Standard 5:
Sharing Power

Families and school staff are *equal partners* in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.

Ideas for Implementation

1. Hold a series of parent leadership academies or other parent university classes with a focus on leadership. Develop a curriculum and start with a small and select group of parents representative of the school's population. Provide parents with the knowledge and resources they need to become leaders and advocates for their children's education. Build parent capacity by then using your new parent leaders to recruit other parents to be involved.

2. Ensure parents are actively recruited and understand they are wanted and needed to be a part of all school committees and councils (not just the ones that are designated or designed for parents). Give them concrete, meaningful tasks to complete as part of the group. Seek to have parent representatives that are reflective of the school community and work to address family involvement barriers related to diversity, race, income and culture.

3. Connect parents with public officials by offering and promoting opportunities for personal interaction. Hold town hall meetings or other events where parents are able to raise concerns, share ideas, or just dialogue with school administrators, public officials, and business or community leaders. Also invite or include public officials in routine school events and meetings to allow parents an opportunity to develop relationships.

4. Seek all parents' ideas routinely on current and potential school programs or district funding for students or their families. Ask parents about how they can support the school improvement plan, involve parents in focus groups or community cafes around your district Comprehensive LEA Implementation Plan (CLIP), or get creative in getting a high return rate on your parent involvement surveys.

5. Involve parents in action research. Do not just ask parents their opinions, but give them a chance to actually be a key part of the process. Allow them to observe classes to provide first-hand feedback on a new curriculum initiative, examine various textbooks up for adoption, or send them to visit a school in another district to learn about a new program for implementation.

6. Hold group trainings for all members of the school's councils and committees inclusive of the parent representatives. Cover topics such as facilitation skills, brain-storming, and ways to communicate effectively. Explain how the school, parent, and community representatives all are partners in this important work and allow time to ensure the parents feel comfortable and understand their role.

7. Ensure transparency of information to all parents. Discuss the school's scores on state tests, regardless of the outcomes, and describe ways in which the school plans to improve (with seeking parent input of course!) Make sure parents are aware of the good and not so good information the school has to share. Then, do not be afraid to ask for parents to help! Make them part of the solution.

8. Utilize parent organizations to do more than just fundraise or complete random acts of kindness for the school. While they can still do those things, also have them work with leadership to understand and then suggest ways their group can support the school improvement plan. Use them to help their membership and others in the school community contribute to the work as well.

9. Allow parents to speak at various meetings, functions, and events within and outside of the school. Have parents share their stories of engagement at a community philanthropic event, share an inspiration at a school board meeting, or open up a school parent night assembly.

10. Ask parents to participate in the drafting of all types of school policies and procedures. Consider changing the way you currently collect parent input on the school parent involvement policy. Allow parents the opportunity to network with each other, conduct small group work, and share issues that are important to them. Has a school committee discussed a policy change? If so bring other parents into the discussion and use them to survey other parents on the issue or help in the actual writing of the policy.

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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