



Standard 6: Collaborating with the Community



Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expand learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

Ideas for Implementation

1. Develop a school public relations campaign to rally the community around innovative and successful school programs. Pick a topic such as parent engagement, attendance, or the importance of graduating high school. Partner with local radio and television stations, faith-based and community-based organizations, health clinics, supermarkets, restaurants, and other neighborhood businesses. Ask them to use empty store front space to communicate the initiative and actively contribute their time to the greater cause.
2. Ask and seek out community members to sit on school committees. Share your school data and use their expertise to assist and develop programs to support student success. Get to know them as a resource and connection to the greater school community.
3. Host school and community resource fairs that connect families to all types of free resources and services. Develop a community resource directory or partner with a local non-profit organization to create one. Work with local partners to help communicate the various services offered, especially ones that many of your parents could really benefit from but they may be apprehensive about seeking them out on their own.
4. Bring community members into the school community by creating various opportunities for them to share their skills or participate in events. It would be a good practice to reach out to local business and community partners at the beginning of each school year by sending a personal note from the school extending the invitation to work together. You can use community partners in different ways such as opening car doors in the morning car pool lane, joining the school volunteer program, reading to a class once a month, or conducting workshops for students and families on various topics.
5. Build trust and understanding with your community partners. Know their contributions and limitations. Make sure your partnerships are strategic and mutually beneficial. Think about what you can contribute to the partnership. Is it physical school space? Is it expertise? Is it giving back by holding a community clean up day that allows the school to share its appreciation to local partners? The stronger the relationship is with your partners, the better outcomes for your students and families.

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6. Make your school the hub of the community. Extend the hours of the school media center, computer lab, or gym to allow families and community members access to these resources and facilities. Offer homework and mentoring sessions for family and community members to interact with students. Offer the use of the school auditorium or cafeteria for town hall meetings and other community events. Allow the community recreation center to hold exercise classes, inclusive of nutrition guidance, in the school gym. The possibilities are endless.
7. Ensure all community partnership activities link to learning. Utilize traditional and non-traditional partnerships. For example, you can have knowledge sharing activities where students interview senior citizens at a local assisted living facility about events in history, or have younger students create books or notes for them that share information about the current curriculum they are learning. Think outside the box.
8. Develop a shared vision for success by reaching out to a broad base of community partners. Make education everyone's business by holding quarterly community forums for partners to come to the school and learn about current initiatives. Allow them to share ideas for collaboration and then work together to make those ideas become a reality. Map out all your community resources and do not leave anyone out.

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
