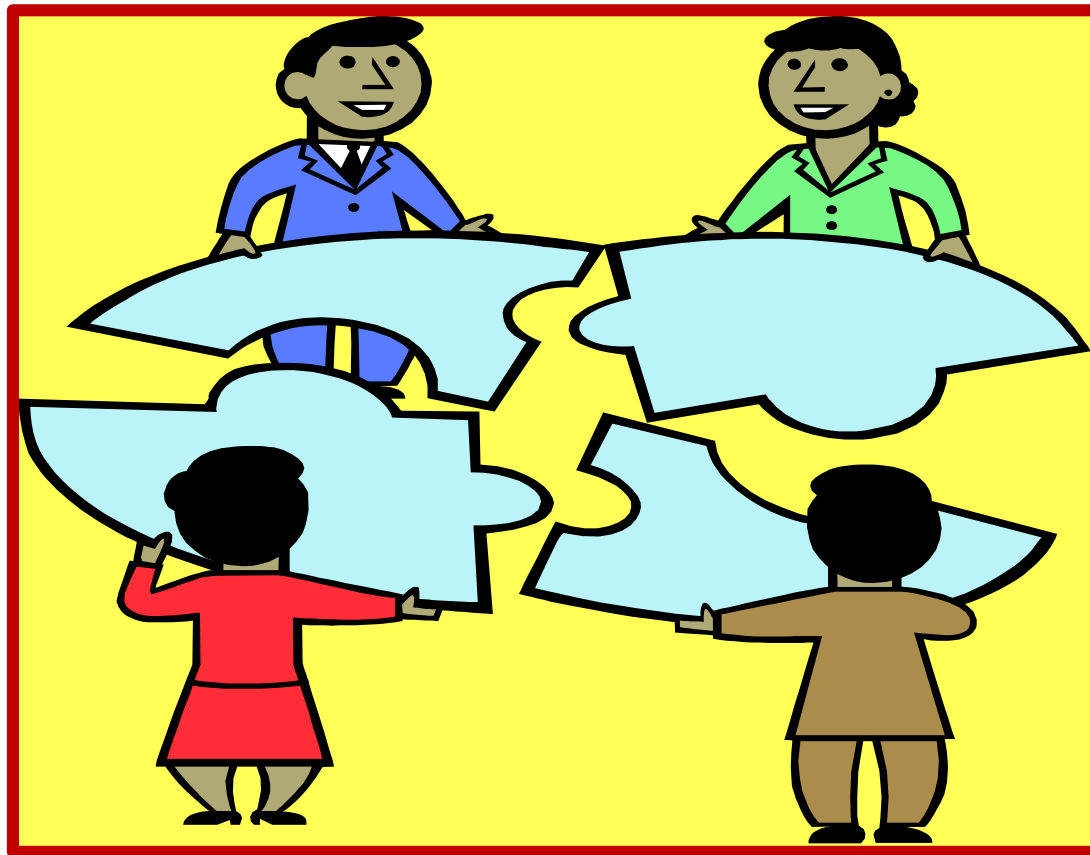# Building Partnerships With Parents

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2017 SW-PBS Summer Training Institute

MO SW-PBS & MTSS:
BRIDGING THE GAPS

Session Outcomes

- Define Family Involvement for your setting

- Determine Current Reality... Set Goals... Action Plan

- Explore resources for building partnerships with families

When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.

A. Henderson and K. Mapp; 2002

What comes to mind when you think of "Parent Involvement?"

Family participation can take on many forms and depends on the unique characteristics of each family.

Often, educators, families, and community partners all have different ideas of what role parents should play in their child's education.

While 90% of teachers felt family involvement in education was necessary, only 32% of teachers felt it was their responsibility to involve families.

Connors and Epstein (1994)

Barriers For Parents

- Time
- Uncertainty about purpose, motive or process
- Culture
- Previous experience with school
- Curriculum-
  - Number of teachers
  - Attitudes held by teachers and family
  - Proximity of school
- Officiousness
  - Official stationary and/or tone
  - Educationeze
  - Focus on history rather than future

Barriers for Schools

- One-sided power relationships between schools and families

- Inadequate teacher preparation regarding establishing and sustaining relationships with parents

- Limited time and material resources for engaging parents

- Attitudes about parent engagement

Parent Involvement

Family Engagement

Family-School Partnerships

Student achievement and school improvement are seen as a shared responsibility, relationships of trust and respect are established between home and school, and families and school staff see each other as equal partners.

Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships; a publication of SEDL in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education, 2014, Karen L. Mapp, EdD and Paul J. Kuttner

How do we get there?

1. **Build respectful and trusting relationships**
   - *The relationship between home and school serves as the foundation. People are more willing to learn from others whom they respect and trust.*

2. **Build capacity within ALL stakeholders.**
   - *Without attention to training and capacity building, well-intentioned partnership efforts don't work. Often revert back to "Random Acts of Engagement".*

3. **Link Family Involvement Practices to student achievement and school improvement.**
   - *Practices aligned with school and district achievement goals; connect families to teaching and learning goals for students.*

Staff Partnership Responsibilities

Staff

- Honor families' existing knowledge, skill, and forms of engagement.

- Create and sustain school and district cultures that welcome, invite, and promote family engagement.

- Develop family engagement practices and connect them to student learning and development.

Family Partnership Responsibilities

Families

- Supporters of their children's learning and development.

- Monitors of their children's time, behavior, boundaries, and resources.

- Decision-makers/choosers of educational options for their children, the school, and their community.

- Collaborators with school staff on issues of school improvement.

Where do we start?

- Common Language and Vision
- What is our goal for Family Involvement/Engagement/Partnerships in our school this year? How is this linked to student learning?
- What is our current reality? How do we know?
- What systems and practices do we need to put in place to reach our goal?
- How will we know when we are there? (Data…Data…Data)

Understanding of families' unique needs; access to targeted resources and supports; relationship established

Information provided in native language; translator; personal contact

Basic information about how to effectively engage in child's education provided through traditional communication system

Organizing Practices:

...*Epstein's six types!*

1. *Parenting*

2. *Communicating*

3. *Volunteering*

4. *Learning at Home*

5. *Decision Making*

6. *Collaborating with the Community*

"School, Family, and Community Partnerships" Joyce L. Epstein and Associates

1. Parenting

Help all families establish home environments to support children as students

- Parenting classes/adolescent development
- Family support programs
- GED, family literacy, college credit, computer classes
- Home visits/neighborhood meetings

Challenges - **PARENTING**

✓ Provide information to *all* families who want it or who need it, not just to the few who attend workshops or meetings at the school building.

✓ Allow families to share information with schools about their backgrounds, cultures, children's talents, goals, and needs.

Redefinitions:

A "workshop" is not only a meeting on a topic at the school building, but also the content of the meeting to be viewed, heard, or read at convenient times and varied locations by those who could not attend.

2. Communicating

Design effective forms of 2-way communications about school programs and student's progress

- Conferences with every family

- Language translators available

- Information to help families navigate school policies and procedures.

- Procedures for communicating are clearly defined

- Neighborhood representative/telephone trees

- Provide contact information for all staff members that is accessible to all families

Challenges - **COMMUNICATING**

✓Make all memos, notices, and other print and non- print communications clear and understandable for ALL families.

✓Obtain ideas from families to improve the design and content of communications such as newsletters, report cards, and conference schedules.

✓Establish easy-to-use two-way channels for communications from school to home and from home to school.

Redefinitions

"Communications about school programs and student progress" go not only from school to home, but also from home to school, and within the community.

3. Volunteering

Recruit and organize parent help and support

Organized, well-defined school and classroom volunteer program...

In Schools or Classrooms:

- Assist administrators, teachers, students or parents as aides, tutors, coaches, boosters, monitors, lecturers, chaperones, mentors, or in other ways

Audiences:

- Attend assemblies, performances, sports events, award ceremonies, celebrations, and other activities

Challenges **- VOLUNTEERING**

✓Recruit widely for volunteers so that all families know that their time and talents are welcome.

✓Make flexible schedules for volunteers, assemblies, and events to enable working parents to participate.

✓Provide training for volunteers, and match time and talent with school needs.

✓Recognize volunteers and audiences for their support and assistance at school and in other locations

Redefinitions

"Volunteer" not only means someone who comes to school during the day, but also anyone who supports school goals and children's learning and development in any way, at any place, and at any time.

4. Learning at Home

Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home.

- Skills required for subject/grade

- Homework policies/how to monitor homework/parents' role

- Setting student goals (college, work)

- Family interactive homework assignments

Challenges - LEARNING AT HOME

✓ Design and implement interactive homework on a regular schedule that guides students to discuss classwork, demonstrate skills, and share ideas with their families.

✓ Involve families and their children in important curriculum-related decisions in a timely way.

Redefinitions

"Homework" not only means work that students do alone, but also interactive activities that students discuss with others at home, linking schoolwork to real life.

"Help" at home means how families encourage, listen, praise, guide, and discuss schoolwork with their children, not whether or how they "teach" school subjects.

5. Decision Making

Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives

- Active PTA/PTO, advisory council (voice heard?)

- Family participation on committees (PBS?)

- Networks to link all families with parent representatives

- Representatives from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic groups

Challenges - **DECISION MAKING**

✓ Include parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and other major groups on councils teams, and committees.

✓ Offer training for parent leaders to develop leadership skills and to represent other families.

✓ Include student representatives along with parents on decision-making committees in high schools.

Redefinitions

*"Decision making" means a process of partnership –
sharing views, solving problems, and taking action
toward shared goals, not an endless power struggle.*

*Parent "leader" means a representative who shares information with
and obtains ideas from other families,
not just a parent who attends school meetings.*

6. Collaborating With the Community

Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning /development

- Community contributes to schools, students, and families
  - *Business partners*
  - *Cultural and recreational groups*
  - *Health services*
  - *Faith-based organizations*
- Schools, students, and families to contribute to the community
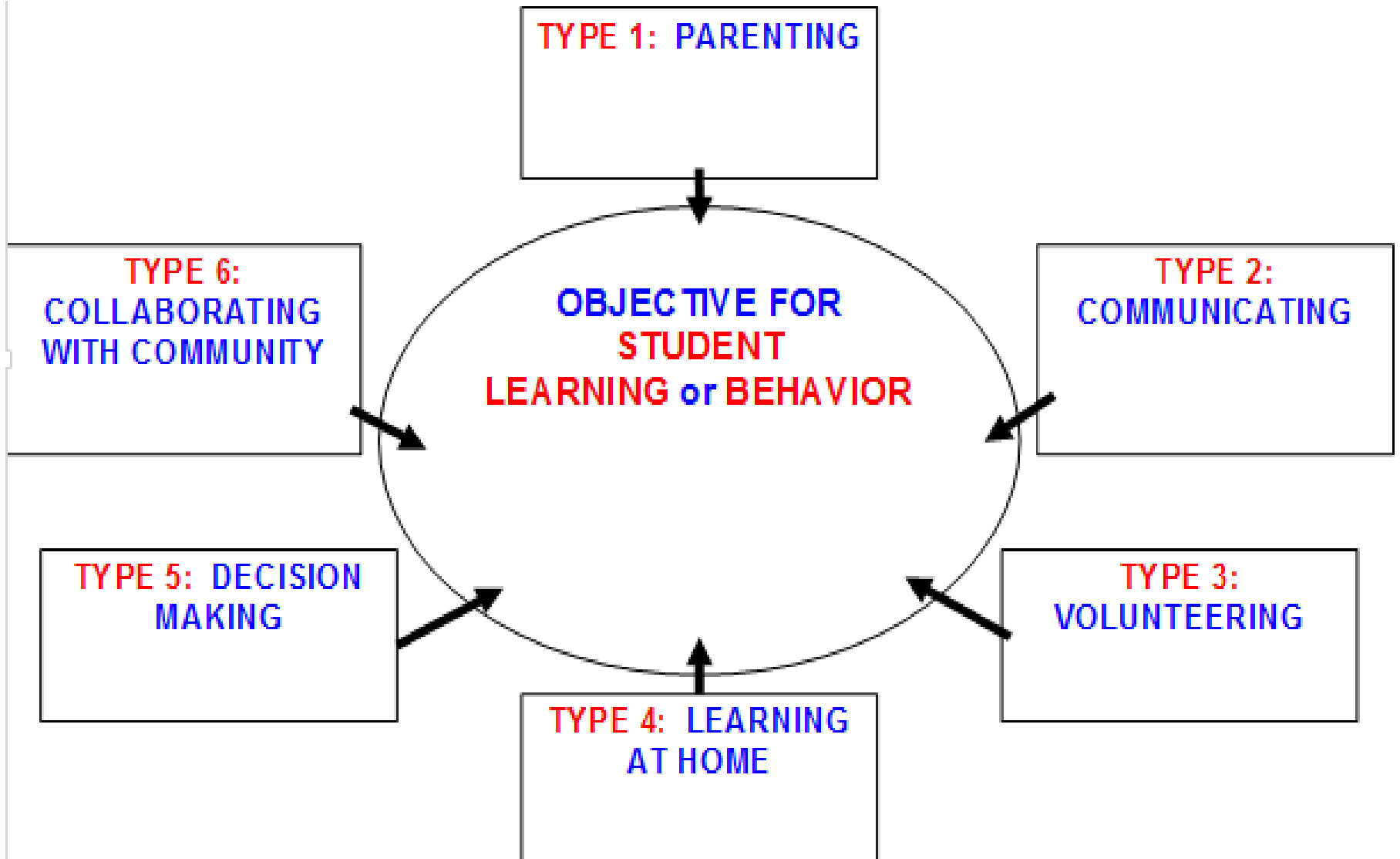 - *Service learning and other special projects*

Challenges -

COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

✓Prevent or solve problems among partners of turf, goals, responsibilities, and funds.

✓Inform all families and students about community programs and ensure equal opportunities for participation and services.

Redefinitions

"Community" is rated not only on low or high social or economic qualities, but also on the strengths and talents of individuals and groups who may support students, families, and schools.

"Community" includes not only families with children in the schools, but also others who are interested in children's success and who are affected by the quality of education.

Type 6: Collaborating with Community
Donations from business partners of books for classrooms, for the school library, and for children to take home

Type 1: Parenting
Workshop for parents on various ways to read aloud with young children

Type 2: Communicating
Parent-teacher-student conferences on reading goals and reading progress

Improve Reading Achievement

Type 3: Volunteering
Reading-partner volunteers, guest readers of favorite stories, and other organized, ongoing read-with-me activities

Type 5: Decision Making
PTO support for a family room or parent center to provide information on children's reading, and to conduct book swaps, make book bags for read-at-home programs, and sponsor other reading activities

Type 4: Learning at Home
Family Reading Night to demonstrate reading strategies for parents and grade-specific activities to conduct with students at home

Elementary School Example

Type 6: Collaborating with Community
"College and Careers" club linking students and families with alumni from the school to increase knowledge and actions on postsecondary paths and opportunities

Type 1: Parenting
Workshops for parents and students on course credits and requirements for graduation, college financial aid, college entry tests, and career planning

Type 2: Communicating
Series of videos for families to learn about HS graduation requirements and postsecondary planning

Improve Postsecondary Planning

Type 5: Decision Making
A postsecondary planning committee of parents, teachers, and students to implement a series of activities on college awareness and career options from 9th to 12th grade

Type 4: Learning at Home
Interactive homework that requires students to discuss their academic goals and career plans with a family partner and to outline strategies for reaching these goals

Type 3: Volunteering
Field trips for students and parents to local colleges and universities

High School Example

Next Steps…

- Define "Parent Partnership"
  - All on board?
- Create Goal (linked to student learning)
- Determine Current Reality
  - What practices do we already have in place? Are they working?
  - Baseline data
- Action Planning
  - Goal Map with 6 Types
- Implement Plan
- Evaluate Results
  - Didn't work? Check fidelity of implementation; revisit plan
  - It worked! How will we sustain these practices?

Resources on Website…

- Family Engagement Checklist

- Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships

- Action Plan Form for Goal

- Family Engagement Practices

Resources:

- ***School, Family, and Community Partnerships; Your Handbook for Action;*** 3rd edition; Joyce L. Epstein and Associates; 2009 Corwin Press

- ***Beyond the Bake Sale;*** A.Henderson, K. Mapp, V. Johnson, and D. Davies; 2007 The New Press

- ***101 Ways to Create Real Family Engagement***; Steven M. Constantino, Ed.D.; 2008 Engage! Press

- ***Engaging All Families***; Steven M. Constantino; 2003

- ***Working With Parents***; Ruby K. Payne, Ph.D.; 2005

- ***Creating Home-School Partnerships***; Teaching Exceptional Children; July/Aug 2008

- ***Partners in Education: A Dual Capacity-Building Framework for Family–School Partnerships;*** a publication of SEDL in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Education, 2014, Karen L. Mapp, EdD and Paul J. Kuttner

- **Aligning and Integrating Family Engagement in Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS);** Concepts and Strategies for Families and Schools in Key Contexts; edited by M. Weist; A. Garbacz, K. Lane, D. Kincaid

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