

Working Together: School-Family-Community Partnerships

A Survey for Assessing School Level Family and Community Partnerships

This survey may be used to assess a school's progress in strengthening partnerships between school personnel and the school's families and community members. It is suggested that the survey be used at different points in the school year to assess progress in the six areas of parent involvement identified by the work of Dr. Joyce Epstein and the PTA's National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs.

Rating Scale	
Frequently	Occurs in most classes or grade levels. Receives substantive time and emphasis. A highly prevalent component of the school's parental involvement plan.
Sometimes	Occurs in some classes or grade levels. Receives minimal or modest time and emphasis. Not a prevalent component of the school's parental involvement plan.
Never	Strategy does not occur at the school or occurs in isolation.

1. IMPROVING COMMUNICATION

Communicate effectively with all families in the community.

Our School:	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Conducts parent-teacher conferences with every parent at least once a year.			
Provides translators to assist families as needed.			
Provides clear information about report cards and how grades are earned.			
Has established two-way channels for communication from home to school and from school to home.			
Provides clear information about selecting courses, programs and activities in this school.			
Sends folders of student work home weekly or monthly for parent review and comments.			
Sends home positive messages or makes phone calls to parents about students on a regular basis.			
Notifies families of students having academic or behavior problems. Teachers have easy access to telephones to communicate with parents during or after school.			
Provides parents with the telephone numbers of the school, principal, teachers and counselors (at school or at home).			
Has a homework hot line for students and families to hear daily assignments and messages.			
Conducts an annual survey for families to share information and concerns about students' needs and reactions to school programs.			





Our school newsletter includes:			
A calendar of school events.			
Student activity information.			
Information about curriculum, assessments and standards-based instruction.			
Information regarding volunteer involvement (when and how to volunteer).			
School governance information (how the school is run, site council, etc.).			
A column to address parents' questions.			
Recognition of students, families and community members.			

2. PROMOTING POSITIVE PARENTING

Assist all families with parenting skills and in setting home environments to support children as students.

Our School:	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Sponsors parent education workshops and other courses or training for parents.			
Provides families with information on child or adolescent development.			
Provides families with strategies that support learning at home.			
Lends families books or tapes on parenting or videotapes of parent workshops.			
Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths and talents.			
Sponsors home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.			
Respects the different cultures represented in our student population.			

3. ENHANCING STUDENT LEARNING

Provide information to families about how to help students at home with their homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.

Our School:	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Provides family-friendly information to families on New Mexico's Content Standards and Benchmarks.			
Provides information to families on how to monitor and discuss schoolwork with their child.			
Provides information on how to assist students with skills that they need to improve.			
Has a regular schedule of interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member.			
Asks parents to listen to their child read or to read aloud with their child.			
Provides calendars with daily or weekly activities for families to do at home and in the community.			
Assists families in helping students to set academic goals, select courses and programs and plan for college, their next level of schooling (i.e. middle school and high school) or work.			

4. INCREASING VOLUNTEERISM

Organize volunteers to support the school and its students.

Our School:	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Conducts an annual survey to identify interests, talents, and availability of volunteers.			
Provides a parent room or family center for volunteers or family members to work, meet, and access relevant resources.			
Provides ways for families to be involved at home or in the community if they cannot volunteer at school.			
Recognizes our volunteers for their time and efforts.			
Schedules plays, concerts, games, and other events at different times of the day and evening so that all parents can attend.			
We encourage families and the community to be involved at school by			
Assisting in the classroom (e.g., tutoring, grading papers).			
Helping on trips or at parties.			
Giving talks (e.g., careers, hobbies, etc.).			
Checking attendance.			
Monitoring halls, working in the library, cafeteria or other areas.			
Leading clubs or activities.			

5. SUPPORTING DECISION MAKING AND ADVOCACY

Include families as participants in school decisions and develop parent and community leaders.

Our School:	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Has an active PTA, PTO or other parent organization.			
Invites parents to be on the school's advisory council, improvement team, or other committees at our school.			
Asks involved parents to make contact with parents who are less involved to solicit their ideas and report back to them.			
Provides information on school or local elections for school representatives.			
Develops formal networks to link all families with their parent representatives.			
Involves parents in school level decisions.			
Involves parents in revising school/district curricula.			
Includes parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socio-economic and other groups represented in school.			





6. COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students and schools.

Our School:	Frequently	Sometimes	Never
Provides a community resource directory for parents and students with information on community agencies, programs and services.			
Provides information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.			
Works with local businesses, industries and community organizations on programs to enhance student skills.			
Offers after-school programs for students, with support from community businesses, agencies or volunteers.			
Sponsors inter-generational programs with local senior citizen groups.			
Provides "one-stop" shopping for family services through partnerships with school counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies.			
Organizes service learning projects for the community, students, families, and schools.			
Building is open for use by the community after school hours.			

Adapted from Dr. Joyce Epstein, et al, 2002

Summary of Strengths and Needs

- Ratings of "frequently" indicate that the activity or approach is strong.
- Ratings of "sometimes" or "never" indicate that the activity is not yet part of the school's program or needs improvement.

The results provide information on the strength of current practices and insights about future directions or needed improvements in your school's parental and community involvement/partnership program. Use the chart below to begin identifying areas of strength, need and plans for improvement.

Areas of Strength	Areas in Need of Improvement	Plans for Improvement

Table 9.5: Examples of school–community partnerships

Community resource	Potential school benefits	Potential partner benefits
Church or other religious institution	Space for a literacy program, after-school youth center	Materials for a youth center, clothes for a resale shop
College or university	Tutoring and mentoring summer program, future teachers, alternative high school	Space, employment for students
Local residents	Security guards, volunteers, donations, special skills	Employment opportunities, classes, newsletters, volunteer opportunities
Businesses	Donations, scholarships, mentoring, service learning opportunities	Future employees, interns and apprentices
Chamber of Commerce	Access to the business community, mentoring, training, volunteers	Well-trained workforce, publicity
Bakeries or restaurants	Food for events, help establishing catering enterprises	Catering opportunities, publicity
Media	Good publicity for events, assistance in mobilizing the community	Access to news events, public service opportunities
Artists and cultural institutions	Mentors, judges for contests, facilitators for projects	Display space, artist in residence opportunities, publicity
Library	Access to resources, space, specialized content skills	Support for library programs, access to kids and parents (patrons)
Senior citizen's groups	Tutoring, mentoring, transportation, event volunteers, child-care resources	Access to school space, educational programs, holiday meals
Banks	Money, connections to outside funders, grant-writing skills	Public service opportunities, publicity
Police	Assistance with crime prevention, mentoring	Development of relationships with youth
Various community events – festivals	Community exposure, support for school–community relationships	Volunteers, participants
Community education	Access to special training like sewing, model building, car maintenance, budgeting, public speaking	Access to participants
Daycare centers	Student exposure to young children, service-learning opportunities	Volunteer help from students, possible space
Policy makers	Influence over local decisions and policies, especially ones impacting schools (levies, etc.)	Exposure, platforms
Government	Influence over funding streams and priorities for delivery of services, etc.	More effective use of funding and resources because they are more responsive to local needs
Councils and boards (i.e., Family and Children First Councils, School Boards, etc.)	Influence over policies, funding streams, etc.	More effective use of funding and resources; better aligned policies
Citizen and community groups (i.e., neighborhood associations, racial and/or ethnic groups)	Mobilization of key constituents in support of school directions	Ability to better serve their community via the school

From: Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993; Stone, Henig, Jones, & Pierrannuzi, 2001.