



Standard 1: Welcoming All Families into the School Community



Families are active participants in the life of the school and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.

Ideas for Implementation

1. Create welcoming committees to provide new families to the school with important information and a support system. Place welcome to the “ABC” School Community signs in their yards, mail welcome packets with information from the school and greater community, or develop a parent to parent mentoring program that provides new families with an additional point of contact.
2. Enlist parent greeters to provide a smiling face before school, after school, as well as during other high-traffic times or school events when families and visitors are in the school. Set up a parent desk at the entrance of the school and staff it throughout the day with parent volunteers who greet those who enter and serve as an initial point of contact for school information.
3. Display a guestbook for visitor sign in and sign out and provide various badges indicating whether a person is a parent, volunteer or visitor for guests to wear while they are in the building. Label the badges Very Important Person (VIP) so that staff and students are aware of their presence when they are in the building.
4. Provide a school interpreter on site or someone who can be called upon, in person or over the phone, if a parent or family member needs assistance. Recruit some of your bi-lingual parents to volunteer their time to assist with interpreting.
5. Ensure that all aspects of the school community reflect, respect, and value the diversity of all your families. Provide many opportunities for them to volunteer by offering them ways to utilize their unique talents and by offering school activities that are free or low-cost.
6. Take time to honor those parents who contribute to the school, classrooms and their child’s education by listening to them and thanking them in various ways on a regular basis. Have students draw pictures or write cards, highlight their names and service at special events, or simply have a different school faculty or staff member personally thank them each month.

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7. Develop an open door policy that allows parents and families to connect with the school or drop-in at any time. Provide guidance to parents on what to do when entering a classroom to observe so students are not distracted. Have a special chair dedicated to a parent or visitor in each room so they are seen as a valuable part of their child's education process.
8. Make it a goal to continuously look for ways to support and communicate with families as well as how to engage them in the student achievement process. Listen to your parents and learn about their interests, likes, and dislikes. This information will give you the input you need to develop creative ways to get them to participate in the planning and implementation of school goals and programs. Not only will they feel welcome, but they will also know that they are a valuable asset to the school.

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

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