

National Blue Ribbon Schools 2017

Home-School Partnerships

Goals

- Provide a facilitated discussion about the value of creating home-school partnerships
- Have candid conversations about the challenges to making it happen
- Learn from others about the strategies and mechanisms that make partnerships powerful
- Leave with ideas to try at home

Move into groups

- Elementary
- Middle
- High School

Table talk

- What does home-school partnership and family engagement mean to you?
- What do you see as the value in doing it?

Report out

A working definition

- ❖ Family Engagement is *any way* a child's guardian effectively supports learning and healthy development.
- ❖ It's an empowerment *process* that facilitates guardians' ability to understand the importance of their role and contribution to the learning and development of their children.

What do we know?

“Over 50 years of research links the various roles that families play in a child’s education – as supporters of learning, encouragers of grit and determination, models of lifelong learning, and advocates of proper programming and placements for their child.”

(Dual Capacity Framework)

What do we know (cont.)?

Students

- Faster rates of literacy
- Higher grades
- Higher levels
- Promoted
- Adapt better
- Better Social Skills
- Graduate

Families

- Role shifts
- Confidence and influence
- Accountability
- New challenges
- Personal growth

Educators

- Relationships matter
- Not in it alone
- Retention

How do we cultivate powerful partnerships?

It requires action

Essential Conditions/Practices

- Build respectful and trusting relationships
- Link family engagement events and initiatives to learning and developmental goals
- Adopt an asset-based, developmental lens
- Collaborate and honor all stakeholders' "funds of knowledge"
- Use interactive approaches to build capacity

Links to the points Sydney Chaffee made yesterday about connecting with students

Relationships, Relevance, Equity

Table Talk and Post: Challenges

- In table groups, discuss some of the challenges and barriers that might be interfering with implementing home-school partnerships (write them out on sticky notes and post along the wall)
- Try to sort them under “school barrier” or “parent barrier” (this will be tricky!)
- Quick summary of challenges

Table Talk: Explore Approaches

- With the barriers in mind, talk about the opportunities, events and activities you currently have in place
- Summarize the common opportunities
- Challenge yourselves...did we have a goal for families? E.g., did they gain new insights/information? Did we have a goal for ourselves?
- Challenge yourselves...which families tend to participate? Who are we missing?
- Report Out by table

Capacity Shifts

FROM	TO
Focus on programs	Focus on relationships
Deficit-based and adversarial	Strengths-based and collaborative
Random	Systemic
Individual	Collaborative/shared responsibility
Compliance driven	Learning and outcomes driven
Service	Developmental
One-time project	Sustained

Ten Truths of Family Involvement...

- All parents have hopes and goals for their children. They differ in how they support their children's efforts to achieve those goals.
- The home is one of several spheres that simultaneously influences a child. The school must work with other spheres for the child's benefit, not push them apart.
- The parent is the central contributor to a child's education. Schools can either co-opt that role or recognize the potential of the parent.
- Parent involvement must be a legitimate element of education. It deserves equal emphasis with elements such as program improvement and evaluation.
- Parent involvement is a process, not a program of activities. It requires on-going energy and effort.
- Parent involvement requires a vision, policy and framework. A consensus of understanding is important.
- Parents' interaction with their own children is the cornerstone of parent involvement. A program must recognize the value, diversity and difficulty of this role.
- Most barriers to parent involvement are found within school practices. They are not found within parents.
- Any parent can be "hard to reach." Parents must be identified and approached individually; they are not defined by gender, ethnicity, family situation, education or income.
- Successful parent involvement nurtures relationships and partnerships. It strengthens bonds between home and school, parent and educator, parent and school, school and community.

(RMC Research Corporation, 1999)

A blast from the past...just for fun!