

Strategies for Effective Family Engagement

1. Provide a Welcoming Environment

- Offer a variety of opportunities to volunteer.
- Make the environment physically welcoming.
- Appearance, parking, signs
- Survey parents to determine community climate.
- Create a place that parents can call their own.
- Continuous celebration of families.
- Parent Bulletin Board, Family Hall of Fame, Special Events for the whole family

2. Affirm and Value Diversity

- Provide training to broaden knowledge of the diversity of your community.
- Conduct activities and events to honor all cultures.
- Utilize translators for meetings, events, etc.
- Provide printed material in languages of the community.
- Know how to pronounce families names correctly.
- Explain terminology and jargon.
- Utilize mentor parents to invite other parents.
- Establish term limits.

3. Parent Education and Support

- Recognize and support all forms of parent involvement.
- Develop “Family Tool Kits” for parents on specific topics.
- Provide networking opportunities for parents

4. Two-Way Communication

- Visibly promote upcoming community events.
- Update community website links regularly.
- Include other parent organization links.
- Communicate in languages that reach all parents.
- Use ALL communication channels.
- Phone calls, e-mail, flyers, newsletters, bulletin boards, community website, suggestion box, surveys.
- Use social media in creative ways.
- Webinars, Twitter, Facebook, Blogging, Texting.

5. Develop a Partnership with Parents

- Encourage parents’ ideas.
- Provide opportunities for parents to lead (e.g. facilitate meetings, manage activities).
- Vary times/places for meetings.
- Plan agendas based on issues important to parents (surveys).
- Communicate parent’s ideas/concerns to staff.
- Invite the whole family: offer food, child care and help with transportation.

6. Evaluate

Regularly use data and surveys to:

- Assess areas of need/concern
- Decide upon changes for improvement
- Share results with the school community
- Implement new strategies
- Share and celebrate successes!
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7. Collaborate with Community

- Map your community's assets.
- Partner with local businesses to host meetings and events within the community
- Invite local community members to serve on teams.
- Reach out to senior citizens and church groups and invite them to volunteer in community.
- Host a community breakfast for local business & civic leaders – discuss ideas, issues & problems in community.
- Celebrate business and community partnerships.

8. Relationships, Relationships, Relationships!

- **Meet face to face with parents.**
- Follow up with those who don't "show up" to meetings.
- Take time to speak with parents about what they believe.
- Meet families outside of formal settings.
- Make positive acknowledgements at every opportunity.
- Make outreach a priority.

Adapted from the Nation PTA at www.pta.org