

Playing the Game: **Player Instructions**

Object of the Game

You are a member of a team appointed by the superintendent of the Verifine School District to help change the school district into a continuously improving learning community. A *continuously improving* community is one that systematically plans, implements, and monitors its progress to benefit all learners and to meet the needs of stakeholders such as parents and the business community. A *learning community* is created when people work together to create the results they desire, think and work in truly innovative ways, and are continually learning how to learn together. (Senge, 1990)

You have three years to accomplish the goals of the game. They are:

- To move most members of the school and community represented on the gameboard through the stages of becoming a learning community — from Awareness to Renewal.
- To produce as many learner benefits (*Bens*) as you can.

The assumptions for your playing team are:

- You have the permission of the superintendent to plan but do not yet have his broad support nor the commitment of the district and community members.
- The people in the community (player pieces represented on the gameboard) that you need to influence know nothing about your task.
- You have just begun to focus on the goals of the game and have three school years to accomplish as much as you can.

Because this is a simulation based on real life, there is no final point or end to the game.

The School Community

The Verifine School Community includes an administrative staff and school board, a K-5 school, a 6-8 middle school, and a 9-12 high school. It is a community that has tried many innovations in the past with mixed success. It has a diverse student population and community.

The staff, students, parents, and community members of the school community are described on *People Cards* (see below). The administration is represented by one school board member, a superintendent, an assistant superintendent, and a community member. The K-5 school includes a principal, teachers, and a parent. The middle school includes a principal, teachers, a student, and a parent. The high school is represented by a principal, teachers, other staff, a student, and a parent.

Parts of the Game

- **Player Instructions:** this sheet describes how to play the game.
- **Gameboard:** the board lists the representative people from the school community and contains a grid of the stages of becoming a learning community from Awareness to Renewal that player pieces will move across during the game, skipping over the shaded spaces.
- **People Cards:** describe people on the gameboard.
- **Player Pieces:** each of the people on the gameboard is represented by a player piece. The pieces are moved as the game progresses.

- **Activity Sheet:** this describes all the possible moves your team can make in the game.
- **40 Plastic Bits:** these are your resources for one year of play.
- **Strategy Record Sheet:** a record of all your team moves during the game.
- **Progress Record:** a record of the progress you make with the people on the gameboard.
- **Feedback Cards:** cards you will receive from the facilitator that tell you the results of your moves and may contain information and hints.
- **Bens:** numerical rewards listed on the *Feedback Cards* that your team earns as you make systemwide changes in the community.

To Play

1. Read about the people in the Verifine School Community on the *People Cards*.
2. Select a recorder for your team.
3. With your team, review the *Activity Sheet* and decide on an activity as your team's first move and which people on the gameboard will be involved in the activity, if required. Remember, a team may conduct only one activity at a time. You may conduct the activities in any order you wish, although activities #21 through #26 may only be done in Year Two and Year Three of the simulation.

As you discuss your possible activity choices, you should read the description carefully to make sure you understand what it entails. Then decide, as you would in real life, what your best tactic would be.

4. Record your team's move (the activity number and name) on the *Strategy Record Sheet*. Begin recording in the first space and use one line for each new move. Keeping track of what you do will help you reflect on and learn from your successes and failures.
5. Write the initials of the people you choose to do the activity in the third column of the *Strategy Record Sheet*, Participants' Initials (Who), for example, A (for Al). (If you do not need to select people, leave the third column blank.) Please write legibly as the facilitator will need to be able to read your *Strategy Record Sheet* in order to decide the appropriate feedback for your activity.
6. Count out the number of plastic *Bits* required to do the activity. (You have 40 *Bits* to spend each school year.)
7. Have one team member take your *Strategy Record Sheet*, *Progress Record*, and the *Bits* to the facilitator.
8. The facilitator will give you a *Feedback Card* based on your team's activity choice and the progress of the people on the board. Bring the *Feedback Card* from the facilitator back to your team.
9. Discuss and record the results you get on the *Strategy Record Sheet*.
10. Move the player pieces as indicated on the *Feedback Card*. **Skip over the shaded spaces on the board when moving Player Pieces.**
11. If your team receives *Bens* for doing the activity, record the number in the fifth column of the *Strategy Record Sheet*. At the end of the game the team will tally their *Bens*.
12. Indicate the individuals' new stage position on the board in the *Progress Record* if it has changed.
13. Choose your team's next activity/move and repeat steps three through six.
14. Return the *Feedback Card* to the facilitator and get a new *Feedback Card* for the next move.

Time

The time will be divided into three segments to represent three school years. The facilitator will signal when each year begins and ends.