



Standard 4: Speaking Up for Every Child



Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their successes.

Ideas for Implementation

1. Empower parents with the tools necessary to support their own and other children's success in school. Provide direction on setting high expectations for student learning and success. Assist parents in designing plans that monitor their child's progress and goal development. You can suggest that the Parent Involvement Coordinator target families who need assistance in knowing how to access resources inside and outside of the school community.
2. Develop effective parent advocates by educating parents on the right questions to ask school and community leaders and teachers about education. Demonstrate the correct way to approach issues with school faculty and staff and how to facilitate conflict resolution. Teach communication skills and ways to foster a partnership with their child's teacher to promote increased student learning.
3. Recommend certain parent representatives for school committees or promote their participation in certain groups you are aware of in the community. It would also be a good idea to encourage parents to further their knowledge of the education curriculum, school governance, and leadership. Use their perceptions to enhance school community outcomes and have them help spread the work and progress the school is making with other parents and the larger community.
4. Implement strong school transition programs to ease student anxiety and set new or continued expectations for parents. Make sure the transition program is more than just a onetime event – make it a yearlong process. Set standards for continued engagement, offer concrete things parents can do at home and at school to assist in their child's learning process, and provide opportunities for parents to contribute to their new school.
5. Request that the Parent Involvement Coordinator include a segment at the end of each meeting or workshop for parents to discuss issues that are of importance for all children in the school. These issues can be documented and given to the administrators so these concerns can be addressed one by one. Arrangements can also be made for parent networking conversations to link families who are experiencing issues with families who were able to find a resolution to that same

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problem. This can empower parents to be advocates for change by assisting them in the change process.

6. Assist parents with their own professional and personal development. Help build parent skills so they become confident in their own abilities and as a result are better able to pay attention to their child's academic development.
7. Engage parents in the development of the school's parent involvement policy. Invite parents to various meetings to discuss the policy. Break the large group into smaller groups to facilitate conversation around key topics. Share it with the entire school community and refer to it on a regular basis during school programs and events, as well as in various communications.
8. Develop parent leaders. Create opportunities for parents to develop leadership skills so they can become strong educational advocates for not only their child, but all children. Give parents school projects to complete, have book studies, and allow parents to teach a lesson or read to the class as a model to other parents.

Reference:

National Parent Teacher Association (PTA). (2009). *PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: An Implementation Guide*. Retrieved from <http://www.pta.org/2757.asp>

Your Ideas for Implementation
