



## Simple outline for a first GMM school-community meeting

**Purpose of the meeting:** To create a common understanding of Graduation Matters Montana; to generate excitement about the local GMM initiative; to develop next steps.

**Who's in the room:** Typically there are 25 – 30 people in the room, including (but not limited to) school staff, students, community organization leaders, Main Street business leaders, juvenile justice and workforce readiness staff, higher education personnel, formal and informal community leaders, parents, local elected officials, tribal leaders.

**At the first GMM meeting you should:** (1) share information about Graduation Matters Montana as a statewide effort of locally designed, locally implemented efforts; (2) share data about your local community's dropout/college going challenge; (3) build in time for participants to talk in small groups about what is working and what more can be done to address the challenges; and (4) identify next steps: designate a key point of contact in the school who will work with external partners; identify what additional information the GMM team needs to move forward with planning; and designate a regular meeting time and place.

**Helpful materials include:** (1) copies of the GMM toolkit (available on-line or by request of OPI); (2) simple information on graduation and dropout rates in the district (available on-line or by request of OPI); (3) the GMM Story video (available on-line); (4) a participant sign in sheet; (5) refreshments.

### SAMPLE AGENDA – allow for 90 minutes minimum for a full discussion

**Settling in and Welcome/Purpose** (10 minutes) *Welcoming remarks by school administrator – inspirational.*

**Introductions All Around** (10 - 15 minutes) *Suggested introduction: your name, the “hat” you’re wearing tonight, and one thing that you hope GMM will accomplish in your community OR one strength you bring to your local GMM effort that can help all kids succeed.*

**Overview of Graduation Matters Montana** (10 minutes) *This can be done through the GMM Story video, and/or through an OPI representative if present or a local leader who knows about the initiative.*

**Small Group Discussions** (20 – 30 minutes, depending on the energy in the room) *A very helpful tool is the Comprehensive Community Solutions worksheet found in the GMM Toolkit. Participants form groups of 5 or 6 and choose one of the four focus areas and discuss the items. Make sure groups have cross representation of school and community members.*

**Full Group Discussion** (20 minutes) *Debrief the small group discussions: ask participants from each group to share their thoughts and insights, and begin to talk about ways the GMM team can work together to impact the goals of GMM.*

**Next Steps** (10 – 20 minutes) *Discuss where to go from here – designate a key point of contact in the school who will work with external partners; identify what additional information the GMM team needs to move forward with planning; and designate a regular meeting time and place. Ask who else should be in the conversation, and have people commit to inviting them to the next meeting.*

**Wrap Up** (5 – 10 minutes) *Ask everyone to share one thing they learned, or are excited about.*

**Closing** (3 – 5 minutes) *The person who opened the meeting thanks everyone for their time and their commitment and expresses optimism about what is possible: conclude the meeting on a positive note.*

*Thank you for your interest in working with us on Graduation Matters Montana! For more information, please contact Deborah Halliday, OPI at 444-3559 or [dhalliday@mt.gov](mailto:dhalliday@mt.gov)*