MEANINGFUL PARTICIPATION · LUNCHTIME · SCHOOLWIDE

DATA DAY

The Team puts its own Direction numbers on boards at lunch and asks the campus what to do about them. Students write ideas and sign them, and the Team builds the next piece of the Action Plan out of what they wrote.

PRIMARY CATEGORY
Meaningful Participation

ALSO FITS
School Climate · SEL · School Connections · Community Culture

DIRECTION SIGNAL
Students report that nobody at school asks their opinion or acts on it

PILLAR
6 · Meaningful Participation and Ethical Action

GRADE BAND
HS · MS · ES (elementary version below)

SETTING
One lunch period in the quad or cafeteria, repeated once a quarter

REACH
100 to 400 students in one lunch

TIME TO PREPARE
Two Team meetings after the Forum

TIME TO RUN
One lunch period, plus a 45 minute Team session to sort ideas

TEAM ROLES
Board builders, table hosts in pairs, a recruiter working the crowd, a scribe

MATERIALS
Four poster boards, butcher paper, markers, tables, tape

COST
About $40 for paper and markers

WHY THIS ANSWERS THE DATA

Direction almost always surfaces the same quiet result: students say nobody asks what they think, and the ones asked once never saw anything change. That is a participation problem, and it makes every other number harder to move. Data Day answers it by handing the campus the Team's actual data, in public, and asking for solutions with names attached. It works because students believe a number about themselves before they believe a speech, and because the ideas go into the Action Plan rather than a folder.

WHAT STUDENTS DO

The Team takes the top four issues from the Forum's Critical Issues Board and makes one poster board for each, with the Direction number written large and in plain language. The boards go on four tables at lunch, each staffed by two Team members. Under each board is butcher paper and markers. Students read the number, write what the school should do about it, and put their name beside their idea if they want the credit. The Team carries the paper back to class that week and sorts every idea into what it can do, what needs an adult, and what is not possible right now.

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SET UP

+ Pull the four Critical Issues from the Forum and the exact Direction number behind each.
+ Write each number as one sentence a student can read in three seconds. Percentages only, no charts.
+ Have the Advisor and an administrator review the boards first. Numbers go out accurate or not at all.
+ Reserve four tables in the highest traffic spot on campus and confirm with the office.
+ Assign two hosts to each board and give them the follow up question to ask every time.
+ Announce it for three days so students arrive knowing they will be asked something.
+ Set the date of the sorting session in advance, so the ideas do not sit.

RUN IT

1. **Set up (15 min before).** Boards up, butcher paper taped down, markers out, hosts standing in front of the tables, not behind.
2. **Open (2 min).** One Team member reads the four numbers out loud and says what will happen with the ideas.
3. **Host the boards (25 min).** Hosts read the number to anyone who stops, then ask what the school should do. Hand over the marker. For every idea, ask what it would look like here on a Tuesday, and the scribe writes that down.
4. **Work the crowd (25 min).** The recruiter walks the quad and brings over students watching from a distance, especially those who never join anything.
5. **Close (5 min).** Roll up the butcher paper with the board name on each roll and thank the campus out loud.
6. **Sort the ideas (45 min, that week).** Sort every idea into three piles: the Team can do it, an adult is needed, or not now.
7. **Report back (within two weeks).** Announce which ideas were chosen and name the students who wrote them.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR

+ A board about a heavy topic drawing jokes. Hosts do not argue. Ask the follow up question again and keep the marker moving.
+ Students writing something private about themselves rather than an idea. Redirect gently and name the counselor's door as the place for that.
+ A student who discloses something serious at the table. The host listens, never counsels, and brings the Advisor over that period so the counselor can follow up. Duty to inform applies.
+ Hosts defending the school or arguing with a number. Their job is to collect ideas, not answer for the data.
+ One board getting no traffic. Move the recruiter there and read that number out loud again.

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THE APPLICATION

This is where Data Day earns its name. The Team counts ideas by board, picks two it can run without permission and one to bring to administration, and writes them into the Action Plan with dates and a Team member on each. The idea list, the counts, and the choices go in the Cycle Journal. The chosen actions go on the Running Scoreboard beside the Critical Issue they answer, and the Team reports at the next Forum with what it did, not only what it heard.

MEASURE IT

+ Count: ideas per board, and unique students who wrote one.
+ Count: ideas that became Action Plan items, and how many were done by the next cycle.
+ Binary, re-asked on the next Direction Survey: Has anyone here asked your opinion about a school problem?
+ Likert, re-asked on the next Direction Survey: Students here can change something if they speak up.
+ Compare the re-ask to the cycle that surfaced the signal. Three cycles make a trend.

BY GRADE LEVEL

+ **High school.** As written, once a quarter, with the boards rebuilt from each new Forum.
+ **Middle school.** Two boards instead of four, with simpler wording. Hosts work in threes so nobody stands alone at a board.
+ **Elementary.** The Team is fourth, fifth, and sixth graders with a teacher. Use one board and one number from the school's own survey, in one short sentence. Set it up at recess and have a Team member read it out loud to each classmate who stops. Classmates draw or write one idea. The Team reads the ideas to the class and picks one to actually do that month.

VARIATIONS

+ Small campus: one board and one table, run monthly instead of quarterly.
+ Online: post the numbers and collect ideas in a school platform the Advisor moderates.

TAKE-HOME THOUGHT

If you tell us what to do about it, we will actually do one of them.

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