

Collaboration with Families and the Community

What do we know about the impact of family and community on schools?

- Students with involved parents, no matter what their income or background, were more likely to 1) earn higher grades and test scores, and enroll in higher-level programs, 2) be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits, 3) attend school regularly. • have better social skills, show improved behavior, and adapt well to school, 4) graduate and go on to postsecondary education (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).
- Schools that succeed in engaging families from very diverse backgrounds share three key practices: 1) focus on building trusting collaborative relationships among teachers, families, and community members, 2) recognize, respect, and address families' needs, as well as class and cultural difference, 3) embrace a philosophy of partnership where power and responsibility are shared.
- In schools where teachers reported high levels of outreach to parents, test scores grew at a rate 40 percent higher than in schools where teachers reported low levels of outreach.
- Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children's learning at home are linked to higher student achievement.
- Parent and community involvement that is linked to student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement. To be effective, the form of involvement should be focused on improving achievement and be designed to engage families and students in developing specific knowledge and skills.
- Schools with effective community partners - provide continuity of services across the day and year, have expanded learning opportunities and developmental supports, experiment with new approaches to teaching and learning, enrichment and arts activities that may not be available during the school day, provide family members with alternative entry points into the school day to support their student's learning, improve school culture and community image through exhibitions and performances that help "shine the light" on students whose talents may not be apparent in the classroom, help gain access to and recruit groups of students most in need of support services, and maximize resource use such as facilities, staff, data, and curriculum.

Henderson, A. T. & Mapp, K. (2002). A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family and community connections on student achievement. *Southwest Educational Development Laboratory*. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED536946.pdf>

Also see the following readings from the National Educational Association on school, family and community connections

http://www2.nea.org/mediafiles/pdf/FSCP_Manual_2012.pdf

<http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/Family-School-Community-Partnerships-2.0.pdf>

Stakeholders- things to consider

Families- What is the current climate of school-family-community collaboration? If you know, what data can you use to support that claim? If you don't know, what data could you access to help inform you of the current climate of the connection between the school, family and community? PTA/PTO- how well organized and motivated is this group? Are there particularly strong contingents of students and families represented? Are there groups of students and their parents whose voices are not represented? (think about some of the demographic groups present at your school including race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, language background, academic achievement)

Community partners- Who are some already established community partners that are involved in your school or school district? Who are some of the contingents in the community that are not particularly connected to the school but may be a useful collaborator? Think about the variety of businesses, chamber of commerce, local agencies, or other groups that may be missing in terms of current community partners.

<http://www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org/downloads/FACEHandbook.pdf>

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/Commout_tt/School-Com2-8.pdf

https://www.brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/sites/brown.edu/academics/education-alliance/files/uploads/KLOOM_sfcf_entire.pdf

<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED535614.pdf>

https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2012/01/pdf/community_schools.pdf

Family

Barriers- Consider the demographics of the students, the community, the school faculty and the administration of the school/school district. Are these closely matched or dramatically different in terms of race/ethnicity, socio-economic status, educational attainment, language, or other demographic factors? What cultural and social elements related to the family backgrounds of the students are currently being embraced at the school, and what elements are ignored? Are there resources within the families that can be connected to the school. Are there potential service learning opportunities, guest speakers and advocates that are currently untapped at the school?

https://www.naesp.org/sites/default/files/resources/2/Principal/2009/M-J_p07.pdf

Community

Barriers- Consider the demographics of the community, the students, the faculty and administration? Are these closely matched as well, or is there a clear gap? We know that communities represent a wealth of potential cultural and social capital for students. For instance, some communities may have a variety of opportunities for high school students to do internships and volunteering, whereas other communities may have more limited opportunities. What social

connections to key community members can be established for the school and students? Are there local business leaders, politicians and government officials, or other community actors that may further students' connection to their own community, and see the value of educational achievement in relation to career advancement and community impact?

<http://www.sedl.org/connections/research-syntheses.html>

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/school-community-collaboration-brendan-okeefe>

Examples-

<http://www.aecf.org/m/resourcedoc/AECF-ConnectingSchoolsFamiliesandCommunities-2007.pdf>

<http://www.expandinglearning.org/expandingminds/article/school-community-learning-partnerships-essential-expanded-learning-success>

Connection to your project- Now that you have thought through the value of family and community collaboration with your school and contextualized these issues in terms of your own school's realities, articulate how your project is able to look at the particular personalities, skills and knowledge of your colleagues. Be able to articulate how you guided your colleagues through thinking about the benefits of collaboration with schools and community stakeholders and used research and data to identify areas of weakness in school/family/community collaboration. Articulate how the research and data informed the group's planning of the project as well as the implementation of the project. Articulate how the implementation of the project actual went, in terms of what you expected versus what actually occurred. Explain any challenges or barriers that you and your colleagues faced during project implementation as well as how you assessed the effectiveness of the project. Finally, be able to articulate how the information from, and experience of, leading a group of colleagues through this project inform your future work on family and community collaboration and how could these ideas be implemented sustainable in the future to continue improving school/family/community relations.