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!

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