Building Great Relationships with School and District Leadership

NYS PTA WEBINAR SERIES 2019-20

Antoinette Darden-Cintron, Vice President and Designate Officer for Advocacy
Building Great Relationships with School and District Leadership

OBJECTIVES

• Gain an understanding of Family & School Community Relationships
• Learn best practices of fostering effective relationships within your school community
• Understand how schools and families can engage more within the school community
Where can anyone find an opportunity to impact a child’s world as easily and as well as in a school or home, helping children to grow and develop, while influencing, engaging, and making an impact in their education at its foundation?

Moreover, who is more capable of guiding families and communities through that process?
What are the Family Interactions?

- Families who avoid schools like the plague
- Families who need encouragement to come to school
- Families who readily respond when invited to school
- Families who are comfortable and enjoy involvement in school
- Families who enjoy power and are overly active
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Family Barriers</strong></th>
<th><strong>School Community Barriers</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Families Don’t have enough time</td>
<td>Administrators are too busy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Families feel like they don’t have anything to contribute</td>
<td>Misperceptions of family abilities</td>
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<td>Families don’t understand the systems/don’t know how to be involved</td>
<td>Lack of an understanding of family communication style</td>
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<td>Lack of child care</td>
<td>Lack of training to work with families</td>
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<td>Families feel intimidated</td>
<td>Lack of understanding family attitudes toward engagement</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family schedule conflicts</td>
<td>Cultural differences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language and cultural differences</td>
<td>View that families value extracurricular activities vs academics</td>
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<td>Lack of Transportation</td>
<td>Negative contacts more frequent</td>
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<td>Families don’t feel welcome in schools</td>
<td>School communities don’t feel respected by families</td>
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Family-School Community Relationships

National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

- Welcoming All Families (Standard 1)
- Communicating Effectively (Standard 2)
- Supporting Student Success (Standard 3)
- Speaking Up for Every Child (Standard 4)
- Sharing Power (Standard 5)
- Collaborating with Community (Standard 6)

PTA.org/excellence

https://www.pta.org/home/run-your-pta/National-Standards-for-Family-School-Partnerships
Best Practices for Family and School Community Partnerships

CREATE A WELCOMING SCHOOL CLIMATE:

1. Provide a personal greeting and welcome packet for all families visiting the school, including a community services directory, important school contact information, school calendar and coupons to local businesses.

2. Have teachers make personal contacts with families through e-mail, phone calls or home visits.

3. Hold an open house, prior to school opening, at which families can meet their children’s teachers, tour the school building and meet other parents.

4. Provide transportation and child care to enable families to attend school-sponsored, family-involvement events.

5. Offer translators to welcome and assist families during school activities.

6. Ensure that all staff understands the cultural make-up of the community, how to effectively engage with all cultures and how to infuse different cultures into the school community.
Best Practices for Family and School Community Partnerships

HELP ALL FAMILIES TO ESTABLISH HOME ENVIRONMENTS THAT SUPPORT CHILDREN AS STUDENTS:

1. Accommodate family work schedules for meetings and events
2. Develop opportunities for training families on education issues and new programs and curriculum students will engage in
3. Engage families in after-school programs and youth development opportunities
4. Provide "home visits" via webinars helping families transition through changes in schools (from elementary to middle school to high school to college and career)
5. Provide ideas for creating homework centers at home, best study environments, and free resources in the community to support learning at home
**Best Practices for Family and School Community Partnerships**

**DESIGN MORE EFFECTIVE SCHOOL-TO-HOME COMMUNICATIONS:**

1. End digital gaps by providing discounted lap-tops/tablets for families and software training

2. Have language translators to assist families as needed via written and oral communications, including in-person and over the phone

3. Review the quality of all translations

4. Websites should be easily accessible to all families and information should be found quickly

5. Updated teacher websites at all times

6. Provide information and training on the levels of communication throughout the school district
**Best Practices for Family and School Community Partnerships**

**BUILD MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES AND FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERING**

1. Work to match the talents and interests of families to the needs of students, teachers, and administrators

2. School communities can give families meaningful roles in the decision-making process and provide training and information so they can make the most of such opportunities.

3. Meet the challenges that many families face by providing transportation to meetings/programs/events and provide child-care

4. Families and the community as a whole should be a part of the decision-making process at all levels of a school district community

5. Get a informative understanding of how your whole community perceives your schools and districts, work with administration to implement a survey
Best Practices for Family and School Community Partnerships

COLLABORATION WITH THE COMMUNITY:

1. Teach families about all levels of the school community (from school aides, teachers, principals, district administration, and school boards)

2. Inform families of district practices such as, how to sign up for school and district communities

3. Educate families how to share ideas, volunteer, and share concerns

4. Help families understand the protocol and procedures at school board meetings and the structure of the district over all

5. Provide and share resources with families from local community businesses and services, such as, healthcare services, cultural events, and tutoring services

6. Collaborate with local business to provide discounts from restaurants and services like car washes, and visits to the cleaners
5 Key functions of a Good School Board

- **Sets a vision** They establish a clear vision and high expectations for quality education that supports strong student outcomes.

- **Advances policy** They set practical guidelines for transforming its vision into reality. Through policy, the school board influences nearly every aspect of school operations.

- **Demonstrates accountability** They share responsibility with educators for the performance of the district’s schools and students. This means maintaining high academic standards, transparency, and accountability.

- **Plays a leadership role in the community** They listen to and respond to a community’s concerns and explain the district’s priorities to the public.

- **Forges consensus** A school board will regularly face issues that invite a diversity of strong opinions and passionate beliefs. Their goal should, however, remain the same: to pursue consensus, to reconcile differences, and to reach compromises, all in the service of its students.
MORE WAYS TO ENHANCE FAMILY & SCHOOL COMMUNITY RELATIONS

A Place For Families to Gather

Career Day
What do we ALL want?
How do we get it?

1. Commitment to the best for all of the school community
2. Engaging in decision-making and the sharing of ideas
3. Work towards the common goal of our community and our children
4. Understanding how our schools and district works
5. Get to know our local government
6. Gather and share resources
7. Understand key education laws, rights, and initiatives; federal/state/local
8. It’s not about you, put all children first
Family. School. Community.

Any Questions?