

Family Engagement: Our Families at Our Core



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for Mental Health
Promotion and
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Prevention

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Discussion Questions

- Are our families at the core of our services?
- How close are they to the core?
- What are the challenges to engaging families?



Recognize the Challenges

- Economic survival
- Time constraints
- Mistrust of school system
- Differing expectations
- Language barriers
- Other



Family Engagement Framework

Traditional Engagement (Epstein's)	Non Traditional Engagement
Parenting	Develops reciprocal understanding of schools and families
Communicating	Situates cultural strengths of family and community within the school curriculum
Volunteering	Provides parental education that includes family literacy and understanding of school community
	From Promoting ELL Parental Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times, Great Lakes Center for Education Research & Practice, 2008.

Family Engagement Framework

Traditional Engagement (Epstein's)	Non Traditional Engagement
Learning at Home	Promotes parental advocacy that informs and teaches parents how to advocate for their children
Decision Making	Instills parental empowerment through parent-initiated efforts at the school and community level
Collaborating with the Community	Implements culturally and linguistically appropriate practices in all aspects of communication
	From Promoting ELL Parent Involvement: Challenges in Contested Times, Great Lakes Center for Education Research & Practice, 2008.



Why Involve Parents?

- Parents are key influencers with:
 - Their children and families
 - Teachers, principals and other parents
 - Local communities
 - Local and State decision-makers
- Parents are a credible source of information for young people and other parents.
- Parents can help drive communication efforts.



Know Your Audience

- What do parents in your community value and believe?
- Are there specific groups of parents you need to reach?
- What are the best places to reach them?
- What are their barriers and how will you overcome them?
- What is your message and how will you deliver it?



Tips and Ideas for Outreach

- Coordinate a family event or workshop.
- Enlist teachers and school staff members.
- Use multiple channels to communicate.
- Ensure materials are culturally competent.
- Develop partnerships with local organizations.
- Promote programs through school activities with high parental involvement.



Tips and Ideas for Active Participation

- Create opportunities for parents to give feedback.
- Enlist parents to develop communication materials.
- Establish a group of parent leaders to attract new parents.
- Identify parent champions to engage with school leaders and policymakers.
- Thank and acknowledge parent volunteers.



Discussion questions

- What have your lessons learned been?
- Do you have a challenge you want the group to help you with?



SSHS initiatives share lessons learned

- It takes time to build trust
- Staff should reflect make up of community
- Families are important partners
- Parents want their children to succeed
- Build on previous success
- And finally--



Lessons Learned

- Help is just a phone call (or email) away!!