

Ten Things Schools Can Do to Create Great Family-School Partnerships

1. Host a “Welcoming School Walk-Through” with teachers, administrators, parents, and community members to help school staff see their school the way parents and visitors see it.
2. Give families tools to support their children’s learning. Work with parents to develop a “job description” of an involved parent, build families’ confidence in their ability to help their children, and make sure all families feel welcome and invited.
3. Create a comfortable family resource room inside the school building where families can meet, get to know each other, and discuss their interests and concerns. Stock the family room with books, games and learning materials that families can borrow.
4. Design two “family involvement” activities each quarter to help families participate more effectively in improving their children’s learning. These events could include family reading activities, math and science trainings, or career and college planning nights.
5. Exhibit student work in school and the community to share student learning with families and to change the way people in the area perceive students. Having an audience is a powerful incentive for students to do their best work and a well-informed community will support its public schools.
6. Reach out to all families, especially those who are typically underrepresented because of social, economic, racial, and/or language barriers, to learn what they have to offer the school. Tailor school volunteer opportunities to fit parents’ talents and time constraints.
7. Using surveys, visits, and conversations, find out what parents’ goals are for their children. Work with them on developing skills and strategies they can use to advocate for their children.
8. Organize tours of the community for school staff to get to know families and neighborhoods better and to identify families’ concerns and ideas for improvement.
9. Develop monthly family contact logs for teachers with families’ telephone numbers, so teachers can be in touch with parents at least once a month.
10. Hold language learning sessions for parents and teachers. For example, use a professional development session to teach Spanish education vocabulary or run structured English classes for parent on weekends.

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