

Improving Student Achievement, Outcomes through Family, Community Engagement

Are you finding it difficult to get more parents and community members to share the responsibility that exists between schools and families? The key to building parent involvement lies in genuinely understanding the needs and interests of parents. What can you do? Work with your school community to choose one or two things to work on this year to improve parent and community involvement. For instance:

Distribute a survey to all parents

- Address all the ways parents may become involved in the school rather than focusing only on involvement in the school council.
- In developing your survey, be mindful and consider including an opportunity for parents to identify barriers that prevent them from becoming involved in or attending school events.
- Often times, it is desirable to translate the survey into a variety of languages.

Bulletin boards provide a prime opportunity for announcing school events

- Include items such as a meeting schedule for the year, notices of upcoming meetings including an agenda, and minutes from past meetings.

Create a welcoming information package for parents new to the school

- Include information about the school, the school council, key dates and opportunities for parent involvement.

Be event-oriented

- Consider hosting a special showcase evening that features a school activity or homework strategies (at a time that is convenient for parents to attend).
- For schools that serve a diverse community, multicultural programs and events are great for welcoming parents and allowing them to explain their culture, traditions, food and other activities.

Enhance the visibility of the school council considerably

- Make information about the school council available on the school website and update this information regularly.
- Consider creating a special school council display in a prominent, high-traffic public area of the school.

One to three times per year, use your contact list to reach parents directly

- This ensures that all parents consistently and reliably receive information, understand the role and activities of the school council, and are provided ongoing opportunities to become involved.
- Take every opportunity to collect parent contact information.

Use this handy checklist to review your current parent-engagement activities and to stimulate discussion for ideas

Have we used surveys and other information-gathering tools to assess what parents need and want, and to ask for their opinions and suggestions?
Have we determined the barriers that may prevent some parents from participating?
Do we know how parents are getting our information and how they would like to receive it?
Do we routinely gather parent contact information and use it effectively to keep parents informed?
Do we have an organized plan for parent-engagement activities this year?
Do we know who has assumed responsibility for each activity within the plan?
Do we respond immediately when parents indicate a willingness to volunteer or participate in other ways?
Do we have a school information package for newcomers?
Do we actively encourage parents to attend school council meetings?
Do we regularly provide school events to showcase student work and activities, address issues of concern and provide information of interest to parents?
Do we celebrate our multicultural community by offering events that feature varied traditions and customs?
Do we prominently display information about the school council in a high-visibility area of the school?
Is the school council represented in the school newsletter or website?
Do we send frequent reminders to parents?



Spring Training Sessions

Tentative dates for SBDM new coordinator training and re-endorsement trainer sessions are being scheduled during the weeks of March 10-28. Training sessions will be regionally located again this year. More information will come in January.

Staffing Allocations

It's the time of the year to start thinking about staffing allocations. We have been reviewing staffing allocations; if your board of education staffing allocation policy is outdated, you may receive a notice. If you have made changes, don't forget to send us updates. More information will come after the first of the year.

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