Parental engagement, Why?

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Resources we used to guide our parent club

- Powerful Partnerships: A Teacher’s Guide to Engaging Families for Student Success
- Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships
They “WHY”

Conscious discipline push

SEL push (social emotional learning)
Start here -> Examine your own beliefs

1. Think back to your own childhood/school experiences, how was your family connected or not connected to your school and education?
2. How might these past experiences positive or negative, shape your believe as a teacher in terms of family engagement?
3. What fears, hesitations or apprehensions do you have about this work? What barriers will you have to overcome?
4. What passions beliefs and commitments do you bring that will help you do this work?
Does this sound familiar?

- The families are the problem, and there is no sense engaging them! They get in the way.
- Just give me the kids, the families are dysfunctional!
- Because of their limited education it makes no sense to share the data with them, they will just be overwhelmed.
Try this!

Make a list of the strengths and different types of knowledge and abilities that your families have. Use only asset-based language—do not use any negative phrases or words.

1. Race and ethnic diversity
2. Socioeconomic diversity
3. Occupational diversity
4. Educational diversity
5. Religious diversity
6. Political diversity
7. Talents
8. Others

After creating the list answer the following questions: Are you utilizing all of the strengths and assets your families have to offer? How might you gather information from your families to expand this list?
Look at these 4 categories of schools

Partnership schools- Family engagement isn't done out of compliance and they are key components of the school’s functioning. Families and regarded as full partners with school staff in improving educational outcomes.
Look at these 4 categories of schools

Open door schools- Make families engagement a priority and see it as an important part of student success. Family diversity is recognized through multicultural events and translation is provided at these and other events held at the school.
Look at these 4 categories of schools

Came if we call school—Positive about the concept of engaging with families, but the school sets the terms of engagement. Most of the communication is one way—from the school to the home and families can come to school only when invited. Workshops for families are planned by school staff without parent input or feedback.
Look at these 4 categories of schools

Fortress schools—Engaging families is a low priority and isn't thought of as being connected to student outcomes. Parents don't care about their children's education, and they are the primary reason that the student is failing.
Focus on learning from your students' families

- What can you tell me about your child that can help me be a great teacher to them?
- What are your hopes and dreams for your child?
- What's the best way to contact you? What's the best time?
- What is your preferred language?
- Here's the best way to contact me
- Expect to hear from me throughout the year.

Never allow your first contact with parents to be a negative behavior call!!
Home visits, These can be incredibly helpful.

1. Visits are always voluntary for educators and families and arranged in advanced
2. Focus of the first visit is relationship building-focus on hopes and dreams
3. Teachers are trained and compensated for visits outside their school day. (in a perfect world, yes)
4. No targeting- visit all or the most need students
5. Educators visit in pairs, with reflection and assumptions, strengths and bringing what they learned back to the classroom.
After the visit, reflect on it

a. What did I think was going to be true about the family?
b. What strengths do they have that I didn't know about?
c. How am I going to shift my work in the classroom to leverage this knowledge?
Ask yourself- do my families leave the events at our school or in my classroom knowing more about what their children should know and be able to do?

Relational- intentional about building relationships of trust and respect with families.

Developmental- assumes that families already have strengths and knowledge on which you can build.

**Collaborative initiatives should strive to bring families and staff together so that they can learn from and with each other.**
Principles of adult learning

1. Adults must want to learn
2. Adults will learn only what they feel they need to learn.
3. Adults learn by doing.
4. Adults learn by focusing on a problem, and the problem must be realistic
5. Experience affects adult’s learning
6. Adults learn best in an informal situation
7. Adults want guidance
Beyond the bake sale

4 core beliefs

1. All parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them
2. All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning
3. Parents and school staff should be equal partners
4. The responsibility for building partnerships between school and home rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders.
“We don’t speak the same language”

“But their child has a disability”

“I don’t understand their religion”

“Their heritage and values are not the same as mine”
NO MORE EXCUSES
Getting parents involved is the solution for...

- [ ] Misbehavior
- [ ] Low academic levels
- [ ] Attendance
- [ ] Lack of social emotional skills
- [ ] Teacher turnover
3 Prerequisites of Effective Family and Community Engagement
Be persistent!!

Families will not just greet you with open arms and pile into your rooms just because you made one call or sent home a nice letter. Building trust takes time and persistence.