



Peeling Oranges

*The Meaningful
Engagement of Families*

Project Director Consortia

August 5, 2009

West Chicago Elementary School District 33

A suburb 30 miles west of the city of Chicago

Birth-3 and K-8

3,800 students – 2008

4,200 students – 2009

Student population

69% Hispanic, 2% Black, 53% low income

One birth to three home based program, one preschool, six elementary buildings, one 7-8 grade middle school

District 33 is the largest employer in the city with over 600 employees.

West Chicago Community

- Many families at risk
 - English is a second language
 - Low literacy in Spanish as well as English
 - Low income
 - Parents working multiple jobs to afford basic needs
 - Many young parents
- Many two parent families
- Family is a strong priority among parents
- The philosophy of “in the best interest of the child” is pervasive

Safe Schools/Healthy Students Initiative

2005 award - *WeGo Together for Kids*

2009 Final no cost extension year

Initiative has been integrated into the operations of the district as a department.



Page Unified School District #8

Page, Arizona



- Northwest Arizona at Lake Powell
- Tourist town 7200 people with summer weekend population up to 100,000
- Border town to Navajo Reservation
- Student population 3,000
 - 75% Navajo Students
 - Slight growth in Hispanic enrollment
 - Of Navajo population about 65% reside on Reservation
 - 78% of student receive free/reduced lunch

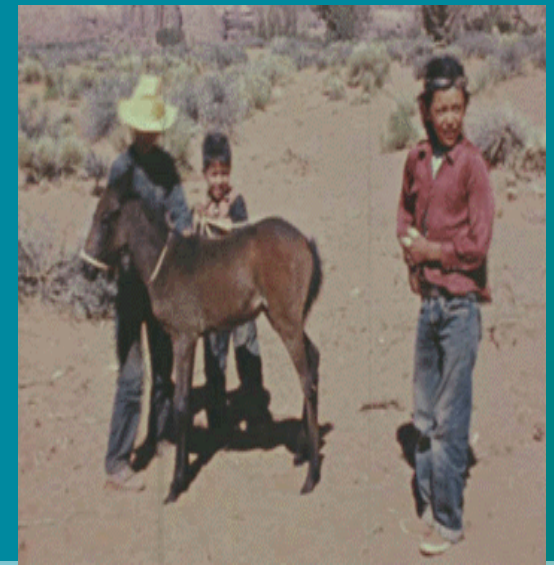


Page Unified School Community

- Five communities are served by the school district
- Page town community and four Reservation communities
- About 50,000 Navajos reside in the school community area
- Number of families without running water/electricity
- Very little economic development on Reservation
- Adults leave area to work
- Children often in care of grandparents/ aunt
- Strong spiritual/religious differences
- Active lawsuit regarding segregation at elementary level
- School bus routes are up to 2 hours one way

Safe School/Healthy Student Initiative

- 2008 Award
- Community Partners have become active participants in directing the work of initiative
- “Prevention is the Key” is the catchphrase of the initiative
- Preliminary work toward
- sustainability





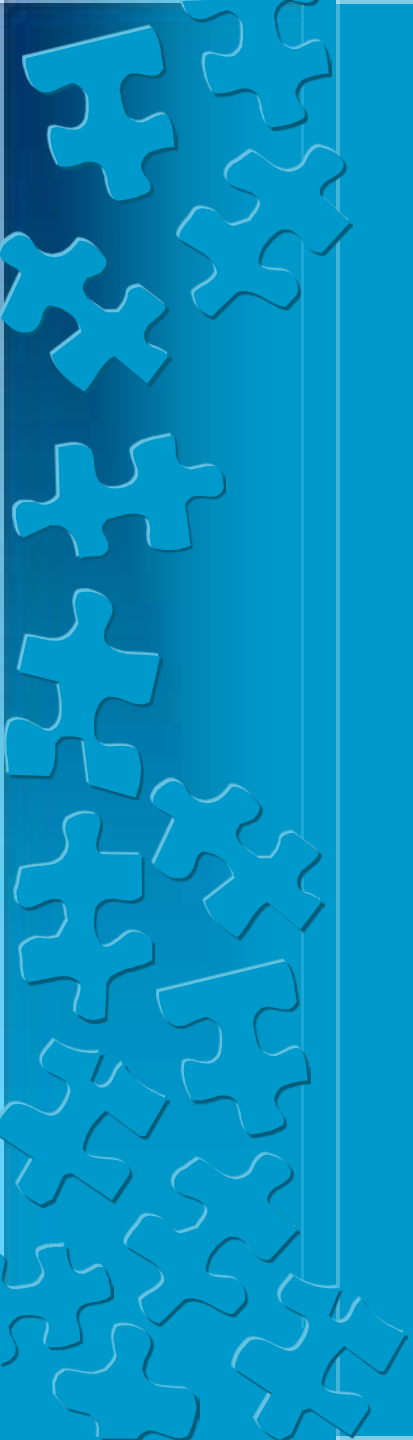
Goals of Today's Workshop

- Explore the value of parent involvement
- Discuss creating alliances
- Review the importance of service delivery
- Present ways to develop meaningful opportunities



Values and Beliefs

- Acknowledgement and commitment to a value system that believes parent and family involvement is vital
- Dedication to engage parents/families in the educational process



1

2

3

8

VALUE--
Parent
Involvement

4

7

6

5



Creating alliances

- Find opportunities to engage community partners to support and work with parents
- Join with parents who are natural leaders for entry to the parent community and for guidance



Importance of service delivery

Service to the family is a strategy for parent/family involvement

1. Barriers/ obstacles that often community agencies can address = service
2. Active recognition and service of parent/family need = involvement by parent
3. Service can include opportunity for parent/family to give back
4. Service allows entry that is respectful, educational and supportive to involvement



Developing meaningful involvement programs

1. Does the group adequately represent the community?
2. Identify need for prevention and promotion based on family risk factors
3. What resources are currently in place?
4. Does the community feel a need for the service/program?



Developing meaningful involvement programs

5. What is the goal of the provider who wants to provide the program?
6. Consider barriers, consider advantages
7. What are the characteristics of successful parent/family programs?
8. Set goals



Ask the parents

Survey of 329 parents about involvement

- “A waste of time...not given anything important to do”
- 315 agreed they had time IF work “makes a difference”
- 98% indicated anxiety about coming to the school

Parent ideas

- Learn about and then be on a committee for curriculum development
- Be in classrooms to assist in teaching
- Monitors on playground and at bus stops
- Want T-shirts to identify them as volunteer of school
- Need recognition events or announcements
- Supervision needs to be “hands on” / person to call, etc.



Examples of Meaningful Opportunities

- Family Night
- Cultural Center
- Parent Institute
- Parent Volunteer Program
- Face-to-face visit with parents
- Positive Action Family Classes
- Navigating the American Education System

<http://www.dupage.k12.il.us/NAES/index.html>



Parent Volunteer Program

Identified person responsible for the program

Program definition includes mission, goals, objectives

Job descriptions developed by administrators

Strategic plan for recruitment of parents to volunteer

Interview each potential volunteer

Required orientation/training for volunteer

Plan for placement of volunteer / on site supervisor

Coordinator introduces volunteer to site supervisor

Simple system for tracking time and effort of volunteer

Regular meetings with volunteers

Newsletter that celebrates work and opportunities for volunteer

Annual Recognition that is meaningful to the volunteer



Family Nights

4 events a year

Themes based on parent request

1. Resource stations
2. Family dinner
3. Family activity
4. Parent and child education classes
5. Raffle or book giveaway



Presenter Information

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