Link to Learning

An Effective School-Parent Compact

A school-parent compact is an agreement that parents, students, and teachers develop together. It explains how parents and teachers work together to ensure all students receive the individual support they need to reach and exceed grade level academic standards. Below is a suggested process schools may follow to ensure an effective school-parent compact is linked to learning.

1. Determine the student achievement goal(s) for the school-parent compact.

Review prior to meeting with teachers and families.

Narrow it Down

Decide which one or two already identified school improvement goals students, parents, and teachers can work on improving together.

Be Family-Friendly

Revise the wording of your selected school improvement goal(s) so that they are family-friendly and clearly explain what should be accomplished throughout the school year.

Plan

Know how you will explain why the goal(s) are the area of highest need to families.

2. Collaborate with teachers.

Meet with teachers prior to parents.

Utilize Data

Use grade level/content area data to identify students' greatest challenges and determine what skills/focus area they need to strengthen the most.

Prioritize

What are the most fundamental learning skills? Pick no more than two academic focus areas for the compact. Utilize the Department's list of focus areas to help in selecting foundational grade-level skills.

Develop Ideas

Draft two to three activities/strategies you can share with parents to use at home with their child that are linked to the identified focus areas.

Discuss

Draft two to three corresponding activities/strategies teachers can also use to help parents with the activities/strategies they identified. Determine what information parents might need to complete the activities with their child effectively.

School-parent compacts should be clearly linked to particular school improvement goal(s) and focus on one or two grade-level/subject-level skills.

School-parent compacts are most effective when developed for each grade (elementary and middle school) or subject level (high school), however, schoolwide compacts are acceptable as well.

3.

Meet with Parents

Welcome families and arrange them in small groups. If developing a grade or subject-level compact, divide them accordingly or hold meetings in individual classrooms. Please note, if holding a schoolwide meeting, not all teachers need to be present. However, it would be helpful to have teachers who are content experts in the goal and focus area selected present.

Icebreaker

Design a brief get-to-know you activity that is simple and fun. Provide opportunities for parents to get out of their chairs and speak to one another.

Share

Be sure to share the student achievement data that focuses back on the areas that will be the emphasis of the compact. Include in your comments how and why the goal(s) were selected. Then, explain learning skills, along with how they are measured, that will be addressed as the focus area(s) on the compact.

Give Examples

Describe the draft activities/ strategies that the teachers developed in the previous meeting, tied to the focus area, that parents will use at home with their child. Model the most important activities with the families.

Role Play

Have parents pair up together, with one parent playing the role of the child and the other one using the activity just shared. Then, have the parents switch roles.

Get Feedback

Ask parents what other activities/strategies would be helpful for the school to provide to them to help their child throughout the year. Chart the responses and/or utilize the Department review meeting sample for a compact to guide the conversation.

Brainstorm

Ask parents what they could do with their child if given the support they need from the school. Make sure the activities/strategies are tied together. Have parents set realistic goals for them and their child. Chart the responses and/or utilize the Department review meeting sample for a compact to guide the conversation.

Developing and revising the school-parent compact each year is an opportunity to hold conversations with families about important student learning goals and define a plan of action that will help teachers and families form a partnership to improve student achievement.

Conversations can take place during regularly scheduled activities the school is already doing or during a special time focused on student learning goals.

4. Speak with Students

Classroom Discussions
Hold short discussions with students to get their input on the compact. You do not have to speak with every student in the school and the older the students the easier it will be to have these conversations. For older students, you may even consider developing a short form asking students for input.

Inform
Provide students the school goal(s) and focus area(s) the compact will address in student-friendly terms.

Ask Questions
Framed in the context of the learning goals, ask questions such as: "What can you do this year to make sure you learn what you need to know?" "Where do you need help to do better?" "How can your teacher help you?" "How can your family help you?" "What do you need to practice more?"

Be Specific
It is best to ask questions directly related to the focus area. For example, if your focus area is vocabulary development you may ask students: "What will you do to learn words you don't know?" "How will work on improving your essay writing skills?"

5. Finalize the revisions the school-parent compact

Utilize Feedback
Use compact feedback from the teacher, parent, and student conversations, to finalize the revisions to the compact.

Review
Ensure that language is family-friendly and all compact requirements are addressed.

Pay Close Attention
Be sure to pay attention to the parent, teacher, and student sections of the compact to make sure that the activities selected complement each other and are directly tied to the school goals and focus areas. Keep your activities/ strategies limited to two or three that will make the greatest academic impact with parents, students, and teachers working together.

6. Distribute and Utilize

Share
Prior to November 1st each year, share the completed compact with all families of Title I students and obtain signatures from each partner: the parent, the student, and the school. Continue to share the compact and its content throughout the year

Explain
Clarify what the compact is and how it was developed in partnership between the school, families, and students. Explain the purpose of the compact and why it is essential in order to improve student achievement.

Track
Hold additional conversations with families to continue to track the success of the activities listed. Utilize the compact as a learning tool.