

Engaging Families and Increasing Parent Participation: Key Strategies



California S3 Symposium
November 15, 2012

Symposium Presenters:
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Workshop Objectives

- » Distinguishing meaningful family engagement strategies.
- » Introduction to 4 meaningful strategies for family engagement.
- » Introduction to parent engagement resources for ongoing learning.

Meaningful family engagement strategies are **PARTNERSHIP DRIVEN** and **INTENTIONAL.**

Partnership Driven

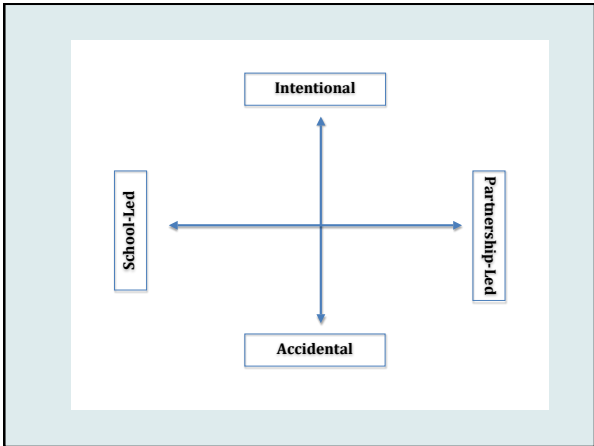
- Based on fundamental belief that parents can contribute as partners
- School challenges (budget, test scores) are made transparent
- Dialogue is two-way
- Goals are shared
- Decision-making power is shared
- Partners' efforts have **impact**

Intentional

School personnel are planful about:

- How to connect with and engage the parent population the school serves
- How to create opportunities for parents to participate in a meaningful way
- How to reduce barriers to parents' participation

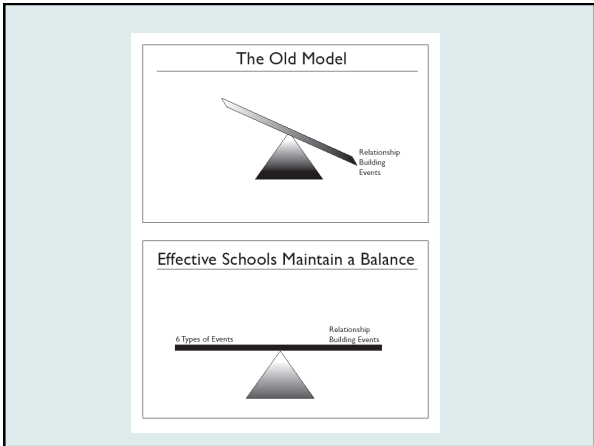
Measurable goals for family engagement are set (short term, long term)

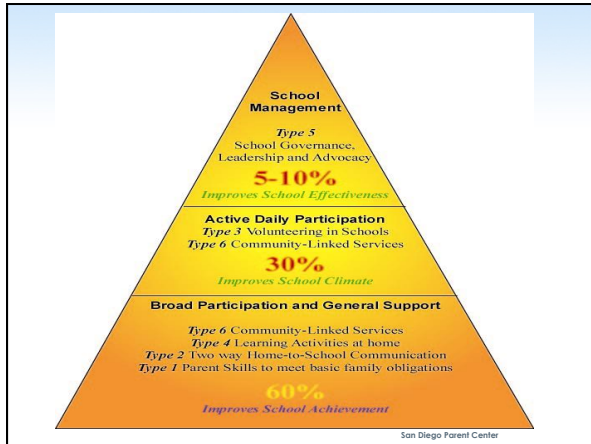


THE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL-FAMILY-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS
EPSTEIN'S SIX TYPES OF INVOLVEMENT

- Type 1 PARENTING:** Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level. Assist schools in understanding families.
- Type 2 COMMUNICATING:** Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.
- Type 3 VOLUNTEERING:** Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at school or in other locations to support students and school programs.
- Type 4 LEARNING AT HOME:** Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.
- Type 5 DECISION MAKING:** Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, action teams, and other parent organizations.
- Type 6 COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY:** Coordinate resources and services for students, families, and the school with businesses, agencies, and other groups, and provide services to the community.

Reprinted with permission: Epstein, J. L., Sanders, M. G., Brann, B. S., Sattler, K. C., Janson, N. R., & Van Vooren, F. L. (2002). School, Family and Community Partnerships: New Handbook for Action (Second Edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.






Understanding How Parents Decide To Partner

| | | |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| Personal Motivation | Parental Role Construction | "Do I believe that my involvement will make a difference?" "Do I believe I'm supposed to be involved?" |
| | Parental Efficacy | "Do I believe I need to defend/protect my child's education?" |
| Invitations | General School Invitation | Do people at the school 'tell' me they want my involvement?" |
| | Specific School Invitations | Does the teacher ask me to be involved? offer specific requests/ suggestions for my involvement?" |
| | Specific Child Invitation | "Does my child want or need my involvement?" |
| Life Context | Knowledge/ Skills and Culture | -What knowledge they already have -What kind of involvement they prefer -Perceptions of appropriate involvement activities |
| | Time and Energy | Influence parents' ideas about the involvement activities they can reasonably choose to engage |



| | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------------|---|
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Objectification of Families

"Begin challenging your own assumptions. Your assumptions are the windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while or the light won't come in."

Alan Alda, Connecticut College, 1980

The Teacher Persona

It is important to recognize that teachers' [and principals'] reflections on their life stories as touchstones for their work with students and families flies in the face of much of the scholarly literature on teachers.

That literature describes them as—assumes them to be—neutral, unemotional, and static adults with no interior life, no phantoms from the past, no ambivalence, and no fears. Philosopher Maxine Greene challenges this pervasive view of teachers as a bound up in their professional, rationalistic, and objective straitjackets and urges us to recognize the power of their **“personal biographies.”**

This narrow conception of teachers, is not only a distortion of the complex, layered lives of teachers both within and outside the classroom, it also limits the repertoire of ways in which they might successfully relate to **children and their families**, and the range of human qualities and emotions in them that might support communication and rapport with parents ^(pp.6-11)


^[1] Lawrence- Lightfoot, Sara: *The Essential Conversation- What parents and teachers can learn from each other*, published by The Random House Publishing Group, Copyright 2003



Impact


- Faulty strategies developed based on wrong information
- Low expectations may be expressed
- Limits creativity
- Frustration due to lack of authentic conversations
- Creates an unsafe, unwelcoming environment

Strategy 1: Home Visits



Non academic visits by teacher.

Before important information about academic status can be effectively shared, positive communication must be established and barriers addressed.




In The Know With CCISCO

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Contra Costa Teachers Unlock the Power of Parent Engagement

\$15 million for home visits to help build bridge between schools and families

Teachers and parents report positive changes in their students' academic experience. Homework gets done, behavioral problems go down, and test scores go up.



Came Rose of the Parent Teacher Visiting Project presents a Home Visit training for Teachers in West Contra Costa Unified School District

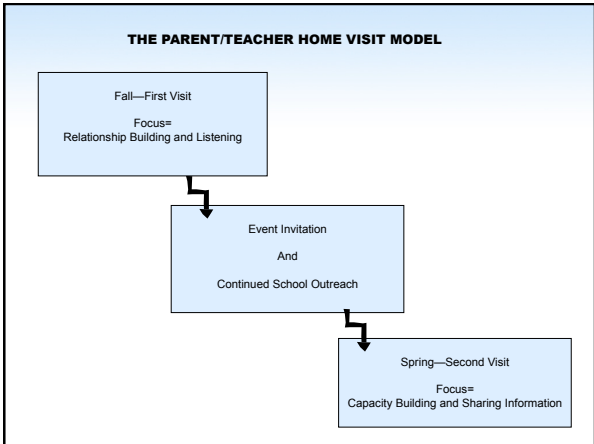
In the winter and spring of this year, CCISCO, PICO California and the Parent/Teacher Home Visit Project encouraged local schools and school districts to apply for home visit funding. To date, over 150 teachers in Contra Costa have participated in home visit trainings and are engaged in visiting families.

Contra Costa schools participating in the program include: Parkside Elementary, Delta View Elementary, Hillview Junior High, and Central Junior High in Pittsburg; Bel Air Elementary in Bay Point; and Ford Elementary, Washington Elementary, Montalvin Manor Elementary, and Richmond High School in West County.


The deadline for the next round of funding for the Nelsolo Parent-Teacher Involvement Program is November 19, 2007.


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In 2006, CCISCO leaders worked with our sister organizations in PICO California to advocate for funding for the Nelsolo Home Visit Initiative and secured \$15 million in new funding for the next two years.



There are three main components to an effective home visit/community meeting:

1. The Call 

2. The Visit
(community meeting) 

3. The Follow Up 

| No. | Item |
|-----|--|
| 1. | Set up a new date to train your teachers w/ Community Engagement Office |
| 2. | Establish your lead team that will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promote home visits - Support teachers on coordination home visits - Develop/assemble any home visit "kits" |
| 3. | Identify an upcoming school event that you would like to have parents attend and develop flyer. <i>At the end of any home visits teachers will extend an invitation to the above (please develop flyer).</i> |
| 4. | Revise home visit form template if you intend to use it. |
| 5. | Set up a "home visit challenge!" Challenge all teachers to conduct at least 3 home visits before the event selected on step 3. |
| 6. | If you have chosen to develop a kit that all families will receive, please order your materials ASAP. Possible items a kit could include: -School calendar, -Teachers contact information, -Dictionaries -Workbooks, -Videos to support learning at home, -Educational games -Flash cards, -Graphic organizers, -Educational video games -Books, -CASHEE/SAT prep books, -Information on services available at your school, -Adult Ed. Information |

PUT YOUR SCHOOL NAME HERE
Nell Soto Home Visit Form

1st Visit 2nd Visit

Teacher Conducting Visit:

Date: _____ Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____
 Student ID: _____
 Address: _____

Reason for home visit:

| | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Learning Needs | <input type="checkbox"/> CASHEE |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Social/Emotional | <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Attitude (behavior) | <input type="checkbox"/> Family in transition |
| <input type="checkbox"/> GATE | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

Home visit preparation steps:

| | Yes | No |
|--|-----|----|
| Welcoming kit assembled? (including flyer for next parent event) if applicable | | |
| Translator needed? | | |
| The principal or point person has been notified of time and date of my visit? | | |
| 2 nd person accompanying me is: | | |

First Visit Debrief (to be completed AFTER visit not during):

| | |
|------------------|---------------|
| Topics Discussed | New knowledge |
|------------------|---------------|

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High School Success and California High School Exit Exam (CAHSEE)

High school home visits can be broken down in many ways at the high school level.

For example, schools with houses or small learning communities can use those structures to determine which staff will visit which students.

You can also choose to be more strategic, but have to be careful about the "targeting perception". One positive example was to visit the homes of tenth graders who just learned that they did not pass the exit exam on their first attempt. However, the focus was not on the failure but on the possibilities and pathways for success.

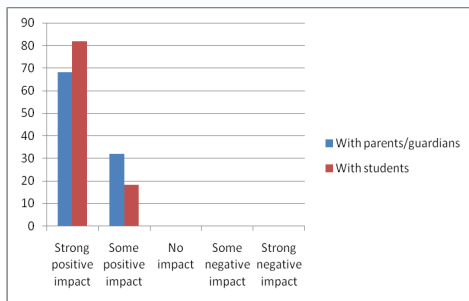
Richmond High School

A total of 329 home visits conducted in 10 months.
 Students selected based on varying criteria.
 Most home visits lasted 30-60 minutes.
 Most teachers were suspicious of non academic home visits.

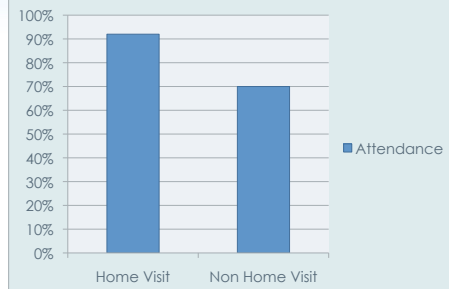
Average number of years working at RHS of teachers was 6 years.

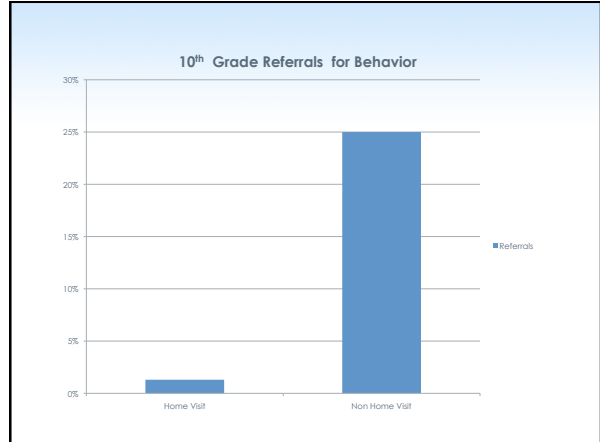
78% of teachers surveyed reported home visits had a strong positive impact on their attitude towards teaching.

Chart #1: Impact of home visits on teacher relationships with parents/guardians and students (percentage of responses) (n=38)



10th Grade Class





www.pthvp.org

THE PARENT/TEACHER HOME VISIT PROJECT

"INCREASING THE SUCCESS OF ALL STUDENTS — ONE VISIT AT A TIME"

Read the Mission Statement...

THE PARENT/TEACHER HOME VISIT PROJECT is an innovative and widely replicated model of family engagement that has been proven to end the cycle of failure between families and school staff by building trust and respect, raising cultural competence and increasing personal and professional capacity for all involved.

The increased communication, trust and support between families and teachers via home visits result in:

- Increased student attendance rates.
- Increased student test scores.
- Decreased suspension and expulsion rates.
- Decreased opposition at school sites.

Home visits also provide a positive opportunity to meet federal and state mandates that families that remain in or return to their child's academic standing.

The model began in Sacramento, California but has since been adopted and

Carrie Rose, Executive Director
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Unwelcoming/Confusing School Environment

"Ask yourself this question: what might a school look like that has created a genuine culture of school-family-community partnership, and that has made real progress toward high social and academic achievement for all students?"

Beyond the Bake Sale~ The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships

“Foundational Standards” for Parental Involvement

1- The physical environment 

2- School Wide Practices and Policies 

3- Welcoming School Staff 

4- Written and other media materials 

“Getting ready for the party”



The Foundation

Personal Motivation

Invitations

Life Context

The physical environment



School Wide Practices and Policies



Welcoming School Staff



Written and other media materials



Strategy 2: School Level Family Partnerships Point Person



Why:

Principals can't do it alone

All action plans require a point person/s



Key work for point person to help High Schools:

- ❑ Support efforts to make pathways from middle/high school to graduation to college/career **transparent** for families
- ❑ Helps provide all families with college/career information
- ❑ Facilitate events where students and families engage in "hopes and dreams" discussions and goal-setting processes to plan for future
- ❑ Help teachers communicate student progress/concerns to families in a proactive way
- ❑ Facilitate/organize workshops/info on: improving study skills, parent-teen communication, problem-solving and decision-making skills and other developmentally appropriate topics
- ❑ Engage families in student-led conferences and academic conversations

Pitfalls when no plan is in place

- Additional gate keeper
- Translation and interpretation focus
- Quasi clerk
- Traffic patrol
- Lunch supervision
- Stand in chaperon
- Yard supervisor
- Attendance clerk



Professional Development




Professional Development

- How to engage with parents in 1-1s
- How to deliver effective parenting curriculum
- How to nurture and maintain community partnerships/resources
- How to facilitate meetings
- Clear understanding of core curriculum and academic initiatives
- Planning skills

Principal's To-dos

- Establish a team
- Develop an action plan
- Meet with point person on a regular basis to review goals
- Develop two-way communication processes that point person can help reinforce with families.



- Intervention**
 - Family Therapy (CBO)
 - Evidence-Based Programs (e.g., Strengthening Families Program)
- Meaningful Participation**
 - Family Engagement Team
 - Academic Parent Teacher Teams
 - Volunteer roles
 - ELAC, PTA, School Site Council
 - Learning Supports in the Home
- Gathering Information**
 - Parent Survey
 - Parent school visits
 - Home visits
 - School meetings (e.g., Principal's tea)
- Giving Information**
 - Phone blasts
 - Newsletters
 - Open House
 - Back to School night
 - School meetings (e.g., Principal's tea)

Strategy 3: Family Engagement Teams

- » Leverage existing teams (ELAC, PTA, School Site Council) to reduce Redundancy/Review collected data (surveys, etc)
- » Consider school challenges and resources
- » Establish measurable, achievable annual and quarterly goals
- » ~~Make decisions about how to allocate resources and focus strategies~~
- » Effective groups are:
 - multi-disciplinary
 - administrator support, advocacy (and participation)

Strategy 4: Evidence-Based Programs

- » Use to target parent-child interactions and/or internal states for parents (e.g., stress management)
- » Why do it?
 - Do not have to reinvent the wheel
 - All lessons and materials included
 - Tested in rigorous studies to show that they actually work for what they say they work for
 - Reduce one-shot or piecemeal approaches that may alienate or disengage parents
 - Stop wasting time and money!!!

Challenges to using EBPs

- » Expensive
- » Require trained staff (MFTs, psychs)
- » May require partnering with Community Based Organizations



Strengthening Families Program

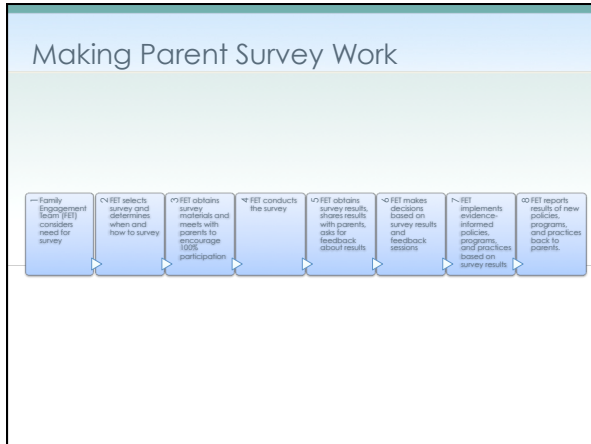
Strategy 5: Parent Voice

- » Using Surveys in a **Two-Way Dialogue**
 - Surveys are only as valuable as you make them
 - A survey IS an interview
 - make personal contact to explain purpose

Encourage 100% Survey Participation: What to Stress

- Survey convenience, simplicity, and brevity
- Value and need of data for school community
- The opportunity for parents and staff to communicate confidentially and anonymously their perceptions of school

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Ideas for Incentives

- Up to 5% of your S3 budget can be used for incentives.
- Hold contests among homerooms, classes, grade levels, etc. to see who can get the most parent surveys turned in
- Provide incentives for return (e.g., the parent's student's name is entered into a raffle for free prom tickets, free yearbook, free school sweatshirt or hat)

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Please Contact Us!

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