



Engaging Families in Policy and Planning at the School Level

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Purpose of School Policies

- Policies and practices or procedures are put into place to make school campuses healthy and safe.
- Many school policies are required by either local, state, or federal law.
 - Schools that do not have the policies are deemed “out of compliance.”
 - When out of compliance, schools can lose much needed funding to provide services and programs for students.

The illustration shows a stylized school building. On the left, there is a bell tower with a golden bell hanging from a red roof. Below the bell tower is a red double door with two small windows. To the right of the door is a window with a white frame. The building is set against a light blue sky with soft clouds. The foreground shows a green lawn and a path leading to the door.

Family Involvement

As a parent, you know your children and their needs better than anyone. By getting involved with your school you can help create, monitor and enhance school policies and procedures that will improve their school environment.

A stylized illustration of a school building. On the left, a bell tower with a red roof and a golden bell is visible. Below it, a red double door with two small windows is shown. To the right of the door is a window with a white frame. The building is set against a light blue sky with soft clouds. The foreground shows a green lawn and a path leading to the entrance.

Why Should families participate in their children's education?

Research shows that when parents are involved in their children's education, the children succeed.



“New Wave of Evidence”

Dr. Karen L Mapp

Started with a group of 80 studies and literature reviews that focused on the influence of family and community involvement on academic achievement and other outcomes.



“New Wave of Evidence”

Dr. Karen L Mapp

Studies met these standards:

- Sound methodology
- Study findings matched the data collected



Overall Finding:

Studies found a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement.

This relationship held across families of all economic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for students at all ages.

It also suggests benefits for schools, families and students, including improved achievement and behavior.



Students with involved parents, no matter what their background, are more likely 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
- Graduate and go on to higher education



Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to higher student achievement. Family involvement at home appears to have the greatest affect on student achievement.



Family Involvement has a protective effect. The more families can support their children's progress, the better their children do in school and the longer they stay in school.



Parent and community involvement that is linked to improving student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement.

An illustration of a school building with a bell tower. The bell tower is on the left, with a golden bell hanging from a red roof. The building is orange with a red door and a window. The sky is blue with white clouds, and there is a green lawn in the foreground.

How Can Schools Get Every Family Involved in Policy Decisions and Development?



A stylized illustration of a house on the left side of the page. The house has a red double door with two small windows, a window with a white frame, and a bell tower with a golden bell. The house is set against a background of a blue sky with white clouds and a green lawn.

What are some barriers?

Turn to a partner and share.



I didn't think they meant *me*.

An African American parent was attending her first parent event at a school in St. Louis, after the parent coordinator had personally invited her. A teacher asked, “Did you ever get the flyers we sent home about workshops for parents?” The parent replied, “Yes, I got the flyers and stuff about what’s going on at the school. But I didn’t think they meant *me*. I didn’t think they wanted *me* to come.”

What would improve family involvement – looking out the window

- **Families who speak English and understand the culture here in the US**
- **More respect for the value of education**
- **Parents who are more motivated**
- **More money to hire staff who can work with families**
- **More parent involvement programs run by the district**
- **More discipline and better behavior in the home**

What would improve family involvement – looking in a mirror

- **A more welcoming school building and front office**
- **Positive phone calls home a least once a month**
- **Translation available in the office and for conferences and other contacts**
- **A family center stocked with learning materials that families can take home**
- **Workshops on reading and math**
- **More planning time to meet with families**



Where to find Families Ready to Get Involved in their Children's Education

- School Hallway
- PTA
- Local Community Center
- At their worksite
- School Concerts , Games, or functions
- Some will even ask, “How can I help?”



Build Relationships

- Invite parents to informal coffee & doughnuts conversation
- Go to where your parents are
- Ask them what they want and what they want to know about school
- Value what they bring – know the neighborhood, culture, language, skills
- Individualize see families and parents as individuals, not as a “type” or group
- Small moves



Epstein's Six Types of Family Involvement

Center for Partnership Schools, John Hopkins University

1. Parenting
2. Communicating
3. Volunteering
4. Learning at Home
5. Decision Making
6. Collaborating with the Community




Approach to Engage Families in School Policy Decision Making

1. It's not for every family
2. By creating relationships you can find them
3. Don't start with policy development
4. Support families for whom this is a new experience
5. The process is just as important as the product

A stylized illustration of a school building. On the left, a bell tower with a golden bell is visible. Below it, there's a red double door with a small window. To the right of the door is a window with a white frame. The building is orange-brown, and the background is a light blue sky with soft clouds. The foreground shows a green lawn and a path leading to the door.

Building the School-Family Partnership Process

1. Create a team to plan and implement
2. Review policy for language and content
3. Review your demographics
4. Review resources and successful models
5. Consider the six types
6. Include plan as a part of your SIP or overall building plan (e.g. Valhalla)



Types of Policies at Building Level

- Attendance Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Dress Code/Policy
- Display of Public Affection Policy
- Plagiarism Policy
- Transportation Policy
- Visitation Policy
- Medication Policy
- Wellness Policy
- Weapons Policy
- Suspension Policy
- Prayer Policy
- Program Policy



What Do You Know?

Turn to a partner and discuss what you know about any two of the policies listed on the previous slide.



Plan of Action

- At the core, most policies outline a plan of action in the event that “something” occurs. The plan explains what will happen if...This is especially true in schools
- Families have the right to know what the policy/plans are and schools can help parents understand the intent and purpose.



Example of Policy (Plan of Action)

Of the 295 school districts in Washington State all but three receive supplemental educational funds under Title I, Part A of No Child Left Behind legislation


- Most of you sitting in this room live in a district that receives this funding. Your students attend these schools
- Knowing how to help students increase academic achievement is our responsibility- schools and families.



No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Title I, Part A of NCLB has a required building parent involvement policy

NCLB states: Each school served under Title I shall jointly develop with, and distribute to, parents of participating children a written parental involvement policy, agreed on by parents of Title I students, that shall describe the means for carrying out the requirements of the policy. (Section 1118)(b)

A colorful illustration of a school building. On the left, there is a bell tower with a golden bell hanging from a red roof. Below the bell tower is a red double door with two small windows. To the right of the door is a window with a white frame. The building is orange and yellow, set against a light blue sky and green grass.

What is Parent Involvement According to NCLB

The term ‘parental involvement’ means participation of parents in regular two-way meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including ensuring:

- that parents play an integral role in assisting their child’s learning



What is Parent Involvement According to NCLB

- that parents are **encouraged** to be actively involved in their child's education at school;
- that parents are **full partners** in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in **decision making** and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child.

No child Left Behind Sec. 1902 Definitions



Who Has Responsibility for helping to build Parent Involvement policy?

- Educational Leader/Administrator
- Family (extended definition), especially family members of Title I served students
 - Diverse race/ethnicity
 - Diverse socioeconomic
 - Bilingual
 - homeless
 - Special education parents
- Student
- School/facility staff
- Private School representatives



Title I Parent Involvement Policy Requirements

- Written.
- Agreed upon by parents.
- Describes the means for carrying out parent involvement activities at the building level.
- Distributed to parents, and the local community, in a format and language, to the extent practicable, that the parents can understand.
- Annually convene a meeting for parents of Title I students to explain Title I program requirements.
- Offer flexible number of meeting times, and may provide, with Title I funds, transportation, child care, or home visits, as such services relate to parental involvement.

[Section 1118(b)(1), ESEA.]

Guidance D-2



Building Policy/Plan (cont.)

- Provide timely information about programs.
- Involve parents in an ongoing, timely planning, review, and improvement of the school parental involvement policy and the joint development of the schoolwide program plan.
- Include a description and explanation of the curriculum in use at the school, the forms of academic assessment used to measure student progress, and the proficiency levels students are expected to meet.
- Respond to parent's suggestions for regular meetings to formulate suggestions and to participate, as appropriate, in decisions relating to the education of their children



School-Family Compact

The **compact** must describe:


- The school's responsibility to provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in an effective learning environment; ways in which each parent will be responsible for supporting their child's learning.
- Address the importance of ongoing communication between teachers and parents at a minimum by:
 - Having annual parent-teacher conference (at elementary schools), at which time the compact will be discussed as it relates to the child's achievement.
 - Providing frequent reports to parents.
 - Allowing access to staff, opportunities to volunteer and participate, and observation of classroom activities.



Think about it

Turn to a partner and discuss:


1. At least one barrier to school-family partnership in the development of the Title I parent involvement policy
2. Identify ways to overcome the barrier



School Parent Partnership- It's a process

Start Early


Parent involvement in education has a positive effect at all grade levels: elementary, middle, and high school



School Parent Partnership- It's a process

Provide Professional Development for Teacher and Non-certs

Studies find that in schools where teachers reported high levels of outreach to parents, test scores grew at a rate 40 percent higher than in schools that reported low levels of outreach to parents



School Parent Partnership- It's a process

Invite Parents to School

When parents come to school regularly, it reinforces the child's view that school and home are connected.



Nine Characteristics of a High Performing School

1. A clear and shared focus.
2. High standards and expectations for all students.
3. Effective school leadership.
4. High levels of collaboration and communication.
5. Curriculum, instruction and assessments aligned with state standards.
6. Frequent monitoring of learning and teaching.
7. Focused professional development.
8. A supportive learning environment.
9. **High levels of parent and community involvement.**



High Level of Family and Community Involvement

- Work in partnership
- Link to academic goals
- It's about leadership
 - Live core beliefs
 - Create policy
 - Build relationships
 - Allocate resources

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Trust Makes the Difference

When people feel liked, valued and respected they collaborate more readily. In their study of trust in Chicago public schools, Tony Bryk and Barbara Schneider found that schools where staff trust parents and their colleagues tend to have higher levels of student achievement.



Key Resources

School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action. Joyce L. Epstein, Mavis G. Sanders, Beth S. Simon, Karen Clark Salinas, Natalie Rodriguez Jansorn, Francis L. Van Voorhis. 2002, Corwin Press, Inc.

Diversity: School, Family, & Community Connections. Martha Boethel. 2003, National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. www.sedl.org/connections

Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships. Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies. 2007, NY: The New Press

The Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools: A Research-based resource fo. school leadership teams to assist with the School Improvement Process. Shannon, G.S. & Bylsma, P. 2007, (2nd Ed.). Olympia, WA: OSPI. www.k12.wa.us/research/default.aspx

A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement. Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp. 2002, National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory. www.sedl.org/connections

Engaging All Families: Creating a Positive School Culture by Putting Research into Practice. Steven M. Constantino. 2003, MD: Rowman & Littlefield. School, Family, and Community Partnership



Websites

- Northwest Regional Education Laboratory (NWREL)
www.nwrel.org/index.php
- Office of the Education of Ombudsman (OEO)
www.waparentslearn.org
- Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction,
Washington
www.k12.wa.us
- Parent Trust for Washington Children
www.parentturst.org
- Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (SEDL)
www.sedl.org
- US Department of Education Parental Information and
Resources
www.ed.org
- Washington Alliance for Better Schools – KEYS Program
www.washingtonea.org