

Engaging Stakeholders Webinar Series

School Turnaround Learning Community

Session 2: Elements of Effective Family-
School Partnerships

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What does a Family-School Partnership Look Like?



Beyond the Bake Sale

The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships

Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson and Don Davies

The New Press, 2007



Fortress School (Below Basic)

- “Parents don’t care about their children’s education, and they are the main reason the kid’s are failing”



- “Parents don’t come to conferences, no matter what we do”
- Principal picks a small group of “cooperative parents” to help out
- “We’re teachers, not social workers”
- “Curriculum and standards are too advanced for these parents”

Come-If-We-Call School (Basic)

- Parents are told what students will be learning at the fall open house
- Workshops are planned by staff
- Families can visit school on report card pickup day
- Parents call the office to get teacher-recorded messages about homework



Open-Door School (Proficient)

- Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year
- There is an “Action Team” for family engagement
- School holds curriculum night three or four times a year
- Parents raise issues at PTA meetings or see the principal
- Multicultural nights are held once a year



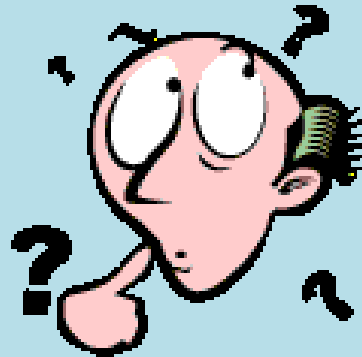
Partnership School (Advanced)

- Families are seen as partners in improving educational outcomes



- All family activities are connected to student learning
- There is a clear, open process for resolving problems
- Parent networks are valued and cultivated
- Families are actively involved in decision-making
- Home visits are made to every new family

How can we achieve effective family-school partnerships?



Requires a paradigm shift:

From seeing parents as a part of the problem to seeing them as a part of the solution.



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Core Belief One

- All parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them.

“...I believe that all parents hold big expectations for the role that schools will play in the life chances of their children. They all harbor a large wish list of dreams and aspirations for their youngsters. All families care deeply about their children’s education and hope that their progeny will be happier, more productive, and more successful than they have been in their lives.” (Lightfoot, 2003)

Core Belief Two

- **All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning.**



Core Belief Three

- **Parents and school staff should be equal partners.**



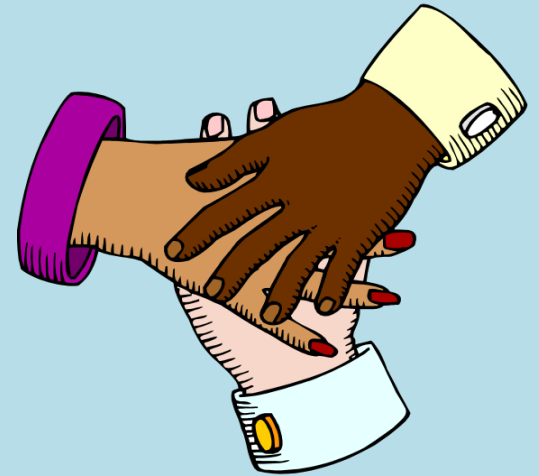
Core Belief Four

- **The responsibility for building partnerships between school and home rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders.**



The Joining Process*

- Welcoming
- Honoring
- Connecting



* Mapp, K.L. 2003. *Having their say: Parents describe why and how they are engaged in their children's learning*. School Community Journal, Volume 13, Number 1

Welcoming

- Families are made to feel at home, comfortable, and a part of the school community.



Honoring

- Family members are respected, validated and affirmed for any type of involvement or contribution they make.



Connecting

- School staff and families put children at the center and connect on education issues of common interest designed to improve educational opportunities for the children.

