



NEW YORK STATE AFTERSCHOOL NETWORK

## NYSAN PROGRAM QUALITY SELF-ASSESSMENT (QSA) TOOL INDICATOR DEFINITIONS

### ELEMENT 3: RELATIONSHIPS

**A quality program develops, nurtures, and maintains positive relationships and interactions among staff, participants, families, and communities.**

#### **Relationships, Indicator 1**

\*Has staff that respect and communicate with one another and are role models of positive adult relationships.

##### Performance Level 1

Staff members are disrespectful and/or hostile toward one another. Participants witness disrespectful behavior among staff members. Staff members work in isolation, not as a team. The site director does not facilitate relationship-building among staff members. Participants are not taught to develop and maintain positive relationships, nor are these skills modeled by staff members.

##### Performance Level 2

Staff members seem to be indifferent to one another. The staff rarely works as a team, and staff members do not take initiative to work together to best serve youth. The site director mediates for staff members when approached regarding a disagreement, but does not take other steps to facilitate relationship-building among staff members. Participants are not taught and seldom see modeling of relationship-building skills by staff.

##### Performance Level 3

Staff members generally seem to get along and are respectful of one another. The staff works as a team in order to best serve youth. The site director mediates for staff members when approached regarding a disagreement, and follows-up with staff members to ensure the conflict does not affect their work. The site director facilitates relationship-building among staff members by organizing professional development on relationship-building and providing non-work related functions, such as a staff picnic for staff to bond and develop as a team.

##### Performance Level 4

Staff members always get along, positively work through conflicts, and are respectful of one another. Staff members work as a team and develop strategies for utilizing each others' skills to best serve youth. The site director provides conflict resolution and negotiation professional development for the staff with direct examples of how to implement techniques. When staff members need additional assistance and cannot resolve conflicts on their own, the site director immediately mediates for them. The site director follows-up with staff members several times to ensure the conflict does not affect their work and that they feel that it is resolved. The site director also convenes a staff committee to plan relationship-building and team-building opportunities for staff members including occasional events, a mentoring program for new staff members, and monthly staff meetings.

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#### **Relationships, Indicator 2**

\*Interacts with families in a comfortable, respectful, welcoming way.

##### Performance Level 1

There is little interaction between families and staff members. Staff members do not welcome families at the program site; they are told to come to the site only when it is time to pick up their child. Family members' concerns are often dismissed. Family members who are not native-English speakers are not given an opportunity to talk to staff members in their own language.

#### Performance Level 2

There is some interaction between families and staff members. Staff members welcome families who come to the program site, but they do not specifically invite them to visit other than when it is time to pick up their child. Family members may voice concerns but action is seldom taken. Family members who are not native-English speakers are only given an opportunity to talk to staff members in their own language when there happens to be a staff member who understands their language or when there is a problem with their child.

#### Performance Level 3

There is frequent interaction between families and staff members. Staff members welcome families, and specifically ask them to come to the program site once a year to learn more about the program and to see their child engaged in activities. Family members' concerns are taken into consideration whenever possible. The site director hires staff members who are bilingual whenever possible so family members who are not native-English speakers can talk to staff members and so they can develop program materials in multiple languages.

#### Performance Level 4

There is frequent, regular interaction between families and staff members. Families are regularly made aware that they are always welcome at the program site to see their child engaged in activities and to participate in family activities and programs. Family members' suggestions, ideas, and concerns are welcomed, requested, documented, and implemented whenever it is possible. The site director hires staff members who are bilingual whenever possible so family members who are not native-English speakers can talk to staff members in their own language. If a family member speaks a language not spoken by any staff member, the site director locates a translator to facilitate dialogue.

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### **Relationships, Indicator 3**

\*Treats participants with respect and listens to what they say.

#### Performance Level 1

Staff members are often disrespectful to youth and have been observed yelling at youth to get their attention. Staff members frequently interrupt young people who are speaking. Staff members choose to use negative language and negative discipline strategies rather than teaching, supporting, and praising positive behaviors. Young people's ideas are not taken seriously or are dismissed. The program culture and activities are adult-centered.

#### Performance Level 2

Staff members multi-task while working with youth and do not make eye contact or individual connections with young people. Staff members seldom call participants by name. There are few opportunities for youth to communicate with staff members and peers about the program, daily experiences, and concerns.

#### Performance Level 3

A daily "check-in" is incorporated into the program routine as a tool to connect youth with staff members to discuss their strengths, desires, needs, and concerns. Young people contribute to program offerings and to the program's discipline policies or code of conduct. Participants are valued, trained, supported, and regularly recognized as leaders within the program. A majority of staff members practice a variety of positive discipline techniques and use community-building strategies. Staff members try to make time to connect with youth on an individual basis.

#### Performance Level 4

Staff members are aware of the strengths and needs of individual youth; a daily "check-in" is incorporated into the program routine. Positive supports and discipline strategies are used throughout the program, and young people contribute to program offerings and to the program's discipline policies or code of conduct. Most activities are designed with youth input and youth feedback is sought and integrated into the program. The program culture is safe and confidential, which encourages young people to speak freely. Participants are valued, trained, supported, and regularly recognized as leaders within the program. The language and behavior of staff members shows sensitivity to race, ethnicity, sex, gender identification, sexual orientation, and the physical ability of all young people. Staff members have adequate professional development to teach, model, and support cooperation and respect among youth.

#### **Relationships, Indicator 4**

Teaches participants to interact with one another in positive ways.

##### **Performance Level 1**

Participants are disrespectful to one another, evidenced by bullying and teasing. Staff members primarily focus on the program and do not address the social and emotional development of participants. Staff members do not intervene in bullying and teasing or treat it as an opportunity for conflict resolution. Participants are sometimes reprimanded for disrespectful behavior, but only when staff members have time to address the issue. No opportunities exist for youth to become peer leaders and interact positively with other participants.

##### **Performance Level 2**

Participants are sometimes disrespectful to one another, and there are some signs of bullying and teasing. Staff members seldom intervene in bullying and teasing situations and have no formal training in effective interventions. Staff members focus primarily on running activities and only address the social and emotional development of participants if they have time. Staff members have no formal training in social and emotional learning or how to teach conflict resolution skills to youth. Participants are usually reprimanded for disrespectful behavior. Youth are not valued as role models for positive interaction.

##### **Performance Level 3**

Positive program expectations are developed by participants and staff members at the beginning of each year and taught, modeled, reinforced, and supported throughout the year. Participants are generally respectful to one another. Staff members receive professional development in social and emotional learning and focus both on running activities and on social and emotional development. Bullying and teasing are addressed immediately and tracked to ensure that they have stopped. Positive relationships are built and fostered through a variety of strategies including team-building exercises. Participants are always taught, prompted, and encouraged to display respectful behavior and reminded, redirected, and/or reprimanded, if necessary, for disrespectful behavior.

##### **Performance Level 4**

Positive program expectations are developed by participants, families, and staff members at the beginning of each year and taught, modeled, reinforced, supported, and assessed throughout the year. Participants are respectful to one another and acknowledged regularly for respectful behavior. Staff members receive professional development in social and emotional learning, with an emphasis on effective bullying prevention education and interventions, and focus both on running activities and on social and emotional development. Participants are taught about what bullying and teasing is and that it is not tolerated at the program. Bullying and teasing are addressed immediately investigated, dealt with, and tracked to ensure that they have stopped. Positive relationships are built and fostered through a variety of strategies including team-building exercises. Participants are always taught, prompted, encouraged, and recognized for respectful behavior and reminded, redirected, and/or reprimanded, if necessary, for disrespectful behavior.

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#### **Relationships, Indicator 5**

Teaches participants to make responsible choices and encourages positive outcomes.

##### **Performance Level 1**

Staff members make all decisions about the program, such as what activities are offered, the types of snacks served, and when participants interact with one another. Participants are told what they are doing and are never allowed to make their own choices. Therefore, they do not develop skills in making responsible decisions through the program. Staff members do not ask for feedback from participants. No opportunity for youth voice exists.

##### **Performance Level 2**

Staff members make most decisions about the program, and allow participants to make basic choices such as which snack to choose or which chair to sit in. Participants rarely have the opportunity to exhibit signs of developing skills in making responsible decisions.

### Performance Level 3

Staff members give participants authentic opportunities to make decisions about the program. Participants learn responsible decision-making skills and have the opportunity to practice those skills when deciding about which activities should be offered in the program or which to choose to attend. Staff members support, recognize, and reward participants for making responsible decisions. Participants are given opportunities to practice role modeling positive behaviors through skits or other activities as well as through authentic real world situations and community service opportunities.

### Performance Level 4

Staff members give participants authentic opportunities to make decisions about the program. Staff trainings include professional development on social and emotional learning, youth development, and the importance of youth choice, and are required to integrate these issues into the program. The program is designed to allow participants to have the opportunity to develop and practice skills in making responsible decisions. Participants learn responsible decision-making skills and have the opportunity to practice those skills when deciding about which activities should be offered in the program or which to choose to attend, as well as how they interact with staff and other participants. The program includes leadership, service learning, and other character development activities. Staff members formally teach, model, support, recognize, and reward participants for making responsible decisions.

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## **Relationships, Indicator 6**

Is sensitive to the culture and language of participants.

### Performance Level 1

Staff members are unaware of participants' cultures. They only speak English and do not communicate with participants who are learning English as a second language. Staff members question cultural norms that participants follow, such as wearing a covering, eating certain food, or other behaviors, and participants often have to defend these behaviors.

### Performance Level 2

Staff members are sometimes aware of participants' cultures. Most staff members only speak English and do not regularly communicate with participants who are learning English as a second language, but they try to find someone who can assist with translation when possible. Staff members generally disregard cultural norms that participants follow, such as wearing a covering, eating certain food, or other behaviors and often have to be reminded of them.

### Performance Level 3

Staff members are aware of and respect participants' cultures. Several staff members are bilingual and work with participants who are learning English as a second language to ensure that they are engaged in the program. Staff members generally understand cultural norms that participants follow, such as wearing a covering, eating certain food, or other behaviors and are accepting of them.

### Performance Level 4

Staff members are aware of participants' cultures, and are mandated to attend trainings on cultural sensitivity. The site director seeks out bilingual staff members, ensuring that the staff would be able to speak all of the most common languages spoken in the community. Staff members work with participants who are learning English as a second language to ensure that they are engaged in the program. Staff members generally understand cultural norms that participants follow, and ask questions to learn more to ensure that they are respectful of the participants, families, and culture. The program is designed with the community to celebrate the cultures in the community and to expose them in positive ways to a variety of cultures, so every participant feels welcome and accepted, and accepts and appreciates other cultures.

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## **Relationships, Indicator 7**

Establishes meaningful community collaborations.

### Performance Level 1

The program works independently and in isolation from other programs and organizations in the community. Therefore, no resources or information are shared.

#### Performance Level 2

The program occasionally works with other programs and organizations in the community. Resources and information are shared on an ad hoc basis, mostly via e-mail or in informal ways. This is generally helpful but typically does not reach the entire staff and does not have a large impact on the program.

#### Performance Level 3

The program often works with other programs and organizations in the community. Resources and information are shared formally and informally on a regular basis, both via e-mail and during in-person meetings with several staff members. This has an impact on the program by giving staff members additional information and resources needed to develop curriculum, work more effectively with youth, and better manage the program.

#### Performance Level 4

The program regularly collaborates with other programs and organizations in the community through informal means and formal partnerships. Resources and information are shared on a regular basis, through many means of communication such as e-mail, in-person meetings, community planning, etc. This has an impact on the program through collaboratively planning, sharing resources, and sharing and aligning professional development to develop and strengthen curriculum, work more effectively with youth, better manage the program, and reach community and program goals for youth and families. The group also works together to conduct outreach to local businesses and political leaders, raise funds for programming, and tackle other issues within the community.

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### **Relationships, Indicator 8**

Builds a sense of community among participants.

#### Performance Level 1

The program does not consider community-building as a program objective, and therefore does not focus any resources or time on it. Participants do not all know one another.

#### Performance Level 2

The program is interested in building a community among participants, but does not intentionally focus resources or time on it. Some staff members facilitate relationships among youth, but there is not a program-wide sense of community. Participants do not all know one another.

#### Performance Level 3

The program considers building a community among participants to be a program objective, and staff members are expected to focus resources and time working toward this goal. Many staff members facilitate relationships among youth. Special activities and events are designed to foster a sense of community by including all youth in the program. Because of this, participants know almost all of their peers.

#### Performance Level 4

The program considers building a community among participants to be a main program objective, and staff members are expected to focus resources and time working toward this goal. All staff members facilitate relationships among youth. Special activities and events are designed to foster a sense of community by including all youth in the program, and using special techniques including collaborative projects, community service, and opportunities to discuss topics such as empathy, respect, and teamwork. Because of this, participants know all of their peers.

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### **Relationships, Indicator 9**

Is structured to create close, sustained relationships between individual participants and caring adults.

#### Performance Level 1

The program is not designed to create close, sustained relationships between participants and adults, nor is it evaluated on the quality of these relationships. Some youth and staff develop strong relationships, but they are not intentional or documented. Staff members do not recognize this as part of their work.

#### Performance Level 2

Program leaders expect participants and adults to create close, sustained relationships, but there is no formal mechanism for doing so. Some youth and staff intentionally develop strong relationships, but they are not documented. Staff members may or may not recognize this as part of their work.

### Performance Level 3

The program is designed to create close, sustained relationships between participants and adults, and program leaders have a clear expectation for staff regarding relationship development. This expectation is outlined during staff orientation. Many youth and staff intentionally develop strong relationships, and they are documented in program records. Staff members recognize this as a core part of their work.

### Performance Level 4

The program is designed to create close, sustained relationships between participants and adults, and program leaders have a clear expectation for staff regarding relationship development and maintenance. This expectation is outlined during staff orientation, and is revisited through professional development opportunities throughout the year. Many youth and staff intentionally develop strong relationships, and they are documented in program records and included in the program's evaluation. Staff members recognize this as a core part of their work. All participants have at least one strong relationship with a staff member.

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## **Relationships, Indicator 10**

Has scheduled meetings with its major stakeholders.

### Performance Level 1

Staff members do not regularly meet with other stakeholders. Information is shared with stakeholders via e-mail or phone calls when necessary and on an ad hoc basis. When meetings are held with stakeholders, they generally focus on troubleshooting or addressing rising challenges.

### Performance Level 2

Staff members have a few meetings with its major stakeholders, including the Board of Directors, local principals, funders, families, and others, but they are often called last minute and not scheduled in advance. Meetings are scheduled when necessary and on an ad hoc basis. These meetings generally focus on troubleshooting or addressing rising challenges.

### Performance Level 3

The program has scheduled meetings with its major stakeholders, including the Board of Directors, local principals, funders, families, and others. Meetings are scheduled in advance and occur on a regular basis. These meetings give staff members the opportunity to discuss program updates, ask for input and suggestions, troubleshoot, address rising challenges, and celebrate successes.

### Performance Level 4

The program has scheduled meetings with its major stakeholders, including the Board of Directors, local principals, funders, families, and others. Meetings are scheduled in advance and occur on a regular basis. Stakeholders are invited to contribute to meeting agendas to include their information, ideas, suggestions, concerns, and feedback on the program. Meetings give staff members and stakeholders the opportunity to discuss program updates, complete quality self-assessments, plan and revise programming and program direction, identify strengths, troubleshoot, address rising challenges, plan for sustainability, assess progress towards goals, and celebrate successes.

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## **Relationships, Indicator 9**

Encourages former participants to contribute as volunteers or staff.

### Performance Level 1

The program does not maintain contact with former participants when they stop attending or become too old to attend the program. Former participants rarely contribute to the program.

### Performance Level 2

The program maintains contact with some former participants who stay in touch with individual staff members. Depending on the staff member they remain in touch with, they are sometimes asked to contribute to the program in whatever way they can. These contributions are usually made through occasional visits to the program.

### Performance Level 3

The program tries to maintain contact with former participants by keeping their contact information in a database and contacting them once or twice a year. Former participants are asked to update their information if it changes. The program sends news and updates to former participants. Former

participants are invited to contribute to the program by volunteering to work with youth or to participate in fundraisers and events.

#### Performance Level 4

The program maintains regular contact with former participants by keeping their contact information up-to-date in a database. Former participants are asked to update their information if it changes, and they are contacted annually as a reminder. The program sends news and updates to former participants on a regular basis. Former participants are invited to contribute to the program by volunteering a set number of hours to work with youth, serve as a mentor, attend or speak at events, or to participate in fundraisers. Requests are sent to adult former participants who may have special skills, such as grant writing, event management, or marketing.