YATST

Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together

RELEVANCE·RELATIONSHIP·RIGOR·RESPONSIBILITY

Best Practices
&
Self-Assessment Tool

April 2019

The mission of YATST is to "increase student engagement in learning and voice in decision-making by creating a partnership among students, faculty and the community to increase rigor, relevance, relationships and shared responsibility." The YATST "Best Practices and Self-Assessment Tool" was designed to provide both an overview of the YATST vision and a roadmap for the journey.

This document is structured according to the "4Rs", Rigor, Relevance, Relationships and shared Responsibility, which serve as guiding tenets for increasing engagement in learning. The fifth Best Practices rubric (on page 11) outlines key elements of a school's readiness to embrace YATST work. It also charts the way youth involvement in increasing engagement with learning through action research becomes part of the decision-making fabric of the school. This is the ultimate goal of YATST.

This tool is designed to:
- paint a picture of a transformed school, with examples of each "R" in the "Setting Out," "Transforming," and "Destination" stages
- provoke dialogue about the present state of the "4Rs" in your school
- build a common vision for school transformation in your community
- raise differing perspectives on these variables
- prompt understanding of some of the steps which can be taken to impact the "4 Rs"
- highlight how strategies can be tracked by evidence of change

This document should help to create a vision of your ultimate goal, so that incremental steps to reach this end point make sense. It may well also serve as the first of many deep and meaningful discussions about school change.

The YATST "Best Practices and Self-Assessment Tool" was inspired and informed by the New England Secondary School Consortium "Global Best Practices: An Internationally Benchmarked Self-Assessment Tool for Secondary Learning." Their exemplary work in high school transformation includes many other benchmarks relative to: equity, personalization/relevance, academic expectations, standards-based education, assessment practices, international/multi-cultural, technology, learning communities, vision mission/action plan, school culture, multiple pathways, transitions, interventions/support, time/space, data systems/applications, continual improvement, teacher recruitment & retention, administrative leadership, shared leadership, moral courage. This document can be accessed at: http://www.newenglandssc.org/resources/publications.

This tool uses a four-step self-assessment process for each of the "4Rs." You may choose the best way for your team to approach these steps, depending mainly on the amount of time you have to devote to this task. If you have five hours available, you might opt for an open and honest group discussion for each step of each "R," and commit to reaching consensus on the final score. Alternately, you might choose to have each person review and assess each "R" on their own, and then share individuals' insights and final scores over the course of an hour-long meeting. There is no one right way. The major goal of this tool is to introduce the "4Rs" through self-assessment. How you accomplish this goal is up to you. Remember, the quality of the dialogue is far more important than any ultimate score!

Step 1: Read the description of that particular "R"
Start by reading each individual column. The column on the far left depicts a school that is just beginning work on this "R," or may not yet have even given it priority. The middle column portrays a school in the process of change. The column on the far right reflects a more fully transformed school. You may find yourself interested in one particular aspect of these descriptions, so reading across the columns makes sense. It is likely that your school is in a variety of stages of development in any one of the "4Rs," with some attributes falling in one column and other attributes in different columns. The purpose of these descriptions is to provoke self-reflection and dialogue, not to pass judgment or ask that you force yourself into any given column. Schools are much more complex places than that! After completing Step 1, you will move to the next page for Step 2.

Step 2: Review the sample strategies which schools may employ to build that particular "R" and then note your current strategies
The list of strategies will provide a wide array of means to build each "R." Once you have read this list, inventory those strategies that your school currently employs to support or develop this "R."

Step 3: Review the sample strategies to secure evidence about that particular "R" and list evidence currently available to you
Review the list of sample evidence that could be followed to track if your work in this "R" is successful. Once you have read this list, think of data sources in your school that help you understand the impact of those strategies you listed. Be sure to list **hard evidence** gathered through such means as surveys or interviews (quantitative and qualitative data), versus hearsay or personal perceptions. YATST teams conduct a survey that tracks many of the variables in this description. This data can and should be supplemented with other evidence to confirm (or negate) the impact of chosen strategies. You now proceed to Step 4.

Step 4: Score your school
The purpose of scoring this "R" is to spark deep dialogue, which requires all participants to pull together reflections and opinions formed in the first three steps. It important to identify a balance of strengths and potential concerns, avoiding going to a deficit mentality (i.e. *glass half empty*) in this scoring step. It is often far easier to identify "what isn't" rather than "what is." Seek balance and avoid judgment in the scoring process. Wherever you are on the scoring continuum is the perfect point for initiating change. No blame and no shame allowed!

GLOSSARY

THE "4 Rs":
The "Rigor, Relevance and Relationship" framework was initially developed by the International Center for Leadership in Education in the early 1990s, based on extensive research. Over the past two decades, these three key attributes of the learning environment have served as a means to focus transformation efforts by schools around the world.   The Youth and Adults Transforming Schools Together (YATST) initiative added the fourth R, Shared Responsibility. Without naming the importance of the learning partnership, too many schools undertake transformation work without inclusion of student voice….and often do not notice its absence! YATST is founded on the belief that inclusion of students in the process of changing schools is *essential* to transformation, given their unique perspectives and wise insights. Their sense of empowerment as valued learners and their ownership of their learning will grow from active involvement in decision making.

RIGOR:
Teachers have high expectations for ALL students. The curriculum develops the capacity to understand content that is complex, provocative, and personally or emotionally challenging. Students are able to apply complex concepts to real world, unpredictable situations.

RELEVANCE:
Learners make connections between the academic content and their past learning, personal lives, and/or future academic and career goals. This includes a school's commitment to infuse the cultures of its students into all aspects of the learning environment.

RELATIONSHIPS:
Strong student-teacher relationships exist, grounded in mutual respect. Learning is tailored to the individual's goals because the teacher knows the student well. The teacher is seen primarily as a guide and facilitator of learning, rather than the "expert."

RESPONSIBILITY (SHARED):
Students and teachers understand that each plays a key role in learning and share responsibility accordingly. Students are incorporated into decision making in school-wide issues impacting them.

RIGOR

STEP 1: Read the following descriptions of RIGOR as this grows in a school.....

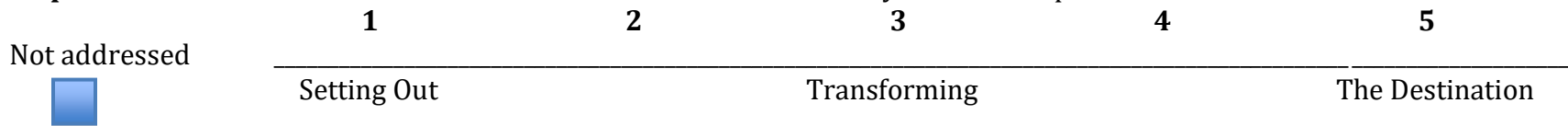| 1 Setting Out…	3 Transforming…	5 The Destination…
• Teachers have varied expectations based on the learner's prior history and/or assumptions associated with the student's life context (home life, gender, race, etc.). Students have varied expectations of themselves as learners. • Subtle and not-so-subtle tracking exists, with "bright" students steered towards "honors" classes and others tracked to "lower performing" classes. When students are asked to predict their grades, there is a wide variation, with a notable number predicting mediocre or failing grades. • Students do not generally find their learning challenging and their motivation to achieve is limited. • Instruction is often via lectures and frequently requires rote memorization for testing. Creativity is not valued or readily evident in classroom practices. • Teachers rarely check in with individual students about their learning and adjust instruction accordingly. • Regular tests and quizzes serve as the primary tool to evaluate learning. Grading is assumed to adequately reflect learning, with failing grades suggesting the student's inability or unwillingness to learn. • It is hard for students to access extra help if needed. • Some learners are prepared for post-graduate career or academic pursuits; many are not.	• Teachers have reasonably high expectations for students. Students have reasonably high expectations for themselves as learners, although variation clearly exists. • The faculty and students are developing an awareness of individual and systems level messages which reinforce tracking; they are creating a plan to eliminate systems, beliefs, and behaviors which contribute to assigning lower expectations to some students. Some students predict continued mediocre or failing grades • Students are beginning to be challenged to have high expectations for themselves and understand the importance of this. • Reported levels of classroom challenge vary widely, but faculty are working on means to integrate rigorous strategies to meet the needs of more learners. • Alternatives to lecture and integration of creativity in the classroom are evident. Students are sometimes asked to solve complex problems on their own. • Teachers check in periodically with each learner and attempt to adjust the learning experience to these differing needs. • Learners are sometimes asked to revise/rewrite until demonstrating mastery. • The traditional grading system is questioned as an accurate means to assess learning. • Exhibitions of learning are researched as a way to demonstrate learning. • Extra help is available but not always accessed by students. • Many learners are prepared for their next step in post-graduate career or academic pursuits.	• Teachers have high expectations for ALL students. Students have high expectations for themselves as learners and are motivated to work until they have mastered their learning goals. • Systems where students were tracked according to **assumed** ability are non-existent. • Learners report that they find their classes challenging and value the time required of them to learn independently. Students are frequently challenged to work on complex problems that they must figure out on their own or in small groups. Creativity in learning is highly valued. • There are many pathways to a degree and each student charts his/her own course of study based on their interests and goals and reflects high self- and teacher expectations. • Class options cross grades and content areas and involve high levels of rigor and relevance. • Teachers are continually checking in with students to adjust learning opportunities to assure that they are challenging each learner. Mistakes in the learning process are valued as critical learning opportunities. • Work is continually revised until it is mastered, with teachers as ever-present guides and facilitators of learning. • Community exhibitions of learning are common means to demonstrate learning in a public setting. • Learners who are struggling know how to access extra help and do so readily. • Most learners are fully prepared for their next step in post-graduate careers and further academic pursuits and feel confident about their futures.

RIGOR

Step 2: Record RIGOR strategies that exist in your school **Step 3:** Record RIGOR evidence

Sample RIGOR Strategies	Sample RIGOR Evidence
- The common language of the "4 Rs" is regularly integrated into classroom discussions and periodic assessments, so that all understand the rhyme and reason for instructional decisions. - Students honor teachers who are exemplary in high expectations and course rigor through a quarterly recognition system. - Informational and training experiences are offered to look at alternative ways to assess student learning, including integrating more re-work/re-write opportunities to assure the option of mastery for more students. Shifting from traditional grading to a mastery or competency-based performance system are introduced through trainings and site visits. - Teachers, in partnership with students, develop many "re-set" systems (or formative assessment) classroom methods - ways for teachers and learners to continually assess learning and instruction and adapt accordingly. - Develop a formal feedback system regarding the "4 Rs" which is implemented early in the semester in all classes. This includes students assessing their role as learners. Both students and teachers set goals to improve learning and check in regularly. - Create a media campaign about the importance of self-expectations and actively work to create a school norm of high expectations for both students and teachers. - Students are enrolled in untracked classes, with a wide mix of students in each class. - Teachers are supported to learn and use a wide variety of engaging teaching strategies to meet the needs of varied learners, including development of multi-disciplinary classes and project-based learning. - Implement community exhibitions of learning on a quarterly basis, with student, teacher, and community member assessment tools and feedback systems. - There is a clear structure to reach out to learners who are struggling, so that no student is allowed to fail due to lack of access to help. - Schools offer a college and career planning course for all students in 9th grade to shape their learning plan for their high school experience, reinforcing high expectations.	- An ever increasing number of students graduate with strong academic and real-world skills, allowing them to pursue academic and career options of their choice. - Students can articulate the necessary ingredients of learning (4 Rs) and how to exercise control over their learning experiences through active involvement in classroom assessment efforts. - Students report via a survey that they feel ownership and partnership in the learning experience, and are personally known as a learner by their teachers. - Students report an increasing belief in their abilities as learners; teachers report increasing confidence in the ability of ALL students as learners. - Teachers give increasing opportunities for re-writing/re-working assignments so that learners have the opportunity to reach mastery. - There is a reported increase in use of varied instructional strategies that focus on developing independent learning skills and creativity. - High level of rigor is evident in exhibitions of learning, as reflected in student, teacher, and community member assessment tool measures.
Our Current RIGOR Strategies	**Our Current RIGOR Evidence**

Step 4: Score Your School Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school's performance relative to **RIGOR**

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Not addressed _____

□   Setting Out   Transforming   The Destination

RELEVANCE

STEP 1: Read the following descriptions of RELEVANCE, as this grows in a school…..

| 1 Setting Out…	3 Transforming…	5 The Destination…
- Most classrooms are set up in a classic lecture format and most teaching is provided through lectures. - There is little evidence of personalizing learning to build upon the interests or varied abilities of students (i.e. project choices and different ways to demonstrate learning). Curriculum decisions (what is taught) are driven by a rigid adherence to state standards and required fields of knowledge which will be tested. There is little or no effort to survey individual learners about their background knowledge or interest in a discipline, and build upon this understanding throughout the semester. - In-depth inquiry, student collaboration and application of learning to the real-world are absent from most courses and lessons. - Use of current technology to explore course content is minimal or absent. - Other subject areas are rarely integrated into any given content area. - Students have little or no understanding of why they are learning what they are expected to learn. Instead, they are passive recipients of whatever content is delivered to them, with little or no input into either instruction or curriculum based on their individual interests and abilities. - Students report concern about adequate preparation for their post-graduate plans. Students who are doing well "playing the game of school" are happy with this system. Others who do not readily learn in this way, are often failing, feel powerless and have lost a belief in themselves as learners.	- In the course of a typical day, there is a clear mix of more traditional classroom teaching (mainly lecture format) and innovative learning strategies (i.e. small group work, project-based learning, students as teachers, innovative use of technology, community-based apprenticeships). - A school-wide desire to personalize learning is driving new ways to help individuals take responsibility for developing their own program of study, based on their unique goals and interests. - There remains a fairly obvious distinction between the courses taken for college bound students and those heading for technical or career paths, although that is increasingly blurred as learners are consulted and create their own "pathways." - Community-based educational opportunities (internships and apprenticeships) are being developed. - Many teachers are actively grappling with the tension between meeting state standards and shifting to more engaging learning strategies which include relevance. Departments, students and the principal generally respect this tension and support the teacher's efforts to take instructional risks. - The Rigor/Relevance framework is being introduced to faculty and students to provide a common language to shape classroom decisions. - The student body is unsure about this new role in their learning and reactions to creating a partnership in learning is quite varied. - Students feel more confident that their high school learning experience is relevant to life's next steps.	- A walk down the hallway reveals that classrooms are using a wide variety of instructional strategies for learning (i.e. small group work, project-based learning, students as teachers, innovative use of technology, community-based apprenticeships). - Each learner has a vision of his/her learning goals for high school and beyond, and can talk about a clear plan to reach these goals. These goals include such key life skills as citizenship, communication skills, problem solving ability and personal development. - Teachers remain accountable to address state standards, but realize that innovative strategies will yield deeper learning and mastery. They take instructional risks to incorporate relevance into the learning experience and are supported to do so by their peers and principal. - Teachers frequently check in with students to understand and help guide their learning on an individual basis. - State-of-the-art technology is utilized for both exploring relevant content and demonstrating learning. - Learners and teachers frequently integrate multiple content areas while exploring a topic. - Students take on increased involvement and responsibility as learners, identifying interests and pursuing them within the classroom experience. Students provide regular input into classroom instruction and curriculum, using the Rigor/Relevance Framework. - Students and teachers believe students can and should be partners in learning. - Students report that they are strong independent learners who are prepared life's next steps.

RELEVANCE

Step 2: Record RELEVANCE strategies that exist in your school   **Step 3: Record RELEVANCE evidence**

Sample Strategies	Sample Evidence
• Students are included in co-designing challenging, long-term projects that culminate in a public exhibition. In addition to more traditional research and writing projects, include community-based learning, internships and other creative learning options. • Teachers have a consistent and varied means throughout the semester to assess students' current knowledge and interest in the content. This information is then used to personalize the learning through instruction, assignments or projects which tap these interests. • Teacher in-service time is devoted to use of the Rigor-Relevance Framework as a means to design classroom curriculum, instruction and assessment strategies. • Student input to increase relevance in curriculum design is sought and acted upon. • When starting a new unit, teachers lead discussions with students using the Rigor/Relevance Framework to introduce the varied ways they will learn this content. Teachers often begin units with "Quadrant D" (highly rigorous and relevant) learning experiences so that students understand the necessary core content requirements and varied strategies that will be required of them to reach this level of mastery. • Interdisciplinary and project-based learning courses are created, merging many fields of study and increasing relevance.	• Reported student and teacher perceptions of curriculum relevance are both high. • Teachers and students can list many varied ways that student interests are regularly inventoried and incorporated into their learning. The list grows as faculty share their own successful strategies. • Absences, expulsions, behavioral issues and drop out rates are declining. • Course failures during the 9th and 10th grades have declined. • Teachers report a growing comfort and capacity to engage students in on-going discussions about the role of relevance in their learning. • Students report an understanding and acceptance of their role in the learning partnership, providing meaningful feedback for teachers and demonstrating greater engagement in learning with increased relevance.
Our Current RELEVANCE Strategies	**Our Current RELEVANCE Evidence**

Step 4: Score Your School: Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school's performance relative to **RELEVANCE**

	1	2	3	4	5

Not addressed _____

              Setting Out   **Transforming**   **The Destination**
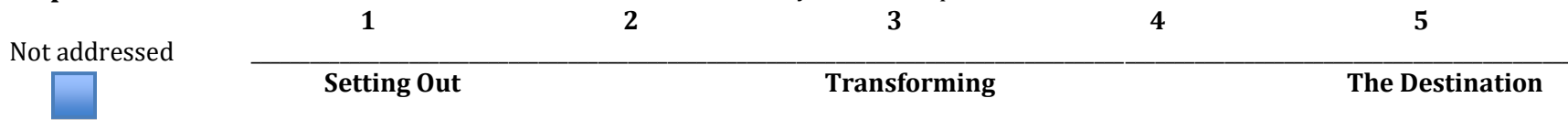
RELATIONSHIPS (mainly student-teacher)

STEP 1: Read the following descriptions of RELATIONSHIPS as they grow in a school…..

| 1 Setting Out…	3 Transforming…	5 The Destination…
• Respect between students and teachers is low, as reflected in the number of behavioral issues stemming from disrespect in classrooms. • Although some students report that there is at least one caring adult at school they could talk to about a problem, a significant number do not have anyone at school who provides this role. Also, many students report not having anyone to talk to about their interests, their future plans or immediate concerns which might be impacting their learning. • It is clear to students that teacher morale is low. Most do not find their teachers enthusiastic about what they are teaching. Therefore, instruction is generally not very engaging. • Some students report that it is clear that teachers care more about some students than others, which can lead to a lack of fairness in the classroom. There is a sense that stereotypes are assigned to particular groups of students and that it is difficult to break out of this mold with teachers once that opinion has been formed. • A notable number of students sense that teachers have low expectations for their learning. • Weak student-teacher relationships are mirrored by weak or troubled relationship within faculty, between faculty, school administration and the board, and with the greater parent community.	• Students and teachers generally treat each other with respect. Some classroom behavioral issues still occur, but these are decreasing as student-teacher relationships are growing. This is particularly noticeable in the case of those students who had previously felt unknown or who had a strong sense of low expectations from teachers. • Systems are being put into place (development of Personalized Learning Plans for high school, teacher advisories, mentoring programs, etc.) which assure that every student has positive relationships with faculty, and a deeper, caring relationship with at least one teacher in the school who he/she could talk to in times of need. • A growing sense of high expectations for all students and understanding that every student CAN learn is shifting the culture from focusing on deficits to building on strengths. • Student-teacher relationships are deepening due to a growing belief in learning as a partnership. Stereotypes are diminishing as each student is better known. • Teacher morale and enthusiasm for sharing their content areas are growing, resulting in increased classroom engagement. Staff, administrative, board and parent relationships are more highly valued and nurtured. It is increasingly clear that relationships, across all ages and roles, serve as a foundation for a positive learning environment.	• Students and teachers report high levels of mutual respect. Classroom behavior issues are minimal. • All students have *at least* one person who they feel knows them well, understands their future goals and will be their advocate in times of need. They also report that all teachers know their interests as related to that particular subject area, understand their learning style and hold high expectations for their learning. • Teachers serve as guides, continually assessing what students need to reach mastery in the subject content or greater goals relating to communication skills, problem solving ability, civic engagement or personal development. High expectations and caring blend to form a strong student-teacher bond. • Students and teachers understand that "fair" is not necessarily about "equal", but rather tailored to the individual learner. • Teachers are generally enthusiastic about their subject content, which is reflected in their instructional choices. • Students witness that each person is treated as a respected individual. There are no "classroom favorites" or sense of either negative or positive stereotyping affecting how individuals are treated. • Teacher morale is high and there is a strong collegial sense among the faculty, administration and board. Parents also know they are integral partners in their child's learning.

RELATIONSHIPS

Step 2: Record RELATIONSHIP strategies that exist in your school

Step 3: Record RELATIONSHIP evidence

Sample RELATIONSHIPS Strategies	Sample RELATIONSHIP Evidence
• Each student develops a Personalized Learning Plan with an adult advisor who knows them well. This plan charts out that individual's course of study for their entire high school experience, based on their learning goals. • Create means for regular public appreciation of both students and teachers who reach out to others in caring ways. One school chose to do this through a "Send a shooting star" appreciation at monthly community gatherings, honoring individuals who had been particularly supportive or caring that month. • Establish a "Futures and Life Choices" class so that each student can fully explore his/her future options, learning style, etc., developing this insight and clarity as a basis for development of their Personalized Learning Plan and for on-going discussions with teachers and advisors. • Create a "Teacher Advisory" that really works - students establishing a meaningful relationship with at least one teacher who serves as an advocate and guide. This individual is often a bridge between the school and the family. • Create an electives option to allow teachers (or student-teacher teams) to offer short-term electives to share their passions and interests outside of the core content areas. • Create opportunities for students and teachers to periodically interact in a more informal (and often fun) context, for example through adventure-based experiences such as a 9th grade transition adventure day on a ropes course where students and teacher take risks together. • Develop a "January Term" two-week elective option, with courses designed by teachers and student-teacher teams, to share interests and passions through engaging learning methods.	• Data reveals a high percentage of positive student-teacher relationships as assessed by both students and teachers. • A very low number of students report 0-1 individuals at school who they could talk to about a problem. • Classroom behavioral issues are minimal. • Attendance at Teacher Advisories is strong and students report that it is time well spent. • The students' work in a "Futures and Life Choices" class helps them articulate what they care about, their strengths and challenges, and desired future direction. This informs Personalized Learning Plan development with their advisor. • Each student has a Personalized Learning Plan developed with a caring adult, after a thorough exploration of alternatives. • A means of regular, public appreciation of positive relationships between students and teachers is established.
Our Current RELATIONSHIP Strategies	**Our Current RELATIONSHIP Evidence**

Step 4: Score Your School

Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school's performance relative to **RELATIONSHIPS**.

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Not addressed _____

              Setting Out   **Transforming**   **The Destination**
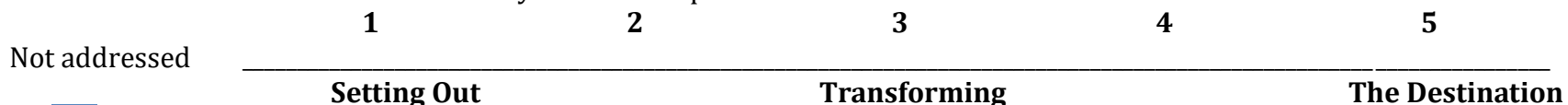
RESPONSIBILITY (shared)
STEP 1: Read the following descriptions of RESPONSIBILITY as this grows in a school…..

| 1 Setting Out….	3 Transforming…	5 The Destination…
- Students are generally passive recipients of the learning experience, with adults making all major decisions about what and how they learn. The teacher is operating in the assumed best interest of the majority of the students, based on his or her understanding of best practices. - Students have no common language or vehicle for assuming shared responsibility in their learning beyond meeting teacher directed expectations. When students do provide feedback, it is often stemming from anger or defensiveness and is not well received. - Students do not have an opportunity to provide classroom feedback about the learning environment, nor do they necessarily feel that it is safe or appropriate to do so in their current role. - Teachers feel a heavy burden of accountability for state standards and test results which limits their willingness to take risks regarding innovation in curriculum or instruction or to invite student input. - Students are experts in reading the expectations of each teacher and deciding their roles as learners accordingly. They tend to assume known and comfortable roles, ranging from the classic high achiever to the "do-enough-just-to-pass student" (etc.) in the absence of a sense of partnership in learning and shared responsibility. - Both adults and students tend to believe that adults should be the primary decision makers in the school, with students included only in more minor decisions (i.e social events).	- Students and teachers are exploring a new role of students as true partners in learning and decision making. This marks a significant shift in the school culture and current beliefs and practices. - A common language for learning, using the 4Rs, is being established by all in the school community. - Teachers are experimenting with new means of soliciting student feedback and leading classroom dialogue about curriculum and instruction decisions. Students are experimenting with providing constructive feedback about their learning and means to become more active partners in this process. - Teachers are demonstrating a willingness to change practices to better meet the needs of learners, while asking students to factor in the standards and testing accountability demands which also must influence classroom decisions. - Both students and teachers are transparent in setting and tracking learning and teaching goals. - New student and teacher practices are not necessarily fully successful, but are seen as key steps in learning how to share responsibility. - Students are adjusting to different expectations and accountability for their learning. Discomfort, and anxiety provoked by risk taking and letting go of known roles is clearly evident for all. - Decision making practices are shifting to include youth voice, including orienting youth members of hiring teams, better support for meaningful involvement in the school board, and other decision-making bodies impacting learning.	- The premise that learning must be an active partnership founded on shared responsibility is part of the school culture. - Teachers check in with students regularly to assess their learning and adapt their instruction accordingly, using the 4Rs as a guide. A mid-semester student feedback system for teachers also includes a means for students to self-assess their role as learners (timeliness, taking risks, asking questions, active participation, etc.). - Students feel comfortable and confident in sharing their reflections about their learning experience and know how to share their insights in a non-judgmental, open and honest way. Faculty are open to this feedback and clearly value student input as evidenced by changes in practices directly resulting from these discussions. - Both teachers and students set (and re-set) goals for their teaching and learning on a regular basis. - Students feel a significant sense of responsibility for their role in the learning process and put forth their best effort most of the time. - Respect for their teachers is clearly evident, as is their teachers' respect for students. - Youth and adults believe that students are able to have meaningful input into 1) what they learn, 2) how they learn, 3) school rules and procedures affecting them, and 4) school climate. There are systems in place to assure that student input is woven into the decision making structure, including involvement in hiring committees, the school board, and other decision-making bodies impacting learning.

RESPONSIBILITY (shared)

Sample Strategies	Sample Evidence
• Lead a faculty meeting to introduce the youth-adult partnership ladder and talk about ways to assure that the partnership has integrity (such as language barriers, youth and adult stereotypes, etc.) • Introduce the Rigor-Relevance Framework to faculty (first) and to students to create a common language to understand classroom strategies and provide teacher feedback. • Create a mid-semester classroom feedback system, based on the 4 Rs, which includes student self-assessment as learners. Survey results are discussed as a class, followed by goal setting by the teacher and the individual learners. Make sure students understand the importance of this new opportunity for shared responsibility and discuss ways to give respectful and constructive criticism. • Lead a text-based discussion with faculty about the "Re-Set Button" or ways to continually assess student learning through formative assessment strategies. Talk about barriers and benefits of more frequent student feedback and create a shared strategy to increase the frequency of formative assessment. • Inventory school decision-making bodies and assess opportunities for student involvement. Provide training for both youth and adults if students are incorporated into existing adult structures ("Youth on Board" materials). • Highlight youth-adult partnership success stories at assemblies, particularly looking for those stories which include non-traditional student leaders. • Institute Student-led conferences where students lead a meeting with their teacher and parents/guardians to review and reflect upon their work and outline future learning goals.	• YATST has become institutionalized as a youth-adult ACTION research body. Necessary resources to assure YATST success (time, adult support, principal advocacy) are a high priority. • Survey data is high for both students and teachers regarding a belief in student voice within the classroom and greater decision making structure . • New opportunities are created for student involvement in decision making, both in the classroom (such as the student-teacher feedback system), as well as in the school at-large (hiring committees, state-mandated Action Planning committees, etc.). • The frequency of the number of opportunities students have to impact decisions in the school is increasing, as reflected in survey data. • Teacher work groups notice the absence of student voice and regularly consult with students to assure that they have this important perspective. • Student-led conferences are instituted.
Our Current RESPONSIBILITY Strategies	**Our Current RESPONSIBILITY Evidence**

Step 4: Score Your School Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school's performance in shared **RESPONSIBILITY**.

1	2	3	4	5

Not addressed _____

Setting Out　　　　　　　　　　　　**Transforming**　　　　　　　　　　　　**The Destination**
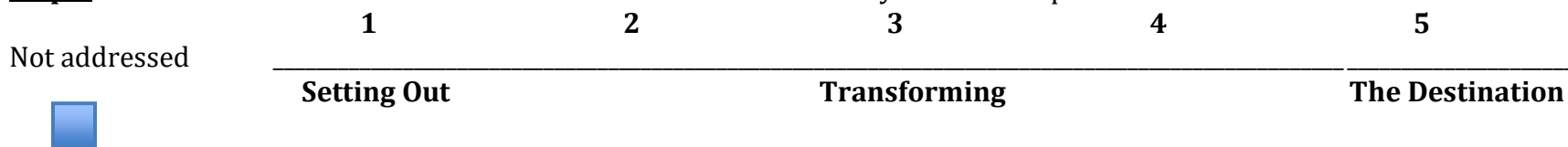
SCHOOL-LEVEL READINESS for YATST WORK

STEP 1: Read the following descriptions of a school's readiness for YATST work....

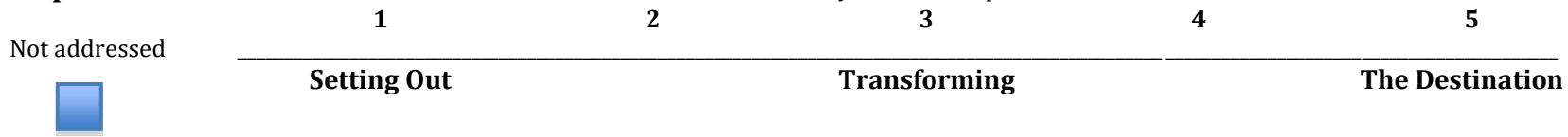| 1 Setting Out...	3 Transforming...	5 The Destination...
- Increasing student voice and youth-adult partnership are perceived to be threatening and inappropriate by the educational leadership. There is a pervasive belief that adults are responsible and accountable for learning, have spent their lives in this pursuit, and should therefore be making decisions about school changes, on behalf of students. There is a more subtle belief that most students are too immature to be involved in school change. - Although it is clear that many students are disengaged from learning, it is accepted as inevitable. There is a belief that not all students can learn, which is generally attributed to life circumstances that limit the potential of some. - The school caters to those who want to learn with a strong AP program and honors classes. The strongest faculty teach these courses. Those who "don't want to learn" are relegated to classes with far lower expectations, with often new or inexperienced teachers. This is not seen as inequitable or inappropriate. - Decision making is a traditional, tops-down structure. There is a curiosity about the potential of YATST by a few, but no real commitment. - The principal assigns two teachers to take on YATST as their project for the year. These teachers have little idea about what this means, but feel they must comply. - The principal is reluctant to look for financial resources to offset YATST costs. - There is underlying tension and distrust between the principal, faculty and board. No one but the principal and two teachers know about this upcoming YATST work.	- Increasing student voice and youth-adult partnership are generally accepted as critical next steps in school transformation, although it is not clear how best to make this happen. YATST is perceived as a means to help structure this work. - The educational leadership, teachers and students are all willing to commit to ACTION research as a means to empower youth voice and guide change. - They also understand that the absence of a common language has hindered important partnerships between students, teachers and community members. They are willing to explore the "4Rs" model and identify ways to integrate it into faculty development and student training. Faculty in-service time will be committed to this. - Adults realize that this will be new, unchartered and work and are willing to partner with students to assure the quality and success of their efforts. They realize that YATST will be begging deep questions about educational practices which will be threatening to some faculty. All are committed to helping deal with the inevitable discomfort which will come from change. - The educational leadership intend to make sure YATST assumes a permanent place in the decision-making structure but may not be sure exactly what this will look like. They are willing to pursue financial support for this work. - YATST adult advisors are strong youth voice advocates and deeply committed to their role. - The faculty and the board are informed about the decision to join YATST and are supportive. - The relationships between board, school leadership and faculty are generally positive.	- Increasing student voice and youth-adult partnership are seen as essential to school transformation by the educational leadership. - Teachers believe in youth voice and that the creation of a stronger and more transparent learning partnership with students is central to improving their professional practice. - Students are willing to consider the necessity of change, even though for some the present system appears to be serving them well. - There is a commitment to data driven decisions and therefore, support of YATST ACTION research. - The school believes that establishing a common language that is readily understood by students, teachers, administrators, and community members is a key to a change process and readily embrace the "rigor, relevance, relationships and shared responsibility" framework for this end. - Students, teachers and school leadership can no longer accept the inequities in the system as it presently exists and are ready to commit to transformation, despite the inevitable discomfort which stems from change. - The principal and the school board have institutionalized YATST as a credit bearing effort embedded within the school day. It is fully sustainable in the face of leadership turnover. - The principal actively pursues financial resources to subsidize the cost of YATST. - The opportunity for involvement in YATST is appreciated by parents and larger community. - Most can't imagine the school without this highly visible and productive group! - The board, the faculty and the principal enjoy trusting and supportive relationships.

SCHOOL-LEVEL READINESS for YATST WORK

Step 2: Record READINESS qualities that exist in your school   **Step 3: Record READINESS evidence**

Sample Strategies	Sample Evidence
• Gather a potential YATST youth-adult team, the principal and a school board member(s) and self-assess using this instrument. Talk about potential resources and barriers to involvement and realistically assess readiness for this work. • Using the YATST Transformation Tool Kit or curriculum as guides, explore the youth-adult partnership ladder and rationale for increasing student voice. Provide examples. Explore barriers and supports for partnership. Reflect on present state and set preliminary goals to increase meaningful student involvement in learning and decision making. • Introduce the faculty and student body to the rationale for school transformation • Explore the impact of tracking and low expectations in faculty in-service meetings, inventorying overt and covert evidence of tracking and negative stereotypes. • Seek YATST teacher leaders who are fully philosophically aligned with YATST and who may also be able to tie their content areas into the work. • Provide youth with training regarding effective dialogue strategies. Then develop MANY opportunities for youth and adult dialogue about shared common desires (increased engagement in learning being key). • Take a youth-adult team to visit an innovative school, using structured observation protocols to discern what might be effective back at their own school.	• The principal dedicated 5 hours of faculty in-service time to exploring both youth-adult partnerships and transformation, with youth facilitation and participation in discussions. • Two adult advisors are enrolled in the YATST graduate class and the principal is committed to being involved in this adult learning community whenever possible. • A survey reveals a high, positive correlation between students and faculty valuing the integral role of students in the change process. • A well informed decision is made to join YATST, with teacher leaders who are committed to this work and fully informed regarding what it will entail. • The principal informs the School Board about YATST involvement and documents their unequivocal support through a vote.
Our Current READINESS qualities….	**Our Current READINESS evidence….**

Step 4: Score Your School   Place an X on the scale below to indicate your school's performance in this dimension.

	1	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**

Not addressed   _____

     Setting Out   **Transforming**   **The Destination**