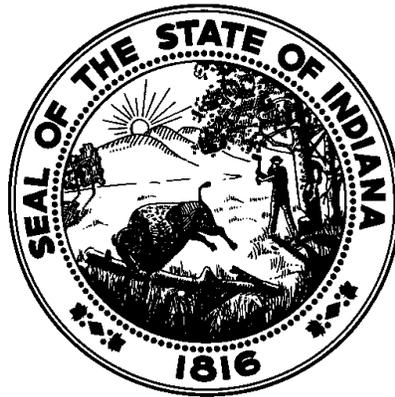


School-Parent-Community Partnerships

Resource Book



Indiana Department of Education

September 2001

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1	Executive Summary.....	3
	Cornerstones of Success.....	4
	Introduction.....	5
	Historical Perspective.....	5
Chapter 2	National Standards (introduction).....	7
	Communication.....	8
	Parenting.....	10
	Student Learning.....	12
	Volunteering.....	14
	School Decision-Making.....	16
	Community Collaboration.....	17
Chapter 3	Policies, Surveys, Implementation, Evaluation.....	20
	End Notes.....	22
Chapter 4	Sample Surveys	
	Parent.....	25
	Teacher.....	26
	Principal.....	27
	Superintendent/School Board.....	28
	Sample Quality Indicator Checklists	
	Communication.....	30
	Parenting.....	31
	Student Learning.....	32
	Volunteering.....	33
	School Decision-Making.....	34
	Community Collaboration.....	35
	Sample Compacts	
	Parent.....	37
	Student.....	38
	Teacher.....	39
	Sample Team Work Plan.....	40
	Sample School Policy.....	41
	Resources.....	42

Chapter 1

Executive Summary

Cornerstones of Success

Introduction

Historical Perspective

Executive Summary

During the First Regular Session of the 112th General Assembly, 2001, Senate Enrolled Act 505¹ was enacted to address parental involvement in school systems and students' educational processes. The Indiana Department of Education was charged with the responsibility to provide models of parental participation to schools. These models would capture the trends of current research, the philosophical viewpoints of national significance, and include a list of resources for local school systems. Additionally, the document was to include methods and examples of documents to assist local school systems in designing their own process for developing policies, surveys, and compacts.

This resource book is comprised of four chapters. Chapter one includes the Department of Education statement, an introduction to the subject matter, and a brief historical perspective of parental involvement in education.

Chapter two is a comprehensive review and narrative of the nationally accepted standards, based on the research of Joyce Epstein at Johns Hopkins University. As part of the general discussion of each standard, quality indicators, based on Parent/Family Involvement Programs published by the National Parent Teacher Association, are included.

Chapter three includes a brief pathway for developing local policies, a narrative outline targeting methodology for surveying stakeholders in the local school system, and a description for implementing and evaluating the progress of parent involvement programs at the local level.

Chapter four is comprised of sample parent, teacher, principal, and superintendent/board of education surveys, a checklist of the quality indicators for each standard, a sample team work plan, and sample compacts for teachers, students, and parents.

Also included are endnotes and a list of other resources that local schools systems may access when building their individual programs.

School-Parent-Community Partnerships

Cornerstones of Success

School-parent-community partnerships are described as continuous planning, participation, and evaluation of activities that enhance the success of students. The Indiana Department of Education recognizes that a student's education is a joint responsibility shared by schools and parents as part of the larger community, and that these participants directly impact learning. The Department believes that schools must, in cooperation with their constituencies, create an atmosphere of collaboration, mutual acceptance, and commonality of goals in order to foster the educational success of all children. The Department encourages each school system in the state of Indiana, in concert with parents and community partners, to incorporate strategies related to school-parent-community partnerships in the school's strategic and continuous school improvement and achievement plan under Public Law 221-1999. Processes for evaluating progress in addressing the involvement of parents and the community in order to advance student achievement should be part of these strategies.

Introduction

Experts, research, school systems, and parents all confirm that students perform at a higher educational level when there is evidence of parent involvement in schools. Across varied levels of public involvement, communities of diverse size or location, and school administrations, a groundswell of sentiment is rising to emphasize the collaborative paths that must be taken to ensure that students are achieving at the highest levels possible.

Considerable public attention is being directed toward emphasizing student achievement. Concerned parents, schools, and community leaders are working together to forge partnerships that are meaningful and that create ownership for workable policies focused on environments that foster learning. Numerous states are addressing the issues involved, numerous universities continue to be involved in longitudinal studies, and federal and state governmental agencies, are addressing partnerships as integral elements of best practices, policy, and regulation.

Historical Perspective

Systems of education have undergone a host of changes even in the last one hundred years. What began as the one-room schoolhouse with the community or wealthy citizens employing a teacher has become a multimillion-dollar enterprise, supported by tax dollars, with established standards of curriculum content while maintaining an influential public persona. But even with the vast changes, experts still agree that this business is—and always will be—about children. In many communities, isolationism has created barriers among the schools that are charged with educating youth, the families from which these young students come, and the communities in which all live. There has been a pervasive aura of separatism; the child belonged to the school for certain hours of the day, the parents other hours. Communities became larger and more diverse: the lives of families more complex. Parent involvement was relegated primarily to extracurricular activities. Community entities were all but nonexistent within the school setting. But in the intervening years, a tide of opinion arose, not only within the community and with parents, but also within the schools themselves. All three constituencies felt disengaged, out of touch with other entities, and constantly on the defensive. There was a sense of loss and fragmentation. These issues, although viewed negatively, have been a primary catalyst driving the renewal of parent and community involvement in the educational system. At the same time, there were many districts that chose to create schools that were truly an integral part of the community and to forge partnerships with parents that significantly impacted the common goal of educating children. These districts stand as examples of how collaboration works and how all people, especially the students involved, profit.

As Indiana begins a new century, educators, parents, legislators, and community leaders have come together to create new legislation with the focus on parental involvement in schools as a component of Public Law 221² and its strategic and continuous school improvement process for schools. This resource book is distributed to all school communities in order to assist in the formulation of local planning to meet those goals.

Chapter 2

Overview of National Standards and Quality Indicators

National Standards

Quality Indicators

National Standards

Based on the extensive research of Joyce Epstein, Ph. D., of Johns Hopkins University, school districts, as well as a number of national organizations, have embraced the six components that comprised the basis of the study. These six components, included in Dr. Epstein’s work “School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share,”³ have become accepted, by state departments of education, the National Parent Teacher Association, and other entities, as national standards for parental involvement. As this resource guide will show, these components form the core elements that schools need to address to ensure student achievement.

The six major components are:

Communication
Parenting
Student Learning
Volunteering
School Decision-Making
Community Collaboration

The National Parent Teacher Association in their publication, “National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs,”⁴ has formally adopted the six standards and has utilized prevalent research to designate a number of quality indicators that are important to student success. These indicators, or ones containing similar issues, have become widely used for implementation of goals in promoting school, parent, and community partnerships in order to support the learning and growth of children. As school improvement committees create the framework for the parent/school partnerships, standards and corresponding quality indicators will effectively be accompanied by a methodology for determining the essential elements that will be addressed. By utilizing the quality indicators as the basis of measurable goals and activities, schools will be able to calculate the success of their methodology and revise or enhance activities.

Standard I

COMMUNICATION

The most important factor in any partnership is communication. Examples can be found in many forms, e. g., notes from the teacher to the parent, e-mail systems, Web sites, study guides for parents, outlines of course expectations and approximate time lines, and homework lists, as well as larger school/parent meetings and focus groups seeking input on major school policy issues. These opportunities for the exchange of information are vital and must be consistently utilized for meaningful involvement to occur. There has been a pervasive atmosphere that the only time teachers and parents communicated was when there were of problems. With more consistent communication, teachers and parents can address the many positives in a student's life. On a larger scale, schools, parents, and community partners need to meet in an atmosphere of mutual respect to address issues that affect the functions of the school. Schools should seek out parents who bring a variety of perspectives to the issue. Those who are willing to serve in decision-making capacities become important partners for individual schools and education in general.

One of the more puzzling aspects of parent involvement is the attempt to engage parents who are not active or visible to the school community.⁵ It may be counterproductive for educators or involved parents to formulate pre-conceived notions concerning those parents who, on the surface, appear non-participatory. These parents may have feelings of educational inadequacy, experience language barriers, have economic issues, or possess life stresses that hinder their participation. They must still be recognized as the primary individual in the child's life, and schools bear the responsibility of making contact. Educators have an essential duty to determine the reasons for barriers to non-participation and to offer assistance to those parents, so that they can become integral partners in their child's education. For even the previously non-involved parent, educators must view parents as a vital resource to be tapped in assisting students to master skills needed for advancement.

Quality Indicators

1. A variety of communication methods are used, including personal individual notes, class newspapers, school newsletters, student diaries, e-mail, Web sites.
2. Opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss learning preferences and student strengths and needs are held at least annually.
3. Clear outlines of courses, including learning goals, approximate time lines, expectations of students and projected dates of tests, projects, etc., school activities, optional programs for students and parents, are communicated clearly to parents.
4. Time lines for progress reports with conference opportunities are established and applied.

5. School handbooks include policies, discipline procedures, assessment procedures, and detailed opportunities for parent involvement.
6. Personal conferences with parents are used to discuss not only needs of students but also positive aspects, achievement, and a commitment to immediate contact should issues arise.
7. Student work is distributed for comment from parents.
8. Language barrier issues are identified and resolved.
9. Both formal and informal opportunities for parent contact with school administration are provided.
10. Staff development related to two-way contact with parents is ongoing.
11. Schools and teachers utilize parent liaisons to reach the disengaged parent on a personal basis.

Standard II

PARENTING

What may seem to be a subject disconnected from school curriculum, activities, and the education of students, the topic of parenting is a vital component of student success. In contrast to the fact that parents were the child's first teachers, countless surveys of parents reveal that many anxieties exist, from feeling inadequate to assist with homework to issues dealing with drugs and inappropriate behavior. Schools can play a significant role in ensuring that parenting programs, workshops on dealing with student issues, and engagement of parents in supporting strong student skill development are emphasized within the community.

Schools have resources, including access to those with expertise in various subjects concerning parenting, and are able to offer a number of approaches. Parents welcome the prospect of learning something new about working with their children, gaining validation about their own skills, or anticipating the chance to meet other parents of their child's friends. Parents of students engaged in sports or other extracurricular activities often have the opportunity to meet other parents, while others have limited connections to other parents in their child's educational setting.

With the growing diversity in communities, schools have the extraordinary opportunity to bring together a group of people with common goals, not withstanding background, education, or affiliation, of educating their children and being supportive parents. Parents can also provide training; if schools and classroom teachers have conscientiously attempted to survey the talents of parents, they can find phenomenal resources about a variety of subjects. A significant consideration is the continuing willingness for involvement from the parent who has experienced fulfillment from being able to contribute, and the positive effect that parent involvement has on the child. At the other end of the spectrum, parents sometimes need resources themselves. A school attuned to parent partnerships should be able to produce information about community resources and referral contacts if the need arises.

Quality Indicators

1. Staff members exhibit respect for parents as the primary support and most important influence in their child's life.
2. Staff members reach out to all parents, not just the ones who are "always" at the school.
3. People of diverse cultures are respected and valued for their contribution to the community. If barriers to communication exist, they are remedied.

4. The school provides opportunities for parents to learn more about parenting skills.
5. Parents are involved as trainers, tapping into specialized information, cultural perspectives, and individual talents in sessions for staff, other parents, or students.
6. School staff members are knowledgeable about community resources for parents.
7. Parents are included in building skills with their child, training/suggestions for enhancing academic work at home, and the academic success of their child.
8. The school provides notices of community opportunities that will enrich the life of the students and family.

Standard III

STUDENT LEARNING

Research confirms that the most critical relationship regarding student achievement remains the connection between teacher and parent. In order to maintain open communications between the teacher, the student, and the parent, a clear outline of expectations must exist. Although an additional issue, involving student learning, has been noted in a prior standard, a significant motivation of learning is success. Communication between teachers and parents must always include positive statements.

The Indiana State Board of Education has adopted higher standards for subjects at all grade levels. Schools must ensure that parents are aware of their ability to access these standards through a variety of media, including the Indiana Department of Education Web site. Actual copies of the standards are sent to schools in order to provide copies to parents. As schools are distributing the standards to parents, providing workshops on linking the standards to curriculum will give parents a clear idea of the skills that students are to acquire. These are the levels of skill acquisition that are the basis of achievement. In meeting those standards, teachers, parents, and students must all be simultaneously attuned to the skills necessary to perform at each level and to sustain that body of knowledge in order to strengthen the prospect of student achievement and success.

One notable issue that has surfaced in the research on parent involvement has been in regard to homework, a major source of confusion and contention. The guidelines should be defined explicitly so that parents and students have a clear understanding of expectations. Surveys from parents are clear that while homework is expected, it is to be assigned judiciously and must be meaningful.

A major research project commissioned by Metropolitan Life, “Building Family-School Partnerships: Views of Teachers and Students,”⁶ probed various perceptions of student learning and parental involvement in schools. The statistical correlation between grade achievement and parental involvement has served to underscore the importance of these components of education. While the expected result was that educators wanted to see a higher level of involvement on the part of parents, the percentage of students that affirmed that they benefited substantially from their parents’ involvement, or that they desired considerably more parental involvement, was well above the anticipated level. An additional component addressed to students focused on their opinion of the interaction between school and parent. A significant number of students reported that the school should employ practices to emphasize more parental involvement.

The importance of this issue of student learning and achievement presents an opportunity for schools and teachers to communicate with parents and provide avenues for involvement that will foster the most desired outcome, student success. Schools have a broad array of teaching and learning resources that can be accessed by parents. By utilizing the “train-the-trainer” focus, teachers can actually provide skill development for parents, so that they can echo the classroom strategies in the home that the student

sees at school. With this systematic reinforcement, students learn valuable lessons in the particular skill without the confusion of multiple strategies and have a better understanding that their education is a joint effort by their teacher and their parent. A feature of prevailing philosophy is to “leave no child behind.” To accomplish that, schools must leave no parent behind.

Quality Indicators

1. Schools or individual teachers offer mini-sessions for parents on ways that they can mirror learning strategies and assist their child in learning at home.
2. Schools ensure that all parents and students have clear guidelines on standards for the subject and grade level lessons, and project timelines and expectations.
3. In-service training is provided to teachers about techniques for engaging parents in learning.
4. Student projects requiring parental involvement are used.
5. School newsletters feature the importance of involvement and other learning opportunities for parents.
6. Parents are involved at the decision-making level on curriculum and school-related issues.
7. Parents with expertise on particular subjects are involved in classroom or other school activities.
8. The school maintains a list of community or nearby opportunities for parent/student involvement in learning, e. g., museums, local points of interest, and similar community resources related to curricular objectives.

Standard IV

VOLUNTEERING

As schools proceed in identifying avenues of knowing and involving parents, one of the more widely used methods is that of the volunteer parent. Because this is a relatively easy way to involve parents, many schools have tried utilizing parents in various roles within the school structure, including working a couple of mornings in the front office, assisting with reading in the classroom, or providing snacks for extracurricular activities. Unfortunately, without knowledge of parent skills and talents, and with little or no organization surrounding the effort, volunteering begins to disintegrate.

If schools are to profit from the many talents of parents, a thorough discovery phase must be implemented. During the time that teachers are learning about parents, it becomes appropriate to share that data for the whole school, and not just an isolated class. Administrators and teachers comment that “wish lists” are dreams never to be fulfilled. But wish lists can become reality if a systematic volunteer program is put into place, with ongoing review and with rewards, no matter how simple, for those parents who are willing to donate their time and talent. As a result of the significant influx of families from Asia, Latin America, and Europe, a wonderful source of cultural enrichment has been provided to many communities. These parents can bring a new level of world awareness to schools and the students involved in studying other cultures.

Schools must look beyond the stay-at-home parent who can come in and help for the morning; they must look at the parents who work but can accomplish great things on weekends with supplied materials. Schools must look at combining parent expertise and involving parents’ employers to make the link to the community. They must look past the parent who is always there to the parent whose face no one recognizes. This does require effort, but the rewards are many, for the school as a whole, the individual child whose parents are involved, and the parents who is contributing to the success of their child and the school.

Quality Indicators

1. The use of interviews and survey forms, indicating personal interests, areas of expertise, and significant life experiences are utilized in classes and throughout the school.
2. There is an organized method of recruiting and rewarding volunteer efforts, including avenues for involving the non-involved parent.
3. There are consistent processes for volunteers who come to the school.
4. Staff members are aware of volunteer efforts and are involved in ensuring that parents are recognized for their contributions and that the individual child is included.

5. Assignments that are completed by volunteers are legitimate contributions to the class or school and are acknowledged verbally and in writing.
6. Volunteers who come to the school are aware of school policies including safety policies.

Standard V

SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING

One of the more difficult transitions concerns parental participation on major decision-making committees. Schools have historically made decisions in isolation or accompanied by outside experts. If the decisions were unpopular or unsuccessful, schools experienced parent disapproval and media scrutiny. Although designing and adhering to total parent inclusion in decision-making is sometimes likened to a frightening loss of control or power, the schools that have adopted the mechanisms for such levels of parent involvement have reaped vast benefits despite occasional incidents of confrontation.

For many schools, it remains a scary scenario to move parents from making flash cards or making treats for extracurricular activities to board committees that consider such issues as curriculum, textbook choice, or safety issues where there are serious consequences for errors in judgment. Schools bear the responsibility for educating children, and inviting parents in as partners, especially those with divergent philosophies, can be unsettling to school districts accustomed to making all decisions without input from staff, parents, or community partners.

As schools move toward parent inclusion, the foundations of that partnership must be based on mutual trust, respect, an appreciation for cultural diversity, a tolerance of differing viewpoints, and divergent philosophies. By celebrating the successes of projects of lesser controversy and taking time to explore positive activities and defining solutions to barriers, partnerships can move confidently to more complex issues.

Quality Indicators

1. There is administrative provision and active support for parent associations.
2. Training is made available on a continuing basis, at least annually, for school staff and parents on how to create and maintain effective partnerships.
3. Parents are involved on policy and procedure committees where the representation mirrors the demographics of the school and community.
4. Parents are involved in the process of evaluating school functions and performance.
5. Parents are informed of opportunities for involvement in education issues beyond the local school level.
6. There are formal procedures in place to involve parents who have limited time or who have traditionally had limited opportunities to contribute to school issues.

Standard VI

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

If schools are going to realize a profitable collaboration, then the administration must look beyond the parents of the students and into the larger community. These are the community partners; the businesses where parents are employed, and other local entities can provide valuable linkages for involvement. These are the partners that can lend expertise to problems and be visible partners for education.

Businesses have a vested interest in education and the functions of schools. They are the potential employers of the students after additional post-secondary educational . As some researchers have stated, if one looks at school systems as producing a product, the students, and community businesses as the consumers of that product, the potential employers, then following the example of successful businesses, schools must involve themselves in consumer research and responsiveness to the needs of the community as a whole. Businesses can provide and view the long-term effects of standards of achievement and assist in determining areas of the educational process that need strengthening. By forging this bond of collaboration, schools have the opportunity to profit from community leaders being involved with school functions and ensuring that educational goals are at the forefront of the business community's agenda.

Businesses are not the only community partners able to offer a variety of resources. Schools should ensure that other types of organizations are engaged for possible collaboration. Other community partners utilized successfully by schools include senior citizen groups, public health offices, fine arts organizations, and wellness centers.

Quality Indicators

1. Encourage businesses to adopt policies that promote the involvement of parents and employees as integral partners with schools.
2. Formal and informal processes exist by which business representatives are on committees that adopt, revise, or evaluate curricula.
3. Procedures encourage schools to be participants in community functions promoting well-being and focusing on awareness of community services, learning opportunities, and student enrichment.
4. Formal agreements are in place, assisting in the placement of age-eligible students in intern positions in local businesses.

5. Ample opportunities exist for the exchange of information between community service agencies and schools in order to promote volunteering and community service among students.
6. Schools regularly review the roster of current active community partners and seek the affiliation of those who are not participants.
7. School staff members are fully informed of community service agencies and are able to communicate with parents about linkages.
8. Business partners are utilized as resources both in the classroom and at the administrative level.

Chapter 3

Policy Design

Survey Methodology

Implementation

Evaluation

End Notes

Policies, Surveys, Implementation, Evaluation

As schools develop their school improvement plans, consistent with Public Law 221, these plans must include provisions for parent involvement. As the review or designs are formulated, those who are charged with the process would be prudent to contact those who have procedures and a plan that are defined and functioning well. There are many pitfalls that can be avoided, from setting the agenda for the first meeting to responding to the evaluation of the plan. This document emphasizes that communication must be forthright and meetings conducted with respect. School systems may want to utilize an outside resource for assistance in facilitating meetings, but the outside resource must be fully aware that for this to be truly effective, it cannot be just a paper process. Issues must be brought to the table that may appear insurmountable; parents who have not been involved need to appreciate that success can sometimes be elusive and barriers exist that require dedication and time to resolve.

There are a multitude of resources available to promote parent, school, and community partnerships. One recipient of a United States Department of Education grant is the Indiana Partnership Center, an organization that offers consultation, training, and technical assistance in establishing parents as partners for any school system. There are numerous resources in print and on the world-wide-web, including other states' education departments (see Resources).

In beginning the actual work of creating strategies for parent and community involvement, the first step is to identify a broad range of stakeholders, including administrative staff, teachers, parents, and community representatives to participate on the school improvement plan committee (planning team) as a component of Public Law 221-1999. This group must commit to functioning in an oversight capacity throughout the planning process, implementation and annual review processes.⁷

One notable directive for action team models has always been to define the scope of the project, have those involved create a shared vision, and allow the vision to generate the maps that will be the foundations of the project. Time must be devoted to addressing structural issues for the group process and to understanding current parent involvement issues from each stakeholder.

After the planning team has convened and developed a group process, created the vision, and determined the scope of the project, the school improvement plan committee will need to develop or review the local school board policy on parent involvement.⁸ It is recommended that policies created at the local level address the following areas concerning parent involvement: (1) Opportunities for parents to be involved on various levels from the classroom to general school functions; (2) Opportunities for parents to receive information on their child's education; (3) The standards by which skills and learning activities are measured; and (4) Community resources. Another key element centers on the availability of training for staff on the subject of "quality engagement" of parents. School directives should certainly contain recognition of the parent as the primary focal point of the child's life and respect for individual culture and diversity. The primary focus of any policy designed to address parent involvement must have a centralized focus on achievement. As the school improvement plan committee works through this process of developing a parent involvement policy, they will soon recognize that by addressing the

issues cited in this document there will be an automatic emphasis on student achievement.

The next recommended step is to conduct an assessment of parents, students, school personnel, and community partners to learn the strengths and needs for creating or sustaining parent, school, and community partnerships (see Chapter 4 for sample surveys). There are decisions that must be addressed, such as deciding the number of survey recipients and determining an acceptable number of responses from each group of survey respondents. Another important issue that must be addressed is the calculation, formulation, and categorization of survey results. The planning group must address what the assessment is revealing with a review of responses. For example, question sixteen (16) in the parent survey asks, “Do you know what the curriculum requirements are for your child’s grade?” If this survey question generated a high number of “no” responses, then the school improvement plan committee would want to address this in the plan. Also, just as planning groups will focus on issues of concern, it remains of utmost importance to also focus on those survey responses that indicate success. By reviewing and studying the results of positive comments, the planning group can determine methods of parent involvement that are successful and can utilize methods that have produced success or provided a link to an additional issue.

The planning team must analyze the data and compare it to the six standards and related quality indicators to establish the priorities and actions for the parent involvement strategies. Chapter 2 contains the in-depth description of the national standards and quality indicators that are involved in creating and maintaining schools that emphasize parent, school, and community partnerships.

With the planning group in place, the policy formulated, the surveys completed, tabulated, and compared to the quality indicators, the committee must turn its attention to the development, implementation, and evaluation of the plan. As with any project, there are components that are vital to success. These components include measurable goals or outcomes, clearly stated activities, identification of responsible persons, professional development, a time line for review and completion, and a methodology for evaluation of the project (see chapter 4 for a sample work plan). In the literature review completed for this resource book, a notable suggestion was made by multiple school systems for enhancing outcomes: ENSURE THE TIME AND OPPORTUNITY TO CELEBRATE SUCCESSES.

Research has proven time and again that parent involvement is the key. If school systems expect to see an impact on student achievement, then this planning process must garner the attention of stakeholders, require the commitment of each person involved, and emphasize that parent involvement will become the primary method for success. Student success and achievement are the ultimate outcomes as schools move through the development and implementation of a parent involvement plan. The Indiana Department of Education is committed to providing the leadership to promote these partnerships, not only through linkages with state and local partners, but through the collection and distribution of information and resources.

End Notes

- 1 Enrolled Act, Public Law 279-2001, Indiana Code 20-10.2-3, 20-8.1-14, State of Indiana.
- 2 Enrolled Act, Public Law 221-1999, Indiana Code 20-10.2-3, State of Indiana.
- 3 Epstein, Joyce L., “School/Family/Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share,” *Phi Delta Kappan* 76(9) (May, 1995): 701-712.
- 4 National Parent Teacher Association, “National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs,” 1998.
- 5 Education Resource Information Center, “Parent Involvement: Disregard Hard-to-Reach Stereotypes.” http://www.eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families/hard_to_reach/chapters63.html 6
Metropolitan Life Survey, “Building Family-School Partnerships: Views of Teachers and Students,” Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. (survey project directors), 1997.
- 7 Vermont Department of Education, “Equity and Excellence Action Planning Guide,” <http://www.state.vt.us/educ/actplan/APguide7.htm>.
- 8 Connecticut State Department of Education, et al., Policy Action Packet for School-Family-Community Partnerships, 1998.

Chapter 4

Sample Surveys

Sample Quality Indicator Checklists

Sample Compacts

Sample Work Plan

Sample School Policy

Resources

Sample Surveys

PARENT SURVEY

ISSUE	YES	NO
1. Does you support active learning for your child at home?		
2. Do you have a set routine for study, television, conversation, and bedtime?		
3. Do you have positive communication between family members and your child?		
4. Do you encourage reading, by reading to/with your child or discussion of books?		
5. Do you have clear rules/expectations for your child at home and school?		
6. Do you encourage good eating habits?		
7. Do you make sure that your child attends/gets to school on time?		
8. Do you have a mutual respect for school staff and expect that of your child?		
9. Do you call/contact your child's teacher regularly?		
10. Do you respond promptly to communication from the school?		
11. Are you a good role model for your child?		
12. Are you actively involved in activities in your child's classroom?		
13. Are you actively involved in over-all school activities, e. g., PTA?		
14. If you work, do you volunteer for other activities outside the school day?		
15. Have you communicated your willingness to serve on school planning groups?		
16. Do you know what the curriculum requirements are for your child's grade?		
17. Do you keep up with the over-all lesson plan for your child's subjects?		
18. Do you have high expectations for your child both academically and behaviorally, and do you communicate that to your child and the teacher?		
19. Do you utilize your work/business to promote good community educational goals?		
20. Do you review your child's class work and homework?		

TEACHER SURVEY

ISSUE	YES	NO
1. Do you contact each child's parent by phone or e-mail during each grading period?		
2. Do you ensure that cultural/ethnic diversity is respected?		
3. Do you expect the best from each student?		
4. Do you provide a curriculum outline with projected dates for parents?		
5. Do you talk to parents about the learning style of their child?		
6. When you talk to parents, do you discuss positive aspects of their child?		
7. Do you survey parents to know what their talents are?		
8. Do you discuss homework with parents and are assignments meaningful?		
9. Do you offer resources to parents (verbal/written) on how to help their child?		
10. Do you find something for each parent to do to contribute to the classroom?		
11. Do you celebrate parent contributions with the class?		
12. Are parents "surprised" negatively when report cards arrive?		
13. Do parents know the class schedule?		
14. Do parents understand the academic standards and report card procedures?		
15. Do you do environmental scans of unusual behaviors that should be reported to parents (e. g., squinting, unhappiness)?		
16. Do you discuss social behavior and discipline policies with parents?		
17. Do you provide linkages to other services that parents may need?		
18. Do parents feel welcome in your class and know how to contact you?		
19. Do parents know the importance of being involved in their child's learning?		
20. Do you welcome parent suggestions for your class?		

PRINCIPAL SURVEY

ISSUE	YES	NO
1. Do you set a positive standard for parent involvement?		
2. Do you balance the need for safety with an “open-door” policy?		
3. Do you provide training for teachers on getting parental involvement?		
4. Do you communicate the definition of parent involvement?		
5. Do you have parents who meet regularly to address school-wide issues?		
6. Do you set the standard for respect of ethnic/cultural diversity?		
7. Do you communicate the “customer service” view to your staff and parents?		
8. Do you set high expectations of staff, students, and parents?		
9. Do you have a plan in place to monitor results of school/parent initiatives?		
10. Do you have group meetings with parents to discuss over-all school issues?		
11. Do you ensure that school newsletters or other written communication are family/culturally friendly?		
12. Do staff members know how to assist with accessing resources for non-educational needs for families?		
13. Do you maintain a group of staff and families to address involvement?		
14. Do you know and use individual families' expertise to enhance the school?		
15. Do you involve a variety of parents in school planning committees?		
16. Do you work closely with parent organizations on school-wide issues?		
17. Do you provide training to teachers on to involving parents who are inactive?		
18. Do you have parent education available?		
19. Do you utilize involved parents to involve other parents?		
20. Do you utilize parents as trainers in staff development activities?		

SUPERINTENDENT/SCHOOL BOARD SURVEY

ISSUE	YES	NO
1. Do you actively support public accountability for school function/use of tax dollars?		
2. Do you have a standing agenda item for meetings that includes meaningful dialogue on parent involvement in schools?		
3. Do you provide opportunities for parent organizations to discuss issues with the board?		
4. Do you actively involve a variety of parents in policy-making decisions?		
5. Do you gain input from a variety of parents prior to making policy decisions?		
6. Do you encourage local businesses to address the board about school/community outcomes?		
7. Do you communicate to principals/staff the priority of effective school/parent partnerships?		
8. Do you have parents/staff committees that are responsible for formulating, communicating, and evaluating school/parent partnership policies?		
9. Do you communicate to local employers the need for parent involvement?		
10. Do you communicate to local businesses the need for and mutual benefits of community partnerships?		
11. Are the expenditures/budgets of the school district clearly communicated to the public?		
12. Do you actively seek the expertise of community partners and parents?		
13. Do you seek the expertise and support of the teaching staff of the schools?		
14. Do you communicate the need for staff development opportunities and monitor effectiveness of training opportunities?		
15. Do you have a method for continuous community comment?		
16. Do you publicly celebrate successes of the school community?		
17. Do you maintain a cordial and open relationship with the media?		
18. Do you promote in all venues the goals of student achievement?		
19. Do you work with principals, teachers, and parents to address sensitive community issues and barriers to success?		
20. Do you recognize and promote the benefits of diversity?		

Sample Quality Indicator Checklists

Quality Indicator Worksheet

COMMUNICATION

INDICATOR	YES	NO
1. A variety of communication methods are used, including personal, individual notes, class newspapers, school newsletters, student diaries, Web sites/e-mail.		
2. Opportunities for parents and teachers to discuss learning preferences and student strengths and needs are held at least annually.		
3. Clear outlines of courses, including learning goals, approximate time lines, expectations of students and projected dates of tests, projects, school activities, and optional programs for students and families are communicated clearly to parents.		
4. Time lines for progress reports with conferences opportunities are established and applied.		
5. School handbooks include policies, discipline procedures, assessment procedures and opportunities for parent involvement.		
6. Personal conferences with parents are used to discuss not only needs of students but positive aspects, achievement, and a commitment to immediate contact should issues arise.		
7. Student work is distributed for comment from parents.		
8. Language barrier issues are identified and resolved.		
9. Both formal and informal opportunities for parent contact with school administration are provided.		
10. Staff development on two-way contact with families is part of ongoing in-service training.		
11. School and teachers utilize parent liaisons to reach disengaged parents on a personal basis		

Quality Indicator Worksheet PARENTING

INDICATOR	YES	NO
1. Staff members exhibit respect for parents as the primary support and most important influence in their child’s life.		
2. Staff members reach out to all families, not just the ones who are “always” there/volunteering.		
3. People of diverse cultures are respected and valued for their contribution to the community; if barriers to communication exist they are remedied.		
4. The school provides opportunities for parents to learn more about parenting skills.		
5. Parents are involved as trainers, tapping into specialized information, cultural perspectives, and individual talents in sessions for staff, other parents, or students.		
6. School staff members are knowledgeable about community resources for parents.		
7. Parents are included in building skills with their child, training/suggestions for enhancing academic work at home, and the academic success of their child.		
8. The school provides notices of community opportunities that will enrich the life of the student and the family.		

Quality Indicator Worksheet

STUDENT LEARNING

INDICATOR	YES	NO
1. Schools or individual teachers offer mini-sessions for parents on ways that parents can mirror training techniques and assist their student in learning at home.		
2. Schools ensure that all parents and students have clear guidelines on standards for the subject and grade level, lessons and project time lines, and expectations.		
3. In-service training is provided to teachers on techniques of engaging parents in learning.		
4. Student projects that require parental involvement are used.		
5. School newsletters feature the importance of involvement and other learning opportunities for parents.		
6. Parents are involved at the decision-making level on curriculum and school-related issues.		
7. Parents with expertise on particular subjects are involved in classroom or other school activities.		
8. The school maintains a list of community or nearby opportunities for parent/student involvement in learning, e. g., museums, local points of interest and other local community resources related to curricular objectives.		

Quality Indicator Worksheet VOLUNTEERING

INDICATOR	YES	NO
1. The use of interviews and survey forms indicating personal interests, areas of expertise, and significant life experiences are utilized in classes and throughout the school.		
2. There is an organized method of recruiting and rewarding volunteer efforts including avenues for involving the non-involved parent.		
3. There are consistent processes for volunteers who come to the school.		
4. Staff members are aware of volunteer efforts and are involved in ensuring that parents are thanked for their contribution and that the individual child is included.		
5. Assignments that are completed by volunteers are legitimate contributions to the class or school and are acknowledged verbally and in writing.		
6. Volunteers who come to the school are aware of school policies including safety policies.		

Quality Indicator Worksheet

SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING

INDICATOR	YES	NO
1. There is administrative provision and active support for parent associations.		
2. Training is made available on a continuing basis, at least annually, for school staff and parents on how to create and maintain effective partnerships.		
3. Parents are involved on policy and procedure committees where the representation mirrors the demographics of the school and community.		
4. Parents are involved in the process of evaluating school functions and performance.		
5. Parents are informed of opportunities for involvement in educational issues beyond the local school level.		
6. There are formal procedures in place to involve parents who have limited time or who have traditionally had limited opportunities to contribute to school issues.		

Quality Indicator Worksheet COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

INDICATOR	YES	NO
1. Encourage businesses to adopt policies that promote the involvement of parents and employees as integral partners with schools.		
2. Formal and informal processes exist by which businesses are part of committees that adopt, revise, or evaluate curricula.		
3. There are procedures that encourage schools to be participants in community functions that promote well-being and are focused on awareness of community services, learning opportunities, and student enrichment.		
4. Formal agreements are in place that assist in the placement of age-eligible students in intern positions in local businesses.		
5. There are ample opportunities for the exchange of information between community service agencies and schools in order to promote volunteering among students.		
6. Schools regularly review the roster of current active community partners and seek the affiliation of those who are not participants.		
7. School staff members are fully informed of community service agencies and are able to communicate with parents about linkages.		
8. Business partners are utilized as resources both in the classroom and at the administrative level.		

Sample Compacts

Sample Compact PARENT

School-Parent-Community Partnerships

1. I will encourage my child to do well in school and be a good citizen in the classroom, respecting teachers, school staff, and other students.
2. I will maintain an environment and schedule at home that fosters learning and ensures that my child will attend school regularly, with the ability to learn and actively participate in school activities.
3. I will monitor out of school activities to ensure my child's well-being and safety and provide enough time for parent-child learning time together.
4. I will read all correspondence from the school and promptly respond to a request from a teacher or staff member concerning the well-being and educational activities of my child.
5. I will seek ways to assist my child in learning by reinforcing lessons from school and other community learning opportunities.
6. I will communicate to my child's teacher any circumstances that would directly affect my child's ability to learn.
7. I will make myself knowledgeable concerning the education standards set forth for the grade and subject matter for my child and be continually aware of the current status of my child's work.
8. I will volunteer personal time to my child's class and /or to the school to ensure that the school is meeting the educational needs of the community.

Signature: _____

Parent

Date: _____

Sample Compact STUDENT

School-Parent-Community Partnerships

1. I will try to work hard in school and do my very best on all assigned learning activities.
2. I will show respect for my teacher, other school staff, and other students. I will understand school regulations and follow school rules.
3. I will make sure that any messages between my teachers and parents are given to them as soon as possible.
4. I will go to parent-teacher conferences and be a part of the meeting in order to make sure that I am learning the skills that are necessary for my success.
5. I will complete and discuss my homework with my parents so that they can see the new things that I am learning and be part of my education.
6. I will encourage my parents to become actively involved in my education by spending some time in my classroom and being involved in general school activities.
7. I will welcome visitors to my school and class and thank them for their work with students.
8. I will contribute my individual talents to making my school community better.

Signature: _____

Student

Date: _____

Sample Compact TEACHER

School-Parent-Community Partnerships

1. I will encourage all of my students to do their best in school and help both my students and their parents in order for my students to achieve needed skills.
2. I will acknowledge the important role that parents maintain in the life of their child and reinforce that role with my students.
3. I will work to communicate with all parents consistently so that all parents are aware of classroom activities, their child's involvement, and how they can participate.
4. I will ensure that all parents are aware of the educational standards for the subject and/or grade that I am teaching, that parents have a copy of the curriculum outline, and that they are aware of subject matter and project time lines.
5. I will ensure that all parents know how to contact me or the school, emphasize that communication is important in helping their child succeed, and conduct face-to-face conferences with parents.
6. I will know the parents of my students in order that they may contribute to the class or school functions. I will know the parents of my students in order to provide information or assistance for community needs that they may have.
7. I will ensure that if problems arise, I will communicate immediately with parents and include the positive activities in which the student is engaged.
8. I will ensure that parents are fully informed of school policies and opportunities for parent involvement beyond my classroom.

Signature: _____
Teacher

Date: _____

Team Work Plan

School:

Date:

Outcome Statement:

Strategies and Activities	Persons Involved	Time Line	Evaluation	Progress

Sample SCHOOL-PARENT-COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP POLICY

Our school recognizes that educating students and helping them achieve success is a shared responsibility between the school and parents. Schools and parents must work together to ensure that students develop the necessary skills for success in life.

The stakeholders in the process of educating students (the schools, the parents and the community) can each contribute unique individual and cultural aspects to forge partnerships that are meaningful and productive.

The school supports the development, implementation, and continuing evaluation of activities that promote:

- Communication between parents and schools
- Recognition of the primary roles of parents and parenting
- Successful student learning and skill development
- Parents and their contributions as welcomed assets
- Parents as vital members of the decision-making body of schools
- Community partnerships that expand horizons for students

RESOURCES

Alexandria Compact for Education. Alexandria City Public Schools, Alexandria, Virginia.

App, Marie, and Grinde, Jane, (eds.). *Families and Education: An Educator's Resource for Family Involvement.* Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. 1997.

Assessments, Communicating, Family Centers, Involving Families, Technology. The Family Connection of St. Joseph County. <http://www.partners-in-learning.org.htm>.

Bright Beginnings & Family-Community-School Partnership. State of Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction. <http://www.dpi.state.wi.us/dpi/dlcl/bbfcsp/fscpgeto/htm>.

de Kanter, Adriana, et al. *A Compact for Learning: An Action Handbook for Family-School-Community Partnerships.* United States Department of Education.

Enrolled Act, Public Law 279-2000 Indiana Code 20-10.2-3, 20-8.1-14.

Epstein, Joyce. *Chalkboard: Tips and Resources, Hand in Hand.* National Network of Partnerships - 2000 Schools. 1998.

Equity & Excellence: Action Planning Guide. Vermont Department of Education. <http://www.state.vt.us/educ/actplan/APguide5.htm>.

National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs. National Parent Teacher Association. <http://www.pta.org/programs/pfistand.htm>. 1997.

Parents, Educators, Business and Community Working Together. New Hampshire Department of Education. http://www.nhbsi.org/about/strong_business.htm.

Partners in Learning. Indiana Center For Family, School, & Community Partnerships. Spring 2001.

Public Law 221 InfoCenter. Indiana Department of Education. <http://www.doe.state.in.us>. 1999.

School-Family-Community Partnerships, Policy Action Packet. Connecticut State Department of Education, Connecticut Association of Boards of Education, Parent-Teacher Association of Connecticut, Special Education Resource Center. 1998.

School-Family-Community Partnerships, Position Statement. Connecticut State Board of Education. 1997.

School-Family Partnerships. Education Resource Information Center. <http://eric-web.tc.columbia.edu/families>.
