-use method for creating a living network of collaborative dialogue around questions that matter to the real-life situation of your organization or community.

Café Activity

- How do you engage the community when you make major decisions in your district?

Community Café

- Café for Students
- Café for Adult Stakeholders

- Well crafted questions
- Facilitator or leader
- Participants
- Facility
- Process

Did You Know?

Café Questions

- 1. What are the skills and strategies that students will need to be successful in our changing world?
- 2. What are some of the practices and/or learning opportunities currently in place that promote student success?
- 3. In order for our students to be successful in the future, how must ESM's educational system shift?
- 4. What is currently in place that will no longer prepare you (students) for the world as it shifts?
- 5. What are the untapped resources that our community has to offer?

Focus Forums

- Selected 4 groups
 - Community members that are connected to the school
 - Community members that are not connected to the school
 - Businesses that are connected to the school
 - Businesses that are not connected to the school

Group Size

- 12 – 15 participants in each group
- Selected strategically to be representative of the group
- Need the right participants so that you have a multi-lens perspective

Gathering Community Input

- Electronic
 - On our Website
- Paper
 - Mailed to residents without students
 - Mailed to parents of high school and middle school students
 - Sent home with elementary students

Analysis and Input of Data

- Sorting data
- Determining BIG PICTURE focus

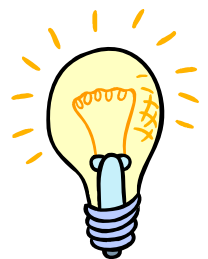
Core Team

- Invitation to serve
- Number on team (46)
- Composition of team
- Scheduled meetings
- Research
- Data Review (confront the brutal facts)
- Established purpose
- Develop Strategic Intentions and Charges

Community Engagement

Involve participants in small, structured, facilitated groups for the purpose of informed, personal and deliberative dialogues.

ERS Spectrum, Fall 2008



Our 5 Focus Areas

- Academic Excellence and Rigor
- Communications, Systems and Structures
- Information Technology and Digital Literacy
- Partnerships for Learning
- Youth Development and Leadership

Our Changing World

What are two things that come to mind that changed the most in the past 20-30 years?

21st Century Skill Set

What are the skills that are needed for the changes that have and are occurring?

21st Century Learning

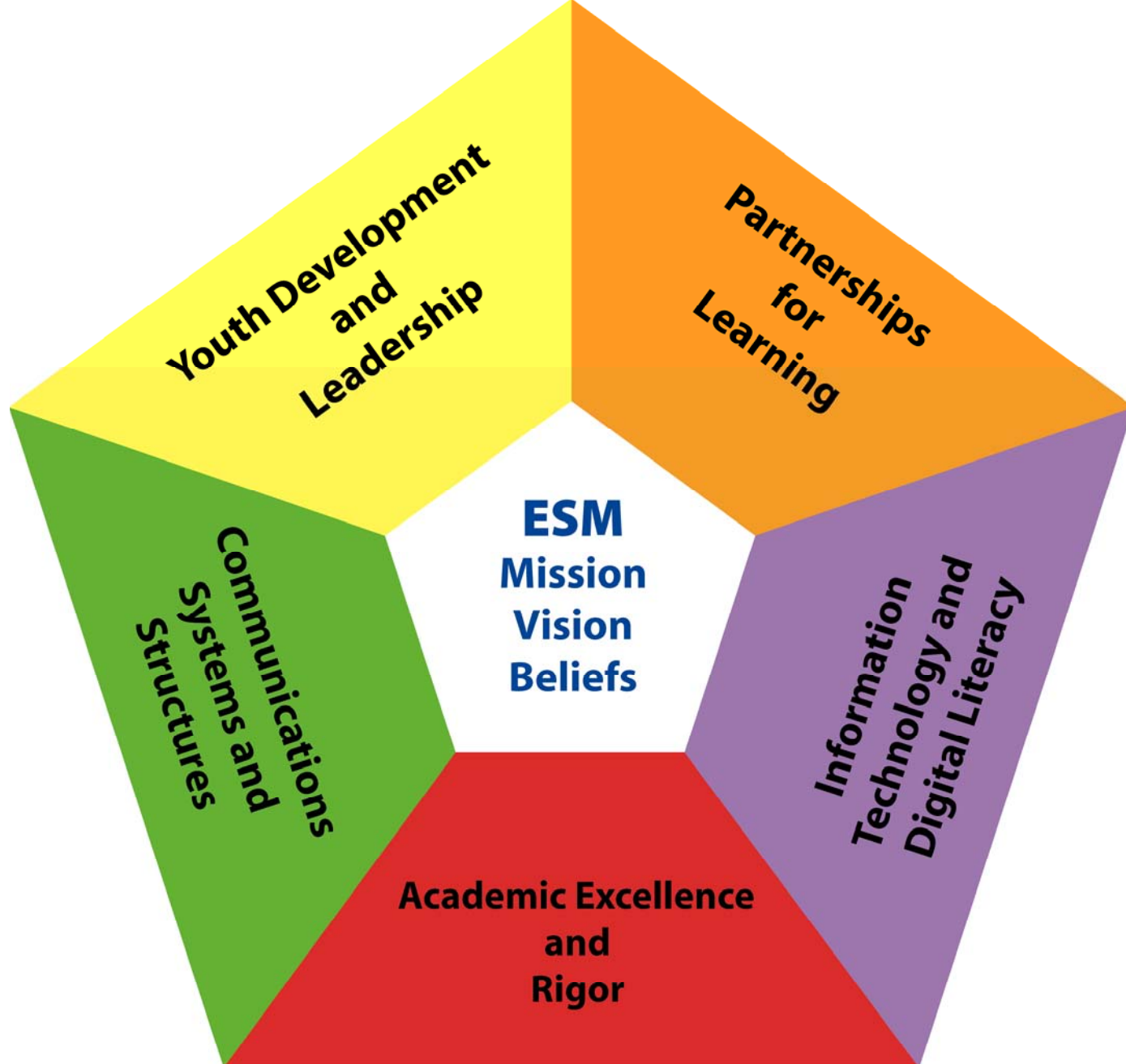
Themes:

- Core Subjects
- Global Awareness
- Financial, Economic, Business and Entrepreneurial Literacy
- Civic Literacy
- Health Literacy

21st Century Learning

Skills

- Creativity and Innovation
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Information and Media Literacy
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Initiative and Self Direction



21st Century Learning

Community Engagement

Involve people in work that
they choose to do.

ERS Spectrum, Fall 2008



Task Forces

- Broad Representation
- Number on teams (111)
- Composition of teams
- Scheduled meetings
 - Overview of process
 - Introduce new concepts
 - Work of the group
- Develop Key Initiatives and Action Plans
 - Expertise
 - Interest

Academic Excellence & Rigor Task Force

- Share common knowledge
- Explore relevant research
- Build shared understanding
- Engage in meaningful dialogue
- Encourage collaboration

Community Engagement

Following task force meetings, conduct large group meetings of core team to share insights and recommendations to set a course of action.

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Action Teams

Ask teams to take action, not just make recommendations.

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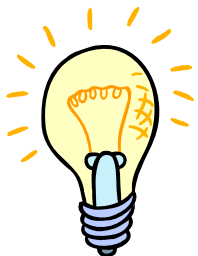
Communicate, Communicate, Communicate

- Bulletin
 - Superintendent's message to community
 - Articles
- Website
 - Posted all meeting agendas, minutes and completed work
- Newspaper articles
- Letters to staff
- E-mail site
- Visitations to staff and PTO meetings in each building
- Community organizations
- Continuous Board updates

Community Engagement

People involved effect
change in a number of ways.

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21st Century Learning in Action

- Research: An Educational Journey (Bristol)
- SAS
- Intergenerational relationships
- Syracuse University/Legislative Grant
- The Leader in Me
- 21st Century Partnership



Questions and Answers

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