

Linking to Learning

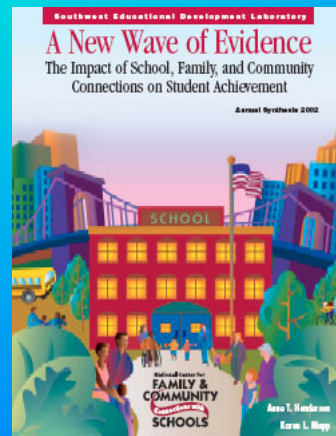
Parent Involvement Strategies for Improving Student Achievement

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A New Wave of Evidence:

The Impact of School,
Family and
Community
Connections on
Student Achievement
By Anne T. Henderson
and Karen L. Mapp

www.sedl.org/connections



Overall Finding:

When families are involved at home and at school --
Children do better in school, and the schools get better



If Parents are Involved, Students from All Backgrounds Tend To:

- ✓ **Earn higher grades and test scores**
- ✓ **Enroll in higher-level programs**
- ✓ **Be promoted and earn credits**
- ✓ **Adapt well to school and attend regularly**
- ✓ **Have better social skills and behavior**

Finding #1: Link to Learning

Parent and community involvement that is designed to improve student learning has a greater effect on achievement.



Impact of Parent Outreach

Students' reading and math scores (3-5th grades) improved 40-50% faster when teachers :

- **met with families face-to-face**
- **sent materials on ways to help their child at home**
- **telephoned routinely about progress**

(Westat and Policy Studies Associates, 2001)

Link to Learning: How Will It:

- ✓ Help parents know what their children are learning and doing in class?
- ✓ Promote high standards for student work?
- ✓ Help parents assist children at home?
- ✓ Promote discussion about improving student progress?

Finding #2: Programs Work

Programs designed to engage families in supporting children's learning lead to improved student achievement.



Finding #3: Advocacy is Protective

The more families can be advocates for children and support their progress, the better their children do, and the longer they stay, in school.



What are Advocates?

- 1. Know how system works**
- 2. Work with school staff to plan for children's future**
- 3. Guide children through the system**
- 4. Know where to get help**
- 5. Speak out for other parents**



Finding #4: All Families Contribute

Families of all backgrounds are involved at home.

- ✓ Talk about school
- ✓ Help plan for higher education
- ✓ Keep focused on learning and homework.
- ✓ Encourage their children



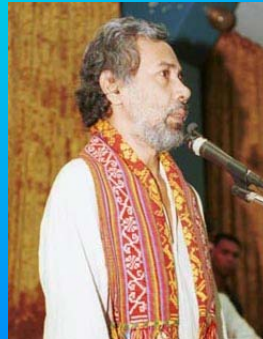
Finding #5: Working with Community Groups Gets Results

- Upgraded school facilities
- Improved school leadership and staffing
- Higher quality learning programs
- Resources to improve teaching and curriculum
- Funding for after-school programs and family supports

(Lewis, Mediratta and Fruchter, 2002)

Findings #6-8: Practices that Work to Engage All Families

- Focus on building personal relationships**
- Reach out and remove barriers**
- Address class and cultural differences**



Ways to Bridge Class and Cultural Differences

- ✓ **Make sure school and parent meetings are welcoming**
- ✓ **Build on families' values – share traditions, tell education stories, ask about expectations for their children**
- ✓ **Identify and use cultural brokers**
- ✓ **Work with community groups**

Parents Are More Likely to Become Involved When:

- ✓ Parents understand that they **SHOULD** be involved
- ✓ Parents feel **CAPABLE** of making a contribution
- ✓ Parents feel **INVITED** by the school and their children

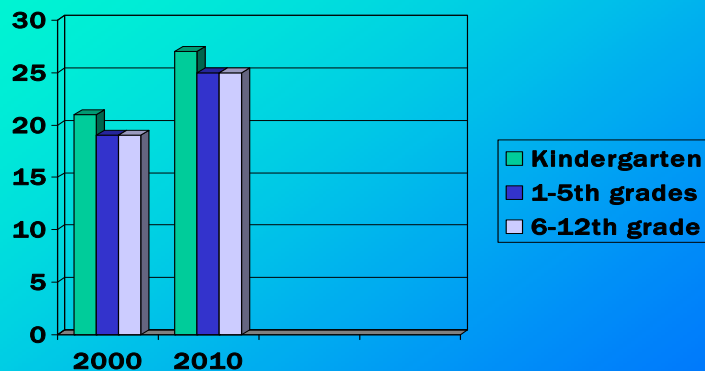
(Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997)



America is Changing

- ✓ Immigration
- ✓ Poverty
- ✓ New Economy/New Standards for Achievement

Children of Immigrants



Children in Poverty

73 million children in the U.S.

- **40% live in poverty – family unable to provide basic necessities**
- **18% live below poverty line**
- **81% have at least one working parent**
- **Number rising steadily since**

NAEP 2005/US Achievement

% Proficient	Math	Reading
Grade 4	36%	31%
Grade 8	30%	31%

NAEP 2005/ND Achievement

% Proficient	Math	Reading
Grade 4	44%	42%
Grade 8	40%	40%

We need a new vision for parent involvement

A vision that matches the reality of
the 21st Century

New PTA Standards

1. Welcoming all families
2. Supporting student success
3. Communicating effectively
4. Speaking up for every child
5. Sharing power
6. Collaborating with community

Why Revise the Standards?

1997 Standards

- Identify what schools should do
- Combine advocacy with decision-making
- “Parenting,” can be controversial
- Volunteering is limited to better-off parents
- Shared decision-making doesn’t address power issues

2007 Standards

- Identify what parent-school partnerships should do
- Make advocacy a separate standard, Speaking Up
- Parenting part of supporting student learning
- Make part of a Welcoming School Community
- Change to Sharing Power

The School-Parent Compact

A bureaucratic rule?

OR

A golden opportunity?

What Does “Good” Look Like?

What is a Compact?

Title I schools must jointly develop with parents a school—parent compact that says:

- 1. How parents, school staff, and students will share the responsibility for improved student achievement**

AND

- 2. How the school and parents will build and develop a partnership to help children achieve the state standards**

Ways to use Compacts

- ✓ Build relationships with families**
- ✓ Carry out the School Improvement Plan**
- ✓ Develop programs and activities linked to learning**
- ✓ Discuss at parent-teacher conferences**
- ✓ Provide topics for study circles and focus groups**

Parent Compact

Standard

- Get my child to school on time
- Check homework
- Read with my child daily
- Limit TV watching
- Support school rules

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- Check Friday folders
- Communicate with teachers on progress
- Involve student in real-world math
- Practice math facts
- Read daily and discuss
- Practice vocabulary and spelling

School Compact

Standard

- Hold high expectations
- Be welcoming
- Be positive and professional
- Encourage volunteers
- Communicate regularly

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- Communicate monthly with families
- Explain expectations for teaching and learning
- Focus on hands-on math problem-solving
- Send math tools home
- Provide reading incentives
- Provide vocabulary development

Four steps to focus a compact on learning

- ✓ Look at school data and improvement plan to set priorities and goals
- ✓ Ask parents, teachers and students what *they* should do and what they want the *others* to do
- ✓ Identify common concerns, discuss differences
- ✓ Draw up draft, ask for comments, revise

Linking to Learning

Do MORE:

- ✓ Displays of student work
- ✓ Regular calls to families on progress
- ✓ Math and literacy nights
- ✓ Student-led conferences on their work
- ✓ Workshops on planning for college

Do LESS:

- Teacher-made displays
- Calling home with bad news
- Parenting classes
- Teacher-led conferences on behavior
- Posters on drug abuse and teen pregnancy

Starting Point: The Joining Process

Create a school community that is family-friendly:

- Welcoming
- Honoring
- Connecting



(Mapp, 2002)