

Engaging All Families in a Multi Tier System of Support

Jane Groff, Director
Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC)
jgroff@kpirc.org

What are PIRCs

- Parent Information Technical Assistance Center
- Funded under Title V of No Child Left Behind
 - Office of Innovation and Improvement, Parent Options and Information
- Currently more than 62 Centers in 50 states, protectorates and territories.
- Purpose is to provide training, information, and support to parents, schools, districts, and other organizations that carry out parent education and family involvement programs.
- Choice, SES, Accountability Systems, parent involvement in education to support student success.

KPIRC Partners & Collaborators

- Partners with KFAST –
 - Kansas PTA
 - Kansas Parents as Teachers Association (KPATA)
 - Kansas National Education Association (KNEA)
 - Families Together, Inc.
 - Kansas Head Start Association
 - Kansas State Department of Education (KSDE)
- Collaborators –
 - Kansas Learning First Alliance
 - State Library of KS
 - Migrant Parent Advisory Council
 - KS Head Start Collaboration Office
 - Kansas Association of Child Care Resources and Referral Agencies
 - Communities in Schools (CIS)
 - Kansas Enrichment Network (KEN)

Benefits of Being Involved in Your Child's Education

- Students with involved parents were more likely to earn higher grades and test scores;
- enroll in higher-level programs;
- be promoted;
- attend school regularly;
- have better social skills and adapt well to school; and
- graduate and go on to postsecondary education (Henderson & Mapp, 2002)

(Cont.) Benefits

- Students display more positive attitudes toward school
- Students behave better both in and out of school
- Middle and High school students make better transitions
- Develop realistic plans for the future
- Less likely to drop out
- Children from diverse cultural backgrounds do better when families and schools join forces to bridge the gap between home and school cultures

Impact of Parent Involvement

- Henderson & Mapp's (2002) research synthesis of 51 studies on parent/family involvement found:
 - Programs/interventions that engage families in supporting their children's **learning at home** are linked to higher student achievement and appear to have the greatest affect on student achievement
 - All families, regardless of cultural backgrounds, education, and income levels can encourage their children, talk w/them about school, help them plan for higher education, and keep them focused on learning and homework – and have positive effects on their children's learning

Impact of Parent Involvement

- The extent to which schools encourage and facilitate participation is a greater predictor of involvement than family characteristics (parent's education, socioeconomic, and marital status) (Thorkildsen & Stein, 1998, US Dept of Ed, 1997)
- Involvement is higher when schools welcome parents and make it easy for them to be involved (Nord, Brimhall & West, 1997)
- Students with involved parents were more likely to earn higher grades and test scores; enroll in higher-level programs; be promoted; attend school regularly; have better social skills and adapt well to school; and graduate and go on to postsecondary education (Henderson & Mapp, 2002)

Building Relationships is an Intentional Process

- School-family collaboration efforts must be considered a priority, permeating all actions, if benefits are to be accrued (Comer, 1996)
- Developing relationships typically can take 3-5 years for an impact to be noted.
- Although educators have always valued parent involvement and worked with parents, they have not been educated to work with parents as partners around student achievement.

Defining Feature of High Performing Schools

- Among the defining features of high-performing schools is that parent involvement is viewed not as an add-on, but rather as a vital force for change and improvement.
- Henderson and Mapp found that:
“When schools engage families in ways that are linked to improving learning, students make greater gains. When schools build partnerships with families that respond to their concerns and honor their contributions, they are successful in sustaining connections that are aimed at improving student achievement.”

Involving All Families

Teacher Pre-Service Programs and Parent Involvement

- The Met Life survey, 2004, reported that the area that most teachers felt ill prepared when beginning teaching was working with parents.
- KS survey reports that upon graduation the Professional Education Standards that pre-service teachers felt least prepared was Standard 10; building collaborative relationships with parents,.....

Teacher Pre-Service Programs and Parent Involvement

- Baum and Schwartz McMurray (2004) report that when parent involvement is not part of the pre-service curriculum, pre-service teachers graduate seeing parents as adversaries rather than allies.
- Lynn, (1997) examined 60 teacher education programs in 22 states, and found little substantial coursework emphasizing parent and family involvement.
- 88% of the courses mentioning family involvement focused primarily on parent teacher conferences.

Looking Out, Looking In

- More respect for the value of education
- Parents who are more motivated
- More discipline and better behavior in the home
- Money to hire staff to work with families
- A more welcoming school building and front office
- Positive phone calls home at least once a month
- More planning time to meet w/families
- Family Resource Center
- Family rdg and math nights
- Shared Decision Making
- Parent Involvement Linked to Learning

Historical Context of ESEA

- G. W. Bush era – No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act of 2001 (signed into law on January 8, 2002)
 - *“...to ensure that all children have a fair, equal, and significant opportunity to obtain a high quality education and reach, at a minimum, proficiency on challenging State academic achievement standards and state assessments.”*
 - Funding increased 24% to over \$12 billion
 - New reauthorization period 6 years

ESEA/NCLB Titles

- **Title I** – Improving the Academic Achievement of the Disadvantaged
- **Title II** – Preparing, Training and Recruiting High Quality Teachers and Principals
- **Title III** – Language and Instruction for LEP and Immigrant Students
- **Title IV** – 21st Century Schools
- **Title V** – Promoting Informed Parental Choice and Innovative Programs
- **Title VI** – Flexibility and Accountability
- **Title VII** – Indian, Native Hawaiian, and Alaska Native Education
- **Title VIII, IX, X**- Aid, Unsafe Schools, Homeless

Definition of Parent Involvement

- The participation of parents in regular, two-way, and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities; including ensuring that parents (Title IX General provisions, Part A Sec 9101)
 - (A) play an integral role in assisting their child's learning;
 - (B) are encouraged to be actively involved in their child's education at school;
 - (C) are full partners in their child's education and are included, as appropriate, in decision making and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their child;
 - (D) the carrying out of other activities, such as those in Title I, Sec 1118.

How to Partner

Requirements Under NCLB (Title I, Section 1118) Parent Involvement Policy

- With parents (write LEA/school parent involvement policy; plan, design and review Title I programs)
- Share responsibility for high student academic achievement (explain state content and performance standards; state and local assessments; develop a school-parent compact; provide information to help parents work w/their children to improve their academic achievement)
- Build capacity for involvement
- Accessibility (provide opportunities for full participation of parents with limited English proficiency, parents with disabilities, and parents of migratory children, including reports in a language such parents understand.
- Shall inform parents about the existence of the Parent Information Resource Center – in KS – KPIRC!

Required School-Parent Compact Provisions

- 1. Provide high-quality curriculum and instruction in a supportive and effective learning environment.
- 2. Hold parent-teacher conferences during which this compact will be discussed.
- 3. Provide parents with frequent reports on their children's progress.
- 4. Provide parents reasonable access to staff.
- 5. Provide parents opportunities to volunteer and participate in their child's classroom.

Administrative Support for Partnerships

- Lack of administrator and teacher training for working as partners with families has long been described as one of the biggest barriers for implementation of school-family partnerships for children's learning.
- The nature of school-family relationships in a school is influenced by the role, belief system, and philosophy of the principal.

Administrative Support for Partnerships

- Principals set the expectation for involvement as well as the tone for interaction (nonblaming, inviting), encourage the development of meaningful roles for families.
- Effective principals take partnering with families very seriously.
- Principals also realize that parent input must be reflected in school policies and practices.

Barriers to Parent Involvement (Wandersman et al, 2002)

- Personal Barriers
 - Parents
 - past negative experiences, old fears & frustrations, anxiety about child's performance/behavior/expectations, mistrust of education system, lack of knowledge on how to be involve, lack of support from partners, limited parental education, limited finances
 - Teachers/Staff
 - unawareness of how they can encourage parent involvement, belief this is too time-consuming, that parents are troublesome or don't have skills to help their children, equate lack of involvement w/lack of interest

Barriers to Parent Involvement (Wandersman et al, 2002)

- Institutional barriers
 - Beliefs/actions of the school that occur when resources are lacking or when the school staff is not interested in promoting parent involvement
 - Occur when there is no policy supporting parental involvement – or when the program is based on needs of school rather than needs of parents
 - Failure to examine current school practices that are ineffective in promoting parental involvement

Perspectives on Parent/Family Involvement (Epstein)

- National Standards for Parent involvement
 - Endorsed by Kansas Bd of Ed in Jan., 2008
 - Co-developed by the National PTA
 - Influenced NCLB legislation
 - Included in KSDE School Improvement Plans

National Parent Involvement Standards

- **Welcoming All Families Into the School Community** - families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.
- **Communicating effectively** – families and school staff engage in regular, meaningful communication about student learning.
- **Supporting Student Success** – families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.

National Parent Involvement Standards

- **Speaking up for every Child** – families are empowered to be advocates for their own children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.
- **Sharing Power** – families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices and programs.
- **Collaborating with Community** – families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.

Promising District-Level Practices for Family Engagement

Shared vision of family engagement

1. Treat parents as full partners in promoting student learning
2. Recognize that parent engagement also concerns what parents do at home with their children

Purposeful connections to learning

1. Value family engagement as a core instructional strategy, not an “add-on”

Investments in high quality programming and staff

1. Create a sustained, organizational approach to professional development

Robust communication systems

1. Ensure that communication cuts across all departments and staff
2. Promote reciprocal sharing of information between parents and school staff

Evaluation for accountability and continuous learning

1. Develop meaningful indicators of family engagement efforts

Summary

Collaborating with families has to be much more than an activity: It must be a pervasive attitude.

Baking Powder

New KPIRC Website! www.kpirc.org



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC). At the top right, there is a navigation menu with links for "About", "Partners", "Collaborators", "Contact", and "Cart". The main header features the KPIRC logo on the left, which consists of a stylized 'K' with a person icon inside, followed by the text "KANSAS PARENT INFORMATION RESOURCE CENTER" and the tagline "a No Child Left Behind Parent Center" in smaller font. Below the header is a secondary navigation bar with links for "Parents", "En Español", "Schools", "Early Childhood", "Businesses", and "Higher Ed", along with a search box labeled "Search" and a magnifying glass icon. The main content area begins with the word "WELCOME!" in large, bold letters. Below this is a paragraph of text: "The Kansas Parent Information Resource Center (KPIRC), federally funded under Title V of No Child Left Behind, is the official Parent Information Technical Assistance Center for the state of Kansas. KPIRC promotes meaningful parent involvement at all levels of education and provides information and resources to help parents, educators and other organizations promote the educational success of every Kansas child." To the right of this text is a photograph of a smiling woman holding two young children, with another child visible in the background.