

Family Outreach Self-Assessment

How well does your school promote family involvement? Rate your school on each of the following items from 1 (poorly or rarely) to 5 (extremely well or always).

(note that the term 'parent' is used to represent any guardian the student has)

Communication

- We provide opportunities for parents to share their concerns, questions, and thoughts (*two-way communication*)
- We provide a variety of *different* types of communications to meet parents' varying schedules and levels of comfort with technology (newsletters, emails, blogs, phone calls, home visits, etc.)
- We hold the expectation that teachers communicate to families about positive news in addition to problems
- We make it clear who at the school parents should contact for which types of concerns
- We offer communications in the languages that our families feel most comfortable with
- We train our staff in effective communication skills to help with interacting with families
- We provide opportunities for parents to learn what is happening in their children's classes (through a curriculum night, ongoing updates throughout the year, actual classroom visits, etc.)
- We ensure that parents understand their child's progress (through regular progress reports, by explaining how assessments work and what the results mean, and by alerting them early on when their child is struggling)
- We clearly communicate the types of assistance the school provides when students struggle academically (afterschool tutoring, homework hotline, online resources, etc.)
- We ensure that the entrance to the school is welcoming (rather than just threatening that visitors must sign in)
- We train the office staff to communicate that this is a school that welcomes parents
- We hire a family liaison – or add this responsibility to an existing staff member's job – to prioritize reaching out to families

Volunteering

- We understand that parent volunteering can take many forms and we define it flexibly
- We survey parents to find out *how* they are interested in supporting their children and the school
- We compile a list of the ways parents wish to volunteer and distribute this to school staff
- We offer volunteering opportunities for those who cannot come to the school (making food, editing the newsletter, planning an event, etc.)
- We include parents in decision making when appropriate (school leadership team, PTA, fundraising committee, school improvement meetings, opportunities to advocate for family needs, etc.)
- We provide parents with a list of ways they can support their child's learning *at home* (such as helping by reading to them, checking their homework but not doing it, bringing them to the library, finding simple math activities in everyday activities, providing a regular space to do homework, giving them breakfast before school, etc.)
- We provide a *range* of ways parents can volunteer *at the school* (discuss their career on a career day, be a guest speaker in a class, tutor students during an afterschool homework club, listen to a child read in class, complete office work that does not reveal student names, get involved with school beautification efforts, serve as an additional adult on lunch duty, etc.)

School Events

- We are sensitive to the various schedules of families and schedule school events flexibly and offer childcare or other assistance to maximize attendance
- We provide professional development to teachers to prepare for parent-teacher conferences
- We make repeated and varied efforts to get parents to attend parent-teacher conferences
- We help parents prepare for parent-teacher conferences by providing a sheet of tips or suggested questions
- We provide translators for school events as necessary
- We find innovative ways to bring families in to the school (parent book clubs with the assistant principal, once-a-month family Fridays to visit a child's class, a parent event the same night as a middle or high school dance, etc.)

Other

- We inform and involve parents when celebrating students (student award nights, honor roll announcements, etc.)
- We provide opportunities for parent *learning* (such as by setting up a parent resource center at school, bringing in speakers to talk about parenting, purchasing parenting books and materials for parents to borrow, etc.)
- We regularly reward students for positive deeds and inform parents about this (such as through a positive referral program)