

considered n

QUESTION 4. Teachers' Practices of Contacting Families

The three practices teachers used to contact the MOST families were:

Communication Practice	Average % of families reached
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %

The three practices teachers used to contact the FEWEST families were:

Communication Practice	Average % of families reached
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %

Other items from Teacher Survey Question 4 that are of interest at this school are:

ITEM	Practice	% contacted
_____	_____	_____ %
_____	_____	_____ %

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The responses to Question 4 suggest that teachers at this school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

Which communication strategies need to be improved to reach more families? How many families would the school like to reach? How does the school know whether families understand the notices they receive well enough to act on them? For example: What do ninth graders' parents need to know about report cards? How should that information be provided? How can the schedule and content of parent-teacher-student conferences be improved to involve all or most families?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Teacher Survey Question 4 suggest that this school might develop the following specific practices or projects to improve contacts and communications with families:

QUESTION 5. What are Parents' Responsibilities?

Teachers reported whether practices in major types of involvement are not important, a little, pretty, or very important for parents to conduct with their ninth graders.

List the practices that **30%** or more of teachers think are not important and that **50%** or more think are very important for parents of their students to conduct.

Teachers' Ratings of Practices They Want Parents to Conduct

PRACTICE	30% or More Say <u>Not</u> Important	PRACTICE	50% or More Say <u>Very</u> Important
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Put an * next to the top 3 practices that teachers say are very important for parents to conduct.

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

Overall, the information in Question 5 suggests that teachers in this school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

How could the school help more families conduct the activities that the teachers believe are very important for parents to do? Check the Survey of Parents to see what information parents want and need about their teens and about high school. How could the high school provide information to all families in forms that are easy to understand? What information do schools need from parents to help educators become more responsive to the students and families?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Teacher Survey Question 5 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects to help parents fulfill important responsibilities that should benefit their students:

QUESTION 6. How Much are Parents Presently Involved?

Teachers were asked how families of their ninth graders are presently involved in different ways. From the computer print-out of data on Question 6, report the average (mean) percent of families that teachers think are involved in these activities:

Average %
of families

- _____ % Supervise their teen's behavior
- _____ % Attend parent-teacher conferences with you
- _____ % Attend sports or music events or other assemblies
- _____ % Talk to their teen regularly about classwork in your subject
- _____ % Joined the PTA/PTO/PTSA and attend meetings regularly
- _____ % Know and use services in the community to assist their families

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The percentages reported for the items from Question 6 suggest that teachers at this school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

Could your school help more families be involved in the ways that are described above? Which percentages are the most troubling and why? What practices might be particularly effective for increasing the participation rates on these activities? For example, if you would like to have more families talking regularly with their teens about classwork, what clear, useful, "friendly" information could you send home to help parents do this? If too few families attend performances or assemblies, conferences, or PTA meetings, what changes in the schedule or content of these events might help increase parents' attendance?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Teacher Survey Question 6 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects to improve the percent of families who become involved in different ways:

QUESTION 7. Who Supports Parent Involvement and How Much?

It is interesting to compare teachers' views of their own attitudes with their ideas about how others think about school and family partnerships. Fill in the percent of teachers who answered that these colleagues presently give **STRONG SUPPORT** to parent involvement:

	% Strong Support
a. You, personally	_____ %
b. Other teachers in my department	_____ %
c. Other teachers in the school	_____ %
d. The principal	_____ %
e. Other administrators	_____ %
f. Counselors	_____ %
g. Parents	_____ %
h. The community	_____ %
i. School board members	_____ %
j. Superintendent	_____ %

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

In this school, on average, teachers think that... (fill in one choice for each)

...they (personally) support parent involvement _____ other teachers in their department.
(more than, the same as, less than)

...the principal supports parent involvement _____ the teachers.
(more than, the same as, less than)

...the parents support parent involvement _____ the teachers.
(more than, the same as, less than)

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

What do these and other patterns in Question 7 suggest to you about the need for communication between and among teachers, parents, and others in the school? Would parents agree with the views teachers hold? (Check with the data from parents.) What might be done to help each group understand the other's viewpoints?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Teacher Survey Question 7 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects to improve the mutual support for strong programs of partnership:

QUESTION 8. Teachers' Views of the Community

Teachers reported how they view the community in which they teach. Write in the percent of teachers who say the following are **major problems**.

	% say "major problem"
Unemployment	_____ %
Crime	_____ %
Drug use	_____ %
Teen gangs	_____ %
Homelessness	_____ %
Teen parenthood	_____ %
Mobility of families	_____ %

Put an * next to the top 3 major problems reported by the teachers.

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The information in Question 8 suggests that, according to teachers, the community served by this school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

How do major problems in the community affect practices of school and family partnerships? How might practices of partnership overcome or reduce some of the problems that face this community? What do students need to know about serious social problems? What roles can students play in preventing or reducing some problems, including helping to build connections between home and school?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Question 8 suggest that this high school might develop these specific practices or projects to work together with families and others in the community on one or more problems that they want to solve:

QUESTION 9. Your Students and Teaching
QUESTION 10. Your Experience and Background

The responses to Questions 9 and 10 help determine if the survey respondents are representative of all teachers in the school or if important subgroups did not respond.

If you have the resources to analyze the data further, Questions 9 and 10 provide information to help you identify patterns of responses. You may want to know, for example, whether responses vary for teachers with different education and teaching experience, or if they teach different grade levels, subjects, or students with different backgrounds and abilities. The information in Questions 9 and 10 also can be used in more advanced analyses of potential influences on teacher attitudes and behaviors.

You may add data from other items in Questions 9 and 10 that are of interest to your school.

From QUESTION 9. Your Students and Teaching

9A. Record the % of respondents who are:

_____ % Teachers _____ % Other educators

9B. Record the % who teach each grade level in your school:

_____ % Grade 9 _____ % Grade 10 _____ % Grade 11 _____ % Grade 12

9G. Record the average (mean) minutes of homework assigned on most school days:

_____ Average minutes of homework

9H. Record the % of teachers who assign homework on weekends. _____ % YES

Teachers reported the percent of their students who are in special programs or are at different academic levels in their classes. This information can help identify special needs or approaches that may be helpful with students and their families. Report the **average %** of students in these categories:

**AVERAGE
(Mean) %**

- 9L. _____ % Special Education
 _____ % Bilingual/ESL
 _____ % Honors, AP, or gifted classes
 _____ % At risk of failing 9th grade
 _____ % Free or reduced lunch
- 9M. _____ % Above average ability
 _____ % Average ability
 _____ % Below average ability
- 9N. _____ % Promptly deliver memos or notices home
 _____ % Complete all of their homework on time

From QUESTION 10. Your Experience and Background

10A. What % of teachers responding to the survey have more than 5 years of teaching experience?
_____ % Have been teaching for more than 5 years (sum %s)

10C. What % of teachers responding to the survey have a master's degree or more?
_____ % Have an advanced degree (sum %s)

Record the % of respondents who are:

10B. _____ % Male _____ % Female

10D. _____ % African American _____ % Asian American
_____ % Hispanic American _____ % White _____ % Other

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The information about teachers' experiences in Question 9 and 10 suggests:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

Does the information reported in Questions 9 and 10 reflect the school as a whole? How does the variety of backgrounds and experiences of students, families, and teachers at this school affect the design or selection of practices to increase partnerships between school and home?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Teacher Survey Questions 9 and 10 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects to meet the diverse situations and characteristics of the teachers and their students:

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The survey asks teachers to give their personal views and explanations on six optional open-ended questions. Their comments may provide examples and perspectives to help explain the survey data in the questions above. Open-ended questions a, b, c, and e support Survey Questions 2 and 3 with ideas about needed school practices of partnership; open-ended question d supports Survey Question 5 with information on practices teachers hope parents will do; open-ended question f may support any question or provide other ideas about school improvement, depending on the content of the response.

On separate pages, summarize the main themes discussed by teachers on each question, and list a few direct quotations to illustrate the main ideas or unique ideas that teachers expressed.

**SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS
SUMMARY: SURVEY OF PARENTS**

SCHOOL: _____

This section summarizes the results of the survey of parents at this high school about their ideas and practices of parent involvement or school and family partnerships. For each question of the survey, selected results are highlighted. Based on data for each question, you are asked to write a summary statement about the data, discuss some related issues, and draft some ideas about next steps and possible practices to improve school and family partnerships. Later, you will compare the data from parents with those from teachers and students in a final summary and plan for action. (NOTE: Be cautious about interpreting scores or percentages that are based on responses from fewer than 20 respondents.)

We have focused on the families of ninth graders to begin to guide plans to improve practices of partnership. Over several years, practices can be added to inform and involve the families of students at all grade levels.

In this school, _____ families were given questionnaires, and _____ families returned the surveys for a response rate of _____ %.

COVER PAGE

Who responded? Fill in the percents specified:

- % of surveys answered by mother and stepmother (sum %s) _____ %
- % of surveys answered by father and stepfather (sum %s) _____ %
- % of surveys answered by other relatives and guardians (sum %s) _____ %

QUESTION 1. Parents' Attitudes About the School and Parent Involvement

Fill in the % of respondents who **STRONGLY AGREE**.

STRONGLY AGREE

Parents were asked whether . . .

- (1a) this is a good high school _____ %
- (1b) the teachers care about their teen _____ %
- (1d) they feel welcome at the school _____ %

Parents also were asked whether . . .

- (1c) they need more information from the school to talk with their teen about schoolwork _____ %
- (1g) the school works hard to get parents involved _____ %
- (1i) parents do not need to be involved much in their ninth grader's education _____ %
- (1j) they only hear from the school about problems _____ %
- (1o) they want to be more involved than now in teen's education _____ %
- (1p) the school wants to learn what parents know about their teen _____ %

Parents noted that . . .

(1r) they almost always know where their teen is day or night _____ %

(1u) the community has many good activities for teens _____ %

Parents judged their teen's learning and interactions about school at home.

(1e) teen should get more homework _____ %

(1f) teen is learning as much as he/she can this year _____ %

(1l) teen talks about school at home _____ %

They reported whether . . .

(1m) the school and family have different goals for their teen _____ %

(1q) this high school is a good place for students and for parents _____ %

Other items from Parent Survey Question 1 that are of interest at this school are:

ITEM	TOPIC	% Strongly Agree
_____	_____	_____ %
_____	_____	_____ %
_____	_____	_____ %

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The percent agreeing with the items from Question 1 suggest that parents at this high school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

Overall, do most parents support this school, its programs, and teachers? Do most parents seem to be trying to monitor their children's work and behavior? What items suggest parents want or need more information? How do parents' attitudes contribute to a climate of "partnership?" What other topics or questions would you raise from these data? _____

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Parent Survey Question 1 suggest that this high school might develop these specific practices or projects to increase positive attitudes and understanding about the school, about their teens as students, and about school and family partnerships:

QUESTIONS 2 & 3. How Are Parents Presently Involved with Their Teens?

In Question 2, parents related how often this year they conducted 13 different practices of involvement and interaction with their teen **at home**. Report those items that at least **30%** of the parents say they never do and those that at least **50%** of the parents say they presently do weekly or every day (sum %s).

PRACTICE	30% or More Never	PRACTICE	50% or More Weekly or Daily
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

In Question 3, parents reported how often they became involved this year **at school**. Report those items that at least **40%** of the parents say they never do and those that at least **40%** say they do a few times or many times a year (sum %s).

PRACTICE	40% or More Never	PRACTICE	40% or More Few or Many Times
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Check the other response categories in Question 2 (i.e., 1-2 times, monthly) and in Question 3 (1-2 times) to see which responses are of interest to you.

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

Parents' reports of their own involvement at home (Question 2) and at school (Question 3) suggest that at this school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

Most parents recognize that they are more involved in some ways than in others with their teens and the schools. Which percents in Questions 2 and 3 should be low? (That is, once or twice a year, or a few times is sufficient?) Which percents should be higher than they are -- i.e., more parents should be involved in these ways many times, weekly, or daily? How do the responses of never help identify needed practices to increase the involvement of families? Which of the percents that you reported surprised you?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Parent Survey Questions 2 and 3 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects to increase the involvement of parents at home and at school:

QUESTION 4. How Well Does The School Involve Families Now?

This table provides a "profile" of how well parents think this school involves them in practices of partnership in major types of involvement. The items cover only a few of the practices that may be used for each type. The patterns should give some idea of where parents think school programs are already strong or need improvement. Fill in the percents and then look at the patterns of responses.

TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT	PARENTS WHO SAY:		
	SHOULD START	COULD DO BETTER	DOES WELL
a. Help me understand teen problems and development. (Type 1)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
b. Help me help my teen become independent and self confident. (Type 1)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
c. Give me information on how my teen may qualify for scholarships or loans for college. (Type 1)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
d. Provide me with information about school programs my teen can choose (college prep, vocational, etc.). (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
e. Give me information about how report card grades are earned. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
f. Include my teen in a parent-teacher-student conference each year. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
g. Contact me if my teen is having problems. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
h. Contact me if my teen does something well or improves. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
i. Give information on courses required for graduation from high school. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
j. Provide information on how to help my teen plan for college or for work. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
k. Ask me to volunteer at the school. (Type 3)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
l. Provide ideas on how I could keep track of my teen's homework. (Type 4)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
m. Provide ideas on how to help my teen at home on skills in specific subjects. (Type 4)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
n. Give information on what my teen is required to learn to pass each subject. (Type 4)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
o. Assign homework that requires my teen to share ideas and talk with me. (Type 4)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
p. Invite me to PTA/PTO meetings. (Type 5)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
q. Include parents on school committees such as budgets, curriculum, and school improvement. (Type 5)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
r. Provide information about community services to assist my teen and family. (Type 6)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %

List the practices that 30% or more of parents reported were "NOT IMPORTANT" for this high school:

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION.

In the table for Question 4, **CIRCLE** all of the practices that **OVER 40% of the parents** say the school **SHOULD START** or **COULD DO BETTER** or **DOES WELL NOW**. This gives you a quick "profile" of parents' perspectives of strong, weak, and needed practices for a comprehensive program of partnership.

Discuss: Of the items you **CIRCLED** in the table, which practices do parents agree are strong now? need to be developed or improved? List one or two practices for each type of involvement that most parents think are important for your school to add to your program or to improve. Also list practices that most parents think the school does well now. (The types are noted in the table with each practice.)

PRESENT PROFILE OF PRACTICES TO INVOLVE FAMILIES
Over 40% of the Parents Say:

	SHOULD START or DO BETTER	DOES WELL NOW
Type 1:	_____	_____
Type 2:	_____	_____
Type 3:	_____	_____
Type 4:	_____	_____
Type 5:	_____	_____
Type 6:	_____	_____

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

There are many practices that may be selected to build partnerships on the six major types of involvement. Brainstorm and then list some specific ideas for practices that might work at your school to follow up on parents' suggestions.

	THIS SCHOOL MIGHT TRY:	at which grade levels?
Type 1:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Type 2:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Type 3:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Type 4:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Type 5:	_____	_____
	_____	_____
Type 6:	_____	_____
	_____	_____

Later, you will compare the "profiles" of the six major types of involvement from the reports of teachers, parents, and students to identify practices that all three groups believe are important to add, strengthen, or keep strong in your program of partnership.

QUESTIONS 5, 6, and 7. How Has the School Involved You in the Past Year?

QUESTION 5. On What Topics Did the High School Contact Families?

Question 5 asks parents to report how often the high school contacted them about 7 aspects of their teens' education. Report those items that **50%** or more say never and those that **50%** or more say more than once (sum %s of 2, 3, or 4 times).

PRACTICE	50% "Never"	PRACTICE	50% "More Than Once"
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

QUESTION 6. What Forms Were Used to Contact Families?

Question 6 asks parents to report how often the school contacted them using 9 communication strategies. Report those items that **40%** or more say never and those that **70%** or more say at least once (sum %s of all other responses).

PRACTICE	40% or More "Never"	PRACTICE	70% or More "At Least Once"
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

QUESTION 7. How Is Information Received by Families?

Question 7 asks parents to report how they received information over the past year in 7 forms. Report those items for which at least **40%** of the families did not receive this information (% who did not check item):

Form of Communication	40% or More Did Not Receive
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The responses to Questions 5, 6, and 7 suggest that parents at this high school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

How do parents' responses to Questions 5, 6, and 7 reflect the practices that the school organizes? For example, if you do not invite volunteers, send home newsletters, or have report card pick up, the responses should be "never." What do the percents of "Never" in these questions suggest about practices that you may want to add as you develop a program of partnership? Which of the percents that you reported in Questions 5, 6, and 7 surprised you?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Parent Survey Questions 5, 6, 7 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects in order to reach more parents with more information:

QUESTION 8. Topics for More Information or Workshops

Parents recorded their interest in obtaining more information on a list of 19 topics. Report those topics on which over 60% of the parents at this high school want more information.

TOPIC	60% or More	TOPIC	60% or More
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>	<hr/>

Put an * next to the top 3 topics that parents want more information about.

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

Parents' interests in topics for more information or workshops in Question 8 suggest:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

How can grade level differences in parents' interests be taken into account in planning workshops? Is it worth holding a workshop if only 20 parents attend? What could you do to summarize or share the information with parents who are not able to attend? (E.g., can you use newsletters, summary sheets, tape recordings of the workshops, videos, computerized phone messages or answering machines, or other techniques to distribute information to all families?)

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Parent Survey Question 8 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects to increase the information to parents on topics they want to know more about:

QUESTIONS 9 and 10. When Can Parents Attend Meetings and Events At School?

Question 9 asks parents when they can attend meetings or events at the school.

Best Time to Come to School	% Who Prefer This TIME
Early morning	_____%
Mid morning	_____%
Lunch time	_____%
Afternoon	_____%
Early evening	_____%
After dinner	_____%
Weekends	_____%
Cannot attend ever	_____%

Question 10a indicates that in this high school _____% of the families report no special needs that must be met in order for them to attend meetings or conferences.

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The items from Questions 9 and 10 suggest that at this school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

How do parents' responses help to explain the present rates of attendance at school conferences, meetings, and events? What might be done to meet the schedules of parents who can only come to school at certain times?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Parent Survey Questions 9 and 10 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects to increase parent attendance at conferences, meetings, and other school events:

QUESTION 11. Information About the Community

Parents reported the types of services, resources, and information that they would like to know about their community. The top 6 choices by parents for information on community services were:

Top 6 Requests About Community Services	% Yes
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %

Other items from Question 11 that are of interest at this high school are:

Other Requests for Information	% Yes
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

Parents' requests in Question 11 for information about community services suggest that at this school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

How can the school and community work together to get information to families about community services that are available to them and to their teens? How could connections with the community strengthen school programs as well as assist families? Do most parents want services for themselves or for their teens? What school-community partnerships might be most helpful?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Parent Survey Question 11 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects to help parents get the information they want about community services:

QUESTION 12. About Your Teen
QUESTION 13. About Your Family

The last few questions ask parents of ninth graders several things about their children, family background, and experiences. Responses to Questions 12 and 13 help you determine how representative your sample is of the families at the school.

If you have the resources to analyze the data further, Questions 12 and 13 will help you identify and interpret patterns of responses for parents of children with different degrees of success in school, in different academic programs, or whose children are males or females. Or, you may benefit by looking for patterns in the responses of parents who have different educational or work experiences, or whose families are large or small, with one, two, or more adults at home. This information also can be used in more advanced analyses of influences on parents' present attitudes or level of involvement.

You may add data from other items in Questions 12 and 13 that are of interest to your school.

From QUESTION 12. About Your Teen

A. Percent of families reporting that their ninth grader is:

_____ % Male _____ % Female

B. Students in the ninth grade range in age:

from the **youngest** (age _____) _____ % year of birth 19__
to the **oldest** (age _____) _____ % year of birth 19__
with **most** students (age _____) _____ % year of birth 19__

About homework . . .

C. Parent's report of amount of homework on an average night:

_____ % No homework
_____ % LESS THAN one hour a night
_____ % One hour
_____ % Two to three hours (sum %s)
_____ % Four or more hours

I. Average minutes parents could spend interacting with teen on homework on an average night:

_____ Average minutes

J. Percent of parents who have time on weekends to interact with teen on homework: _____ % YES

Other experiences in school . . .

D. Parent's report of student's academic program:

_____ % College prep
_____ % Vocational or business
_____ % Other program (sum %s of general, other)
_____ % Don't know or not sure

E. Parent's report of teen's success in school:

_____ % Excellent or Good (sum Mostly As & Bs)
_____ % Average (Mostly Cs)
_____ % Fair or Poor (sum Mostly Ds & Fs)

F. Parent's satisfaction with teen's progress this year:

- ____ % Very satisfied
- ____ % Mostly satisfied
- ____ % Pretty satisfied
- ____ % Mostly or Very dissatisfied (sum %s)

G. Parent's report of how ninth grader likes school:

- ____ % Likes a lot
- ____ % Likes some or a little (sum %s)
- ____ % Does not like much or at all (sum %s)

H. Parent's report of how parent and teen make most decisions:

- ____ % Parent decides most rules
- ____ % Parent and teen decide together
- ____ % Parent leaves most rules for teen to decide

L. Parent's report of how far in school they think ninth grader will go:

- ____ % Not graduate from high school
- ____ % Graduate from high school
- ____ % Get some college, other training, or enter the military
- ____ % Complete 2-year college degree
- ____ % Complete 4-year college degree
- ____ % Go past college for an advanced degree

K. This question asks parents to judge their teen's independence and responsibility. Report the % who say **JUST LIKE** my teen.

% JUST LIKE MY TEEN

- ____ % Promptly delivers notices home
- ____ % Usually needs someone to tell him/her what to do
- ____ % Likes to make his/her own decisions
- ____ % Will find it hard to face the "real world" later on
- ____ % Can be trusted on most things

Other items from 12K that interest this school:

- ____ % _____
- ____ % _____
- ____ % _____

From QUESTION 13. About Your Family

Fill in the % of families who responded to these categories:

a. Number of adults living at home:

- ____ % One adult
- ____ % Two adults
- ____ % More than two adults (sum %s)

b. Number of children living at home:

- ____ % One child
- ____ % Two children
- ____ % Three to five children (sum %s)
- ____ % More than five children (sum %s)

c. Parent's education:

- _____ % Did not complete high school
- _____ % High school diploma
- _____ % Other training or some college (sum %s)
- _____ % College degree
- _____ % Advanced degree

d. Parent's report of how parent liked school as teen:

- _____ % Liked a lot
- _____ % Liked some or a little (sum %s)
- _____ % Did not like much or at all (sum %s)

e. Parent's work:

- _____ % Full-time job
- _____ % Part-time job
- _____ % Not employed

f. Parent's race/ethnic group:

- _____ % African American
- _____ % Asian American
- _____ % Hispanic American
- _____ % White
- _____ % Other

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The information about students and families from Questions 12 and 13 suggests:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

Are the families who returned the surveys representative of all parents of ninth graders in the school, or have large groups of parents been left? How diverse are the families and their teens in their school and family experiences? How do the reports from parents about their teens and their families inform plans for practices of partnership?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Parent Survey Questions 12 and 13 suggest that as plans are made for new practices of partnership, this school might develop these specific practices or projects to meet the diverse situations and characteristics of the parents and their children:

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The survey asks parents to give their personal views and explanations on six optional open-ended questions. The parents' comments may provide examples and perspectives to help explain the survey data in the questions above. Open-ended question a provides ideas on topics that high school parents want more information about concerning parenting skills and adolescent development; open-ended questions b, c, and d support Survey Questions 4, 5, and 6 on specific practices that parents think the school should add to its program to guide parental involvement; open-ended question e informs Question 2 about how parents could assist the school; open-ended question f may support any question or give other ideas for school improvement, depending on the content of the comment.

On separate pages, summarize the main themes discussed by parents on each question, and list a few direct quotations to illustrate the main ideas or unique ideas that parents expressed.

HIGH SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS SUMMARY: SURVEY OF STUDENTS

SCHOOL: _____

This section summarizes the results of the survey of ninth grade students at this high school about their ideas of parent involvement or school and family partnerships. For each question of the survey, selected results are highlighted. Based on data for each question, you are asked to write a summary statement about the data, discuss some related issues, and draft some ideas about next steps and possible practices to improve school and family partnerships. Later, you will compare the data from parents with those from teachers and students in a final summary and plan for action.

We have focused on the ninth grade students to begin to guide plans to improve practices of partnership. Over several years, practices will be designed and implemented to inform and involve students and families at all grade levels.

In this school, _____ ninth graders were given a questionnaire and _____ returned the survey for a response rate of _____ %.

QUESTION 1. Students' Attitudes About Parent Involvement

Fill in the % of respondents who **STRONGLY AGREE**.

STRONGLY AGREE

Students were asked whether . . .

- | | |
|--|---------|
| (1a) this is a good high school | _____ % |
| (1b) parents feel welcome at the school | _____ % |
| (1d) the teachers care about me | _____ % |
| (1g) I am learning as much as I can this year | _____ % |
| (1o) I know at least one adult in the school
who I could go to for help on anything | _____ % |
| (1v) students have a lot of say at this school | _____ % |

Students also were asked about connections of school and home.

- | | |
|---|---------|
| (1h) parents do not need to be involved in
high school students' education | _____ % |
| (1p) <u>students</u> should be included in
parent-teacher conferences | _____ % |
| (1r) my teachers do not want me to talk
about school at home | _____ % |
| (1s) most of my teachers know my parent | _____ % |

Students gave their ideas on whether . . .

- | | |
|---|---------|
| (1c) the school teaches what my family wants
me to learn | _____ % |
| (1l) this high school is a good place
for students and for parents | _____ % |

Students reported their interactions about school at home.

- (1q) I like homework that asks me to interview or talk with someone at home _____ %
- (1k) on most days I don't have time to talk with a parent about homework _____ %
- (1i) my parent keeps close watch on how I am doing in school _____ %
- (1w) I want my parent to be more involved in my education _____ %

Students also noted . . .

- (1m) my parent almost always knows where I am, day or night _____ %

Other items from Student Survey Question 1 that are of interest at this school are:

TOPIC	% Strongly Agree
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The percent agreeing with the items from Question 1 suggest that students at this high school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

Overall, how do most students feel about this school, its programs, its teachers? Do they feel they are participating and succeeding in school? Do they want their families to be more involved in their school and education? Do they say their parents are trying to monitor them and their schoolwork? How do students' attitudes and actions contribute to a climate of "partnership?" What other topics or questions would you raise from these data? _____

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Student Survey Question 1 suggest that this high school might develop these specific practices or projects to improve student attitudes about school and their roles in school and family partnerships:

QUESTION 2. Student Reports of Family Involvement in the Transition to High School

Students reported how they were helped to adjust to high school and how their families were involved.

Students say that when they were in eighth grade . . .

they visited the high school and went to some classes _____ % TRUE

their families visited the high school _____ % TRUE

(For these items report the % TRUE only for students who lived in the area.)

In ninth grade, their families helped them make the transition _____ % TRUE

They got off to a good start in this school _____ % TRUE

They talk with their families about tenth grade courses _____ % TRUE

They talk with their family about the future _____ % TRUE

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The percent agreeing with the items from Question 2 suggest that students at this high school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

How are students and their families oriented to high school in the spring when they are still in the middle grades? What information could all families use before the student enters high school? What new connections with the middle grades schools might be helpful? How are all families oriented to high school in the fall when the students start ninth grade?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Student Survey Question 2 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects to improve student and family transitions to high school:

QUESTION 3. How Are Parents Presently Involved with Their Teens?

In Question 3, students reported how often their families conducted 18 different practices of involvement and interaction with them at home. Report the items which at least **50%** of the students say their families never did this year, and those which at least **50%** of the students say their families do weekly or daily (sum %s).

PRACTICE	50% or More Say Never	PRACTICE	50% or More Say Weekly or Daily
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Put an * next to the 3 practices that most students say their parents never do.

You may want to examine the computer print-out for this question to see how many students say their parents did the practices in Question 3 "once" or a "few times."

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The information from Student Survey Question 3 suggests that at this high school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

Most students recognize that their families are involved in their education in some ways more than in others. Which percents could be higher than they are -- i.e., more parents could be involved in these ways many times, weekly, or daily? Which common activities could more families do, and how often? What school practices might be needed to guide families so that they can become more involved in these ways? Which of the percents of students' reports surprised you?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Student Survey Question 3 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects to increase the involvement of families:

QUESTION 4. How Well Does the School Involve Families Now?

This table provides a "profile" of how well students think this school involves their families in practices of partnership in the major types of involvement. The items cover only a few of the practices that may be used for each type. The patterns should give some idea of where students think the school's program is already strong and where it needs improvement. Fill in the percents and then look at the patterns of responses.

TYPE OF INVOLVEMENT	STUDENTS WHO SAY:		
	SHOULD START	COULD DO BETTER	DOES WELL
a. Help my parent understand teenagers better. (Type 1)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
b. Tell my parent about courses I can choose each year. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
c. Have a homework center to help students with their schoolwork. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
d. Include me in a parent-teacher-student conference. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
e. Tell my parent what I need to know to pass each course. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
f. Tell my parent the requirements for me to graduate from high school. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
g. Have a student newspaper that families can read to learn about what is happening at school. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
h. Tell my parent how report card grades are earned. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
i. Tell my parent when I am having problems. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
j. Tell my parent when I do well or improve. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
k. Give my parent information on homework policies. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
l. Inform my parent about how to help me plan for college or work. (Type 2)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
m. Invite my parent to become a volunteer. (Type 3)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
n. Invite my parent to school programs or events. (Type 3)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
o. Give my parent ideas about how to help me with homework. (Type 4)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
p. Assign homework that asks me to talk to someone at home about my classwork. (Type 4)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
q. Include <u>parents</u> on committees to make decisions about the school. (Type 5)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
r. Include <u>students</u> on committees to make decisions about the school. (Type 5)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %
s. Ask people from the community to come to my classes to talk about their work or interests. (Type 6)	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %

List the practices that 30% or more students reported were "NOT IMPORTANT" for this high school:

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION.

In the table for Question 4, **CIRCLE** all of the practices that **OVER 40% of the students** say the school **SHOULD START** or **COULD DO BETTER** or **DOES WELL NOW**. This gives you a quick "profile" of students' perspectives of strong, weak, and needed practices for a comprehensive program of partnership.

Discuss: Of the items you **CIRCLED** in the table, which practices do students agree are strong now? need to be started or improved? List one or two practices for each type of involvement that most students think are important for your school to add to your program or to improve. Also list practices that most students think the school does well now. (The types are noted in the table with each practice.)

PRESENT PROFILE OF PRACTICES TO INVOLVE FAMILIES
Over 40% of the Students Say:

	SHOULD START or DO BETTER	DOES WELL NOW
Type 1:	_____	_____
Type 2:	_____	_____
Type 3:	_____	_____
Type 4:	_____	_____
Type 5:	_____	_____
Type 6:	_____	_____

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

There are many practices that may be selected to build partnerships on the six major types of involvement. Brainstorm and then list some specific ideas for practices that might work at your school to follow up on students' suggestions.

	THIS SCHOOL MIGHT TRY:	at which grade levels?
Type 1:	_____	_____
Type 2:	_____	_____
Type 3:	_____	_____
Type 4:	_____	_____
Type 5:	_____	_____
Type 6:	_____	_____

Later, you will compare the "profiles" of the six major types of involvement from the reports of teachers, parents, and students to identify practices that all three groups believe are important to add, strengthen, or keep strong in your program of partnership.

QUESTION 5. What School Practices to Involve Families are OK with Students?

Question 5 asks students to report whether it is OK if their teachers asked them to conduct 12 practices to involve their families. Report the top 6 practices that students say are OK with them.

TOP SIX PRACTICES	OK with students
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

Students responses to Question 5 suggest that in this school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

In what ways are most students ready to interact with parents at home if their teachers ask them to do so? Which practices are most popular at this time with students? Which practices are least popular at this time with students? How do things that students are ready to do match practices that parents request? How do students' responses match practices that teachers want parents to do at home?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Student Survey Question 5 suggest that this school might develop these specific practices or projects to help students make connections with parents:

QUESTION 6. Students' Independence and Responsibility

Question 6 asks students to judge their own independence and responsibility. Report the % who say JUST LIKE ME.

% JUST LIKE ME

- _____ % Promptly delivers notices home
- _____ % Usually needs someone to tell him/her what to do
- _____ % Likes to make his/her own decisions
- _____ % Will find it hard to face the "real world" later on
- _____ % Can be trusted on most things
- _____ % Gives many suggestions and ideas in class
- _____ % Gives many suggestions and ideas at home

Other items from Question 6 that interest this school:

_____ % _____

_____ % _____

_____ % _____

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The results from Question 6 suggest that students at this high school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

How do students' views about themselves inform school practices to involve students in partnership activities? Check students' reports of whether they deliver notices home promptly. What might be done to increase the number of students who do this? How many students say they need parents' help to make good decisions? What does this mean for involving families in decisions about courses, school programs, and plans for college and work? Compare students' ratings about themselves with parents' ratings about their teens on a similar question.

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

Based on the students' responses to Question 6, the school might develop these specific practices or projects to help students take more active roles in school and in partnerships with their families:

QUESTION 7. Students' Reports of Family Rules and Decision Making

Question 7 asks students to report how they and their families decide 19 guidelines or rules for teen behavior. These items suggest how much students participate at home, receive guidance, or are left on their own about school and other topics.

Report the rules that **50%** or more of students say their parent decides, or that they decide together, or that they decide on their own.

50% or More Students Report . . .

PARENT DECIDES		DECIDE TOGETHER		STUDENT DECIDES	
_____	%	_____	%	_____	%
_____	%	_____	%	_____	%
_____	%	_____	%	_____	%
_____	%	_____	%	_____	%
_____	%	_____	%	_____	%
_____	%	_____	%	_____	%

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

Overall, the information from students on Question 7 suggests that at this high school:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

Which types of rules do students decide with a parent? on their own? When a student says that something is "up to me," it may indicate hard won independence, or a lack of supervision or control by parents. Which decisions should be joint or left up to students in ninth grade? Which decisions might require more parental control? What information might parents need to better understand the process of decision making with their teens? What percents that you reported surprised you, and why?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

Based on the students' responses to Question 7 this school might develop these specific practices or projects to help families and students understand adolescent decision making:

QUESTION 8. About School
QUESTION 9. About Other Activities
QUESTION 10. About Your Family

These questions ask students about themselves, their experiences at school, and their families. Responses to Questions 8, 9, and 10 will help you determine how representative your sample is of the students at the school.

If you have the resources to analyze the data further, the information in Questions 8, 9, and 10 will help you identify and interpret patterns of responses for boys and girls, students with different levels of success in school, in different academic programs, or other characteristics of the students or of their families that are of interest at your school (such as size of family or mother's education). This information also can be used in more advanced analyses of influences on students' attitudes or experiences with parent involvement.

From QUESTION 8. About School

Fill in the % of students who responded to these categories:

8A. Students reported the amount of homework they do on an average night:

- ____ % No homework (sum none assigned and don't do)
- ____ % Less than one hour
- ____ % One hour
- ____ % Two-three hours (sum %s)
- ____ % Four or more hours of homework

8B. They are in these academic programs:

- ____ % College prep
- ____ % Vocational or business
- ____ % Other program (sum %s of general, other)
- ____ % Don't know

8C. Students reported how happy they are with different aspects of school life:

	% Happy or Very Happy	% Unhappy or Very Unhappy
a.with courses	_____ %	_____ %
b.with teachers	_____ %	_____ %
c.with friends	_____ %	_____ %
d.with activities and sports	_____ %	_____ %
e.with your work and progress	_____ %	_____ %

QUESTION 10. About You and Your Family

Fill in the % of students who responded in these categories:

A. % of students who are: _____ % Male _____ % Female

B. Students report they are:

 from the **youngest** (age _____) _____ % year of birth 19__

 to the **oldest** (age _____) _____ % year of birth 19__

 with **most** students (age _____) _____ % year of birth 19__

C. Number of adults living at home:

- _____ % No adults
- _____ % One adult
- _____ % Two adults
- _____ % More than two adults (sum %s)

D. Number of children living at home:

- _____ % One child (just self)
- _____ % Two children
- _____ % Three to five children
- _____ % More than five children

G. Student's race/ethnic group:

- _____ % African American
- _____ % Asian American
- _____ % Hispanic American
- _____ % White
- _____ % Other

H. How far in school mother went:

- _____ % Don't know
- _____ % Less than high school
- _____ % High school diploma
- _____ % Some college or training
- _____ % College degree
- _____ % Advanced/professional degree

10F. Students reported items they have at home to help them study. Examine the items that the most or fewest students say they have at home. Report **five** responses that are of most interest at this school:

Items at Home to Help Study	% YES
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %
_____	_____ %

DISCUSSION of 10F.

How can teachers design homework activities that make good use of the variety of items that students have at home to help them study? Because not all students have the same items at home, how can options be included in homework assignments that allow students to use TVs or cable, typewriters or computers, VCRs or encyclopedias to conduct their work? How can families be included in using items at home with their teens to talk about schoolwork at home, or to learn what their students are thinking or doing?

SUMMARY STATEMENT.

The data from Student Survey Questions 8, 9 and 10 suggest:

DISCUSSION TOPICS.

Are the students who returned the surveys representative of all ninth graders in the school, or have large groups of students been left out of the survey? How diverse are the students' experiences in school and how varied are their families at home? How do the reports from students about their families inform plans for practices of partnership?

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS.

The results from Student Survey Questions 8, 9, and 10 suggest that as plans are made for new practices of partnership, this school might develop these specific practices or projects to meet the diverse situations and characteristics of the parents and their children:

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

The surveys ask students to give their personal views and explanations in five optional open-ended questions. The students' comments may provide examples and perspectives to help explain the survey data in the questions above. Open-ended question a provides ideas on partnership practices that students think worked well for them and their families; open-ended questions b and c support Survey Questions 4 and 5 on specific practices that students think the school should add to its program to increase and improve parent involvement; open-ended question d advises how students and families contribute to the program; open-ended question e may support any question, depending on the content of the comment.

On separate pages, summarize the main themes discussed by students on each question, and list a few direct quotations to illustrate the main ideas or unique ideas that students expressed.

NOTE: The last section asks you to compare and synthesize the results of the Surveys of Teachers, Parents, and Students.

SUMMARY: LOOKING ACROSS THE SURVEYS OF TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND STUDENTS

Every school has many options to consider in its plans for improving school and family partnerships. Patterns in the data reported in the first three sections of this summary should help you identify practices and issues about partnerships that are particularly important to teachers, parents, and students at your school. Which practices did large numbers of all three groups of survey respondents request or support? Which practices did large numbers of all three groups oppose or reject? The practices that all agree would help students, the school, and families are good choices for improving this school's partnerships with families.

The next few questions ask you to examine the data that you summarized on the three surveys and draw some general conclusions. You also are asked to think about the suggestions from teachers, parents, and students for practices of the six major types of involvement. This summary across the three surveys should provide a good starting point for taking specific actions to improve school and family partnerships at your school.

A. Look at **Question 1** on each of the surveys. What do you conclude about the general attitudes of teachers, parents, and students about the school and about school and family partnerships? What positive attitudes do the groups share? What differences seem important? How do all three feel about the importance of parent involvement? Are there common interests on which to build stronger partnerships?

B. **Question 2** of the Survey of Teachers, **Question 4** of the Survey of Parents, and **Question 4** of the Survey of Students provide "profiles" of what each group thinks are strong practices of partnership now, or practices that need to be added or improved.

Look across these questions to summarize the practices that the **largest number** of teachers, parents, and students AGREE should be added or improved. Consider practices for all six types of involvement that will help you develop, over time, a comprehensive program of school and family partnerships.

You may want to make other charts of strong practices, practices to improve, and new practices to add, drawing from all of the questions from the three surveys. Other information about school practices is in Teacher Survey Questions 3 and 4; Parent Survey Questions 5, 6, and 7; and Student Survey Question 5.

Type 1: To improve parents' understanding of adolescent development, parenting skills, home conditions for learning, and the school's understanding of its families.

What are the top COMMON suggestions by teachers, parents, and students for new or improved Type 1 practices?

Type 2: To improve communications from school to home and from home to school about school programs and student progress.

What are the top COMMON choices of teachers, parents, and students for new or improved Type 2 practices?

Type 3: To improve the organization, schedules, and use of volunteers at the school and for the school, and the opportunities and schedules for audiences at school for students' events.

What are the top COMMON choices of teachers, parents, and students for new or improved Type 3 practices?

Type 4: To improve family involvement in learning activities at home, including homework, classwork, curricular related interactions and decisions.

What are the top COMMON choices of teachers, parents, and students for new or improved Type 4 practices?

Type 5: To improve family involvement in school decisions, committees, school-based management, advocacy, and other practices of participation.

What are the top COMMON choices of teachers, parents, and students for new or improved Type 5 practices?

Type 6: To improve community collaborations and resources for students, for the school, and for families.

What are the top COMMON choices of teachers, parents, and students for new or improved Type 6 practices?

C. **Question 2** and **3** of the Survey of Parents report practices that parents are presently conducting at home. Compare this information with the activities outlined above for the six types of involvement. Sometimes parents report that they need help on the same practices they are trying to accomplish on their own. Or, some parents are conducting some practices, but most parents need assistance from the school to understand what they should do to become more involved. Also, compare the information from parents with what teachers think parents are doing now, as reported in **Questions 5** and **6** of the Survey of Teachers. Sometimes teachers are not aware of what parents are trying to do, or how they can help more parents accomplish the practices of partnership that all agree are important.

From these questions, what do you conclude about school practices that will strengthen the efforts of families to influence their children's education?

D. As you look across the three surveys, you will find many **other topics** or questions that you want to explore with the data from teachers, parents, and students. Write one question that interests your school and then summarize the data from the Surveys of Teachers, Parents, and Students that addresses your question.

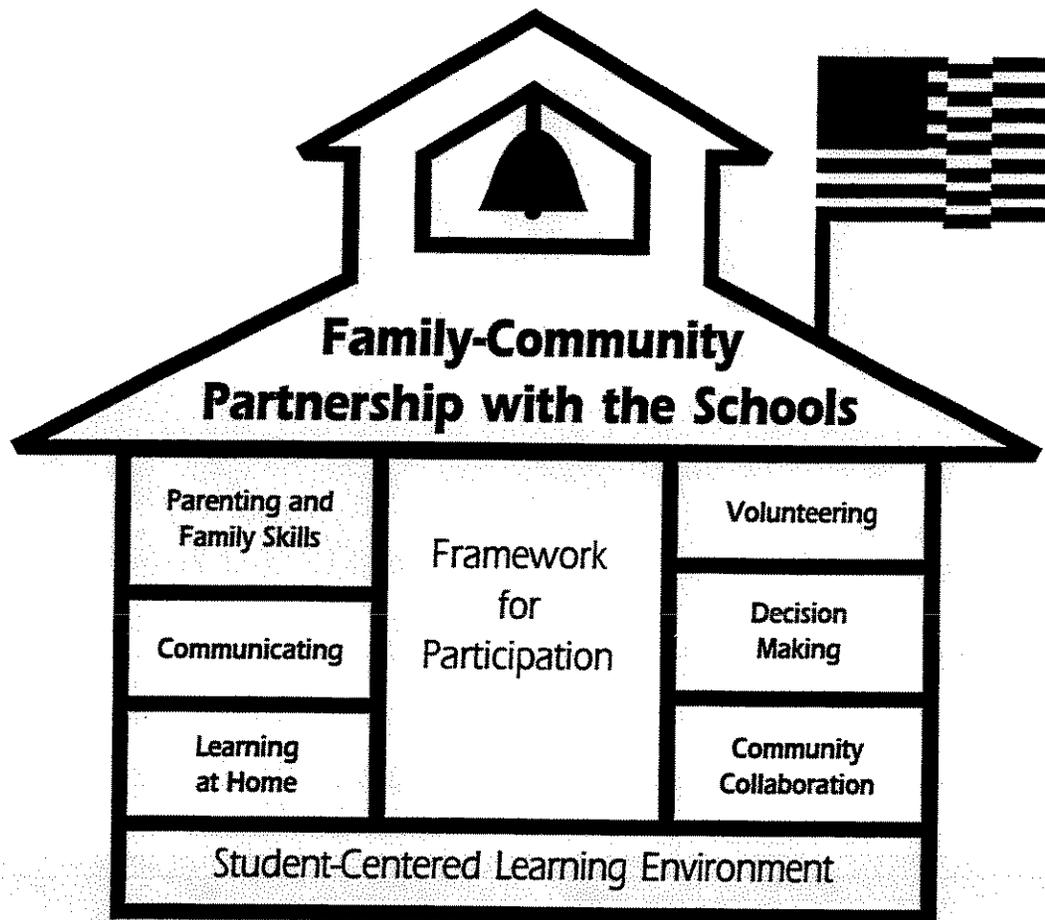
(You may have other questions that you want to summarize on your own.)

One question we want to check across surveys: _____

Data from Surveys of Teachers Parents, and Students that informs this question:

Teachers, administrators, parents, and students should discuss the data and the summaries to see how the information is interpreted by different groups. Then, your School and Family Partnership Team should set priorities in the form of a three-year plan. Based on the data and summaries, your team should select practices from all six of the major types of involvement to implement over a three-year period.

With an action team of teachers, administrators, parents, and students working together, a clear plan, and a long-term commitment to develop a comprehensive program, you will improve your school and family partnerships.



Six Types of Partnerships

Parenting includes the responsibility of parents to help their children learn and be ready for school. Schools can help by connecting parents to resources and educational opportunities in the community and beyond. Parents and other caregivers for children need to be involved in selecting and offering school-sponsored opportunities for families that build on their parenting strengths.

Communicating, which must be two-way, includes responsibilities for both parents and schools. Parents should be encouraged and enabled to talk with school staff about their children, and school staff should be willing to actively listen and offer support. In addition, schools have a responsibility to provide general information, including report cards and other student assessment, in a user-friendly and timely manner.

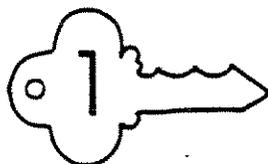
Learning at home includes helping students and their families make connections between what is learned in school, at home, and in the community. The focus is on learning versus schooling. Families and school staff can work together to develop learning goals and provide opportunities to learn at home and in the community.

Volunteering includes participation by parents and other community members at home, in the community, and at school to improve learning. Even attendance at school events is considered volunteering. The various contributions of all adult family members need to be appreciated. Some people can do more than others, but all should be valued!

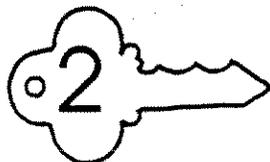
Decision making requires parents to be accepted as partners. Parents and other adults need to be advocates for all children, not just their own. Decision making should include perspectives of low-income and minority parents, as well as majority parents and caregivers. Does the school governance structure allow all parents easy access to decision making?

Community collaboration recognizes that the community is part of the learning process. Community resources, whether basic or enrichment, contribute to the success of all learners.

THE KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIPS: EPSTEIN'S SIX TYPES OF INVOLVEMENT



PARENTING: Assist families with parenting and child-rearing skills, understanding child and adolescent development, and setting home conditions to support learning at each age and grade level.



COMMUNICATING: Communicate with families about school programs and student progress with school-to-home and home-to-school communications.



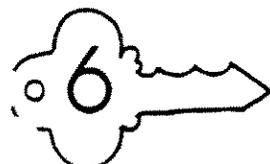
VOLUNTEERING: Improve recruitment, training, work, and schedules to involve families as volunteers and audiences at the school or in other locations to support students and school programs.



LEARNING AT HOME: Involve families with their children in learning activities at home, including homework and other curricular linked activities and decisions.



DECISION MAKING: Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA, committees, councils, and other parent organizations.



COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY: Coordinate the work and resources of community businesses, agencies, colleges or universities, and other groups to strengthen school programs, family practices and students learning and development.

TABLE 1.1 Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement for Comprehensive Programs of Partnership, and Sample Practices

Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	Type 6
Parenting	Communicating	Volunteering	Learning at Home	Decision Making	Collaborating With Community
Help all families establish home environments to support children as students	Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and their children's progress	Recruit and organize parent help and support	Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning	Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives	Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development
Sample Practices					
Suggestions for home conditions that support learning at each grade level	Conferences with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed	School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents	Information for families on skills required for students in all subjects at each grade	Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees (e.g., curriculum, safety, personnel) for parent leadership and participation	Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services
Workshops, video tapes, computerized phone messages on parenting and child rearing for each age and grade level	Language translators assist families, as needed	Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families	Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home	Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements	Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students
Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy)	Weekly or monthly folders of student work sent home for review and comments	Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers	Information on how to assist students to improve skills on various class and school assessments	District-level councils and committees for family and community involvement	Service integration through partnerships involving school; civic, counseling, cultural, health, recreation, and other agencies and organizations; and businesses
Family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services	Parent-student pick-up of report cards, with conferences on improving grades	Class parent, telephone tree, or other structures to provide all families with needed information	Regular schedule of homework that requires students to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class	Information on school or local elections for school representatives	Participation of alumni in school programs for students
Home visits at transition points to preschool, elementary, middle, and high school; neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families	Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications	Parent patrols or other activities to aid safety and operation of school programs	Calendars with activities for parents and students to do at home or in the community	Networks to link all families with parent representatives	Service to the community by students, families, and schools (e.g., recycling, art, music, drama, and other activities for seniors or others)
	Clear information on choosing schools or courses, programs, and activities within schools		Family math, science, and reading activities at school		
	Clear information on all school policies, programs, reforms, and transitions		Summer learning packets or activities		
			Family participation in setting student goals each year and in planning for college or work		

TABLE 1.2 Challenges and Redefinitions for the Successful Design and Implementation of the Six Types of Involvement

Challenges					
Type 1	Type 2	Type 3	Type 4	Type 5	Type 6
Parenting	Communicating	Volunteering	Learning at Home	Decision Making	Collaborating With Community
<p>Provide information to all families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building</p> <p>Enable families to share information about culture, background, children's talents and needs</p> <p>Make sure that all information for families is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school</p>	<p>Review the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications</p> <p>Consider parents who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type</p> <p>Review the quality of major communications (e.g., the schedule, content, and structure of conferences; newsletters; report cards; and others)</p> <p>Establish clear two-way channels for communications from home to school and from school to home</p>	<p>Recruit volunteers widely so that all families know that their time and talents are welcome</p> <p>Make flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies, and events to enable employed parents to participate</p> <p>Organize volunteer work; provide training; match time and talent with school, teacher, and student needs; and recognize efforts so that participants are productive</p>	<p>Design and organize a regular schedule of interactive homework (e.g., weekly or bi-monthly) that gives students responsibility for discussing important things they are learning, and helps families stay aware of the content of their children's classwork</p> <p>Coordinate family-linked homework activities, if students have several teachers</p> <p>Involve families with their children in all important curriculum-related decisions</p>	<p>Include parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups in the school</p> <p>Offer training to enable leaders to serve as representatives of other families, with input from and return of information to all parents</p> <p>Include students (along with parents) in decision-making groups</p>	<p>Solve turf problems of responsibilities, funds, staff, and locations for collaborative activities</p> <p>Inform families of community programs for students, such as mentoring, tutoring, and business partnerships</p> <p>Assure equity of opportunities for students and families to participate in community programs or to obtain services</p> <p>Match community contributions with school goals; integrate child and family services with education</p>
Redefinitions					
<p>"Workshop" to mean more than a meeting about a topic held at the school building at a particular time; "workshop" also may mean making information about a topic available in a variety of forms that can be viewed, heard, or read anywhere, anytime</p>	<p>"Communications about school programs and student progress" to mean: two-way, three-way, and many-way channels of communication that connect schools, families, students, and the community</p>	<p>"Volunteer" to mean anyone who supports school goals and children's learning or development in any way, at any place, and at any time—not just during the school day and at the school building</p>	<p>"Homework" to mean not only work done alone, but also interactive activities shared with others at home or in the community, linking school-work to real life</p> <p>"Help" at home to mean encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, guiding, monitoring, and discussing—not "teaching" school subjects</p>	<p>"Decision making" to mean a process of partnership, of shared views and actions toward shared goals, not just a power struggle between conflicting ideas</p> <p>Parent "leader" to mean a real representative, with opportunities and support to hear from and communicate with other families</p>	<p>"Community" to mean not only the neighborhoods where students' homes and schools are located but also any neighborhoods that influence their learning and development</p> <p>"Community" rated not only by low or high social or economic qualities, but by strengths and talents to support students, families, and schools</p> <p>"Community" means all who are interested in and affected by the quality of education, not just those with children in the schools</p>

TABLE 1.3 Expected Results for Students, Parents, and Teachers of the Six Types of Involvement

<i>Results for Students</i>					
<i>Type 1</i>	<i>Type 2</i>	<i>Type 3</i>	<i>Type 4</i>	<i>Type 5</i>	<i>Type 6</i>
<i>Parenting</i>	<i>Communicating</i>	<i>Volunteering</i>	<i>Learning at Home</i>	<i>Decision Making</i>	<i>Collaborating With Community</i>
Awareness of family supervision; respect for parents	Awareness of own progress and of actions needed to maintain or improve grades	Skill in communicating with adults	Gains in skills, abilities, and test scores linked to homework and classwork	Awareness of representation of families in school decisions	Increased skills and talents through enriched curricular and extracurricular experiences
Positive personal qualities, habits, beliefs, and values, as taught by family	Understanding of school policies on behavior, attendance, and other areas of student conduct	Increased learning of skills that receive tutoring or targeted attention from volunteers	Homework completion	Understanding that student rights are protected	Awareness of careers and options for future education and work
Balance between time spent on chores, on other activities, and on homework	Informed decisions about courses and programs	Awareness of many skills, talents, occupations, and contributions of parents and other volunteers	Positive attitude toward schoolwork	Specific benefits linked to policies enacted by parent organizations and experienced by students	Specific benefits linked to programs, services, resources, and opportunities that connect students with community
Good or improved attendance	Awareness of own role in partnerships, serving as courier and communicator		View of parent as more similar to teacher, and home as more similar to school		
Awareness of importance of school			Self-concept of ability as learner		
<i>Results for Parents</i>					
Understanding of and confidence about parenting, child and adolescent development, and changes in home conditions for learning as children proceed through school	Understanding school programs and policies	Understanding teacher's job, increased comfort in school, and carryover of school activities at home	Know how to support, encourage, and help student at home each year	Input into policies that affect child's education	Knowledge and use of local resources by family and child to increase skills and talents, or to obtain needed services
Awareness of own and others' challenges in parenting	Monitoring and awareness of child's progress	Self-confidence about ability to work in school and with children, or to take steps to improve own education	Discussions of school, classwork, and homework	Feeling of ownership of school	Interactions with other families in community activities
Feeling of support from school and other parents	Responding effectively to child's problems	Awareness that families are welcome and valued at school	Understanding of instructional program each year and of what child is learning in each subject	Awareness of parents' voices in school decisions	Awareness of school's role in the community, and of the community's contributions to the school
	Interactions with teachers and ease of communications with school and teachers	Gains in specific skills of volunteer work	Appreciation of teaching skills	Shared experiences and connections with other families	
			Awareness of child as a learner	Awareness of school, district, and state policies	
<i>Results for Teachers</i>					
Understanding families' backgrounds, cultures, concerns, goals, needs, and views of their children	Increased diversity and use of communications with families and awareness of own ability to communicate clearly	Readiness to involve families in new ways, including those who do not volunteer at school	Better design of homework assignments	Awareness of parent perspectives as a factor in policy development and decisions	Awareness of community resources to enrich curriculum and instruction
Respect for families' strengths and efforts	Appreciation and use of parent network for communications	Awareness of parent talents and interests in school and children	Recognition of equal helpfulness of single parent, dual income, and less formally educated families in motivating and reinforcing student learning	View of equal status of family representatives on committees and in leadership roles	Openness to and skill in using mentors, business partners, community volunteers, and others to assist students and augment teaching practice
Understanding of student diversity	Increased ability to elicit and understand family views on children's programs and progress	Greater individual attention to students, with help from volunteers	Satisfaction with family involvement and support		Knowledgeable, helpful referrals of children and families to needed services
Awareness of own skills to share information on child development					



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How Do Family and Community Involvement Link with National Education Goal 8: Parental Participation?

The best way to answer this question is to ask more questions . . . of *all* those in your community who have a vested interest in the well-being and education of children—senior citizens, businesspersons, parents, teachers, and government representatives. This usually means involving *everyone* in creating a road map for moving your community toward realizing Goal 8 of the National Education Goals, the Parental Involvement Goal.

Goal 8: Parental Participation

By the year 2000, every school will promote partnerships that will increase parental involvement and participation in promoting the social, emotional, and academic growth of children.

The objectives for this goal are that . . .

Every state will develop policies to assist local schools and local educational agencies to establish programs for increasing partnerships that respond to the varying needs of parents and the home . . .

Every school will actively engage parents and families in a partnership which supports the academic work of children at home and shared educational decisionmaking at school; and

Parents and families will help to ensure that schools are adequately supported and will hold schools and teachers to high standards of accountability.

In developing this plan, your community will want to ask: "Where are we today, in relation to Goal 8 or our own goal? Where do we want to be by the Year 2000? How will we get there? And how will we know that we're making good progress along the way?"

Following is a closer look at some of the elements that may help your schools and community examine how they will reach Goal 8.

Thirty years of research make it clear: parents and families are pivotal to children's learning. And no refrain is heard more often, in communities headed toward the National Education Goals, than the African proverb, "It takes an entire village to raise one child."

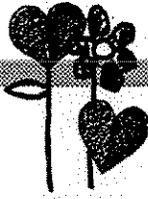
Your community and schools will want to ask: How can we continuously strengthen our partnerships with parents? How can we build and continuously improve our "whole village" partnership for learning?

To answer this question, your community and schools may want to examine:

Early childhood. Are we focusing public and private resources on helping parents prevent their young children's health problems and intervening early, when necessary? Are we ensuring that day care in our community is developmentally appropriate and supportive of parents? Is every child in our community being read to every day? Is every child being taken to the library, museums, plays, concerts, and other performances and cultural events? Does our community make various efforts to support parents and families of young children, so that every child will enter school ready to learn?

Learning at home. Do families in our community use TV wisely? Do they establish daily routines—a time for chores, eating meals together, and firm bedtimes? Do parents set a regular time for children to do homework each day, in a well-lit place, free of distractions such as the telephone, radio, and TV? Do families talk regularly with children about what they're learning in school, and about current events, family history, and other topics? Do families take advantage of libraries, museums, and other educational resources in the community?

Communication between home and school. How often do our teachers and parents talk together about how well individual children are



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doing in school—good news as well as bad—and about how improvements can be made? How can parents and teachers better communicate to help children learn more?

Involvement at home and at school. What are the barriers to getting more parents to help out at school, and how can we overcome these barriers? What are schools doing to make all parents feel welcome at school? What can the schools and various groups in the community do to help keep parents better informed so that families are creating an environment at home that is conducive to learning? What can we do to help all families do things at home to help their children do well in school? Are families looking at report cards and actual student work? Are parents making sure that children always complete homework on time? Do families encourage children to put their best effort into homework? Do parents talk to children regularly—about schoolwork, books the child is reading, world events, and whatever the youngster wants to talk about? Do parents monitor children's TV-watching? How many parents volunteer at school?

Technology. Are we using voicemail or other technologies to facilitate communication between parents and teachers? Are we using technology to let parents know immediately when students are absent, to offer tips on how to help with homework, and to provide other information? Are computers in schools linked to computers at home, or to parents' job sites?

Families facing special challenges. What are we doing to help children—and the families of children—who have limited English proficiency, disabilities, and other special needs, so that these students reach high levels of academic learning?

Grandparents and senior citizens. Are grandparents, retired teachers, and other senior citizens tutoring, guest lecturing, working with small groups of students, or helping in other ways in or outside the classroom?

Employers. What are businesses doing to encourage their employees who are parents to get more involved in their children's education? What leave policies and flex-time arrangements are available to encourage parent participation in the schools? What parent support efforts or programs do employers offer their employees?

Adult literacy. What are libraries, employers, schools, community colleges, churches, volunteer organizations, and others doing to ensure that all parents and adults become literate?

Prevention of violence and drug abuse. To what extent are violence, alcohol, and drug abuse problems in our schools and community? Are unauthorized weapons present in our schools? How safe are our schools? What do students and teachers say? What are we now doing to reduce these problems? What are the media, religious groups, student groups, county organizations, parents, law enforcement, and other groups doing to help? What else do we need to do?

Community service. What community service opportunities are available to youngsters and other members of our community? Can students earn credit or postsecondary financial assistance for helping solve community problems? Are we participating in AmeriCorps—President Clinton's national service program—or using college work-study students as volunteers in the schools?

Basic health and human services. What are we doing to make readily available basic health and human services—such as immunizations, eyeglasses and hearing tests—for low-income families in our community? Do we have governance mechanisms that encourage coordination and communication among housing, employment, welfare, and other services? Do these service providers get adequate training and opportunities to share information and ideas? Do we collect information on the performance of these services? Is this information reported publicly? Are we holding service providers accountable for results?



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Family and public support and engagement. Are we listening to and involving parents? Are we responding to what we hear? Are we working together to analyze our problems and develop solutions? Are we developing a clear and consistent set of messages? Are we delivering these messages regularly and through multiple media and various forums? Do we report regularly on the performance of students and

schools, and on plans to improve performance? Do we inspire willingness to come up with the necessary resources? Do we determine the kinds of involvement needed from individuals, organizations, or groups in the community for particular kinds of efforts (including governance, curriculum development, administrative services, apprenticeship programs, and more)? Are we developing strategies for enlisting that support?

Editor's Note: This article is excerpted from the booklet, "An Invitation to Your Community: Building Community Partnerships for Learning," which contains information about all eight National Education Goals 2000. To obtain a copy, call the U.S. Department of Education at 1 (800) USA-LEARN.

Teachers and Parents Have Different Perceptions

Most teachers realize how important it is to communicate with parents, yet they often feel frustrated in their efforts to communicate. One reason may be a lack of home-school communication skills. Another reason may be the differences in perception that exist between teachers and parents. Below is a chart compiled by Mendoza and Cegelka of Project P-Pact, San Diego State University.

**Differences in Perception That Can Interfere
With School-Home Communication***

Professional	Parent
Group - must focus on the whole class or group.	Individual - is concerned with own child's individual progress, needs.
Established Skills - has knowledge of what child has mastered.	Emerging Skills - is concerned with what child is learning.
Present - is concerned with present development of child.	History - has the perspective on how far the child has come.
Futuristic - looks to what child will be able to do in the future, career potential.	Present - is concerned with here-and-now.
Specificity - is concerned with mastering specific skills.	Diffused - tends to see whole child's ongoing development.
Cognitive - sees child more abstractly, able to distance self from child.	Emotional - has emotional involvement with child.
Achieved/chosen profession- encourages child to make professional career choice.	Given - believes this child has been given; parents accept the child as or she he is.
Dominant - has power position, expertise.	Submissive - may feel helpless, uneducated.
Universal - looks for one best method, way to work with all children.	Individualized - wants to have child approached and taught as an individual.

*Compiled by Mendoza and Cegelka of Project P-Pact, San Diego State University. Published in Community Education Journal (April, 1987), p. 12. Adapted and reprinted with permission.

What Parents Want to Know

In response to an informal survey, approximately 50 parents from several Wisconsin school districts expressed what they would like to say to teachers and what information they would consider the most beneficial in helping their children learn.

Parents Want to Belong

- I want to belong.
- Welcome me to the school; don't shut me out.
- Invite me to school; take the initiative.
- Ask for my input but don't intimidate me.
- Tell me how I can participate in school activities.
- I would like to be a member of an advisory council or parent involvement committee.

Parents Want Teacher Contact

- I would like my children's teachers to call me.
- Because I work, I need evening teacher conferences.
- Let me know what my children are studying.
- I want to meet the teachers at least once a month.
- Keep communications clear, brief, and simple, not overly technical.

Parents Want Information

- Tell me the philosophy of the school, the channels of authority, and the general goals of each subject studied.
- Tell me the best time to call the teachers, the names of the staff, and their telephone numbers.
- Send me a weekly or monthly newsletter which lists school events, community resources, and enrichment programs.
- I need to learn strategies I can use with my children when dealing with alcohol and drug prevention, video games, TV programs, peer pressure, and study skills.
- I would appreciate parent education workshops or videos to learn about communicating

with teens, how to motivate children to study, social pressures, curfews and family rules, college applications, and helping with homework.

Parents Want to Help

- Give me ideas on how to complement what my children are learning in school.
- I need ideas for enrichment to supplement my children's classes.
- What can I do to help with homework?
- I need to know what teachers expect at each grade level in emotional, social, and cognitive growth areas.
- If a problem arises with school work, contact me immediately; don't wait for weeks.
- What are your expectations of my children?
- I'd like a parents' attendance day so I can understand my children's classes better.

Parents Want Teachers to Love and Discipline Their Children

- Do something to make my children feel good about themselves.
- Make rules clear and don't put up with inappropriate student behavior.
- Relax when students are acting normally.
- Remind yourselves that you are an important influence in children's lives.
- If I complain about something, don't "take it out" on my children.
- Avoid stereotyping children.
- Praise students for good efforts.
- Contact me about good news, too, not only about problems.
- Tell me your expectations of my children.
- Care about my children.

Why Parent Involvement?

The single most important determinant of a child's success in school, and ultimately throughout life, is not family status, education level, income, or IQ. It is whether that child's parents are involved in his or her education.

This proposition may sound radical, but there is a mounting body of evidence that is difficult to dispute. Study after study shows that when parents are involved, children do better in school and schools improve. Students whose parents stay in touch with the school score higher scholastically than children of similar aptitude and family background whose parents are not involved. Programs with a parent-involvement component are more effective than otherwise identical programs without one. Schools that connect to their communities by serving as polling places and neighborhood facilities have higher graduation rates. The effect goes well beyond the short term, and it is especially pronounced for children we consider "at risk."

Knowing this, how can we address the restructuring of our public schools without first considering the critical role that parents play in improved student achievement, the outcome by which our success must ultimately be judged?

Not only should parents—the primary stakeholders in the quality of public schools—be involved in the process of restructuring, the primary goal of the entire endeavor must be to transform the relationship between families and schools from one that is distant and wary to one that is intimate and trusting.

If parents are not an integral part of the entire learning process, children find it difficult to integrate the separate experiences of home and school. If home and school are in conflict, the children tend to fall behind and drop out.

Some of the most successful programs to transform schools through intensive parent involvement have been designed by Yale psychiatrist James Comer. His theory is clear and direct: children learn from people to whom they bond. If the attitudes, behavior, and expectations of the school staff are substantially different from those at home, children often become

completely alienated from school by the time they are eight years old.

There are a number of strategies that schools can employ to establish an effective family-school partnership. While they are not difficult or complex, for many schools they will definitely involve restructuring.

- School staff must get to know each child well. It is much more difficult to "write off" students you know and care about. For secondary schools, a teacher-advisory system is recommended where each teacher has responsibility and specific opportunities built into the weekly schedule for close interaction with about 20 students and ongoing communication with their parents.

- The teacher should make at least one personal contact with each student's family every month over the phone, at home, or in the community if a parent is unable or reluctant to come to school.

- Parents should also have at least one opportunity a month to get acquainted with the school. A back-to-school night is great except that it is held only once a year. Other possibilities include social events, such as a family spaghetti dinner; report card days when parents come to school to pick them up; an evening awards assembly to recognize students, teachers, and parents for their contributions to the school; an all-day open house; or a weekend family picnic to celebrate the return of spring. The various elements of the school community, such as the PTA, the faculty, the principal's office, or a local business, can take turns sponsoring the events.

- For parents to share in the life of the school, they must be welcome in the building at all times. This means blanket permission to do such things as have lunch with their kids, visit the classrooms, use the library, or talk to the principal, guidance counselors, and teachers.

Indicators that say, "This school is open to everyone" might include welcome signs in all languages spoken by school families; a parent room equipped with comfortable furniture, a

typewriter, and telephones; and a corner in the library stocked with recommended materials and readings for parents and copies of currently used textbooks.

The school should be a community resource. Schools that provide their communities with a variety of services enjoy a deservedly better reputation. They are also much more likely to have bond issues approved. Community meetings, adult education, local theatrical productions, health screening, candidate nights, and physical fitness classes all are legitimate uses of school facilities, and all contribute to the well-being of the community. The school should also serve as a primary referral point for needed social services.

Some of these recommendations will cost money, but they are strong preventive medicine.

Recent evaluations on dropout prevention programs show that they are too little, too late, yet their cost would probably underwrite what we have been discussing. When we consider that the bill to society for a single unproductive, anti-social citizen is upwards of \$55,000 a year, we don't really have a choice. By getting parents more involved we can restructure our schools in a way that reconnects them to the communities they are intended to serve.

Anne Henderson is an associate with the National Committee for Citizens in Education, author of The Evidence Continues to Grow: Parent Involvement Improves Student Achievement, and co-author of Beyond the Bake Sale: An Educator's Guide to Working with Parents. She wrote this commentary for Policy Briefs, Number 9, 1990, Parent Involvement in School Restructuring, a publication of the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory.

A report from the

SCHOOL, FAMILY & COMMUNITY
PARTNERSHIPS PROJECT

THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
CENTER ON FAMILIES, COMMUNITIES, SCHOOLS & CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Teachers' Reported Practices of Parent Involvement: Problems and Possibilities

Joyce L. Epstein
Henry Jay Becker
The Johns Hopkins University

Debatable issues of parent involvement

Several major issues related to parent involvement were discussed in the comments added by over 1,000 teachers to a survey of teachers' practices. Results of the survey of 3,700 teachers in about 600 schools in Maryland are described in Becker and Epstein (in this issue). The teachers' comments reflect the variation in years of experience and in the number and types of contacts individual teachers have had with parents. Each theme can be viewed from two perspectives—there are potential advantages, but there are also potential problems, with any parent-involvement technique. Teachers' comments reveal their contrasting opinions on the benefits expected from parent assistance at home and on the organizational structures used to conduct parent-involvement activities. Some teachers are very positive about parent involvement; others have been discouraged by their attempts to communicate, and work with parents.

Teachers' time

Many teachers commented on the amount of time needed to prepare projects, workshops, and/or directions for parents to use and supervise at home. The crucial question is whether the time required by the teacher is worth the trouble, and whether teachers should volunteer their time without knowing the likely effects of their efforts.

Some teachers telephone parents frequently to give positive messages about a child's progress in school or special skills or abilities observed as well as to discuss problems. If a teacher telephones 30 par-

frustrated when working on skills at home. Some reinforcement at home is quite helpful as long as it is kept to a minimum amount of time and done consistently. An hour a day is unrealistic, and unfair to parent and child. I feel that children spend a large part of their day in school (hopefully learning) and at home need to be released for relaxation, play, and pursuing interests (hopefully, not all television). Parenting is in itself a demanding job. . . .

Students' time and feelings

Many teachers focused their comments on the benefits or problems for the students of parent involvement in learning activities at home. Some believed academic activities should be kept to a minimum so children could follow interests in their out-of-school time. Many stressed with deep conviction that students' time at home should be mainly the time to play, participate in activities of special interest, or relax. Others expressed concern that academic tasks at home can cause parents and children psychological stress as the pressure to perform vies with the child's need for help and parents' desire to help. Others believe the child's time at home should reflect parents' teaching of home-related skills and responsibilities.

Several teachers expressed concern that the complex relationships between parents and children can be affected by the kinds of activities assigned for work at home by teachers:

Most parents are very willing to assist at home and welcome ideas, but I stress working for *short* periods of time and only when both parties are not becoming upset. Some parents tell me they want to help, but they lose their patience. On the other hand, children often feel embarrassed when they don't think they are performing as well as they want to for their parents.

Care must be taken in "home help" situations so that pressure on the child is not increased by emotional or un-

enlightened parental involvement when the goal is to help the child and thereby lighten pressure placed upon him.

Teachers had varied opinions on whether they should try to maximize the potential advantages of parent assistance for some children, even if other children may not be assisted. Some teachers believe parent activities are valuable even if only some parents complete them; other teachers believe no parent-conducted learning activities should be assigned unless all parents agree to cooperate. They charge that children of parents who do not do their part are put at a disadvantage through no fault of the students. Compare the two points of view:

Although many of my students come from homes where support of schools is great, there are also a good number of students who come from homes where support is minimal and parent involvement is very low. This makes it difficult to give the class an assignment involving parents when only some of the students have parents who would bother to help.

Most parents talk a good story, but rarely follow through on any involvement. Then there are some who, given prodding, guidance, and a great deal of specific directions on what to do, will try consistently to help their child. It pays off, even if the results are minimal. It is for these few that it is worth doing what we can to get them involved—because it is ultimately for the children.

The teachers', parents', and students' time, commitment, and reactions were repeatedly discussed by the teachers. There were legitimate differences of opinion. Should some of the parents' and students' time at home be spent on lessons and school assignments, or should the time be spent on new experiences and diverse skills that build on parents' special abilities? The answers to such questions may depend on such factors as children's ages, the types of

mands on their time. Helping kids at home becomes a more frustrating task when a parent is tired or has many jobs to do. Other parents get carried away and ask the kids to do too much at home.

Several teachers commented on differences between parents with greater or lesser education:

I don't feel the educational level of the parents plays too great a part because in my experience I've had tremendous parent involvement with those whose educational level did not go beyond the eighth grade.

Parent involvement became extremely poor as the years progressed. When the emphasis of education went back to basics, the parents withdrew. This could be attributed to their own poor educational backgrounds and preparedness to help their children.

In general, teachers did not specify the benefits of parent involvement. Most teachers said, "It depends on the students and their parents," as this teacher comments:

I have had excellent cooperation from parents this year. In many instances it has been up to 95 percent. Other years have not produced the same results. Last year, I had the cooperation of approximately 10 out of 32 parents—and it was the same school. It depends on the group of children—if I had completed this questionnaire last year my responses would have been totally different.

And, many teachers thought that the school climate and the principal's support were important, as this teacher notes:

Most of my teaching career, my principals have been *very much* against the teacher working with parents other than when discipline was involved, and have been unwilling for the teacher to have contact with parents outside of regular classroom hours. My breakthrough in working with parents has been due to

working with an outstanding teacher who is excellent in home and school relations.

Use of parent-involvement coordinators

Many comments were offered by teachers on the Title I programs. These programs often include parent coordinators, whose job it is to get more parents involved in more aspects of school life. The Title I programs are the largest formally organized programs for parent involvement. Several teachers remarked on the benefits from excellent Title I parent programs, but just as many said the programs were poor and wasteful. The contrasting opinions suggest that some organizational strategies are necessary if the programs are to succeed from the teachers' point of view.

I teach in a Title I school where we have an organized Parent Involvement Program headed by two Parent Involvement Aides. They lead many programs and activities once conducted by the teacher, such as home visits, telephone calls, trips with children to dentist or doctor, assistance with clothing needs, recruitment of parent volunteers to operate the Reading Club, and organization of workshops for parents to learn games that can be used at home. So many of these opportunities are out of the hands of the classroom teacher. Twenty-five or 30 years ago when I taught in a rural Appalachian consolidated school, I had much more parent involvement than I do now. From my teaching point of view, I definitely had more support from parents on things I attempted to do. Although our Title I aides have very good rapport with our parents, there seems to be more of a trend to let the aides do things for the parents and less emphasis on helping parents to help themselves. We do have "star" examples of parent volunteers of more than 10 years who now are "super" paid Title I aides. That is progress, as they help not only their own families but others.

Under the Title I program, we have a home visitation aide who takes learning

I have found as a teacher in this transient community that the parents are too busy to bother about how their children are doing. If everything is going smoothly, the parents stay at home. Only if trouble arises does one hear from a parent. Even if you are doing a fantastic, outstanding job you do not hear from parents. Only in time of trouble.

Parent involvement is the problem. I have accomplished the impossible when I manage to just get some parents into the school for a conference.

The effectiveness of using these techniques depends on the community(ies) the school is serving. I have taught in a school where the parents were so involved that one did not need to use techniques. I have taught in a school where very few parents were capable of using any technique no matter how simple. I have also had a parent who could have helped her son tell me that that is my job.

Some admitted that teachers fear parents, and this fear inhibits the kinds of programs teachers attempt.

Most teachers fear parents and I, too, only use parents when I feel I have complete control.

My experience indicates that teachers are even more fearful than the parents of our interaction.

Successful efforts

In spite of all the possible problems, some teachers with parents of all educational levels and students at all achievement levels have been able to establish programs that emphasize the link between school and home.

Reading with children. Many teachers described how they organize a formal program in which parents or students read on a regular basis. One example:

About 4 years ago in a school with a large minority population, most parents were contacted and agreed to see to it that their children read—either to the

parent or by themselves for 10 minutes every evening. Many parents cooperated and I believe it helped the children's reading skills. Of course, the children could read longer than 10 minutes if they wished. They brought in slips signed by their parents each morning and were rewarded occasionally by small items donated by local businesses. Very few parents objected.

Signing papers and folders. Many teachers have devised different systems to keep parents aware of the children's schoolwork. When teachers ask parents to sign daily work or weekly folders, they are fulfilling an obligation to keep parents informed of children's progress before or between report cards. Some teachers also send home skill-building assignments or games based on the students' problems identified in schoolwork or on tests:

By having parents sign children's graded math tests and units, I cover several problem spots. Parents always have a good idea of grade average: parents can see the child's progress or lack of it; signing math units enables parents to see all of their children's daily assignments before they are disposed of without the hassle of seeing them every night. Units get signed when the test is taken. If a child receives a poor grade I attach a sheet telling the parents to review and study the needed skills with their child. The signing insures that the parents see the note.

I send a letter to parents each time we start a new phase of work, explaining what we will be doing and how they can help. This is signed and returned. I also send all returnable work home on blue or green paper or attached to a blue or green computer card. Parents and kids know blue papers are to be returned. I have about 95 percent respond.

Some use a system that permits the parents to communicate with the teacher with more than a signature:

A buddy-book: Each day I write a comment concerning the child's work

At the end of the year I sent home a calendar of summer activities that would involve parent-child participation and would help the child improve or retain basic skills.

Dilemmas of parent involvement

The teachers were aware of the dilemmas of home-school relationships:

Parents are so involved with staying alive and being able to keep up economically, there is little or no energy left to devote to children—much less spend time teaching, disciplining, etc. The time they have is spent being loving, lenient, and feeling guilty for not having time or energy to help their children. The children have no motivation to study. Many of the children I teach are too busy raising the little children in the family, cleaning house, and doing adult work at home because their parents are out trying to make ends meet. It amazes me that the children can run houses, raise siblings, and still find time to learn at all.

Many homes have no literature in them—everything comes from TV—yet the schools neglect the media. Parents want to be supportive and help, but they can't—yet without their support, schools cannot make any real difference.

If parents became actively involved and worked *with* the teachers, our students would be more successful. Our students need lots of motivation that teachers alone cannot provide.

In some ways, all of the teachers' comments are correct. There is no denying the different reactions of teachers to the parents with whom they have worked. The honest differences in teachers' opinions reflect three perspectives on parent-school relations: (1) parents care but cannot do much to help the school or their children in actual learning; (2) parents care but should not help with school learning; (3) parents care and can be of great help if they are shown how to help. There was no disagreement, however, about the fact that successful parent-involvement programs

require the teachers' commitment and the parents' commitment. There are usually no formal rewards for teachers or parents for the time and effort required to plan and conduct learning activities at home. However, both may have feelings of satisfaction when children make progress in learning.

Many comments stressed the parents' and students' needs for time at home that is free of academic demands; however, an equal number of teachers emphasized that many students who have trouble in school would be assisted with some structured daily work at home. Parental assistance that provides extra time for learning may be one of the few techniques that can bring a slow student up to grade level. Many teachers believe it is worth a try to develop programs for parents to conduct at home that will supplement the teachers' efforts.

Because of an absence of research on the effects of parent involvement, it is impossible to assure teachers that certain practices will lead to improved student skills, improved parent-child exchanges, or improved parent-teacher relations. It is equally impossible to assure teachers that they can be more successful if they ignore parent involvement. The differences in teachers' opinions and the lack of objective evidence on the debated topics suggest how research can contribute to this important aspect of education. From the statistical results of our survey and from the written comments of the teachers, we have identified eight issues that may prompt new research:

1. Of all types of parent involvement, supervision of learning activities at home may be the most educationally significant. In contrast to PTA councils and classroom volunteers that involve relatively few parents, parent activities at home can involve many or all children's parents. We need to know whether and how teachers at different grade levels can successfully implement parent-involvement programs to include all families.

that these activities have become formal, accepted strategies for parent-teacher exchanges. They are school-level activities that recur in similar, predictable form in most schools. In contrast, the techniques of parent involvement in learning activities at home are classroom-level projects that are developed by individual teachers. The patterns of exchange for these activities have not been standardized and so there are no clear expectations.

It is questionable whether the familiar rituals of visit-school night and parent conferences accomplish more than a polite exchange between parents and teachers. Techniques for parent involvement in home-learning activities have greater potential for actively involving parents in important exchanges with the teacher that may assist their own children's progress in school. We need to know how teachers can organize parent involvement so the activities will become as familiar as the traditional parent-teacher events.

New research on parent involvement should take into account the natural variation in characteristics of teachers, students, families, schools, and classrooms. Important questions on the implementation and effects of parent involvement have been raised by this exploratory survey of teachers and by the variety of opinions they expressed. If the problems and possibilities of parent involvement are systematically studied, research can lead quickly and directly to useful information for teachers.

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