

# Interview

## A strategy for engaging stakeholders

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### You might conduct an interview when...

You might conduct interviews once you've identified investment priorities for next year's budget. Interviewees can then react to the list you've developed and may feel more comfortable being open with their opinions in this one-to-one setting.



### Description

An interview is a strategy that engages a limited group of stakeholders in strategic visioning and planning. The stakeholder interview is generally a one-to-one session between the leader and a specifically recruited stakeholder. The interview generally occurs only once and lasts from 1-2 hours. Stakeholder interview processes can be short, informal and low cost, or they can last longer and be more expensive when coupled with other engagement strategies, such as a listening campaign. Either way, the value of an interview includes the following:

- Interviews can be a very effective way of gathering qualitative information to help leaders compare their version of reality to stakeholder views and make better decisions accordingly.
- Because interviews are 1 to 1, interviewees may feel more open to give authentic feedback.
- Summarizing trends found in your analysis of stakeholder interviews can be an extremely influential tool for building buy-in.

### The “How To” of an Interview

- Identify appropriate times/topics for interviews.
  - Develop a flexible interview process and list of questions that both allows for active listening and yields the kind of information that would be valuable for planning and implementation. When appropriate, consider sharing your interview questions in advance so interviewees can prepare ahead of time.
- Identify specific stakeholders to be interviewed.
  - Because interviews are 1 to 1, you will have limited time to interview many people. Carefully choose interviewees to ensure diverse opinions are represented (including representation from various groups in the school and experts from outside the school.)
- Remember that confidentiality is an absolute must.
  - Feedback can never be connected to individual interviewees, although in some instances, providing a list of interviewees can be useful and appropriate. More often, the roles represented are shared, not the names of those interviewed. Remember, protecting the confidentiality of your interviewees demonstrates your own integrity and assures your stakeholders of your intentions.