

# Creating Your DREAM Community

## ACTION GUIDE



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## Action Guide

### In this session:

- A. You'll learn how creating and communicating a clear vision of your dream school community is the first step to transform customer families into partner families, families who understand and value the difference of Montessori education.
- B. You'll learn how to use your clear vision to attract your dream families and transform your current families. This is the second step I'll show you.
- C. You'll hear about some of the new best practices in engaging and educating your families and staff. That's our third step.
- D. With steps number four and five you'll see how you can systematically use all of these basic steps to transform your school families into dream families.
- E. You'll learn how to take these steps further.

### When you use these five steps you'll:

- Have more time to focus on important issues. More time. Less stress.
- Be confident on how to attract and reach out to the people you want in your school community.
- See how to engage and educate your school community members in a fresh new way.
- Have proven tools to build relationships with incoming families.
- Understand the specifics of how to make your dream school happen.

## The First Step

\_\_\_\_\_ what you want your dream community to be.

This four-part visioning process helps you in two ways:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the team to your vision

2. \_\_\_\_\_ keywords to describe the qualities you desire in your school community.

## DECIDE Part 1: Creating A Vision Plan

Main Question: \_\_\_\_\_do we want our school community to be?

Ask questions such as:

- How do you want your school to look? Inside and out.
- What do the classrooms look like?
- What colors do you use?
- What do your classrooms sound like?
- How do your classrooms smell?
- How do you want parents to feel when they walk into the front door for the first time? The thousandth time?
- How do you want people treat to each other?
- How do you want people to resolve differences and problems?

Information gathering process:

- a) Ask \_\_\_\_\_
- b) Write \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Get \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Remain \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Add \_\_\_\_\_
- f) Consolidate \_\_\_\_\_

## DECIDE PART 2: Creating An Action Plan

The main question: How can we \_\_\_\_\_?

How can we work together to make our vision plan real?

Use the information gathering process as in Part 1.

### **Information gathering process:**

- a) Ask key questions.
- b) Write answers on big sticky notepaper.
- c) Get input from everyone. Take your time!
- d) Remain open to all possibilities.
- e) Add school leader's suggestions at the last.
- f) Consolidate to five items.

### **DECIDE PART 3: Creating An Accountability Plan**

**Our question is: What rules or guidelines do we need to have to make sure our vision and action plans happen?**

**Avoid using \_\_\_\_\_ phrases.**

Use the information gathering process as in Part 1.

**Vision Plan + Action Plan+ Accountability Plan =**

\_\_\_\_\_

To make it flexible we need to add one more step.

### **DECIDE PART 4: Creating a Feedback Plan**

Ask in staff meetings or by email survey each month:

- How are we doing?
- What can we do better?
- What do we need to change?

Your working plan is a working document. It's a \_\_\_\_\_document.

## EXAMPLE OF FLEXIBLE WORKING PLAN

### What Do We Want Our School Community To Be?

#### Our families and staff members...

- Appreciate our school and each other
- Understand and support Montessori ideas and practices
- Communicate and problem solve in open and honest ways
- Work to create school/home partnerships to support all our children's development and learning.

#### How Can We Make This Happen?

- Offer a quality Montessori program with on-going information to all our community members about Montessori and child development principles
- Use and teach problem-solving tools to all community members, children, families and staff members.
- Offer fun relationship building activities through out the year, i.e. open houses, picnics. etc.
- Seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- Support all community members by listening.

#### To Make Sure This Happens We Will...

- Offer friendly reminders of what it means to be part of our school community: In our school we...
- Step up when we see a problem.
- Have the difficult conversations when necessary.
- Ask for help when we need it.
- Create and maintain an effective feedback plan
- Make changes to our plan with necessary.

Signed this day: \_\_\_\_\_

**Vision Plan +  
Action Plan+  
Accountability Plan +  
Feedback Plan =  
FLEXIBLE WORKING PLAN**

**Be sure to download your free ebooklet:  
*Planning Your Dream Community***

## FINDING KEYWORDS

As you go through your visioning process hang on to those

\_\_\_\_\_.

Those sticky notes contain your keywords. The words are right there. The work is already done.

You'll be using your keywords repeatedly on your website, in your newsletters, in your parent and staff handbooks, in brochures, in every talk you give in your school community. And you want to encourage your community to use those keywords, also.

## KEYWORD MESSAGE

**We are a thriving community of children, parents, and staff working individually and together to...**

- Appreciate our school and each other
- Understand and support Montessori ideas and practices
- Communicate and problem solve in open and honest ways
- Work to create school/home partnerships to support all our children's development and learning

Our vision plan leads to our \_\_\_\_\_ plan.

Our working plan provides transformative\_\_\_\_\_.

Keywords lead to our next big idea. Clear Expectations.

## CLEAR EXPECTATIONS

An example of stating clear expectations:

We expect our community members to take the time to find out important information about children and their school community.

We expect them to want to learn how our school will make a difference in their life and their family's lives.

We expect our families to:

- pay on time,
- arrive and depart school on time,
- understand children's sleep and nutrition requirements,
- be the adult in the relationship with their child,
- understand and use key Montessori concepts like freedom within limits, any unnecessary help is a hindrance, respect for the work of the child, and more.

You need to be clear, crystal clear, about the kind of people you want in your school community.

Not being clear lets \_\_\_\_\_ through your screening process.

## **AVOIDING DIFFICULT FAMILIES**

What are difficult families?

In short, they aren't your \_\_\_\_\_.

These words may sound strong and unkind but working with school leaders for many years these descriptions come up time and time again:

- Difficult families act entitled.
- They are habitually late—with the bigger issue that they think the school rules don't apply to them.
- They spread gossip, falsehood and innuendo about the folks in your school community.
- They lack commitment to your school, much less to the idea of Montessori education.
- They seem uninformed about good parenting skills, and seem uninterested in learning about how to be a better parent.
- They may appear unhappy, with unresolved personal issues.
- They may interact with us in demanding, angry, blaming, and sarcastic ways.

When we lack \_\_\_\_\_ for how we want our school community to behave, we end up attracting \_\_\_\_\_ people.

## UNAMBIGUOUS CONSEQUENCES

Be clear about the consequences of not meeting expectations.

- What happens when a family is habitually late?
- Misses too much school?
- Gossips?
- Doesn't support the goals of the school community?
- Doesn't attend parent and community activities?
- Chooses to be uninformed, not reading newsletters or attending key meetings?
- What happens when someone speaks rudely, in a threatening manner, uses profanity?
- What happens when someone chooses to not seek a win/win solution to a problem?

**Your dream families have follow through.**

**You set requirements for being part of your school community.**

**You are clear about the consequences for not meeting requirements.**

## The Second Step

Our second step to our five-step system is about \_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_ people using keywords to communicate high \_\_\_\_\_ and unambiguous \_\_\_\_\_.

## The Third Step

Our next step is to \_\_\_\_\_ and educate our school community.

We have to communicate to our community:

1. What we do
2. Why we do it



3. Why it matters
4. What the results are
5. What they can do at home

Our new generation of families are \_\_\_\_\_ natives.

How do we connect? How do we build relationships? Big questions.

Our new families want their information to be digital, \_\_\_\_\_,  
\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

Our new families value honesty, integrity, innovation, collaboration, and respect.

## YOUR FIVE-STEP SYSTEM

\_\_\_\_\_ Step 1: DECIDE what you want your school community to be.

\_\_\_\_\_ Step 2: RECRUIT the right people.

\_\_\_\_\_ Step 3: ENGAGE AND EDUCATE with your school community in ways that are meaningful to them.

\_\_\_\_\_ Step 4: ACT to build relationships in ways that connect to personal values.

\_\_\_\_\_ Step 5: MAKE IT HAPPEN. To make our dreams come true, we do it. We find a way. We obliterate the don'ts.

This is what I call your \_\_\_\_\_ System.

### **In this session, you've learned:**

How to take the first two steps in creating your DREAM System.

Step 1: DECIDE what you want your school community to be.

Step 2: RECRUIT the right people by using keywords, clear expectations and unambiguous consequences.

Your free ebooklet, *Planning Your Dream Community*, will guide you to implement these two steps.

Steps 4 and 5 are up to you. You have to ACT and you have to MAKE IT HAPPEN.

**You've learned that the third step, the E-Step, is about ENGAGING AND EDUCATING.** You need to help your school community understand...

1. What we do
2. Why we do it
3. Why it matters
4. What the results are
5. What they can do at home

For this new generation engagement and education needs to be digital, clear, fluid and fast.

If you'd like to find out more about how I can help you create your dream community by implementing your DREAM system, please contact me at [Maren@MarenSchmidt.com](mailto:Maren@MarenSchmidt.com) or call me at 503-550-3143 Hawaii Time.

Let's put your DREAM plan into action!

Hope to visit with you soon. Thank you and Mahalo!



Maren Schmidt