STUDY GUIDE

New Ways to Engage Parents: Strategies and Tools for Teachers and Leaders, K-12

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Chapter 1 **Your School's Reality—Data Collection**

Communities are becoming more and more diverse, and schools must meet those challenges to reconsider the role do the school in light of changing demographic realities. The following sections you will collect data on your school's population to provide a road map to assist all stakeholders with gaining a better of understanding of who as well as how to best service all members.

Provide Data for your school in the following categories to understand the families and children in your school (p. 2-4)

Data needed for:	Percentage	Listing
Occupations		
Average educational level		
Median family income		
Average household average		
Family profiles		
Child under 5		
Birth rate		
Race/ethnic groups		
Languages		
Foreign born or speaks other than English		
Preschool		
Barriers for parents enrolling children in preschool		

Planning for the English Language Learners in your community and school (p.4)

Demographic patterns:	Data:
English proficiency levels of parents	
Languages/Cultures	
Are your ELL programs designed to develop proficiency in reading and comprehending academic English in addition to everyday speech?	
Are staff members highly qualified bilingual or ELL teachers?	
Are parent-involvement and community outreach efforts geared to reach the parents of these students?	

Disparities in Educational Attainment and/or Behavioral Performance (p.4-5)

Questions to think about due to the persistence of significant disparities in educational attainment and behavioral performance by race and ethnic group presents a serious challenge.

1) What do your data show about disparities between the academic performance of different between academic performance of different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups? What is your school doing to address disparities?

_____

_____

2) Do gaps exist between these subgroups in the areas of behavioral performance and possibly behavioral referrals? How are these influencing academic performances?
3) Have you established mentoring, tutoring, and dropout prevention programs for students?
4) Have you involved parent organizations, community groups, and others in the effort?
5) How have you communicated with parents the community to inform them of gaps and student needs?

Analyzing the effectiveness of your educational programs in your school to come up with a plan of action to ensure that students possess skills that will support future jobs. (p.6)

1) What can our school do to ensure that high school graduates have the skills they need to contribute to a global economy?
2) Are we encouraging female and minority-students to enroll in upper-level science and mathematics courses and recognizing students for academic as well as athletic accomplishments?
3) Do we have plans and programs to support and motivate boys, who are dropping out in greater numbers than girls?

Supporting Lifelong Learning to stay competitive...what is your school doing? Answer the following questions to guide your thoughts.

1) What role can your school play in expanding learning beyond the K-12 years?
2) How is the integration of 21st-century literacies and technology being prioritized in your school district?
3) What technological infrastructures and goals are in place that will provide students with the opportunity to compete in the ever-changing workforce?
4) How involved and knowledgeable is your community in understanding the importance of the integration of 21st-century literacies and technology? Are community members involved in decision making and supporting options to improve these areas such as through bond proposals?

Using the data from the above areas, now create your school's demographic profile. See figures 1.3, 1.5, 1.6 and 1.7.

Chapter 2-Plan of Action for Involving Parents (p.18)

Figure 2.1—Taking Stock of Our School—List the following:
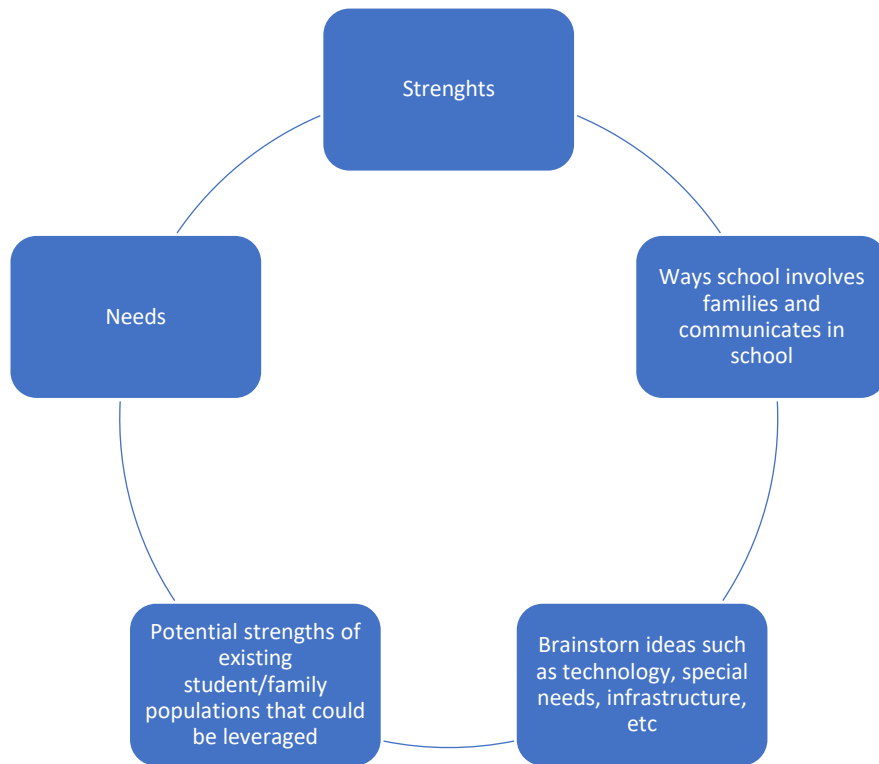
As you take a closer look at the families and students your school services, work to create a spreadsheet which will include the information to share with other teachers who may work with those same students (p.20).

Gather Information to Implement Parent Involvement

The information you gather about the students and their families will help in considering parent participation and what activities to implement to gain support from parents. Here is a checklist of questions to begin thinking about how you and other teachers can support equal opportunities and diversity for parents:

1) How do parents who do not use English as their first language get information about their children's learning and about opportunities to get involved? (This includes parents who are deaf and use American Sign Language, who speak other languages, and who are illiterate.)
2) Do teachers and parents have access to translators and equipment that would help them communicate effectively with one another?
3) Are parents who have a disability aware of support they can receive to get to the school and to other events, such as Individualized Education Program meetings, teacher conferences, performances?

4) Are there other opportunities in which parents can bring a family or friend for support to meetings?
5) How can parents keep in touch with teachers if they work during the day?
6) Is there encouragement and practical help for fathers to be involved?
7) Is the school environment welcoming to all parents (fathers as well as mothers?)
8) Are there opportunities for loved ones (including foster parents) or partners of parents to get involved as volunteers at the school and be a part of events that celebrate families so that all children will have someone there for/with them?

After answering the above questions, come up with multiple plans to implement parent involvement in your school. If teacher-parent partnerships are new to some staff members, they may need support to effectively and efficiently make this initiative a part of their teacher responsibilities. (Also see **Figure 2.3** for suggestions of activities to involve parents.)

Action Plan for Developing Home-School Partnerships (p.21)

Think about positive relationships with parents, which is critical to provide the best education possible to their children. Parents are the most important people in children's early lives and are, therefore, the best people to assist school leaders and teachers in getting to know the children.

Successful home-school partnership depends on the development of mutual trust and respect between the school and parents. Schools need to use the skills, knowledge, and experiences that all parents and all staff bring to the school to support children's learning. There are many opportunities for all parents to have a role in their children's educational success. The checklist in **Figure 2.4** can be use by school leaders to assess the current conditions at the school that promote parents' involvement and where improvements need to be made.

Once you have looked at the checklist, answer as many questions below, then analyze the data to determine which suggestions from Figure 2.3 your school can implement or brainstorm other suggestions from the data analysis.

Q1) _____

Q2) _____

Q3) _____

Brainstorm other ideas:

Plan of action for at least 2 suggestions:

_____
_____

Action Plan for Developing Community-School Partnerships (p. 24)

Schools cannot exist in isolation, and school leaders also need an action plan to ensure that there is a partnership between the community and school. Everyone must be aware of differences in the approaches that are required for each community. Schools provide a service that should be available for everyone. As your school is in the initial stage of building partnerships with the community, there are questions that can guide your planning. **Figure 2.5** is a checklist for school leaders promoting community-school partnerships.

After you have answered as many questions as you can, look at **Figure 2.6 Making the Most of Your Community** and begin with a plan.

Q1) Do parents and teachers work together to identify the priorities for the school and identify areas in which help from other people in the community could be useful?

_____
_____

Q2) Has the school identified what particular skills in the community may be useful for the school?

_____
_____

Figure 2.6 will guide you through a plan of action to identify key organizations and community groups, identify those that could help the school, its students, and parents, ability to share your findings with parents and pupils, and prepare a community directory.

Reaching out to Parents of Preschool Children

Creating school-community partnerships are especially important when school leaders seek to make early connections with families of preschool children. As educators build relationships with parents before they enter school, this will enable parents to begin preparing their children prior to enrollment. Children who have a positive start at home are more likely to feel comfortable, relaxed, and valued, as well as feel good about themselves as learners and have a sense of belonging when they begin school.

What are some ways, you or others at your school have reached out to parents of preschool children? List them in the chart below:

Preschool programs in your community:

| Program 1 | • Pros
• Cons | _____
_____
_____
_____ |
| Program 2 | • Pros
• Cons | _____
_____
_____
_____ |

As you review the programs and the pros and cons of that program, if your school has a program, how does it compare? Are any changes needed to bridge the gap between students who are school ready and those who are not? How can your school help to close that gap?

Not only will your program entice parents of preschoolers, yet your school would need other forms of communication to these parents. Brainstorm other routes that could potentially lead to locating these parents and involving them in understanding the importance of investing in their child's education at an early age.
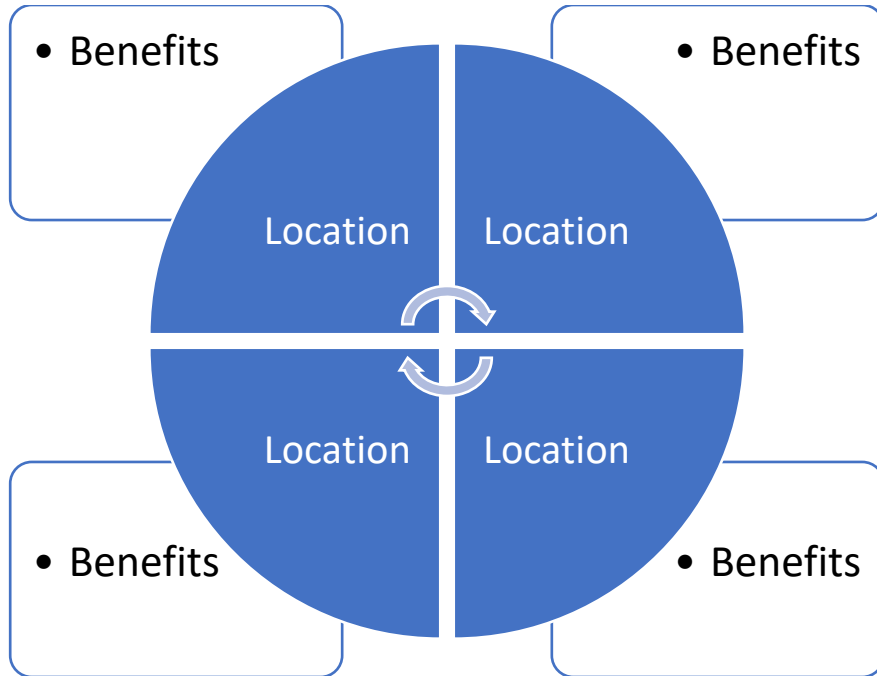
How can you turn the cycle matrix into a brochure that can be used to promote your school's commitment to them and their child?

Chapter 3:

Engaging in Person-to-Person Interactions with Parents-Make Our Best Opportunities Count

As educators, we know that communication between school and home is extremely important to a child's success in school. When school leaders, teachers, and other school staff respect parents and share information with them openly and frequently, parents are more likely to trust and work with the school personnel to support their children's learning.

There are numerous opportunities to help educators interact with parents effectively and successfully. Let's look at two opportunities.

Opportunity 1: Open House

The open house continues to be a common event in schools. At open houses, teachers and parents connect to exchange information that will assist students in their academic and social growth. Knowing that this form of communication is for parents to have a brief time to be welcomed to the school by the principal, to get acquainted with the teacher or teachers, to see the classroom, and perhaps to get a quick overview of the class expectations and the curriculum for the year.

What is the purpose for your school's Open House? _____

If you were attending, what would you expect to see? _____ What knowledge would you expect to gain? _____

 Look at **Figure 3.1** Essential Information That Parents Need to Have (p. 38)

All of the information in Figure 3.1 should be shared with parents, in handouts, in a school handbook, and on the school website, and some of it shared verbally at open house.

1) Rules of the district (e.g., must live within the district to attend school, if not, is there a fee?)
2) Rules of the school (behavior plan for the school, for each class, for the district; this document is usually created by the district office personnel)
3) Attendance policy
4) …………….

What is missing from the above list that you should include in your school's "Essential Information that Parents Need to Have"? How can you put this information in an easy to access and read format? Work on a format for your school.

Using at least 2 of the ideas from your list or from **Figure 3.1**, and write a short lesson using the sample provided in **Figure 3.3.** These lessons can be reviewed with parents, they can even participate in the lesson along with their child for an actual demonstration.

Opportunity 2: Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences have been traditionally used to provide parents with an update on their child's progress or to discuss difficult situations. During these conferences, teachers need to be professional, yet honest regarding the student's progress. A more proactive approach is to set up

parent-teacher conferences early in the school year as a means for laying the foundation for two-way communication. Take numerous opportunities to now the parents and provide information about yourself, your teaching style, and positive experiences you have had and plan on having with their child.

Make Your Messages Respectful—What other ways can you be courteous, clear, and helpful?

Here are some examples…add your suggestions.

Be courteous:

-Speak directly to parents using eye contact.

-Use surnames when addressing parents.

-_____

-_____

Be clear:

-Use words that are understandable ("Your child is working at the proficiency level, which means she understands at least 80% of all content").
-Provide suggestions are that practical ("In order to help your child with his reading Fluency, you need to read to him, then have him to read the same sentences to you").

-_____

-_____

Be helpful:

-Provide resources when applicable (dental, housing, food, homework assistance); provide

explicit examples of homework.

-Provide websites that the parent can have the student visit for extra assistance.

-_____

-_____

Answer General Questions

Parents might ask questions to elicit information and help make their child's year more successful (see below). Teachers might feel that they have addressed many of these questions at the open house meeting with parents but should be prepared to patiently answer these questions and expand upon the information if needed. Frequent questions from parents include the following:

The space provided will help you begin to think about of your responses.

`Could you outline the schedule of a typical day/class period for me? Look at the calendar below and create a day or week which would resemble your day/week.

DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

	Monday		Tuesday		Wednesday		Thursday		Friday
8:30-9:30am	Morning Work	8:30-9:30am	Morning Work	8:30-9:40am	Morning Work/Library	8:30-9:30am	Morning Work	8:30-9:30am	Chapel
9:30-10am	COMPUTER LAB	9:30-10am	Spelling	9:40-10am	Spelling	9:30-10am	Spelling	9:30-10am	Spelling
9:30-10am	Morning Meeting	9:30-10:00am	Morning Meeting	9:30-10:00am	Morning Meeting	9:30-10:00am	LIBRARY	9:30-10:00am	Morning Meeting
10:00-10:20am	SNACK	10:00-10:20am	SNACK	10:00-10:20am	SNACK	10:00-10:20am	SNACK	10:00-10:20am	SNACK
10:20-11:00am	Bible	10:20-11:00am	Bible	10:20-11:00am	Bible	10:20-11:00am	Bible	10:20-11:00am	Bible
11:00am-12:00pm	Reading Groups and Seatwork	11:00am-12:00pm	Reading Groups and Seatwork	11:00am-12:00pm	Reading Groups and Seatwork	11:00am-12:00pm	Reading Groups and Seatwork	11:00am-12:00pm	Reading Groups and Seatwork
12:00-12:40pm	LUNCH	12:00-12:40pm	LUNCH	12:00-12:40pm	LUNCH	12:00-12:40pm	LUNCH	12:00-12:40pm	LUNCH
12:40-1:00pm	Read Aloud	12:40-1:00pm	Read Aloud	12:40-1:00pm	Read Aloud	12:40-1:00pm	Read Aloud	12:40-1:00pm	Read Aloud
1:00pm-1:30pm	Math	1:00-1:30pm	Math	1:00-1:30pm	Math	1:00-1:30pm	Math	1:00-1:30pm	Math
1:30-2:00pm	Science/Health /History	1:30-2:00pm	Science/Health /History	1:30-2:00pm	Science/Health /History	1:30-2:00pm	Science/Health /History	1:30-2:00pm	Science/Health /History
2:00-2:30pm	PE	2:00-2:15pm	Bible	2:00-2:30pm	PE	2:00-2:15pm	Bible	2:00-2:30pm	PE
2:30-2:45pm	Clean up, Go Home	2:15-2:45pm	Clean up, Go Home	2:30-2:45pm	Clean up, Go Home	2:15-2:45pm	Clean up, Go Home	2:30-2:45pm	Clean up, Go Home

`What type of *discipline plan* do you use in the classroom?

DISCIPLINE PLAN

RULES [General classroom rules stated positively]

1.

_____

2.

_____

3.

_____

4.

_____

5.

_____

INCENTIVE PLAN [DESCRIBE--[May include Preferred Activity Time]

_____

_

_____

_

_____

_

LIMIT SETTING ACTS TO BE USED [Generally non-verbal]

_____

_____

_____

NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES [Hierarchical steps to be used in class when limit setting

facts are ineffective.]

Step 1. _____

Step 2. _____

Step 3. _____

BACK-UP PLAN [Outside help to be requested]

Step 4. _____

Step 5. _____

Step 6. _____

`What are your views *on homework*, and what is your homework policy?

`What skills are being addressed right now, and how does that tie in to the overall goal for the year?

Focus on the Child

A great way to start a conference is to have parents read a letter that their child wrote for them.
Figure 3.4, Conversational Starter with Families, shows one-way teachers can begin a conference
with each parent. It is a positive conversation starter and a wonderful self-reflection tool for
students. This lays the foundation for an open and beneficial collaboration throughout the year.

Fill-in Figure 3.4 as if you were one of your students. Make sure the questions are grade appropriate.

Dear_____

I'm glad you came to the conference! Here are some things you should know!

I think I've really been working hard _____

I am really good at _____

I think I should practice more at _____

I love learning about _____

My favorite part of my classroom is _____

Don't forget to look at _____

Love,

_____

Conferences are an opportunity to show parents a sample, visuals to help understand the readiness level of the subject. Also, students can provide information which they have learned or what their challenges are to their parents. You want to also show many readiness levels above where their child is working to show and explain what actions need to be taken to advance them to the next level (Also see **Figure 3.11**)

Look through your students' work and select a sample that shows proficient, partial proficient, non-partial in the content which you teach and provide the criteria and all the standards for the assignment. Check off which standards the child mastered in the assignment and suggestions as to what the parent can do at home to support their child's learning. If you can't locate any, you can search the internet and student's work samples.

The above can also be done with standardized tests. You want to make sure that you know how to explain student's progress to the parent, strengths and challenges that the student is having.

Look at the data below and role-play with a colleague about (insert a student's NWEA scores) how you would talk with a parent about the data. Create questions that you would have for the parent and generate some which you believe the parent may ask. **Figure 3.10 Parent Conference Form 1** also provides an additional resource to assist with conferences prior to the meeting.

Chapter 4: Using Technology to Communicate with Parents

Students are at an advantage when teachers and students work together as a team in order for them to do their best at school. Cultivating communication between home and school helps a teacher know a student better, which in turn assists the teacher in finding the best strategies to meet the needs of the student and thus to teach more effectively.

Understanding Types of Communication Strategies

In order to build an effective partnership with parents, teachers must understand and employ a variety of communication strategies, in addition to the in-person teacher-parent interactions discussed in Chapter 3. There are two ways of communication strategies: one-way and two-way (Berger, 2000; Edwards, 2004; Hoover-Dempsey& Whitaker, 2010).

List some of your communication strategies:_____

How effective are they? How can you make them more effective? Which communication form is used for which situation?

Newsletters, bulletin boards, report cards, school handbooks, and progress notes are all examples of one-way communication. One-way strategies keep parents informed about activities and school policies. The second type of communication, two-way, is an integral part of building partnerships with parents. It is essential for educators and parents to engage in an exchange of ideas including exchanging information on assessment and instruction to build productive partnerships (National PTA, 2000).

As you look at **Figure 4.1 One-Way and Two-Way Communication**, recognize which forms of communication your school offers and which ones they do not.

One-Way Communication we use	Do not use	Two-Way Communication we use	Do not use

Plan of action to implement communication forms and for what purpose(s).

_____

_____

_____

_____

Applying Technology to Reach the Parent Community

Technology is another form of innovation and time efficient to keep parents informed. Technology also holds promise for allowing teacher communication opportunities "not limited by school hour or location" (Brewer & Kallick, 1996, p.181). Ramirez (2001) believes that technology provides educators with the opportunity to communicate quickly to a broad parent community. One example of this is the use of the application Remind 101. This app/web-based communication tool allows teachers/schools the ability to send parents text messages through a secure site, without giving away or accessing personal phone numbers. The parents are given a code, not the teacher's personal number, the teacher is able to send out messages through the app or website to the parent group throughout the year. These messages come right to the parents' phone as a text message, but the parents are not able to see the other numbers included or to text back a response. This is a great way to send reminders to families using familiar means of communication that many families are comfortable with and access often.

How can the **Remind 101** be set-up for multiple groups of parents? What are they? What would one message to a group sound like for another group?

Voice Mail, Email, Texting, Skype, Google Hangouts, Video Technology, School Websites, Class Websites, PhotoCircle, Twitter, Blogs and Wikis are other effective forms of communication to and with parents.

Write a brief overview of each form of communication from the list above as well as other forms that you may have knowledge of.

For your group of parents and students, select the best communication forms (at least 2) and a rationale. Your list may not look the same as another teacher due to his/her student/parent population.

Form:

Rationale:

Form:

Rationale:

You could even provide parents a brochure of numerous communication formats with a synopsis. A survey could be included to get their opinion as to which two or three ways they would best like you

to communicate with them with a brief written demonstration as to how they communication would read.

Chapter 5: Bringing Parents Together Around Things That Matter

When children enter school, not only are they affected by the new school environment but their parents are as well (Edwards, 1993b). Over 40 years ago Harrington (1971) stated that "schools cannot and would not exist without parents. Parents supply the school with primary material—their children—around which the formal educational and organizational program for that school is constructed" (p.49). Schools and teachers are here to serve students and families, and in integral part of a teacher's job is relating to parents.

In our mobile work, it is less likely that today's parents and teachers, compared to previous generations, will hold beliefs and values that are closed matched (Keyes, 2002). When teachers lived in the same communities with school families, there was a "natural bridge" between family and school (Edwards, 2004; Hymes, 1974). Today, teachers often come from a socioeconomic class, race, or ethnic group that is different from that of the children they teach. Differences in these realms are associated with different interactional styles and language system as well as values, and present challenges to developing effective partnerships (Burke, 1999; Henry, 1996; Langdon & Novak, 1998).

Once connections are made, it is imperative that teachers take full advantage of the assistance that the family provides. In chapter 1, you created demographic profiles of your students, which will assist you on making those connections and partnerships.

Enhancing Parent Involvement

Parent Informant Meetings

Why are these meetings needed? What should the agendas of these meetings consist of? How often should they be held? What communication would you use to inform parents about these meetings?

Literacy Network

Many communities throughout the country have a literacy network that schools can partner with. Literacy Network offers its volunteers the chance to apply their skills, broaden their perspectives, and positively change the lives of others.

What Literacy Network could your school partner with? What Literacy goals would your school have that this network help you achieve?

Parent Peer Mentoring

It is important for schools to organize parent-to-parent mentoring programs. The role of parents in a child's literacy development is one of the most important things for schools to consider.

Write a rationale for a Parent Peer Mentoring program at your school. How would you keep those parents connected who may have transportation issues? Or who isn't mobile?

Leveling the Learning Field for Challenged Students

In the 21st century, schools and school leaders have had to grapple with the fact that they are having to address the needs of students some might call "students we worry about" (Allen, Shockley, & Michalove, 1995). This group of students includes (1) immigrant populations and (2) students without preparation for school culture. Let's look at various ways parents can help as well as how schools and teachers can support these parents.

Parents Can Help Level the Learning Field for Challenged Students

Schools should hold "Information Fairs" regarding preschool and kindergarten to encourage more children of immigrants to attend preschool and draw on special education resources, if applicable. In chapter 1, parent peer mentoring was mentioned. This is a great way to work with immigrant populations. Parent support groups for those parents who have limited educational and/or English speaking-skills can help eliminate the barriers to accessing support and resources for their children, especially those who are undocumented.

Who can assist with this initiative? And role will each play? Who else can assist and how?

1. Parent Volunteers:
2. Staff members:
3. Students:

Students without Preparation for School Culture

Schools need to recognize and be sensitive to the fact that many students enter school without preparation for school culture. The following is a list of ways in which a school can help a student, as well as his or her parents, come to understand the school's culture; add to how this suggestion would be beneficial and/or increase relational-trust amongst all stakeholders.

1. Provide a student peer mentor for guidance through the structure of the day.

Beneficial: _____

2. Offer participation in before- and after-school programs to assist with the formalities of the school day, homework, and classwork.

Beneficial: _____

3. Provide counseling (such as with a social worker) to give emotional and educational support- this will help the student express is or her feelings about where assistance is needed.

Beneficial: _____

Showing Parents What Success Looks Like

Schools want parents to be involved in their children's education, and parents want to be involved. All parents want their children to succeed in school. Solid research shows that children from homes where parents are engaged with their children, other parents, and their children's schools earn

better grades, bet better test scores, enjoy school more, and are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

What would success look like in your school and with students for you to showcase to parents?

_____

What suggestions would you give to parents that would improve their children's potential for success in school in literacy?

What does it look like?	What does it sound like?

What resources would you provide to the parents?

How would you know if other resources and suggestions are needed for the parents (**see Figure 5.2?)**

Give Parents Steps to Take and Tools to Use

Neither the school nor classroom teachers can make the assumption that parents know what they mean when they ask them to "get involved." They need to give parents steps to take and tools to use. Some suggestions are a curriculum night throughout the school year for each subject with an opportunity to practice the content. They would be asked questions that would help them understand the content well enough to go home and assist their child.

Ensure Parents Understand the Benefits for Their Children

Sometimes parents must be shown the benefits. You can use strategies like having parents show or have other parents how their children's papers have improved over time, or having parents share testimonies of how certain strategies enhanced their children's learning success. Parents can lead sessions for other parents to help them understand the benefits of reading to their child, having a quiet homework area, taking their child to the park and to the zoo/museum, volunteering, talking with their child about school, scheduling regular doctor visits, attending conferences, and contacting the teacher on a regular basis just to check in.

Please provide a brief synopsis of the benefits for 5 of the suggestions above.

Suggestion	Synopsis of the benefit

Your Most Important Messages

How would you share with parents the following important messages: (1) the manners required in school and (2) effective parenting for school success. One of the most important jobs both parents and teachers have is to help children develop social skills, showing them how to interact in a polite manner with people, and to teach them to treat others with respect. These are foundations of academic dialogue and conversation in schools for promotion of learning.

In the messages to the parents for the above 2 messages, provide characteristics that the students will gain and how they will transfer to their academics also.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Holding Parents Accountable

Parents are the most powerful force on earth. There are increasing calls for schools to find ways to hold parents accountable for their involvement in their children's education. Americans are tired of underperforming schools, and they recognize that we cannot continue to blame teachers. Overworked and underpaid educators only see children for a short period of time each day and cannot possibly do everything that a child needs within that time period.

How does your school hold parents accountable for their children?

Have those initiatives been successful? Why/why not?

What needs to change for them to be successful?

What are some suggestions to hold parents accountable that your school has not initiated? What is needed for it/them to be initiated?

In order to engage parents fully as partners in their children's education, it is essential for teachers to connect with parents around things that matter and involve parents as peer mentors.

Chapter 6: Meet Parents Halfway, and Have a Way to Reach Every Parent

Pleas from Home-School Collaboration

The disconnect that many teachers feel with parents who are culturally and linguistically different from them is not as new as we sometimes think. After school desegregation, researchers began to plead for educators to develop a closer working relationship with the home. Fletcher (1966) was quick to build the case: "Education is simply not something which is provided either by teachers in schools or by parents and family members in the home. It must be a *continuing* cultivation of the child's experiences in which *both* schools and families jointly take part" (p. 189). The home-school connection, opportunities to collaborate may not seem very natural to teachers today who may not live in the communities where they work, may speak a different language and represent different cultural backgrounds, and may not have many natural, everyday encounters with parents.

Why are these relationships difficult? _____

Do you have biases? What are they? _____

What obstacles are at your school? _____

If there are obstacles, provide 2 plausible solutions for each. _____

Brainstorm the positive and negatives of such a relationship for the school, teachers, parent, and child.

	School	teachers	parent	Child
Positive				
Negative				

Recognizing Parent Differences

 In chapter 1, you learned about the different demographics within your school. That data will help with understanding the topics in this chapter.

In thinking about parent involvement and developing family-school partnerships, educators must understand that parents are not all the same. Parents are people, too, with their own strengths and weaknesses, complexities, problems, and questions, and we must work with them and see them as more than "just parents." In my work with parents, I coined two terms, *differentiated parenting* and *parentally appropriate*, to help teachers find new ways to think about whom parents are.

Differentiated parenting means recognizing that parents are different from one another in their perspectives, beliefs, and abilities to negotiate school. While parents might have the same goals for their children (i.e., to read, write, and spell; to think well to solve math and other problems; to gain a foundation in history and science; and to develop their intellectual strengths), they might have

different ideas about how they can help their children accomplish these goals (see Edwards, 2004, 2009; Resource 6.1, tcpress.com).

Parentally appropriate means that because parents are different, tasks and activities must be compatible with their capabilities. For example, parents who do not read well might be very intimidated and frustrated by teachers who expect them to read to their children every night, and teacher might need to select other activities to support them in developing reading fluency (see Edwards, 2004, 2009).

Compare and Contrast your parents' perspectives, beliefs, language, and educational capabilities. Then list activities that your grade level team can prepare in order for parents can support their child's learning.
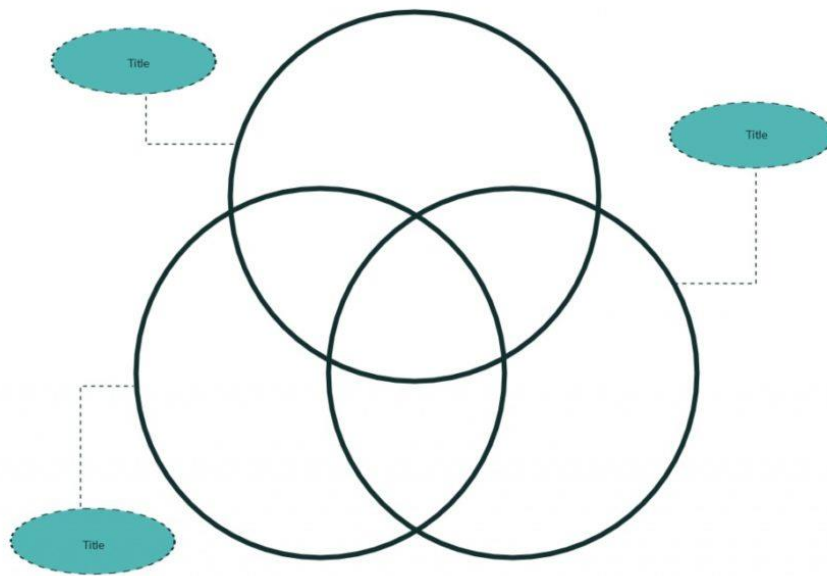
Do we lack understanding with our parents?

    When we as teachers ask parents to "read to their child," more times than not we assume that parents know what we mean? Unfortunately, many parents do not. Read the anecdote illustrations from pages 82-84 within the text and determine where you and the teachers within your grade level and/or school have had similar experiences. If you did, write up a case study with plausible actions that you could implement.

Categories of Parent Differences

Jenkins (1969) challenged schools by posing this question: "[Schools] are accustomed to making the concept of individual differences in the children central to much [their] planning and thinking, but do the children?" (p.35). Making her case stronger, Jenkins categorized five differences in parents, which pointed to the complexity and significance of schools and teachers knowing the parents they serve of being "parentally appropriate." These five categories are as follows:

1) Parental dynamics:
2) Parent feels regarding school:
3) Parent relationships with their children
4) Parent values and goals
5) Parent attitudes toward involvement with the school

For the above provide a brief synopsis and an example.

Parents' Feelings about School

Jenkin's categories of parent differences are closely connected to how parents interact with their children at home and to their general perceptions and attitudes toward school.

Figure 6.1 Parents Respond to School. How many of your parents avoid school? ☐

Need encouragement to come to school? ☐

Readily respond when invited to school? ☐

Comfortable and enjoy involvement in school? ☐

Enjoy power and are overly active? ☐

What are some activities you can implement for those parents who do not fall under the last two categories? Who else can you elicit to help with your efforts and what would their roles in the activities consist of?

_____
_____
_____

Learning About Cultural Issues Involving Families and Communities

Viewing families from a humanistic stance is important, but there is one other approach that educators must consider—the cultural approach. The cultural approach focuses specifically upon the needs of diverse families and emphasizes the fact that families' cultural differences should not be viewed as deficits. Today's educators should not make damaging and inaccurate judgements that parents who comprise new family structures are uncaring, incompetent, or apathetic (Compton-Lilly, 2009; McLaughlin & Shields, 1987). Educators should not assume that successful partnerships cannot be developed when certain families do not respond to the school's invitation to participate.

- **Have you had families who never attend any events at school?**
- **What type of communication did you use to inform them of those events?**
- **Did you provide a reminder to the events?**
- **Were the communications in their language?**
- **Written at a grade level which they could understand?**

Children do not learn in a vacuum; they bring their culture, family experiences, and community experiences with them to school. It is an overwhelming need for teachers to understand the culture of students and families. Irvine (1992) correctly points out that teachers must understand the cultures of

their students because culture is "the sum total ways of living that are shared by members of a population," consisting of "rites, rituals, legends, myths, artifacts, symbols, language, ceremonies, history, and sense-making that guide and shape behavior" (p.83).

In the new millennium, it is critical for educators to reexamine their classrooms to determine whether they, as teachers, are cognizant of the multiple histories and ways of knowing that students bring to the learning environment. Teachers with students from up to 30 different cultures cannot know all of these cultures deeply but can learn from students and families and show respect for all cultures.

List all of the cultures you have in your classroom

Culture	Tradition 1	Tradition 2

How can you incorporate the cultures into your lesson plans? _____

Children's Funds of Knowledge

In an important article Lisa Delpit (1988) critiqued aspects of progressive pedagogy. She claimed that those children who do not learn particular conventions of literacy at home have difficulty acquiring them at school. In many ways this section on culture is an exploration, and I hope a further formulation, of the tension Delpit identified—the tension between honoring the child's home discourse or way of communicating as a rich source of knowledge and learning itself and yet wishing to put that discourse into meaningful contact with school-based and discipline-based ways of talking, acting, and knowing. When teachers do not respect what children bring to school, that has direct implications on family involvement. When families feel that teachers are not successfully working with their children, it oftentimes hampers their involvement in the school.

In her book on *Culture in School Learning*, Etta Hollins (1996) describes several successful interventions that improve the academic achievement of groups traditionally underserved in the nation's public schools. Common characteristics of these programs include the following:

1) Legitimizing the knowledge the children bring to school.
2) Making meaningful connections between school learning and cultural knowledge or knowledge acquired outside of school.
3)

Provide an example of how your school has/is/could do for each of the above.

One way that teachers can move from seeing culture as "tourism" is for them to understand how various cultures may foster specific interactive styles that differ from the teacher's expectations. Teachers must seriously examine the relationship between their own cultural beliefs and practices and those of their students. The role of the teacher should not be to provide legitimacy to their values and discourse practices at the expense of their students.

In the 2003 synthesis *Diversity: School, Family and Community Connections*, Boethel recommends that schools engage in many of the strategies already discussed in this text to address student and family needs related to diversity. In 2005 SEDL report, Ferguson summarized Boethel's strategies, which I have further summarized in Figure 6.2 with space for teachers and leaders to add their own plans as shown in Number 6.

Figure 6.2 Strategies to Address Student and Family Needs

Get Parents Comfortable Talking

Communication is essential to collaboration, as was emphasized in Chapters 3 and 4, and most schools and teachers know that good communication with parents is an important part of their job. Teachers need to know about the children's families, language, and culture in order to help children learn. Parents benefit because they learn more about what goes on in school and can encourage learning at home. More importantly, children benefit by improved communication because contact between home and school helps children learn and succeed.

In **Figure 6.3** is a list of strategies for getting parents comfortable talking. These suggestions can open the lines of communication between schools and parents by making parents feel accepted, supported, and welcomed as partners in their children's school learning.

After reviewing **Figure 6.3**, which strategies have you used? Which suggestions will you implement?

Collaboration among Diverse Groups

Who are the families you service? _____. Many culturally diverse students and families find it very intimidating to participate in school activities. Therefore, it is important for educators to create a bridge between home and school by creating opportunities for parents to understand that they are a very valuable asset to their children's learning. How has your school or yourself created opportunities for the parents you service? _____

Provide specific examples of how the parents reacted to the activities. Provide case studies of how these activities has changed the collaboration among diverse groups in your school.

Reaching Out To Parents with Special Circumstances

Unemployed Parents

About 6.2 million children lived in families with unemployed parents in 2012 and that number rises to 12.1 million American children—about one in six—when including families with unemployed or underemployed parents during an average month of 2012. If educators build collaborative relationships with parents, they can be more aware of when families may be experiencing difficulties such as unemployment and can word proactively to engage parents and support students through these times.

Brainstorm how you can support parents who are unemployed. Place a picture of the suggestion in the gray section and then provide a short synopsis of the suggestion and 2 plausible outcomes.

Synopis
•Outcome
•Outcome

Parents Who Speak Other Languages

All parents can be helpful in their children's literacy development, regardless of their language, education, or literacy level. Parents who speak little or no English can contribute to their children's education in valuable ways. Here are some ways to build an ongoing relationship with parents by reaching out through their native language (Colorin Colorado, 2007); also see Chapter 3.

- *Find a fully bilingual interpreter*.
  - *How would this be helpful*?
  - *How can this build a stronger bridge between parents and the school*?
- *Translate the written communications that you send home.*
  - *How would this be helpful*?
  - *How can this build a stronger bridge between parents and the school*?
- *Learn some of the language yourself.*
  - *How would this be helpful*?
  - *How can this build a stronger bridge between parents and the school*?
- *Put parents in touch with bilingual staff.*
  - *How would this be helpful*?
  - *How can this build a stronger bridge between parents and the school*?

Young Parents

Becoming a parent, at any age, can be a life-altering experience. Regardless of race, education, and socioeconomic status, motherhood—and fatherhood—uniformly places demands on one's life that were nonexistent prior to the birth of a child. What is the average age of your parents? _____.
What is the average education level of your parents? _____.

Teenage parents—which are between the ages of 13 and 19, often these students drop out of school because of the pressures they experience, including stigmatization associated with early parenting; isolation from peers; and lack of needed support from family, friends, school, social agencies and other organizations (Kost, Henshaw & Carlin, 2010).

Is there any support for young parents in your school or in the community? _____

If you teach in high school, is there an on-site nursery? _____ If not, can your school benefit from one and how? _____

Have you completed a survey so that what is needed by these parents? _____ What support can your school provide within the next 30 days? _____

Incarcerated Parents

The nation's growing prison and jail population has raised serious questions about the collateral effects of incarceration on children, families, and communities. Many families suffer economic strain and instability when a parent is imprisoned. Research suggests that intervening in the lives of incarcerated parents and their children to preserve and strengthen positive family connections can promote healthy child development. Schools can work with incarcerated families in the following ways:

- Supply parents with information about what their child is learning.
  - How will you ensure that this is consistent? Who will oversee this project? How often will this information be sent?
- Provide access to records: grades, absences, behavioral issues, certificates, results of tests for visual/dental/hearing/learning disabilities.
  - Who would oversee this project? How will this paperwork be communicated?
- Enable web chat so that the parents can read with or to their child or their child can read to them.
  - What will be the guidelines?
  - How often will this communication take place?
  - Where will this communication take place for the students?
- Facilitate email communication.
  - What will be the guidelines?
  - How often will this communication take place?
  - Where will this communication take place for the students?
- Skype during school performances or put performances on a school's website (with a school media release form from parents of children performing).
  - What will be the guidelines?
  - How often will this communication take place?
  - Where will this communication take place for the students?
- Try to enable incarcerated parents to call the school and speak with the teacher/administrator/social worker regarding their child.
  - What will be the guidelines?
  - How often will this communication take place?
  - Where will this communication take place for the students?

- If children can write, have them compose letters to their parents who is incarcerated (with the custodial parent's permission).
  o What will be the guidelines?
  o How often will this communication take place?
  o Where will this communication take place for the students?
- Encourage teachers to read age-appropriate books regarding the topic in their classroom.
  o Who will select the text?
  o How often will these readings take place?
  o Will there be pre-written questions for discussion?

What will these programs benefit all stakeholders? How will these initiatives be measured for success?

Parents Who Are Illiterate, Semiliterate, or Functionally Illiterate

As the number of illiterate adults continues to grow, increasing numbers of children have parents with limited reading and writing skills (Edwards, 1995; Farris & Denner, 1991). Such children are deprived of the joys of reading, for their parents do not read to them. Leichter (1984) observed that "it may be that children can learn to become literate on their own without formal instruction, but when experiences with literacy take place in family environments, the emotional reactions of the parents can affect the child's progress significantly" (p.46).

If the nation's goal is to break the cycle of illiteracy, teachers need to aid illiterate parents in building the desire to read and write in their children by providing them with the tools of literacy. Teacher-parent interactions should be characterized by sensitivity, understandings, and responsiveness to the parent's needs. **Figure 6.5** shares strategies for involving illiterate parents.

Are the strategies in **Figure 6.5** plausible to your school's needs? How do you obtain the information from the parents regarding their literate level? How can these strategies benefit the community? After learning about the time commitment and overall commitment from your parents, which strategies can you begin implementing?

Parents of Children with Learning Disabilities

All students benefit from family engagement in their education, but children with disabilities often require a greater degree of parental involvement and advocacy than their peers without disabilities in order to be assured of receiving the same level of instruction as the general student population (Ferrel, 2012).

What group of students with disabilities do you service in your building? _____

How do you engage with the parents of these students presently? _____ and how often? _____

There were some suggestions listed on page 103 of the text.

1) What alliances in your building has been established?
2) What plan of action has been established?
3) What resources are available to help parents help their child?

4) Are these resources available to be checked out from the school?
5) What plan of instruction, interventions, and other supports for children's learning and progress in school for cultural issues and home literacy practices?

Working with Social Services

School social workers, through their unique training and practice, provide a variety of professional services that foster students' physical social, emotional, and academic growth. They promote and support the educational process by meeting the individual needs of students and families within the community. These services include providing crisis intervention and counseling, strengthening and supporting parent and family involvement, planning and developing school-based interventions with educators, engaging community resources, and assessing the need for special services.

 Interview your school social worker to obtain their job description and perspective on the parents and students. Generate questions that will help all teachers utilize their services to benefit all stakeholders.

In addition to working with social services, some schools bring in *community advocates.* Some of those community advocates are:

- Community social workers/counselors
- Junior Achievement
- DARE program—local law enforcement lessons
- Dog Reading Program

Reaching out to social workers and community advocates opens a network of resources for teachers themselves and for parents as part of the collaborative partnerships teachers are working to foster between home and school.

Chapter 7: Overcome the Ghosts in the School and Its Community

First impressions of a setting are a decisive factor for parents. A positive response to their initial inquiry regarding the setting is the foundation to the partnership. All members of staff have a share responsibility to ensure that the (families) are made to feel welcome.

~London Borough of Havering. *Working in Partnership with Parents*

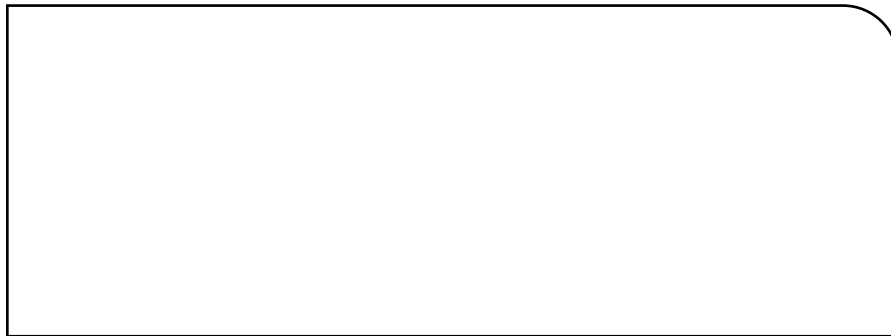### Recognizing Ghosts in the School Building

Morton Professional Development School (a pseudonym), where I had the privilege of coordinating the Home Literacy Project in 1990, experiences a transition similar to the one that took place in my own community in the 1960s as a result of desegregation. In 1952, when Morton was built, it served primarily middle-class White families. These families were young first-time homeowners. The school for them served many purposes. Many of the community's social events were held at school. The school was also a place where the young families discussed national, state, and local politics; goals and aspirations for their children; and ways they could help the school better serve the needs of their children. An interview with the first Morton PTA president was quite revealing.

What ghosts are lingering in your school building? _____

Failure to recognize the school's history retained in the memory of the community can prove problematic for both teachers and the school's administrator. Parents' memories of those friendly and unfriendly ghosts signal to parents whether to feel invited or uninvited in come into school. The failure of schools to build or rebuild linkages between home and schools inadvertently encourages parents to maintain their frozen memories or their community's frozen perceptions of what that school was once like. In order to unpack such claims, we need to begin thinking more carefully about parent involvement and moving it beyond high rhetoric to high practice.

Let's be transparent about parent involvement, not just volunteering for bake sales or chaperoning field trips, yet a fixture in the school who has a shared voice to create changes.

Transparency of parent involvement in my school:

Don't Blame Families-Build Trust

Just as ghosts in the school building may affect families' involvement in schools, other barriers and obstacles to family involvement may exist. As tempting as it may be to blame families for their lack of involvement, building trust by examining and addressing these barriers and obstacles is more likely to lead to higher levels of family involvement. Many schools struggle to actively engage high numbers of family members in children's schooling, of those families who do not get involved, the majority are White and middle income, typically those whose home culture most closely matches the norms, values, and cultural assumptions that are reflected in the school. Minority families, lower-income families, and families who speak limited English, on the other hand, are often highly underrepresented in school-level decision making and in family involvement activities—a phenomenon that speaks far more often to differing needs, values, and levels of trust than it does to families' lack of interest or unwillingness to get involved (Antunez, 2000; Goddard, Tschannen-Moran, & Hoy, 2001; Trumbull, Rothstein-Fisch, Greenfield & Quiroz, 2001).

A common misperception about families who are not actively involved at school is that they simply "don't care about their children's education" (Mapp, 2003, p.42). Educators who see the same small group of families helping out in the classroom, attending school events, and participating in school governance, for example, may conclude that the others in the district are not interested or do not place a high value on education.

Who are the underrepresented family groups in your school? _____

How are they underrepresented compared to the other family groups in your school? _____

In an earlier study, Anderson and Stokes (1984) observed families from Anglo American, Black American, and Mexican America populations to determine the average frequently of literacy events per hour of observation. They identified nine "domains of literacy activity" including (1) religion, (2) daily living, (3) entertainment (source, instrumental, media), (4) school-related activity, (5) general information, (6) work, (7) literacy techniques and skills (adult-initiated, child-initiated), (8) interpersonal communication, and (9) storybook time.   In contrast to the belief that many minority children do not begin school with rich literacy experiences in several domains of literacy activity. They found that 26.5% of all literacy activity for the Black American population in their study fell into the category of religion, surpassed only by the entertainment category (30.2%).

In addition to learning the importance of religious-oriented literacy activities in the lives of some Black Americans, Anderson and Stokes discussed social institutional influences that religious activities had on literacy practices and beliefs. They found information contrary to the belief that Black and Mexican American families who practice religion are only engaged in "oral tradition." In fact, the churches that the families in their study attended, encouraged—and in some cases required—an active, assertive approach to print.

Does your school assume these misconceptions? How has your school examined these barriers, if they exist? What is being done to remove those barriers? What would you like to see happen to ensure these gaps are bridged? Is there a mutual trust within the building? **Figure 7.2** *provides some summarized points to begin building mutual trust.* What other suggestions would you add to the list? Why these particular strategies?

If your school has a plan of action, if there anything that needs to change? How often does the school update the plan?

Invite Families into Schools

An important early step in establishing effective school-parent relationships, according to Purkey and Novak (1984), is for schools and school professionals to work at making schools, "the most inviting place in town" (p.2). Purkey and Novak recommend four principles of invitational education: (1) treating people in ways that recognize them as able, valuable, and responsible; (2) teaching as a cooperative activity; (3) viewing people as possessing relatively untapped potential in all areas of human development; and (4) working to make school places, policies, and programs that are specifically designed to invite development, with school professionals who are personally and professionally inviting (p.2).

Family-friendly schools strive to forge partnerships with *all* families, not just those that are already most involved. Family-friendly schools incorporate strategies that reach out to all families and help involve them in their children's education. Family-friendly schools help to make sure that the school is a place where families and community members feel welcomed, informed, and included. Leuder (1998) suggests that schools should convey to parents that "you are welcome, you are important to us, and we want to work with you to educate your children" (p.62). As mentioned in Chapter 5, parent informant meetings in one wat to invite families into schools. Hoover-Dempsey, et al. (2005) provide some other strategies for creating an inviting, welcoming school culture:

What opportunities are provided to implement these strategies? **What other opportunities can be created to welcome parents in the school and keep them in the school?**

- Create visual displays in school entry areas and hallways reflective of all families in the school (photos, artifacts, pictures, history); focus on creating a strong sense that "this is *our* school; *we* belong here."
- Attend to the critical role of central factors in the creation of positive school climate; principal leadership; long-term commitment to improving and maintaining a positive school climate; creation of trust through mutually respectful, responsive, and communicative teacher-parent relationships.
- Develop strong, positive office-staff skills with a consumer orientation; create habitual attitudes of respect toward parents, students, and visitors.
- Hire parents or seek parent volunteers who can provide other parents with information on how the school works, translations as needed, advocacy as needed, a friendly presence.
- Offer *specific* invitations to specific events and volunteer opportunities at school; schedule activities at times that meet the needs of families with inflexible work schedules (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005, p.118).

Making schools inviting spaces where parents and families are not only welcomed but actively engaged seems more challenging in the diverse, heterogeneous schools and communities of 21st-century America. School leaders and teachers should take seriously their responsibility to provide a high-quality education for all students, they must work to "substantially change the structures, roles, and relationships within the schools… [and] the nature and distributing of power among schools, families, and communities" (Lightfoot, 1980, p.17).

Chapter 8: A New Vision—Seeing More Clearly

Throughout the text, I have emphasized that to involve *all* parents, schools in the 21st century need to be open and friendly places a diverse group of families. Educators should play a key role I this process by encouraging parents to participate in a variety of ways. Meaningful parent involvement can only be achieved when the school does the following:

- Reaches out to parents in a new way: What new ways is your school reaching out to parents? _____
- Helps parents connect to resources: Which resources? How are the connections being made? _____
- Creates an environment that makes parents feel welcome: What does that environment feel, look, and sound like? _____
- Provides numerous opportunities for participation:

Family and community involvement is an essential component of a successful school program—along with curriculum, instruction, assessment, and other aspects of regular school life. Over 20 years ago, Shields (1994) argued that this vision of school improvement compels us to create a new conception of the appropriate relationship between the school and its community, parents, and families.

The idea that schools can best succeed by isolating themselves and their students from the community has been discredited (Epstein, 2001, 2011; Sheridan & Kratochwill, 2007). In the second decade of the 21st century, the improvement of our schools will have to be accompanied by closer connections between schools and their communities, teachers, and families. In this closing chapter, models for creating a new vision for parent involvement that draw on points made throughout this book.

Models of Parent Involvement

Joyce Epstein (2001, 2011) is one of the most frequently cited authors when it comes to theorizing about parental involvement. In Epstein's opinion, schools and families share responsibilities for the socialization of the child. There are three most important contexts in which children grow and develop: family, school, and community. Epstein (2001) proposed a framework of parental involvement that includes six main types of activities that connect families, schools, and communities:

Tell how each can enhance learning from all stakeholders. What training is needed? Outcomes expected.

Models of Parent Involvement	Learning	Training	Outcomes expected
Parenting			
Communicating			
Volunteering			
Learning at home			
Participating in decisions-making			
Collaborating with the community			
Other:			
Other:			

Family-school partnership is a perspective that can be used in a comprehensive analysis of various factors influencing and promoting overall child development, primarily focusing and socialization: family and school. These differences are outlined in **Figure 8.1**. The defining characteristics of the family-school partnership are presented in **Figure 8.2.** Sheridan and Kratochwill (2007) put special stress on two of them: collaborative relationships and shared responsibility for the educational outcomes.

In a collaborative approach to schooling, issues between the family and the school are defined primarily by trust, which opens the door to transparent and sincere communication and supports consensual decision-making. Only if both of the partners see each other as equal can their efforts jointly contribute to the best outcomes for children.

Shared responsibility is completely absent in the traditional perspective, which is actually the operating principle in the majority of schools. Sheridan and Kratochwill (2007) point to a few theories underlying the concept of partnership—including ecological theory, behavioral theory, and the family-centered approach—and then describe a shift toward a partnership-centered approach.

Ecological theory is concerned with the multiple interdependent, inseparable systems or environments and contexts that surround children's development and education:

- Microsystems: home, classroom
- Mesosystems: the interrelation of microsystems
- Exosystems: influencing the microsystems-for example, involvement or produces various obstacles for it
- Macrosystems: overall societal and cultural setting, including national educational policies

The key input taken from this theory is the importance of mesosystem. The interaction of the two most important microsystems in education. Behavioral theory is important because it stresses the importance of learning and focuses on the "here and now" of the situation—identifying the environmental (in contrast to personal, dispositional) factors that influence the family-school interaction. In order to form such a partnership between the school and the family, it is important to identify needs, mobilize the resources, and accomplish goals through the development of family capacities, strengths, and abilities.

From a partnership-centered orientations, Sheridan and Kratochwill (2007) pay special attention to the development of skills and competencies of both family members and educators. Important steps in this process include the following:

- Creating meaningful roles for family members in supporting their child's learning
- Promoting continuity
- Enhancing competencies of all participants

Continuity across home and school is important because it supports effective learning transitions. **Explain how the above steps can be development in your school.**

A Paradigm Shift

Many equate parent engagement with volunteering, school governance, and fundraising. While these activities are vitally important to schools, the kind of parent engagement that affects student success is vastly different. This type of engagement involves parents as teachers and learners. It means building parent-school partnerships that not only increase student learning but expand learning for everyone in a child's support system. Teachers and other school professionals must learn about elements of the home and community culture, and likewise, family and community members must learn about key elements of school culture in order to work toward congruence in their everyday lives. In this type of partnership, everyone is mobilized to learn in order to better support the child's learning and development.

When we think of schools as learning communities, parents and teachers have the capacity to shift the machine metaphor from the grassroots upward. This is the type of change that cannot be mandated from the top down or through policies like No Child Left Behind and the Common Core State Standards. In fact, research shows that partnerships based on relationships, connectedness, and flexibility hold the keys to understanding how to increase student learning and motivation.

What does this paradigm shift mean to families in your schools? _____

While parents and teachers have unique skills and expertise, no one is a single expert. We are all learners. We come together for the shared goal of educating the whole child. What brings families and schools together is a passion for children and education.

Best practice indicates that student success hinges on teachers and administrators who welcome parents into schools and encourage and assist them with the means by which to help their children to succeed. A new vision of parental involvement centrally acknowledges families' important role in the school community. The family-school partnership perspective suggests that acknowledging parents' shared responsibility in education, offering multiple and varied opportunities for parents to participate, leveraging parents' strengths, and matching supports to parents can help parents become involved in their children's schooling. A vision of families and schools as partners in the educational process is one that needs to move from vision to reality for the benefit of students for whom families and schools share aspirations and responsibilities.

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