**Family Engagement Practices**

**Parenting**

***Assist families in understanding child and adolescent development and in setting home conditions that support children as students. Also, assist schools in understanding family backgrounds, cultures and goals****.*

* Workshops, videotapes, websites, and parent-to-parent forums on parenting and child development topics at each age and grade level.
* Parent education and other courses for parents (e.g., GED, ESL, family literacy programs).
* Family support programs to assist families with responsibilities for clothing, health, and nutrition, including clothing swap shops, food co-ops, and collaborations with health services.
* Parent room or family resource center for meetings, volunteer activities, videos, publications, translated school and district policies and documents, and other information for parents.
* Home visiting programs or neighborhood meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.
* Annual questionnaires for families to share information on children’s goals, talents, and needs, and ideas for parental involvement.

**Communication**

***Conduct effective communications from school-to-home and from home-to-school about school programs and children’s progress.***

* Weekly folders for notices, memos, phone calls, and other two-way communications.
* Informative newsletters, web pages, school marquis, local cable TV, community newspapers, and other media to publicize school events, student work, and to address parents’ questions.
* Clear information on school policies, programs, reforms, assessments, and student transitions.
* Parent-teacher (student) conferences with every family at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed.
* Language translators and interpreters, as needed, for all communications with families.
* Folders of student work sent home weekly or monthly for parent review and comments.
* Parent and student pick-up of report cards.
* Timely information on options to choose schools, select courses, obtain services, and join activities.
* Annual survey of families’ views on the quality of school programs and student progress.

**Volunteering**

***Recruit, train, and schedule volunteers and audiences to support students and school programs.***

* Annual short surveys to identify the interests, talents, and availability of volunteers to complete assignments.
* Periodic training sessions for new volunteers for specific roles at or for the school.
* Class parents, telephone trees, bi-lingual neighborhood representatives, community coordinators, or others to provide all families with information about the school or to identify needs in diverse communities.
* Parent or grandparent patrols to help improve school safety, student behavior, and prevent bullying.
* Family and community volunteers to increase students’ career awareness in assemblies, classrooms, or career fairs.
* Recognize and thank volunteers for their contributions.
* Annual review of schedules of student performances, sports events, and assemblies to balance times for daytime and evening audiences.

**Learning At Home**

***Involve families with their children in homework and other curriculum-related activities, individual course and program decisions, and plans for the future.***

* Information for families on required skills, standards, and tests at each grade.
* Information on homework policies and how to monitor, encourage, and discuss schoolwork at home.
* Family nights (or daytime workshops) to help parents understand school subjects and to learn ways to help their children at different grade levels.
* Regular schedule of interactive homework for students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning in class with a family partner at home.
* Calendars with daily or weekly activities linked to grade level requirements and class lessons for parents and students to select and conduct at home.
* Summer learning packets or activities to help students sustain school skills.
* Family participation in helping students set academic goals each year and to make future plans for college and careers.

**Decision Making**

***Include families as participants in school decisions and develop parent leaders and representatives.***

* Active PTA, PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees (E.G., curriculum, safety, teacher appreciation committees).
* Networks to link all families with parent representatives on the various committees/councils.
* Quick e-mail and/or phone surveys to obtain parents’ input and reactions to school policies, proposed changes and the school council or PTA/PTO agenda items.
* District-level advisory councils and committees.
* Include parent representatives in professional development workshops for members of School Councils, and PTA/PTOs.
* Independent advocacy groups to lobby for school improvements and increased budgets.

**Collaborating With the Community**

***Coordinate community resources and services for families, students, and the school, and provide services to the community.***

* Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs, field trips, and services.
* Information on summer programs in the community that link to learning skills and developing students’ talents.
* Develop business and other community partnerships to increase resources to help students reach learning goals through mentoring, job shadowing, tutoring, and summer jobs for high school students.
* Participation of alumni in school programs and assemblies for students on postsecondary planning, career paths, and options for the future.
* “One-stop shopping” for family services in partnership with counseling, health, recreation, job training, and other agencies in “community schools”.
* Service to the community by students, families, and schools (e.g., art, drama, music, and other activities for senior citizens; recycling projects; tutoring, problem-solving, and other programs).

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