Welcoming Environment School Trip

As a member of the Welcoming Environment School Trip Team, your role is to observe the school from one the following assigned perspectives:

- ☐ a new family interested in enrolling
- ☐ a multilingual family member
- ☐ a family member attending a school celebration or recognition
- ☐ a community member interested in partnering with your school
- ☐ a current family member who is returning to seek information
- ☐ a frustrated family member
- ☐ a _____ (ex. grandparent, father)

Your goal is to assess the overall climate and culture by noting what makes the school feel welcoming and where improvements can be made. Please make notes on what's working well and any recommendations you have for making the school more inviting.

Welcoming Environment School Trip Team member:_____ Date: _____

Physical Environment
Does our physical environment help every family feel safe, welcomed, and that they belong?

Item	Yes	No	Notes
OUTSIDE THE BUILDING			
✔ Street signage is clear to direct new visitors to the school.			
✔ Parking lots, landscaped areas, playground areas and sports fields are clean and well-maintained.			
✔ Handicap parking is available, well-marked and close to an entrance.			
✔ Sidewalks and curb ramps are maintained, free of cracks and accessible.			
✔ Visitor/guest and staff parking are marked in more than one language.. Visitor/guest parking is closer to the main entrance than staff parking.			
✔ There is signage to direct visitors/guests from parking lots to the main entrance in more than one language.			
ENTRANCE TO THE BUILDING			
✔ A welcome sign is displayed near the entrance in more than one language.			
✔ An explanation of how and why to use a doorbell are posted in more than one language.			
✔ Doors are handicapped accessible.			
✔ Signs giving directions from the main entrance to the office are clearly posted near the main entrance in more than one language.			
✔ There is a school directory near the main entrance that highlights frequently requested locations such as performing arts center, gymnasium etc. in more than one language.			
✔ The school day hours and office hours are clearly noted near the main office entrance.			
✔ There are friendly, clear instructions for all visitors to sign in at the office and obtain a building badge/pass in more than one language.			
THE MAIN OFFICE			

✔ When entering the school, visitors can pick up a badge that says "Parent," "Volunteer," or "Visitor," indicating that the school considers them to be equally important.			
✔ A log book or digital system is kept in the main office for visitors/guests to sign in when they come into the school.			
✔ The office is colorful, organized and welcoming.			
✔ There is a Family Resource Center where district and school publications are displayed, organized and easily accessible to visitors.			
✔ PTA/SAC/MPLC/ ADDitions and PE community partnership opportunities are visible and explained.			
✔ Displays, artwork, and signage reflect the identities, cultures, languages, and accomplishments of the students and families served by the school.			
THE REST OF THE BUILDING			
✔ Hallways are well lit.			
✔ Bulletin boards are present that thank volunteers, the PTA, and community members for their contributions.			
✔ Bulletin boards and displays throughout: the building is student-oriented, colorful, and well maintained.			
✔ Pictures, photographs, bulletin boards, showcases, and displays reflect the faces of the school's children and their families, including cultural, racial, and linguistic diversity and a variety of family structures.			
✔ Restrooms are clean and orderly.			
✔ Classroom signs identify the name of the teacher, room number, grade level, and safety procedures.			
✔ Classrooms have appropriate space, lighting, temperature and organization.			
Personal Interactions *Do our words, actions, and attitudes consistently make every family feel valued, respected, and supported?*			
THE MAIN OFFICE			
✔ The office staff greet visitors quickly with a smile and in a warm, friendly, courteous way.			
✔ Visitors/ guests are treated equally as important as staff and students.			
✔ A real, live person answers the phone.			
✔ People who answer the telephone are consistently doing so in a friendly, professional way.			
✔ Prompt attention is given to telephone calls , emails, ParentSquare messages, and OnFlo tickets, inviting two-way communication.			
✔ When a person with limited English proficiency calls (perhaps simulated by a phone call from a team member who fluently speaks another language), the staff member answering the phone is very patient and attempts to find someone who can speak his/her language or engages Language Line.			
✔ When a person with limited English proficiency visits the school's office, the staff member greeting them is very patient and attempts to find someone who can speak his/her language or engages Language Line Insights or uses a Pocket Talk translator..			
✔ When an irate parent calls (perhaps simulated by a phone call from a team member), the staff member answering the phone remains calm, listens attentively and attempts to solve the problem or find someone who can help.			

✔ There is a suggestion box or digital form where parents and other visitors/guests can contribute ideas.			
✔ Information about students and staff members is handled discreetly by the office staff.			
✔ Staff are empowered to solve problems rather than simply redirect families.			
✔ Students are courteous, welcoming, and demonstrate pride in their school when interacting with families, visitors, and community members.			
THE REST OF THE BUILDING			
✔ Staff members passing in the hall ask visitors/guests if they may be of assistance.			
✔ When any adult attempts to walk through the hallway without a badge or pass, staff members approach him/her politely and cordially, but firmly invite/escort him/her to the office to sign in.			
✔ There are parents and/or community volunteers observed in the building.			
✔ Interaction observed between staff members is friendly and positive.			
✔ Interaction observed between staff members and students is friendly and positive.			
✔ Staff members greet you by making eye contact, smiling and speaking to you.			
✔ Custodians, cafeteria staff and resource officers interact with you at the same level as the teachers and administration.			
✔ Families and students greeted at dismissal and arrival times by administrators and/or teachers.			
✔ Students are welcomed as they enter the classrooms by their teachers.			
Practices and Policies *Do our systems, procedures, and leadership practices make it easy for every family to engage with our school and intentionally create an accessible, welcoming, equitable experience?*			
THE MAIN OFFICE			
✔ A first-time visitor could independently navigate the campus, access the needed information, understand next steps, and leave knowing who to contact for help			
✔ The school has a documented plan for creating a welcoming environment and building relationships with families that is reviewed annually.			
✔ Front office customer service expectations have been communicated to all staff.			
✔ New staff receive onboarding that includes customer service and welcoming expectations			
✔ New families receive a physical or digital welcome packet or onboarding information.			
✔ The school has a process for collecting and responding to family feedback.			
✔ Families know how their feedback has been used.			
✔ Families are informed how their feedback has influenced school decisions.			
✔ Customer service concerns are addressed through coaching and follow-up.			
✔ The school regularly reviews welcoming environment data (surveys, complaints, enrollment trends, shopper results, etc.).			
✔ Leaders recognize and celebrate staff who demonstrate exceptional customer service.			
✔ The school has procedures to ensure language translation and interpretation for multilingual families.			

✔ Families have both digital and non-digital options for receiving information			
✔ Parent-teacher conferences and other meetings are held at flexible times and have a virtual option available, when permitted by law.			
✔ The school intentionally provides opportunities for parents and/or students to serve as ambassadors and welcome new families and visitors/guests.			
THE REST OF THE BUILDING			
✔ The school has a process to ensure every family receives a positive outreach before the school year begins or early in the school year.			
✔ Families know who to contact for common questions and receive timely follow-up.			
✔ Family questions submitted through district communication systems (e.g., OnFlo) receive timely responses.			
✔ The school intentionally builds relationships with families before concerns arise.			
✔ When concerns arise, staff follow up to ensure families feel heard and supported.			
Digital and Print Resources *Do our digital and printed resources make it easy for every family to access information, connect with our school, and feel informed?*			
THE MAIN OFFICE			
✔ A new family can learn who we are, how to enroll, and why they should choose our school without ever entering the building?			
✔ Personal greeting recorded for the phone system during the day and after hours.			
✔ The school website is current with accurate contact information and office hours.			
✔ Important information is easy to locate within three clicks on the school website.			
✔ ParentSquare is actively used to provide timely, family-friendly two-way communication.			
✔ Communications are available in families' preferred languages whenever possible.			
✔ Printed materials are written in plain language and visually appealing.			
✔ School social media highlights students, families, staff, classroom instruction, student work, and school celebrations.			
✔ Printed resources (registration, transportation, calendars, volunteer opportunities, etc.) are available in the front office in more than one language.			
✔ QR codes are used appropriately to connect families to additional resources.			
✔ Family Resource Center includes current workshops, community resources and support services.			
✔ Photos and materials reflect the diversity of the school community.			
✔ Digital and printed communications consistently reinforce the school's culture, values, and opportunities.			

After completing this walkthrough...

- What is one strength we should celebrate?
- What is one barrier we should remove?
- What is one improvement we will implement within 30 days?