

# **PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: An Implementation Guide**



# Table of Contents

**Introduction .....5**  
 Achieving High Standards .....5  
 About This Implementation Guide .....6

**Standard 1—Welcoming All Families into the School Community.....10**  
 Engaging Families at Fishkill Elementary .....11  
 Action Steps.....13  
 Resources.....14

**Standard 2—Communicating Effectively .....15**  
 Communicating at Eastwood Elementary.....16  
 Action Steps.....17  
 Resources.....18

**Standard 3—Supporting Student Success.....19**  
 Students for Success at Fremont High .....20  
 Action Steps.....21  
 Resources.....22

**Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child.....23**  
 Speaking Up at Appoquinimink Early Childhood Center.....25  
 Action Steps.....26  
 Resources.....27

**Standard 5—Sharing Power.....29**  
 Building Families’ Political Connections in San Ramon Valley ....30  
 Action Steps.....31  
 Resources.....32



**Standard 6—Collaborating with Community .....33**

Making Van Bokkelen Elementary a Community Hub .....34  
 Action Steps.....35  
 Resources.....36

**The Power of Partnerships Family Survey .....37**

**National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide .....39**

Introduction: Measuring Success .....40  
 Standard 1—Welcoming All Families into the School Community ....41  
 Standard 2—Communicating Effectively .....45  
 Standard 3—Supporting Student Success .....49  
 Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child .....54  
 Standard 5—Sharing Power .....60  
 Standard 6—Collaborating with Community.....64

**Family-School Partnership Action Plan Template.....67**

**Family-School Partnership Action Plan Sample .....68**





# Introduction

## Achieving High Standards

Our children are being educated in an era of standards. Ever since *A Nation at Risk* was published in 1983, our country has focused on raising the bar for students and teachers. The states were followed by the federal government in insisting that high standards be set for all students, with regular assessments—high-stakes tests—to see if students are measuring up. In 1997, PTA responded to the challenge of ensuring student achievement by issuing its own national standards for parent and family involvement, a proven factor in student success.

Now it's time to raise the bar again. Our students are making progress but not nearly enough to meet our nation's ambitious goal, established in the No Child Left Behind Act, of all students being proficient in all subjects by 2014. According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress, only about a third of our 4th- and 8th-graders can read and do math at a proficient level.

**National Assessment of Educational Progress  
Achievement Levels**







	Percent At or Above Proficient			
	Math (2007)	Reading (2007)	Writing (2007)	Science (2005)
Grade 4	39%	33%	—	29%
Grade 8	32%	31%	33%	29%
Grade 12	—	—	29%	—

There is no alternative to high expectations. And if we want children to achieve at even higher levels, we must also expect more from their parents and families. This means we must agree on what the standards for family engagement are and know what meeting those standards looks like. Using the most recent research and working with national experts, PTA updated its national standards in 2007.\* These six standards identify what parents, schools, and communities can do together to support student success.

\*When developed in 1997, the standards were called the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs. With a shift in focus from what schools should do to involve parents to what parents, schools, and communities can do together to support student success, the updated standards were renamed the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.



## PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

-  **Standard 1—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.
-  **Standard 2—Communicating Effectively**  
Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.
-  **Standard 3—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.
-  **Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child**  
Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.
-  **Standard 5—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.
-  **Standard 6—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.

## About This Implementation Guide

PTA developed the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Implementation Guide to empower PTA leaders, parents, educators, community members, and students to work together for the educational success of all children and youth.

Research consistently demonstrates the benefits of family-school-community partnerships:

- ❖ Higher teacher morale
- ❖ Increased communication among parents, teachers, and school leaders

- ❖ More parent involvement in supporting teaching and learning
- ❖ More community support for the school
- ❖ Greater student success

But effectively engaging families and communities in schools to support student learning takes a true commitment to shared leadership and collaboration. Here you'll find a comprehensive and practical guide to achieving high standards for involvement.

For each standard, the guide provides the following information:

- ❖ A definition of the standard, followed by a brief explanation of its importance and a discussion of the key goals
- ❖ Expert insights, which can help convince educators of the standard's value
- ❖ A local success story from a school community making real progress toward meeting that standard
- ❖ Action steps for your school community
- ❖ Additional resources to enhance your understanding and help your school meet the standard

The guide also contains

- ❖ The National Standards Assessment Guide, with specific goals, indicators, and examples of what good practice looks like;
- ❖ The Power of Partnerships Family Survey; and
- ❖ A Family-School Partnership Action Plan Template and Sample.

## Who Should Be Using the Guide

Anyone who has a stake in improving schools and making sure children succeed should find this implementation guide to be a useful tool: PTA leaders, other parent leaders, school administrators, school board members, policy makers at all levels, teacher training institutions, education advocates, community organizations, and more.

This guide focuses on implementation at the local school level, because, ultimately, change must happen within each school building and each school community—where the learning happens. Nevertheless, many of the actions recommended will require district policies, resources, professional development, and support if they are to be achieved and sustained.

Share this assessment guide with your school action team, principal, school board members, community partners, and others as you build family-school partnerships for student success.

The National Standards  
Implementation Guide is online  
at [PTA.org/partnerships](https://www.pta.org/partnerships)

## How to Use the Guide

This guide will help local school communities implement programs, practices, and policies that encourage partnerships between families, schools, and communities and promote student success. Use the guide and the supporting resources at [PTA.org/partnerships](https://www.pta.org/partnerships) to educate your community about the importance of family involvement, and to direct the development of effective partnerships.

To put these materials to best use, form a school action team focused on promoting family and community involvement. Include parents, other caregivers and family members, school staff, community members, and even students. Have the whole team familiarize themselves with the whole guide, but also consider establishing a subteam for each standard. Offer opportunities for a diverse group of individuals to lead those subteams.

Once the organizational structure is in place, consider the following steps:

### Step 1

Assess your school's current practices for engaging families and the community in improving school climate and student success. Invite each member of the action team to review the **National Standards Assessment Guide** and identify how well he or she thinks the school is doing on each indicator (excelling, progressing, emerging, or below the scale). Compile the results and discuss them with the whole team and the school principal to decide where and how to focus efforts. The action team should also distribute the **Power of Partnerships Family Survey** to make sure the team's perspective is consistent with that of the broader school community.

### Step 2

Begin planning based on the assessment, survey findings, and your discussions with the school principal. The guide provides a number of **action ideas** for each standard to help you get started, as well as **success stories** showing how real schools have more effectively engaged families. Use the **action plan template** to document your goals and objectives. Remember, building successful partnerships between families and schools is a process, not an event. One-time events can be a good beginning, but it's important to make sure there's a continued connection to supporting student learning.

### Step 3

Present the action plan to the school community for feedback and buy-in. When families feel invited into the development of involvement programs, practices, and policies, there is a greater likelihood of success.

### Step 4

Put the plan into action and monitor your progress throughout the school year. Your action plan should be a living document. If something is not working, go back to the plan and make the necessary changes.

## Step 5

At the end of the school year, document your successes and share them with the school community, which includes families, students, teachers, the superintendent, school board members, the local newspaper and other media, community members, businesses and other potential donors, and partnering organizations. PTAs are also encouraged to share their successes with the PTA national office via e-mail to [partnerships@pta.org](mailto:partnerships@pta.org).

A customizable **PTA Report to the Community** template is available at [PTA.org/partnerships](http://PTA.org/partnerships).

## Step 6

As you plan for the next school year, explore how you can build on your accomplishments. Learn from the strategies that did and did not work, and always seek opportunities to engage new and different voices in the process.

“Families” and “parents” are used interchangeably to refer to adults who are responsible for a student. “Families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods” and “diverse families” include families from all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, family structures, and economic levels, as well as those with physical or mental challenges.





## Standard 1—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.**

Schools are all about relationships. The interactions among teachers, students, families, principals, other school staff, and visitors set the tone for everything else. That's why the first of the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships is about creating a welcoming school community. Walk into any school and you can feel right away if it's a happy, productive place where people enjoy working and learning or if it's...something else. Parents tell us that being greeted warmly and treated with respect is the number one reason behind their school involvement.

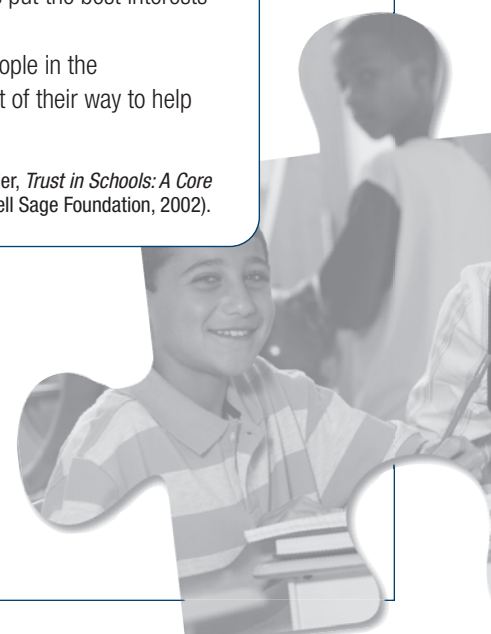
There are two main goals for the standard of welcoming all families into the school community. The first is **creating a welcoming climate**. When families walk into the school building, they should feel that it is a place where they “belong.” Are there opportunities for families to develop personal relationships with teachers and other school staff, including the principal? Is the atmosphere family-friendly for everyone, not just for the in crowd? Are there many ways to volunteer and help out, even for parents who may be working two jobs or don't speak English, live near the school, or have a car?

### The Importance of Trust

A study of trust in Chicago schools found that higher-achieving schools had higher levels of trust, while schools with the lowest achievement rates had minimal trust. The researchers used four qualities to define trust:

- ❖ **Respect:** Recognizing that each person plays an important role in a child's education and knowing that parents and educators can talk honestly and openly
- ❖ **Competence:** Feeling that families and educators can create an effective working environment and will work hard to get the job done
- ❖ **Integrity:** Feeling that people keep their word, doing what they say they will do, and always put the best interests of children first
- ❖ **Personal regard:** Knowing that people in the school community are willing to go out of their way to help each other

Anthony S. Bryk and Barbara Schneider, *Trust in Schools: A Core Resource for Improvement* (New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 2002).



## Motivating Parent Involvement

Researchers have found three key factors that affect whether parents are motivated to become involved in their children's learning:

1. **How parents develop their job descriptions as parents:** Do they know what the school expects them to do? What do their friends and family think is acceptable?
2. **How confident they feel about their ability to help their children:** Do they feel they have the knowledge and skills to make a difference?
3. **Whether they feel invited, both by their children and the school:** Do they get strong, positive signals from teachers and students that they should be involved?

Kathleen V. Hoover-Dempsey, Joan M.T. Walker, and Howard M. Sandler, "Parents' Motivations for Involvement in Their Children's Education," in *School-Family Partnerships for Children's Success*, ed. Evanthia N. Patrikakou and others (New York: Teachers College Press, 2005).

The second goal for this standard is **building a respectful, inclusive school community**. All the school's policies and programs should reflect, respect, and value the diversity of the families in the community. Do school staff value the contributions of all families and work together with families to identify and address barriers to involvement, such as differences of race, education, and culture? Are events, programs, and activities for families and students low-cost or free? Are they open to the whole family and offered at convenient times and places?

## Engaging Families at Fishkill Elementary

### The Challenge

Fishkill Elementary is a school of nearly 500 students in New York's Hudson Valley, approximately 90 miles north of New York City. It serves a diverse community in which many of the parents commute to full-time jobs or take care of younger children at home, making involvement in the school difficult.



### The Joining Process

In her research at a high-performing elementary school in Boston that serves low-income families, education expert Karen Mapp found that the school had intentionally developed a set of practices that embraced parents and made them feel part of the school's family. Mapp calls this the "joining process." It has three parts:

1. Welcoming parents into the school, including visiting new families at their homes
2. Honoring parents' participation, such as by listening to their ideas and thanking them
3. Connecting with families by focusing on the children and what they're learning

Karen L. Mapp, "Having Their Say: Parents Describe Why and How They Are Engaged in Their Children's Education," *School Community Journal* 13, no. 1 (2003): 35–64.

## The Action

To make volunteer opportunities more accessible and more appealing, and thus increasing parent involvement in the school, the Fishkill School Leadership Team decided to initiate PTA Three for Me. The principal introduced the program at Parents as Partners Night at the start of the school year. Teachers wore “Ask Me About Three for Me” badges, used in-class introductions to invite parents to complete Three for Me promise cards, and explained how parents could volunteer on committees, at events, in the classroom, or even from home. Throughout the year, the PTA newsletter featured volunteer opportunities, while the program’s coordinator regularly distributed program reminders, progress reports, and volunteer stories.

## The Impact

Three for Me was a catalyst for parent involvement. Seventy percent of the school’s families now complete at least three hours of volunteer work during the year, with a significant number continuing to volunteer beyond their original commitment. The school has developed a more welcoming climate and a culture of volunteering thanks to this growing network of parent volunteers. Parents who previously just crossed paths when picking up their children now have relationships with each other through their volunteering efforts, and everyone is invested in the common goal of supporting *every* child’s school success.



## Action Steps

### Getting Started

- ❖ Establish a PTA welcoming committee responsible for identifying ways to make all families feel welcome.
- ❖ Survey family members and school staff to determine how family-friendly your school is.

### What Parents and Parent Leaders Can Do

1. Greet other parents at school activities and events; sit with someone you don't know and get to know them.
2. Recruit bilingual parents to greet and interpret for families whose first language isn't English. Ask the school district to provide translation headsets for parent meetings.
3. Offer family activities at low or no cost so everyone can participate; budget PTA/parent group funds for this purpose.
4. Work to change the conversations going on over the back fence. If people complain about "immigrants" or use ethnic slurs, stay positive and point out the contributions all families can make to the community.
5. Hold meetings in a variety of community locations (e.g., the local library, a community center, a church) to make them accessible to all.

### What School Leaders and Staff Can Do

1. Work with the school council to develop customer service guidelines to be used by school staff.
2. Set up a parent help desk or visitor welcome center outside the school office.
3. Conduct meet-and-greet walks in the neighborhoods where students live.
4. Use a professional development day to address assumptions about race, class, and culture.
5. Explore the need for and feasibility of establishing a family resource center in the school.
6. Be accessible and available. It's one thing to say families are welcome and valued, but another thing to show it.

## Resources

***Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships***, by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (New York: The New Press, 2007), examines, among other things, how to know whether your school is really open to partnerships (chapter 3) and how to develop trusting relationships (chapter 4). Chapter 4 ends with a checklist for determining how family-friendly your school is. For a free copy of the checklist and more information about the book, go to [www.thenewpress.com/bakesale](http://www.thenewpress.com/bakesale).

***Building Relationships for Student Success: School-Family-Community Partnerships and Student Achievement in the Northwest***, by Diane Dorfman and Amy Fisher (Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 2002), is a booklet of key research and of promising practices in schools with high poverty rates and large minority populations, including schools on Indian reservations. Go to [www.nwrel.org/partnerships/cloak/booklet2.pdf](http://www.nwrel.org/partnerships/cloak/booklet2.pdf).

The **Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)** provides resources for developing relationships, including *Ideas and Tools for Working with Parents and Families* at [www.casel.org/pub/packet.php](http://www.casel.org/pub/packet.php).

***Including Every Parent*** (2003), a guide developed by parents and teachers at the Patrick O'Hearn Elementary School in Boston and the Project for School Innovation, explores specific practices critical to engaging and empowering parents at school. Learn more at [www.psinnovation.org](http://www.psinnovation.org).

**National Fatherhood Initiative** offers programs, workshops, publications, and other materials to encourage men to be involved, responsible, and committed fathers. Go to [www.fatherhood.org](http://www.fatherhood.org).

**Tellin' Stories**, the parent organizing program of Teaching for Change, uses the power of story to connect people from diverse backgrounds. For more information, visit [www.teachingforchange.org/parentorg](http://www.teachingforchange.org/parentorg).





## Standard 2—Communicating Effectively

### Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

The lifeblood of any relationship and any organization is communication. Communication is a process through which information is exchanged. Yet many ways that schools give out information, such as handouts, newsletters, handbooks, automatic phone messages, and websites, do not provide an easy and routine way for families to respond. Even PTA/parent group meetings are often seen by school leaders merely as a way to get the message out to families. The most effective way to build a real partnership is to create regular opportunities for open, honest dialogue.

For the standard of communicating effectively, there is one key goal: **sharing information between school and families**. All families should feel that the school keeps them informed on important issues and events and that it is easy to communicate with teachers, the principal, and other school staff. Creating the perception, however unwittingly, that a dominant group of parents is in the know while everyone else is in the dark reduces trust and stifles the free flow of ideas.

#### Comprehensive Communication and Student Success

When school staff make an effort to communicate with and reach out to families, students score higher on tests. A research review by the Harvard Family Research Project found that the following approaches pay off:

- ❖ Accommodating parents' English skills, as needed
- ❖ Communicating with even those families who don't attend meetings
- ❖ Encouraging parent input and ideas
- ❖ Offering opportunities to volunteer
- ❖ Assigning homework that calls for parent-student interaction
- ❖ Ensuring that parent committees reflect the school's racial and ethnic mix

*Family Involvement in Elementary School Children's Education, Family Involvement Makes a Difference 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project, Winter 2006/2007).*

"We need to create a wider pathway and a more expansive menu of opportunities for parents. Currently, there is a very narrow pathway for the parent-school relationship, which does not invite all the different kinds of conversations that are needed and does not ask parents to operate in any actionable way with schools. . . . If we want parents to take action, we need to help build their knowledge about education and the importance of family involvement."

—Dr. Rudy Crew, then Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools, in "A Conversation with Rudy Crew," by Suzanne Bouffard, *The Evaluation Exchange* (Harvard Family Research Project) 14, nos. 1&2 (Spring 2008): 20–21.

Does your school offer many different ways to communicate every day? Does the school or PTA/parent group survey families at least once a year to find out what's on their minds and what they think about the school? Are the principal and other school administrators easily accessible to any parent? Is information about current events and issues readily available, not just on a bulletin board? Do the school and PTA/parent group make it easy for parents and families to build connections and communicate with each other?

## Communicating at Eastwood Elementary

### The Challenge

Eastwood Elementary School has long been considered one of the more successful schools in Decatur, Alabama, but even the best schools need to reevaluate old habits and look for new ways to meet today's challenges.

While school leaders had always known that strong communication is essential in developing a healthy home-school connection, changing technology—coupled with a decrease in stay-at-home moms—presented new challenges in communicating effectively.

### The Action

An action team with parent representatives from all grade levels identified three strategies to improve communication.

First, after reviewing what several other schools did to facilitate teacher-parent communication, the action team selected an academic planner, approved by the principal, to become the schoolwide method for communicating homework, tests, and other classroom activities.

At the beginning of the school year, the principal also gave all families the option of being part of the school's e-mail system. While the school still uses more traditional means of communication, the expanded use of e-mail allows communication between home and school to occur quickly and easily.

Lastly, Eastwood PTA created a family resource center to provide a central location for sharing PTA materials, viewing academic planners, and disseminating information about community programs and resources.



## The Impact

The academic planner has helped parents become true partners with teachers in supporting student learning, and has the added benefit of helping prepare students and parents for the transition to middle school, where a similar planner is used. The more-frequent use of e-mail has increased communication between parents and teachers, and the parent resource center has made parents feel more welcome and more connected to the school and their community.

## Action Steps

### Getting Started

- ❖ Make use of all channels of communication: cable television, newspapers, radio, automated phone systems, text messaging, school and PTA websites, etc.
- ❖ Identify parents, community members, local organizations, and businesses that can help strengthen home-school communication.
- ❖ Make sure all information is communicated in languages and formats to reach all parents.
- ❖ Sponsor events that allow educators and parents to interact socially, in addition to parent-teacher conferences and regular school meetings.

### What Parents and Parent Leaders Can Do

1. Design and print “Happy Grams” as an easy way for teachers to regularly report positive behavior and/or achievements to parents.
2. Consider using color-coded lines on hallway walls, or footprints on floors, to help direct parents to important places like the school office, parent resource center, and library.
3. Include a two-way communication mechanism, such as a question-and-answer section or mini survey, in each edition of your newsletter.

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### What School Leaders and Staff Can Do

1. Map the school's parent-teacher contacts: How often do teachers communicate with families, what are the main topics, and when do they have face-to-face contact?
2. Work with the PTA/parent group to establish guidelines for regular communication between home and school (e.g., monthly calls from teachers to parents, home visits, weekly newsletters).
3. Engage school staff, community members, and parents in developing a parent handbook.

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<p>4. Distribute calendars so parents can record upcoming events, assignments, and dates to check with teachers on their children's progress.</p> <p>5. Role-play a parent-teacher conference for families and school staff, demonstrating effective ways for parents and teachers to share information and plan for the future.</p>	<p>4. Establish a method for parents to review their children's work on a regular basis. For example, use manila envelopes to send student work home each week; have a place for parent comments.</p> <p>5. Publicize the hours when administrators and teachers are available for parent visits and any procedures for contacting teachers on the telephone or in writing.</p>
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## Resources

**Connecting Families and Schools: Sacramento ACT** (2005), a case study published by the Center for Community Change as part of *An Action Guide for Education Organizing*, tells the story of the Sacramento Area Congregations Together (ACT) home visiting program, which helps schools reach out to families. Go to [www.cccfiles.org/issues/education/actionguide/](http://www.cccfiles.org/issues/education/actionguide/).

**Culturally Responsive Parental Involvement: Concrete Understandings and Basic Strategies**, by A. Lin Goodwin and Sabrina Hope King (Washington, DC: American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, 2002), offers concrete strategies for involving parents of diverse cultural backgrounds. Find it at [www.eric.ed.gov](http://www.eric.ed.gov).

The **Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE)** of the Harvard Family Research Project provides back issues of its electronic newsletters, many of which address issues of diversity, at [www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/](http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/).

The **National Network of Partnership Schools** at Johns Hopkins University publishes the *Type 2* newsletter twice a year. Named after the second of six types of family involvement—communicating—it shares examples of best practices as well as solutions to challenges. Go to [www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/type2/index.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/type2/index.htm).

**Parents and Teachers Talking Together: A Handbook for Facilitators** (2003) outlines a discussion process developed by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence in Kentucky. It includes a series of questions for parents and teachers to discuss, centered around the two main questions “What do we want for our students?” and “What do we need to do to get what we want?” Order the guide in the Center for Parent Leadership (CPL) Publications section at [www.prichardcommittee.org](http://www.prichardcommittee.org).

**Reaching Out to Diverse Populations: What Can Schools Do to Foster Family-School Connections?**, by Chris Ferguson (Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2005), recommends that schools build on cultural values, stress personal contact, foster communication, and offer accommodations such as child care, translation, and transportation. Read more at [www.sedl.org/connections/research-briefs.html](http://www.sedl.org/connections/research-briefs.html).

## Standard 3—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.**

Engaging families in their children's learning can have a powerful impact on student success, not just in school but throughout life. When their families are involved both at home and at school, students earn higher grades and test scores, come to school more regularly, like school more, behave better, and are more likely to graduate and go on to postsecondary education.

However, to become engaged in ways that boost achievement, many families will need information, encouragement, and support from school staff and PTA/parent group leaders.

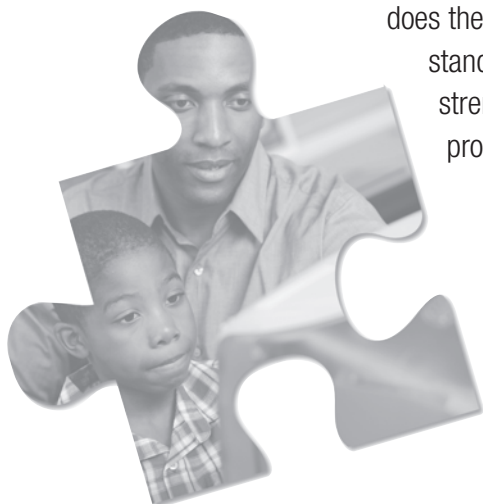
For the standard of supporting student success, there are two goals. The first is **sharing information about student progress**. Families should be kept fully informed of how their children are doing in school, as well as how the entire school is progressing. How do the school and PTA/parent group ensure that parents and teachers communicate about student progress, beyond conferences and report cards? What opportunities do parents have to learn what good work looks like for their child's age and grade? How does the school use

standardized test results to inform parents of which student skills need strengthening? How do the school and PTA/parent group report on school progress to the community?

### Students with Highly Involved Parents Do Better in School

Combining data from 77 studies, Professor of Education Bill Jaynes found that the achievement scores of children with highly involved parents were higher than those of children with less involved parents. This finding held across all ages and ethnic groups and all measures of achievement, including grades, test scores, and teacher ratings. Forms of involvement that required considerably more time, such as reading, expressing high expectations, and communicating with one's child, had a greater impact than setting rules and attending school activities.

William H. Jaynes, *Parental Involvement and Student Achievement: A Meta-Analysis*, Family Involvement Research Digest (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project, 2005), <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/publications-series/family-involvement-research-digests>.





### The Value of Teacher Outreach

When teachers reach out to parents, students make more progress in both reading and math, researchers studying schools in low-income neighborhoods found. Student performance improved 40 to 50 percent faster if teachers did these three things:

1. Met face-to-face with each family at the beginning of the year to build relationships
2. Sent families materials each week on ways to help their children at home
3. Telephoned parents routinely with news about how their children were doing, not just if there were problems

U.S. Department of Education, Office of the Deputy Secretary, Planning and Evaluation Service, *The Longitudinal Evaluation of School Change and Performance in Title I Schools, Volume I: Executive Summary* (Washington, DC: 2001).

The second goal for this standard is **supporting learning by engaging families**. Families should have opportunities to learn how to be active participants in their children's learning at home and at school. Are families invited to observe their children's classrooms? In what ways do school staff develop families' capacity to strengthen learning at home? How are families connected with opportunities for after-school learning?

## Students for Success at Fremont High

### The Challenge

Fremont High School in Sunnyvale, California, is in a fairly affluent school district, but its own student body is economically diverse, and many students lack academic support at home. Approximately 28 percent of the students are English language learners, and there is a high student turnover. These factors contributed to the school having the lowest test scores in the district.

### The Action

To raise student achievement, the school's PTSA and National Honor Society collaborated to launch the Students for Success Tutoring Club. Four days a week, students can stop in to receive free peer tutoring in any key subject, including all levels of math, literature, social studies, science, and foreign language. Help is also provided for standardized-test preparation.

### TIPS for Success

Interactive homework can build students' confidence by prompting them to share their work and ideas with family members. When parents and children are encouraged to talk regularly about schoolwork, parents learn more about what's happening in class. Interactive homework also facilitates communication between parents and teachers about children's work, progress, or problems.

Studies of a program called Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS), in which teachers design weekly homework that calls for children to talk to someone at home about the task assigned, have found that students' writing skills, grades, and test scores improved with the program. Parents talk with and support their children, but don't teach or do the assignments.

Frances L. Van Voorhis, "Interactive Science Homework: An Experiment in Home and School Connections," *NASSP Bulletin* 85, no. 627 (2001): 20–32.

Students may be referred for tutoring by their teachers or stop in on their own for help with homework or to study with friends. At any given time, 15 to 25 tutors are available. Supervision is provided by a combination of PTSA volunteers and paid staff. Attendance is voluntary and flexible, and incentives are offered.

### The Impact

During the first year of the program, 109 National Honor Society peer tutors and 550 registered students participated. On average, 130 students stopped in each day. Approximately 50 percent of the students who regularly attended improved by at least one letter grade by the end of the first semester. Not only that, but the partnership between the school, the PTSA, and the National Honor Society has made the library—the place where tutoring sessions are held—a cool place to be, and has helped restore a sense of pride in Fremont High School.

## Action Steps

### Getting Started

- ❖ Start with the end in mind. Determine what parents need to know and need to be able to do to support their children’s academic success. Also determine how family and community engagement can support school goals.
- ❖ Link all events to student learning, including those activities focused on making all families feel welcome.

### What Parents and Parent Leaders Can Do

1. Create a checklist and tip sheets for effective parent-teacher conferences.
2. Work with school leadership to conduct workshops on interpreting standardized test data.
3. Invite teachers and professionals from the community to speak at meetings on various topics.
4. Provide workshops for parents and students on topics such as study skills, individual curriculum areas, and college and career planning.
5. Provide parent involvement tips and suggestions through signs at the school and articles in the local newspaper.

### What School Leaders and Staff Can Do

1. Ask parents to take an active role in reviewing student portfolios.
2. At a “Parents Make the Difference” evening, give parents an overview of what students are learning, how students are assessed, what parents should expect, and how parents can help.
3. Institute student-led parent-teacher conferences.
4. Develop a family-school compact focused on student achievement.
5. Make it a policy that teachers send home materials at least once a month, such as interactive homework assignments, to help families work with their children.

## Resources

**All Kinds of Minds** offers a parent toolkit to provide a better understanding of learning processes and strategies for mathematics, reading, and writing. Go to [www.allkindsofminds.org](http://www.allkindsofminds.org).

**Conway Middle School Student-Led Conferences** (2001), from the Jefferson County (KY) Public Schools in cooperation with the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence and Louisville, Kentucky's Conway Middle School, outlines the purpose and roles of student-led conferences for students, parents, and teachers. Find the guide in the Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership (CIPL) section under Parent Resources at [www.prichardcommittee.org](http://www.prichardcommittee.org).

The **Education Trust** works for the high academic achievement of all students and offers resources that link parent involvement to student learning. Click on the Parents and Community tab at [www2.edtrust.org](http://www2.edtrust.org).

The **Florida Partnership for Family Involvement in Education** offers tip sheets for parents on getting involved in their children's education and achievement. Go to [www.floridapartnership.usf.edu/resources.html](http://www.floridapartnership.usf.edu/resources.html).

The **National Network of Partnership Schools** at Johns Hopkins University offers *Promising Partnership Practices*, a collection of family-school-community partnership practices that support children's learning from preschool through high school. Learn more at [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/PPP/2008/index.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/PPP/2008/index.htm).

**A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement**, by Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp (Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2002), reviews the research regarding family-school partnerships and student achievement. Read it at [www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf](http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf).

**PTA** provides many resources to help schools and parents support student success. Check out [PTA.org](http://PTA.org), particularly the Topics and Programs tabs.

**TIPS: Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork**, developed by the National Network of Partnership Schools, is a program for interactive homework. It makes learning a partnership between the student, family, and teacher. Learn more at [www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/tips/index.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/P2000/tips/index.htm).

**Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act** (2001) includes several parent involvement requirements. For an overview of these requirements, see *No Child Left Behind: What's in It for Parents*, by Anne T. Henderson (Parent Leadership Associates, 2002), available in English and Spanish in the Center for Parent Leadership (CPL) section under CPL Publications at [www.prichardcommittee.org](http://www.prichardcommittee.org).

## Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child

**Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.**

All children need an advocate—someone to speak out and stand up for them. Most likely that “someone” will be a parent, guardian, or close family member. Students whose families don’t know how to advocate effectively and constructively are at a real disadvantage. School staff and PTAs/parent groups can make a critical contribution by ensuring all students have an advocate—whether it’s a family member, teacher, or community volunteer—and by offering opportunities for parents and community members to learn and practice the special set of skills that speaking up for children requires.

Advocates often address issues affecting groups of children, but every child also needs someone who will step in and look out for him or her as an individual. To be a strong advocate for a child, a person should know the child well, talk to him or her often, and deeply want him or her to succeed.

Here are some of the things an advocate does for a student:

- ❖ Sets high expectations and monitors progress
- ❖ Helps the student set goals and plan for the future
- ❖ Steers the student through the school system, selecting courses that match his or her goals
- ❖ Intervenes if the student has a problem or is being treated unfairly
- ❖ Makes sure the student gets assistance, such as tutoring, medical attention, or counseling, when needed
- ❖ Monitors out-of-school time and makes sure it is spent in constructive, enriching activities



### Parent Empowerment Promotes Student Success

Parents with a high sense of efficacy—of power to have a positive effect on their children’s future—are more likely to monitor their children and be involved in the school. As a result, their children tend to do better in school and feel happier, safer, and more stable.

Lee Shumow and Richard Lomax,  
*Parental Efficacy: Predictor of Parenting Behavior  
and Adolescent Outcomes* (paper presented  
at the annual meeting of the American Educational  
Research Association, Seattle, 2001).

The first goal for speaking up for every child is **understanding how the school system works**. Parents must know how the local school and district operate and how to raise questions or concerns about school and district programs, policies, and activities. They also must understand their rights and responsibilities under federal and state law and local ordinances and policies. Do parents know what school and district staff do, who to contact about what, and where to get this information? Are parents aware that federal and state laws mandate that schools involve and inform parents, and that by federal law children have a right to qualified teachers? Does the school provide information to families about tutoring and other support services for their children? Do parents know how to get a problem resolved, and how to appeal a decision they don't agree with?

“Teachers *need* parents to know how to ‘press for success’—both with their children and with their children’s teachers. Asking good questions and showing genuine interest in student performance communicates a sense of urgency and shared responsibility for student progress. This can reenergize teachers and keep them from becoming complacent or lackadaisical about student progress.”

—Melissa Whipple, Parent Academic Liaison Program coordinator, San Diego Unified School District, quoted in Anne T. Henderson and others, *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (New York: The New Press, 2007), 154.

The second goal for this standard is **empowering families to support their own and other children’s success in school**. Parents must be prepared to monitor students’ progress and guide them toward their goals so they graduate from high school ready for postsecondary education and a career. Are parents offered workshops and other information sessions to help them learn how to ask the right questions and make the best choices for their children’s education? How often do counselors and/or advisors meet with each student and family to map out a plan for the student’s future, including the opportunity to go to college or technical school? Does the school work with PTA/parent group leaders to welcome and orient students and families new to the school or starting a new grade? Does the school or PTA/parent group invite local officials running for office to speak on issues that will impact education?



### Characterizing Families' Levels of Advocacy

A case study of how African American and Latino families attempted to steer their high school students toward postsecondary education showed the families falling into one of three groups:

- ❖ **Moral supporters:** These families, the least active, had little knowledge of the school system and a style that was “hands-off, but encouraging.” They trusted the system to serve their children well.
- ❖ **Ambivalent companions:** These families supported their children through encouragement, close communication, and occasional action.
- ❖ **Struggling advocates:** These families, the most active, monitored their children’s activities, questioned school staff, and took part in college prep events. They strongly believed that families must guide and support their students if they are to succeed, and expressed less trust in the system. Only this group was willing to persist even when rebuffed.

The study recommends that schools and supporting groups give families timely information that clearly targets their needs in supporting their children.

Susan Auerbach, “From Moral Supporters to Struggling Advocates: Reconceptualizing Parent Roles in Education Through the Experience of Working-Class Families of Color,” *Urban Education* 42, no. 3 (2007): 250–83.

## Speaking Up at Appoquinimink Early Childhood Center

### The Challenge

With the student-to-teacher ratio at 27:1 (despite a school board policy of a 22:1 maximum), the teachers at Appoquinimink Early Childhood Center in Middletown, Delaware, found themselves struggling to fully meet the needs of their students. Many of the students, with and without special needs, required small-group and individual attention to catch up to the expectations for kindergarten students. But the school was busting at the seams with no space to add a new classroom.



## The Action

The local PTA informed the families of all students about the effect high student-to-teacher ratios had on student achievement, and notified school district authorities of the situation. In partnership with families and school staff, the PTA then explored possible solutions and presented a proposal to the school board.

## The Impact

Parents identified a problem affecting their children's education, collaborated with other parents and teachers under a common goal, and helped develop and present a solution to an established group able to effect change. They saw their efforts pay off in the growth of their children. The school board allocated funds to hire paraprofessionals for every affected classroom in both of the district's kindergarten centers, ensuring students received the guidance and attention they needed to succeed.

## Action Steps

### Getting Started

- ❖ Get a copy of your school's parent involvement policy and make sure it covers the requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. Then find out what other parents think of the policy and whether it covers their concerns. Update the policy to meet the needs of your school community.
- ❖ Include a mini-poll (one question) in each PTA/school newsletter and post it on the Web. Over the course of the year, cover a wide range of issues affecting students and the school. Use the parent feedback in making school and program decisions.





### What Parents and Parent Leaders Can Do

1. Plan workshops on how to ask the right questions about children's progress and placement.
2. In collaboration with school staff, provide information sessions about programs for gifted and talented students. Reach out to underrepresented populations to ensure access and equity for all students.
3. Involve parents in ongoing training on topics such as being an effective advocate, identifying and supporting learning styles, resolving difficulties, and fostering student achievement.
4. Match new families at the school with a buddy family to show them the ropes.

### What School Leaders and Staff Can Do

1. Frequently share the school's policy and procedures for resolving parent concerns. Cover how to define the problem, whom to approach first, how to develop solutions, and so forth. Encourage parents to address problems early.
2. Develop a Parent Bill of Rights.
3. Provide a school handbook, workshops, and/or Web-based materials to explain all school policies and procedures to families.
4. Publicize any successful changes in the school that resulted from parent initiation and involvement.
5. Facilitate parent participation in school committees and other community groups, such as the city council.

## Resources

***Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships***, by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (New York: The New Press, 2007), includes a chapter on supporting advocacy (chapter 7), with a checklist to help evaluate how well your school supports parents as advocates. Go to [www.thenewpress.com/bakesale](http://www.thenewpress.com/bakesale).

The **Intercultural Development Research Association (IDRA)** offers professional development and training for educators and parents and has a package of bilingual materials to help Latino families plan for college. Check out these resources at [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org).

The **Kentucky Department of Education's Individual Graduation Plan** resources help students set learning goals based on academic and career interests. Download the materials at [www.kde.state.ky.us/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Career+and+Technical+Education/Individual+Learning+Plan/](http://www.kde.state.ky.us/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Career+and+Technical+Education/Individual+Learning+Plan/).

***Making the Most of Middle School: A Field Guide for Parents and Others***, by Anthony W. Jackson and P. Gayle Andrews with Holly Holland and Priscilla Pardini (New York: Teachers College Press, 2004), gives parents practical advice about young adolescents. It is available for order at <http://store.tcpspress.com/080774476X.shtml>.

***Speaking Up! A Parent Guide to Advocating for Students in Public Schools*** (Burnaby, British Columbia: BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils, 2008) offers practical advice on how to resolve problems. Go to [www.bccpac.bc.ca/advocacyproject/resources.aspx](http://www.bccpac.bc.ca/advocacyproject/resources.aspx).

**The Right Question Project** provides training that emphasizes working together to name the information we want and need, formulate questions, reflect on the knowledge gained, and develop plans for advocacy and accountability. For parents the project emphasizes three roles: supporting children's education, monitoring their progress, and being an advocate of their needs. Learn more at [www.rightquestion.org](http://www.rightquestion.org).

***Working Together: A Guide to Positive Problem Solving for Schools, Families, and Communities*** (Winnipeg, Manitoba: Manitoba Education, Citizenship and Youth, 2004) guides parents, educators, and community members in the cooperative problem-solving process of informal dispute resolution. Go to [www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/problem\\_solving/index.html](http://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/specedu/problem_solving/index.html).



## Standard 5—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.**

In a true partnership, all parties have an equal say in important decisions. This is what it means to share power. The lessons we teach our students about democracy in social studies class should come alive in our schools. If families, students, teachers, other school staff, and community members can speak their concerns, take part in elections and other decision-making processes, and meet openly to debate important questions, they will be actively practicing democracy.

For the standard of sharing power there are two goals. The first goal is **strengthening the family’s voice in shared decision making**. Families must be full partners in making decisions on issues affecting their children, both at school and within the local community. Do families sit at the table or have a vote when decisions that touch their children are being made? What governance structures exist to discuss and weigh issues of equity, such as which children are eligible for the gifted program? How do the school council and PTA/parent group develop and support new leaders among parents?

### Empowering Parents Through Leadership Training

Families who are new to the country or to civic activity can benefit from leadership training, which can lead the families to become far more involved. A California school district developed a 13-week leadership training institute covering the school’s curriculum, instruction, programs, standards, and assessments, as well as families’ rights. Graduates of the institute are encouraged to become school volunteers. Benefits of the program include

- ❖ New sources of information for families to support their children;
- ❖ More family confidence about how to support their children;
- ❖ A safe place to talk about important educational issues; and
- ❖ A strong cadre of volunteers for the schools.

Camille Wilson Cooper and Christina A. Christie,  
“Evaluating Parent Empowerment: A Look at the Potential of Social Justice  
Evaluation in Education,” *Teachers College Record* 107, no. 10 (2005): 2248–74.

The second goal for this standard is **building families’ social and political connections**. Every school should have a strong, broad-based parent organization that offers families and school staff regular opportunities to network and discuss concerns with each other and with school leaders, public officials, and business and community leaders. In what ways does the school and PTA/parent group connect families to local officials? How do school and parent leaders make sure the parent organization truly represents all families in both its membership and its leadership?



### Organized Parents, Powerful Change

Community organizing involves recruiting, engaging, and training parents, young people, and community residents to push for reforms in the education system. Many organizing groups start with local public schools, building a strong, broad-based parent organization that focuses on improving school quality and getting a fair share of district resources. A study of community organizing in eight cities around the country found that these efforts had substantial impact on school reform. They:

- ❖ Contributed to improved school-community relationships, parent involvement, sense of community, and teacher morale
- ❖ Stimulated changes that led to improved student test scores, attendance, graduation rates, and college aspirations
- ❖ Influenced district policy and flow of resources to improve low-performing schools
- ❖ Developed the capacity of parents, students, and community members to advocate change at the district level, build effective organizations in their schools and communities, and use research and data to present proposals

Kavitha Mediratta and others, *Organized Communities, Stronger Schools: A Preview of Research Findings* (Providence, RI: Annenberg Institute for School Reform at Brown University, 2008).

## Building Families' Political Connections in San Ramon Valley

### The Challenge

To better serve children and youth, California's San Ramon Valley Council of PTAs knew it needed to build its local units' capacity to effectively inform and influence policies and practices in their schools.

### The Action

The council began by equipping its units with knowledge. Through advocacy trainings at all of its 31 local PTAs, the San Ramon Valley Council of PTAs built leadership skills and made sure parents understood the laws and regulations governing their schools. Representatives from these units now visit state, county, and city legislators several times a year, and have sent more than 15,000 letters through their advocacy campaigns. And because of a candidates forum organized by the council, community members were able to make educated choices in the school board election.

The council also takes a leading role in being an advocate for students. At the district level it influenced the creation of a more parent-friendly, individualized education plan for students receiving special education services. In addition, it coordinates an annual trip with three other councils to Sacramento (the state capital) and has lobbied for full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act.

## The Impact

PTA leaders in the San Ramon Valley obtained an extra \$2.3 million for their school district and an additional \$350 million in education funding for the rest of the state for a single budget year.

## Action Steps

### Getting Started

- ❖ Identify all the ways your school can include and consult parents in decisions that affect the school community.
- ❖ Make sure the PTA/parent group membership and leadership is reflective of the school community.
- ❖ Consider programs and activities that develop social and political connections.

### What Parents and Parent Leaders Can Do

1. Working in partnership with the principal, identify ways the PTA/parent group can support one or more goals of the school improvement plan.
2. Host a voter registration drive.
3. Host a forum for candidates running for public office; focus questions on issues that affect children, families, and education.
4. Work with students, parents, teachers, school and community leaders, and businesses to develop a parent/family involvement policy that establishes the foundation for involvement programs in your community.
5. Get to know your elected officials at all levels of government, as they influence public policy decisions related to children and education.

### What School Leaders and Staff Can Do

1. Conduct an annual survey and/or focus groups to get the input of parents on current and potential school programs and policies.
2. At a PTA/parent group meeting, discuss the school's scores on state tests and describe the school's plans to improve.
3. Sponsor a school accountability meeting at which school officials describe school programs, services, and performance data.
4. Make sure the parents on the school improvement team represent the diverse population of the school.
5. Invite parents to share concerns and ideas by having a suggestion box in the front office, and be personally accessible to all parents.

## Resources

***Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships***, by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (New York: The New Press, 2007), includes a school climate survey that can be an excellent action research project. Download the survey and other sample tools from the book for free at [www.thenewpress.com/bakesale](http://www.thenewpress.com/bakesale).

The **Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership**, developed by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence, is a parent leadership training program in education. It has graduated more than 1,500 parents across the state of Kentucky in the past 11 years. To learn how to start a program in your area, go to [www.cipl.org](http://www.cipl.org).

**National Issues Forums** offers workshops and a starter kit on how to organize public forums on community issues and also helps sponsor forums. Learn more at [www.nifi.org](http://www.nifi.org).



## Standard 6—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.**

Partnerships that connect a school with businesses, hospitals, colleges, service clubs, social service agencies, youth organizations, public housing projects, labor unions, tenant groups, churches, other faith-based organizations, and other community groups can turn a neighborhood into a thriving place to live, work, and raise a family. Many school districts are creating full-service community schools that offer one-stop resource centers for families and local residents. Schools are opening their doors and allowing their communities to use the library, kitchen, computer center, and meeting rooms. If school leaders are aware of what's happening in the community, they can apply school resources to problems that matter.

For the standard of collaborating with community, there is one overriding goal: **connecting the school with community resources**. Parent and school leaders should work closely with neighborhood associations, government agencies, businesses, and institutions of higher education to strengthen the school. These collaborations should make resources available to students, school staff, and families and build a family-friendly community. What links to community resources has the school forged? Have parents and families been part of that process? In what ways has support from community partners been organized? What are the plans to turn the school into a hub of community life? How do the partnerships with community groups strengthen families and support student success?

### Complementary Learning

For children and young people to be successful from birth through adolescence there must be an array of linked supports for learning all around them. The Harvard Family Research Project calls this network of supports “complementary learning.” The connections should work together and be in place continuously, shifting over time as children mature. For more information and resources, go to [www.hfrp.org](http://www.hfrp.org).





### Lessons from the 100 Best Communities

Each year America's Promise Alliance identifies the "100 Best Communities for Young People." In studying 25 former winners that emphasized family involvement, researchers from America's Promise Alliance identified several common best practices in developing family involvement programs and strategies. Those best practices include

- ❖ Addressing the multiple needs of families—economic, health, educational, and parenting—to empower parents to support their children;
- ❖ Asking parents and children about community needs and possible solutions through surveys and community forums;
- ❖ Using data about the community and from performance evaluations to develop and revise programs; and
- ❖ Partnering with community organizations for infrastructural and financial support and leadership.

Jonathan F. Zaff and Danielle Butler, "Whole Children, Whole Families, Whole Communities," *The Evaluation Exchange* (Harvard Family Research Project) 14, nos. 1&2 (Spring 2008): 12.

## Making Van Bokkelen Elementary a Community Hub

### The Challenge

Van Bokkelen Elementary School in Severn, Maryland, a Title I school where more than 80 percent of the students receive free or reduced-price lunches, had become one of the worst-performing schools in the state. It was even put on the state department of education's takeover list. What's more, parents seemed disconnected and mistrustful of the school.

### The Action

Understanding that when parents and the community are involved, students do better in school, the Van Bokkelen Elementary PTA—a group small in numbers but big on commitment—began to question why more parents were not involved. What they found was that many of the families lived in poverty and faced a daily challenge in meeting the basic needs of their families. In addition, many parents, because of their circumstances, didn't feel they should be involved or that they were capable of making a contribution.

To help meet the needs of families, the PTA sought out community resources. Partnerships were formed with the YWCA, a community college, the American Red Cross, and the local Boys & Girls Club, to name a few. These partners helped parents obtain their GEDs, offered job-skills training, provided after-school enrichment and child-care programs, instituted a first-time homebuyers program, and even gave down-payment assistance to parents completing a financial education program—all at the school, which became the hub of the community.

## The Impact

Van Bokkelen Elementary School transformed completely. As families started coming to the school for these supports and services, they began to feel better about themselves and the school, resulting in greater communication with teachers, the principal, and each other. Family members were better able to provide for their children and gained the confidence in themselves to become true partners in supporting their children’s success in school. The school gained the families’ trust. And best of all, student achievement improved, with grades and test scores going up across the board.

## Action Steps

### Getting Started

- ❖ Reach out to a broad base of partners in and around the school to help achieve your desired results.
- ❖ Build trust among the partners and an understanding of the contributions each organization can bring, as well as their limitations.
- ❖ Develop a shared vision among the partners for what type of success the partnership will produce.
- ❖ Make sure partnership activities strengthen families and link to student learning.

### What Parents and Parent Leaders Can Do

1. Host a community-resource fair that highlights programs that support the cultural, recreational, academic, health, social, and other needs of families.
2. Reach out to senior/retired citizens and invite them to volunteer at the school.
3. Work with the local newspaper to promote special events that are happening at the school.
4. Invite school alumni to participate in an alumni sponsors program through which they volunteer time or make a donation to the school.
5. Develop paycheck-size cards with tips for how parents can foster their children’s success. Contact employers about including the cards with employee paychecks.

### What School Leaders and Staff Can Do

1. Sponsor an annual Give Back Day on which students go into the community to perform needed work or services.
2. Include in the local chamber of commerce newsletter a request from the school district superintendent for local employers to encourage employees with children to attend parent-teacher conferences and other involvement activities.
3. Invite local businesses to sponsor community-resource workshops for teachers during the summer to help them learn about the educational, cultural, and business resources in the community.
4. Host a community breakfast at the school for local businesses and civic leaders.

## Resources

***Becoming a Community School***, by Robert L. Ford School Principal Claire Crane and several of her fellow educators (Dorchester, MA: Project for School Innovation, 2004), tells how this K–8 school in a poor Massachusetts neighborhood became a thriving hub for community activities. Find order information at [www.psinnovation.org/order](http://www.psinnovation.org/order).

***Community Engagement Review and Planning Guide—Field Test Version***, by Rosana Rodríguez, Pam McCollum, and Abelardo Villarreal (San Antonio, TX: Intercultural Development Research Association, 2002), is designed to help schools and universities plan and strengthen community engagement. It is available in English and Spanish at [www.idra.org](http://www.idra.org), under Publications.

**Everyday Democracy** (formerly the Study Circles Resource Center) helps communities bring individuals with different experiences and opinions together to talk about challenges facing their community, and to work together to create solutions to those challenges. Learn more at [www.everyday-democracy.org](http://www.everyday-democracy.org).

***School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Your Handbook for Action (Third Edition)***, by Joyce L. Epstein and others (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2008), provides detailed information on strengthening family-school partnerships for schools involved in the National Network of Partnership Schools and those who would like to join. Learn more at [www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/publications/manual.htm](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/publications/manual.htm).

***The School-Family Connection: Looking at the Larger Picture***, by Chris Ferguson (Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, 2008), is a review of current literature on family involvement that identifies important strategies for increasing family-school connections. Go to [www.sedl.org/connections/resources/sfclitrev.pdf](http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/sfclitrev.pdf).



# The Power of Partnerships Family Survey

Dear Families,

The best way to make sure every student in our school succeeds is to build a strong partnership between families, the school, and the community. The survey below gives you the opportunity to tell us what our school is doing well to support this partnership and what we can do better.

If you would like to help tally and analyze the results, please let us know.

—The Family Involvement Action Team

<Provide the names and contact information of the team members here.>

### Welcoming All Families into the School Community

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. When I walk into the school, I feel the school is inviting and that this is a place where parents “belong.”	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. The school’s policies and programs reflect, respect, and value the diversity of the families in the community.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Students at the school are treated fairly no matter what their race or cultural background.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I feel welcome at PTA/parent group meetings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Communicating Effectively

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5. The school keeps all families informed about important issues and events.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. The school makes it easy for families to communicate with teachers.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. The school communicates with families in multiple ways (e.g., e-mail, phone, website).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I can talk to the school principal when I need to.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. My child’s teacher communicates with me on a regular basis.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. It’s easy to get a translator if I need one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

*Continued on next page*

## The Power of Partnerships Family Survey, continued

### Supporting Student Success

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
11. My child's teacher keeps me well informed about how my child is doing in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. I understand the academic standards my child is supposed to meet and how the curriculum is linked to those standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. My child's teacher and the school give me useful information about how to improve my child's progress.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. All students are challenged to do their best.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Speaking Up for Every Child

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
15. If the school can't help me, they will connect me to someone who can.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I understand the rules and requirements for student dress, language, and behavior.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. The school keeps me informed of my rights under federal and state laws and policies and helps me exercise those rights as needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I feel empowered to advocate for my own child's and other children's success in school.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Sharing Power

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
19. The school consults with me and other families before making important decisions (e.g., changes in curriculum, school policies, dress code).	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. The school provides opportunities for families to develop relationships and raise concerns with school leaders, public officials, and business and community leaders.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### Collaborating with Community

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
21. The school connects students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and community improvement initiatives.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments \_\_\_\_\_

Your name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

# PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide



## National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

### Introduction: Measuring Success

PTA's National Standards for Family-School Partnerships offer a framework for how families, schools, and communities should work together to support student success. To facilitate the implementation in local schools of programs, practices, and policies that are guided by the Standards, PTA has developed an assessment guide, otherwise known as a *rubric*.

The National Standards Assessment Guide provides specific goals for each Standard, as well as indicators for measuring whether those goals are being met. There are also examples for each indicator to show what good practice looks like at different levels of development:

- ❖ Level 1: **Emerging**—Limited level of development and implementation
- ❖ Level 2: **Progressing**—Functioning level of development and implementation
- ❖ Level 3: **Excelling**—Highly functioning level of development and implementation

Each level of practice should build on the last; good practices at the emerging and progressing levels are expected to continue at the next level.

### 10 Ways to Use the Assessment Guide

The National Standards Assessment Guide can be used in a number of ways to help develop and improve programs, practices, and policies that affect family and community engagement in schools.

Here are 10 ideas on how to use the guide:

- ❖ To assess current family involvement practices at the school
- ❖ To develop ideas for involvement practices and activities
- ❖ To inform the development of a school improvement plan
- ❖ To monitor progress in reaching school improvement goals
- ❖ To design professional development for staff
- ❖ To discuss the Standards at PTA and faculty meetings
- ❖ To conduct a school walk-through looking for evidence of implementation for each Standard
- ❖ To create a survey for parents and staff
- ❖ To guide the development of school-based parent involvement policies and compacts
- ❖ To design research and evaluation studies and instruments



## National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

Throughout this implementation guide, the levels of practice build on each other, assuming that good practices at the emerging and progressing levels will continue at the next level.

### Standard 1—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.

**Goal 1: Creating a Welcoming Climate:** When families walk into the building, do they feel the school is inviting and is a place where they “belong”?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 <b>Excelling</b> Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 <b>Progressing</b> Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 <b>Emerging</b> Limited level of development and implementation	
<b>Developing personal relationships</b>	<p>Family volunteers from different neighborhoods and backgrounds are trained to serve as mentors to help other families become more engaged in the school.</p> <p><i>For example, mentors call new families to invite them to attend PTA/parent group programs, offering to pick them up or meet them at the entrance of the school.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group members volunteer to work in the school office to provide information and support to families and students.</p> <p><i>For example, a help desk is established and staffed by family volunteers and school employees.</i></p>	<p>Families are greeted promptly in their home language by friendly front-office staff who give them correct information and help them connect with appropriate faculty members.</p> <p><i>For example, a staff member or family volunteer, using the family’s home language, gives a new immigrant family information about the school and a tour of the building.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

## Standard 1—Welcoming All Families into the School Community, *continued*

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<p><b>Creating a family-friendly atmosphere</b></p>	<p>The school is a welcoming place where families can drop in and connect with school staff and other families.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group and school staff together create a family resource center, staffed with parent volunteers or school staff fluent in various languages and filled with information in various languages about the school and community.</i></p>	<p>The school building is easy for visitors to navigate, and the community knows what is going on at the school.</p> <p><i>For example, signs clearly direct visitors to important places within the school such as the library and guidance office, and an outside marquee keeps the community informed of upcoming events.</i></p>	<p>The school campus is clean and welcoming to parents.</p> <p><i>For example, entrances are clearly marked and a sign inside the front door welcomes families in the main languages of the community.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet</p>
<p><b>Providing opportunities for volunteering</b></p>	<p>The school volunteer program reaches out to parents of all neighborhoods and backgrounds, identifies their unique experiences and skills, and offers varied volunteer opportunities for both at home and school.</p> <p><i>For example, PTA/parent group leaders make personal phone calls to diverse parents to solicit their ideas on volunteering and to help connect them to opportunities.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group works with the school to organize a formal volunteer program.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group helps develop a range of volunteer options, sends volunteer invitation forms to all families in their home language, and coordinates the responses.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group members and other parents are welcome to volunteer their services in the school or individual classrooms.</p> <p><i>For example, a small group of parents are used by the school when volunteers are needed.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet</p>

**Standard 1—Welcoming All Families into the School Community, continued**

**Goal 2: Building a Respectful, Inclusive School Community: Do the school’s policies and programs reflect, respect, and value the diversity of the families in the community?**

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Respecting all families</b>	<p>The school and families from all neighborhoods and backgrounds assume collective responsibility to identify and break down barriers to family engagement related to race, ethnicity, class, family structure, religion, and physical and mental ability.</p> <p><i>For example, families from different neighborhoods and cultures create family histories that combine to tell the story of the entire school community.</i></p>	<p>School and PTA/parent group leaders work with parents and community members from different neighborhoods and backgrounds to gain their insights on how to make the school more respectful and supportive.</p> <p><i>For example, families and school leaders discuss how the school will accommodate students who might be absent from school because of holy days.</i></p>	<p>Families and school staff affirm student cultures and history in school resources, classroom lessons, and activities.</p> <p><i>For example, PTA/parent group members from different neighborhoods and backgrounds work with school staff to ensure that media center and classroom materials reflect the diversity of the community.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet
<b>Removing economic obstacles to participation</b>	<p>Family and student activities and events are free. The school and PTA/parent group collaborate to cover the costs through the school budget, PTA/parent group fundraising, and contributions from community businesses and organizations.</p> <p><i>For example, fees to participate in after-school programs are waived for low-income families.</i></p>	<p>School leaders, the PTA/parent group, and community members work together to offer extracurricular activities at no cost.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group sponsors a dialogue with a children’s author and each family receives a free copy of the author’s book.</i></p>	<p>For family activities, the PTA/parent group makes a commitment to keep the events free or low-cost.</p> <p><i>For example, the school book fair offers a section of new or gently used books donated by other parents to be made available at no cost.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

## Standard 1—Welcoming All Families into the School Community, *continued*

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<p><b>Ensuring accessible programming</b></p>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders and school officials jointly create schoolwide procedures and policies to ensure that all parents and students have access to school-sponsored programs and events, including academic services.</p> <p><i>For example, services such as interpreters during meetings or classroom instruction, transportation, and child care are consistently provided for both school-based events and school events held in community locations.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders and school officials work together to plan family programs to be held at the school and in community locations such as libraries, community centers, faith-based centers, homes in different neighborhoods, and work sites.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group organizes a family program about applying effective study skills at an apartment building near the school.</i></p>	<p>Family activities are held at various times and days of the week to respect parents' work schedules.</p> <p><i>For example, a family dinner and science exploration program is held on a Sunday evening instead of a weekday.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet</p>

“Families” and “parents” are used interchangeably to refer to adults who are responsible for a student. “Families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods” and “diverse families” include families from all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, family structures, and economic levels, as well as those with physical or mental challenges.

## National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

Throughout this implementation guide, the levels of practice build on each other, assuming that good practices at the emerging and progressing levels will continue at the next level.

### Standard 2—Communicating Effectively

Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.

**Goal 1: Sharing Information Between School and Families: Does the school keep all families informed about important issues and events and make it easy for families to communicate with teachers?**

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 Excelling Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 Progressing Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 Emerging Limited level of development and implementation	
<b>Using multiple communication paths</b>	<p>Families, the community, and school staff communicate in numerous interactive ways, both formally and informally.</p> <p><i>For example, school and PTA/parent group leaders take part in community forums in different neighborhoods and appear on radio or local TV call-in programs and use social networking online to engage families.</i></p>	<p>School staff collaborate with the PTA/parent group to develop connections with families through multiple two-way communication tools, including personal calls, e-mails, and notes.</p> <p><i>For example, parents who are not fluent in English are given up-to-date information through bilingual staff or parent volunteers who are available at times convenient for these families.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group and school keep families informed of upcoming events in a variety of ways, including regular print and electronic notices, in the languages spoken in the community.</p> <p><i>For example, the school uses newsletters, fliers, e-mail, automated phone calls, and text messages in the home languages of families as needed.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

**Standard 2—Communicating Effectively, continued**

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<p><b>Surveying families to identify issues and concerns</b></p>	<p>Parent survey results are reflected in the School Improvement Plan.</p> <p><i>For example, programs, policies, and practices are developed collaboratively by teachers, administrators, families, and community members to meet the needs of parents as identified in the survey.</i></p>	<p>The parent survey is translated into multiple languages and communicated in various ways, including in person, online, in print, and by phone, and made available to all parents. Results are posted on the school and/or PTA website and discussed.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group plans morning coffees and evening “happy hours” to discuss survey results with parents and solicit additional feedback.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders and representatives from the school staff (e.g., principal, teacher) complete a parent involvement survey. The results guide the development of parent involvement programs.</p> <p><i>For example, the executive committee of the PTA/parent group and the principal meet over the summer to discuss the survey results and plan strategies to address barriers.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet</p>
<p><b>Having access to the principal</b></p>	<p>The principal personally welcomes families into the building and meets regularly with parents in small groups or one-on-one as needed, in school and in different neighborhoods.</p> <p><i>For example, the principal and PTA/parent group develop an agenda for small-group dialogues to be held in different neighborhoods on issues such as school security or homework expectations.</i></p>	<p>The principal is accessible for scheduled meetings with groups of parents or individually at different times of the day.</p> <p><i>For example, the principal hosts monthly coffee hours that are open to all parents to discuss a variety of topics. Meeting times vary from month to month to accommodate parent schedules.</i></p>	<p>The principal shares information about schoolwide issues at PTA/parent group meetings, with opportunities for individual follow-up discussion by appointment.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group invites the principal to a monthly meeting to discuss schoolwide test results and plans to address gaps in learning.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet</p>

## Standard 2—Communicating Effectively, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<p><b>Providing information on current issues</b></p>	<p>A team of administrators, teachers, families, and community representatives strategically look at developing issues that affect families to determine whether there is a need for a schoolwide response.</p> <p><i>For example, the principal meets monthly with a parent-school-community team to address school-wide issues and determine appropriate responses.</i></p>	<p>All school families are kept informed of developing concerns in the school community.</p> <p><i>For example, print and electronic newsletters are generated on a regular basis. When serious concerns arise, families are immediately informed through e-mail, and letters are sent home.</i></p>	<p>The principal keeps the PTA/parent group president informed of current school issues and concerns.</p> <p><i>For example, the principal meets monthly with the PTA/parent group president to review issues that may affect families and student learning. The issues discussed are determined solely by the principal.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet</p>



## Standard 2—Communicating Effectively, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Facilitating connections among families</b>	<p>The PTA/parent group takes steps to help parents get to know those beyond their own neighborhood and culture.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group plans small group events that begin with icebreaker activities, parents can also connect electronically through school listservs, blogs, and social networking Web pages.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group and school jointly develop programs to help parents connect with each other.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group collaborates with school staff to jointly plan an orientation program at the beginning of the year and distributes a calendar and a schoolwide directory with staff and parent listings.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group provides opportunities for parents to get to know each other.</p> <p><i>For example, PTA/parent group newsletters provide contact information for parents who want to join a committee. Parents of students in each grade level can plan informal get-togethers to socialize with each other (e.g., a Parents of 4th-Graders Breakfast Club).</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

“Families” and “parents” are used interchangeably to refer to adults who are responsible for a student. “Families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods” and “diverse families” include families from all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, family structures, and economic levels, as well as those with physical or mental challenges.

## National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

Throughout this implementation guide, the levels of practice build on each other, assuming that good practices at the emerging and progressing levels will continue at the next level.

### Standard 3—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.

**Goal 1: Sharing Information About Student Progress: Do families know and understand how well their children are succeeding in school and how well the entire school is progressing?**

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 <b>Excelling</b> Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 <b>Progressing</b> Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 <b>Emerging</b> Limited level of development and implementation	
<b>Ensuring parent-teacher communication about student progress</b>	<p>Teachers and parents discuss students' individual learning styles, family cultural experiences, strengths, and academic and personal needs, then develop learning goals to support academic success at school and at home.</p> <p><i>For example, the school has adopted a Personal Education Plan for parents, students, and teachers to establish education/career goals.</i></p>	<p>Teachers and guidance counselors regularly contact parents with positive news as well as concerns about their children. Parents have an easy way to communicate with teachers on a regular basis.</p> <p><i>For example, each classroom has a website where class assignments and other schoolwide events are posted. Parents can ask general questions or schedule meetings with teachers as needed.</i></p>	<p>Parents can contact teachers through e-mail, notes, or phone messages and receive a timely response. Teachers make contact with all families at the start of the year to establish positive relationships.</p> <p><i>For example, teachers in high school send home a welcome note to all families inviting their comments and providing an e-mail address or phone number.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

### Standard 3—Supporting Student Success, *continued*

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<p><b>Linking student work to academic standards</b></p>	<p>Teachers and parents have regular discussions about how each school program or activity links to student learning through academic standards.</p> <p><i>For example, the teacher and families discuss the music curriculum goals before a student concert; parents of football players are offered opportunities to learn how the playbook relates to math and logic standards.</i></p>	<p>Teachers explain to parents throughout the year what students are learning and what good work looks like under the academic standards for the student's age and grade level.</p> <p><i>For example, teachers maintain portfolios of students' work for parents to review upon request.</i></p>	<p>Student work is displayed throughout the school in a way that shows how it met academic standards.</p> <p><i>For example, teachers display students' writing assignments to demonstrate how students used skills such as clear and concise language, proper spelling, and staying on the topic.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet
<p><b>Using standardized test results to increase achievement</b></p>	<p>Parents are included on school or school district academic standards committees and discuss how to raise expectations and achievement for every student.</p> <p><i>For example, a cochair of the standards committee is a position established and reserved for parents only.</i></p>	<p>Families have opportunities to learn how to interpret testing data.</p> <p><i>For example, family members and teachers are invited to participate in workshops, sponsored by the PTA/parent group and the school, to learn how the school uses standardized test results to improve student achievement.</i></p>	<p>Parents are informed about standardized tests.</p> <p><i>For example, the principal explains at an informational meeting when and which standardized tests are given at which grade levels, and why the tests are being given.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

### Standard 3—Supporting Student Success, *continued*

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Sharing school progress</b>	<p>The principal collaborates with PTA/parent group leaders to present regular progress updates on reaching academic goals and develops strategies to support improvement.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group works with school staff to match mentors with struggling students.</i></p>	<p>The principal collaborates with PTA/parent group leaders to facilitate discussion between school staff and families on needed academic improvements.</p> <p><i>For example, family-school dialogues focus on increasing the diversity of students in the gifted program or the number of girls taking advanced math and science classes.</i></p>	<p>The principal presents the school's academic goals at the beginning of the school year and reports on progress made the previous year.</p> <p><i>For example, the principal or other school administrators host parent meetings for each grade or subject to present academic goals for the year and to solicit feedback.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

**Standard 3—Supporting Student Success, continued**

**Goal 2: Supporting Learning by Engaging Families: Are families active participants in their children’s learning at home and at school?**

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Engaging families in classroom learning</b>	<p>The PTA/parent group helps organize a database of parent and family skills, expertise, and backgrounds, through which teachers can find resources.</p> <p><i>For example, a parent who is an artist is brought in to work with students to create a school mural.</i></p>	<p>Families and teachers engage in innovative ways to collaborate on classroom learning.</p> <p><i>For example, teachers invite community groups and families to their classes to share information about their cultures and demonstrate how foods from their cultures are prepared, helping students learn history and culture, as well as math and chemistry skills.</i></p>	<p>Families and teachers work together to provide resources for upcoming units of study.</p> <p><i>For example, grandparents discuss life under segregation during a lesson on civil rights.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet
<b>Developing family ability to strengthen learning at home</b>	<p>Teachers and the PTA/parent group plan regular family learning events at workplaces and community locations.</p> <p><i>For example, workshops on a variety of topics that help parents support learning are held during lunchtime at a local manufacturing plant or at a child-care site in the late afternoon.</i></p>	<p>The school and PTA/parent group work together to provide families tools to support student learning at home.</p> <p><i>For example, a series of workshops teach parents strategies for supporting reading development for different grade levels.</i></p>	<p>The school and PTA/parent group offer programs on parenting skills that will help promote learning.</p> <p><i>For example, an expert is invited to give a presentation to help parents deal with the tough issues of raising teenagers.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

### Standard 3—Supporting Student Success, *continued*

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Promoting after-school learning</b>	<p>The school partners with community organizations (including faith-based) to provide after-school programs for children and families.</p> <p><i>For example, the local Boys and Girls Club works with parents, students, and school staff to create a program that meets the recreational and academic needs of students. The program is available five days a week and is free of charge.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group and the school invite families to learn more about the value of after-school activities.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group hosts an Afterschool Alliance Lights On Afterschool event to raise awareness about the importance of after-school programs.</i></p>	<p>The school informs parents of after-school opportunities.</p> <p><i>For example, fliers about school-based as well as community-based programs are sent home with the student. E-mail, Web announcements, and phone calls in families' home languages are also utilized.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

“Families” and “parents” are used interchangeably to refer to adults who are responsible for a student. “Families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods” and “diverse families” include families from all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, family structures, and economic levels, as well as those with physical or mental challenges.

# National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

Throughout this implementation guide, the levels of practice build on each other, assuming that good practices at the emerging and progressing levels will continue at the next level.

## Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child

Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.

**Goal 1: Understanding How the School System Works:** Do parents know how the local school and district operate and how to raise questions or concerns about school and district programs, policies, and activities? Do they understand their rights and responsibilities under federal and state law as well as local ordinances and policies?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 Excelling Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 Progressing Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 Emerging Limited level of development and implementation	
<b>Understanding how the school and district operate</b>	<p>The school district offers workshops for family members about school and district programs, policies, and resources, and the skills to access them. The workshops are offered in various languages and locations in the community.</p> <p><i>For example, workshops are offered on parent and student rights under Title 1.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group and school collaborate to inform the school community about how the school and school district operate and the role of parent involvement in the school.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group and school staff cohost a fall orientation where families can learn about programs for academic and social growth, tour the school, and meet the entire school staff. Interpreters are available.</i></p>	<p>The principal provides all parents with information on the school’s mission, goals, and organizational structure.</p> <p><i>For example, the school handbook is available in print and on the school website. It is also available in various languages as needed.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet



## Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<p><b>Understanding rights and responsibilities under federal and state laws</b></p>	<p>A network of PTA/parent group members helps other families exercise their rights under state and federal education laws.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group engages its members to use state and federal mandates to develop a Parent Bill of Rights.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group invites district staff to talk about parent rights and responsibilities under state and federal laws.</p> <p><i>For example, parent advocates help families understand their options if their school does not make adequate yearly progress under NCLB.*</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group distributes written materials about parent involvement mandates in state and federal programs, such as No Child Left Behind (NCLB)* and Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA)**</p> <p><i>For example, information about each of these mandates is posted on the school's website with links to other programs related to these mandates.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet
<p><b>Learning about resources</b></p>	<p>Guidance counselors, parent advocates, and teachers work with families to take advantage of resources and programs that support student success. They target families who may not know how to access these resources.</p> <p><i>For example, they work with families whose children are underrepresented in advanced classes to encourage their sons and daughters to take higher-level courses.</i></p>	<p>Meetings at school and in the community help families better understand students' options for extra academic support or enrichment.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group and school cosponsor informational sessions on after-school and summer learning programs.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group helps develop and distribute information about available programs and resources, such as magnet programs in math, science, and Advanced Placement classes.</p> <p><i>For example, the school and parent group create a school handbook with academic resources that is available in all languages spoken in the community.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

\* The No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 reauthorized a number of federal programs aimed at improving the performance of U.S. schools by increasing the standards of accountability for states, school districts, and schools. NCLB is the current name for the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) passed in 1965.

\*\*The Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) of 2004 is a federal law ensuring services to children with disabilities. IDEA governs how states and public agencies provide early intervention, special education, and related services.

## Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<p><b>Resolving problems and conflicts</b></p> <p>School staff and the PTA/parent group jointly plan strategies to help parents, teachers, and students identify and resolve problems and conflicts at school.</p> <p><i>For example, conflict resolution classes are offered to help parents, students, and teachers learn effective ways to resolve conflicts at home and at school.</i></p>	<p>The school has a clear, written procedure for resolving concerns or problems.</p> <p><i>For example, a committee of school staff and PTA/parent group leaders is established to ensure that concerns have been addressed, and that further action is taken if needed.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group provides information to all parents on how to resolve problems at school.</p> <p><i>For example, a Guide to Identifying and Resolving Problems at School is developed and made available on the school website and in print, in appropriate languages.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet</p>	

## Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child, continued

**Goal 2: Empowering Families to Support Their Own and Other Children’s Success in School: Are parents prepared to monitor students’ progress and guide them toward their goals through high school graduation, postsecondary education, and a career?**

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Developing families’ capacity to be effective advocates</b>	<p>The PTA/parent group works with the principal to establish school policies that support parents as advocates.</p> <p><i>For example, the school handbook includes a number of resources (e.g., information on parent rights under federal and state education mandates, local district policies, requirements for promotion and/or graduation, and numbers to call for additional support) that help prepare parents to be advocates for their and other children.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group offers parents opportunities to learn advocacy strategies and techniques.</p> <p><i>For example, workshops and other information sessions are offered to help parents learn how to ask the right questions about their child’s progress in school.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group collects and disseminates useful information on how to be an effective advocate for student success.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group provides monthly tips (on the school website and in print) on how to be an advocate for student success.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet
<b>Planning for the future</b>	<p>The school has created partnerships with colleges and universities and local businesses to expand opportunities for career exploration and preparation.</p> <p><i>For example, advanced students have opportunities to take courses at the local college or university. Businesses offer internships for students during the school year and summer.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group and school staff help prepare parents and students to make informed decisions that connect career interests with academic programs.</p> <p><i>For example, information sessions are offered to help parents and students identify career interests and goals. They then can focus on the skills and education needed to be successful in that career.</i></p>	<p>With support from the PTA/parent group, the school offers opportunities for students to explore careers.</p> <p><i>For example, local employers are invited to speak at a school career expo, and asked to offer field trips to work sites.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

## Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Smoothing transitions</b>	<p>A transition program developed by PTA/parent group leaders and school staff helps parents feel connected and remain involved as their children progress through school.</p> <p><i>For example, informational sessions explain how expectations, standards, and approaches to teaching change from elementary to middle and high school.</i></p>	<p>School staff and PTA/parent group leaders reach out to new students and their families before the next school year starts, offering an orientation to the school, opportunities to participate in school-sponsored activities, and to meet other students and parents.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group assigns “buddies” to new students and connects families to parent mentors.</i></p>	<p>Spring orientation programs cosponsored by the school and PTA/parent group help prepare students for the next grade level or school.</p> <p><i>For example, an elementary school organizes visits to the middle school for parents and students, who are given an opportunity to familiarize themselves with the new environment and to ask questions.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

## Standard 4—Speaking Up for Every Child, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Engaging in civic advocacy for student achievement</b>	<p>The PTA/parent group partners with other education advocates to mobilize school and community support around issues that affect student learning.</p> <p><i>For example, “parent café conversations” are held on the need for smaller class sizes, after-school programs, or funding for a middle school science lab, resulting in families advocating for these improvements before the school board.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders offer discussions on policy issues and organize families to testify at local public hearings on school needs.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group invites school board members to give an informal budget briefing and holds a voter registration drive.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders help families learn about political issues affecting education.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group sponsors local candidate forums during election campaigns.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

“Families” and “parents” are used interchangeably to refer to adults who are responsible for a student. “Families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods” and “diverse families” include families from all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, family structures, and economic levels, as well as those with physical or mental challenges.

## National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

Throughout this implementation guide, the levels of practice build on each other, assuming that good practices at the emerging and progressing levels will continue at the next level.

### Standard 5—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.

**Goal 1: Strengthening the Family’s Voice in Shared Decision Making: Are all families full partners in making decisions that affect their children at school and in the community?**

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 <b>Excelling</b> Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 <b>Progressing</b> Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 <b>Emerging</b> Limited level of development and implementation	
<b>Having a voice in all decisions that affect children</b>	<p>The school has established policy to ensure that parents have an equal voice in all major decisions that affect children, such as principal selection and budget allocation.</p> <p><i>For example, 50% of the School Improvement Team is made up of parents. The PTA/parent group leader holds a permanent seat and makes recommendations for additional parent members.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group and school host dialogues with families and school personnel about issues and policies to gain their ideas and insights.</p> <p><i>For example, proposed changes in the grading system are discussed at the school and in neighborhood settings during the day and evening, with interpreters as needed.</i></p>	<p>The school informs families about issues or proposed changes, and gives them an opportunity to respond.</p> <p><i>For example, the school informs families in advance about changes in the school schedule or building renovations, and offers contact information in case families have questions.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

## Standard 5—Sharing Power, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Addressing equity issues</b>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders work with the school improvement team to adopt effective strategies to engage families in reducing achievement gaps between groups of students.</p> <p><i>For example, families, faculty, and community members join in open dialogue with the school improvement team about root causes of the achievement gap, and identify strategies to close that gap.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders work with school staff to address barriers to family involvement and student success that are related to diversity in race, income, and culture.</p> <p><i>For example, van pools are established for families whose students are bused from distant neighborhoods so they can take part in math and science nights.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group identifies barriers to working with school staff on issues such as low attendance that affect student achievement.</p> <p><i>For example, parents and faculty work on shared strategies and jointly determine best practices in raising student attendance.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet
<b>Developing parent leadership</b>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders are trained in facilitation skills such as brainstorming, role-plays, and small-group activities that encourage everyone to speak.</p> <p><i>For example, PTA/parent group leaders use these skills to facilitate regular schoolwide meetings to discuss ideas for improving school climate and student achievement.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders recruit interested families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods to volunteer (both in and out of school—according to their schedules), sit on a committee, and run for office.</p> <p><i>For example, leaders survey families to find out their interests and skills, and follow up with opportunities where they might be able to help.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders reach out to parents with diverse backgrounds and invite them to become involved in the PTA/parent group.</p> <p><i>For example, leaders greet families as they bring their children to school events, and get their ideas for family learning activities.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet



**Standard 5—Sharing Power, continued**

**Goal 2: Building Families’ Social and Political Connections:** Do families have a strong, broad-based organization that offers regular opportunities to develop relationships and raise concerns with school leaders, public officials, and business and community leaders?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Connecting families to local officials</b>	<p>The principal and parent leaders personally invite public officials to meetings to discuss ideas, issues, and problems in the community.</p> <p><i>For example, as a result of ongoing concerns for student safety raised by parents, representatives from the police department, the department of public works, and the school board are invited to an open meeting at the school to address the problem and propose solutions.</i></p>	<p>The school and PTA/parent group host regular meetings with local officials, such as school board members, local police, and other community leaders, so that families can learn about resources in the community.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group plans a community resource fair that includes representatives from the public and private sectors to provide information about their programs.</i></p>	<p>The school and PTA/parent group provide written materials in multiple languages on local government and community services.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group supplies voter registration forms in the school’s front office.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

## Standard 5—Sharing Power, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<p><b>Developing an effective parent involvement organization that represents all families</b></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group leaders build the organization’s effectiveness by recruiting and maintaining a leadership team that reflects the school and community and by aligning all programs and practices with PTA’s National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA leadership team holds focus groups and community discussions throughout the school community to identify issues and invite participation on planning committees based on the National Standards.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group leaders reach out to families who are not involved at the school to identify interests, concerns, and priorities.</p> <p><i>For example, parent leaders and school staff have a “back-to-school” walk and meet with families at local beauty shops, laundromats, parks, places of worship, and other community gathering spots for open conversations.</i></p>	<p>PTA/parent group leaders receive leadership training.</p> <p><i>For example, all parents interested in leadership roles in the school are invited to participate in leadership training, and those holding such positions are required to participate.</i></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 3</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 2</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Level 1</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet</p>

“Families” and “parents” are used interchangeably to refer to adults who are responsible for a student. “Families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods” and “diverse families” include families from all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, family structures, and economic levels, as well as those with physical or mental challenges.

## National Standards for Family-School Partnerships Assessment Guide

Throughout this implementation guide, the levels of practice build on each other, assuming that good practices at the emerging and progressing levels will continue at the next level.

### Standard 6—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.

**Goal 1: Connecting the School with Community Resources:** Do parent and school leaders work closely with community organizations, businesses, and institutions of higher education to strengthen the school, make resources available to students, school staff, and families, and build a family-friendly community?

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3 <b>Excelling</b> Highly functioning level of development and implementation	Level 2 <b>Progressing</b> Functioning level of development and implementation	Level 1 <b>Emerging</b> Limited level of development and implementation	
<b>Linking to community resources</b>	<p>School staff and the PTA/parent group create a comfortable, inviting family resource center. Staff and parent volunteers inform families about services, make referrals to programs, and plan activities.</p> <p><i>For example, the family resource center at the school is available to the community to provide services on site such as a used clothing exchange, dental clinic, and summer program expo.</i></p>	<p>School staff work with the PTA/parent group to determine and describe community resources for students and families.</p> <p><i>For example, with support from the PTA/parent group and faculty, middle and high school students map all the community resources and create an online and print guide (in appropriate languages) for distribution to families and throughout the community while they earn credits for service-learning.</i></p>	<p>School staff and the PTA/parent group collect information for families about community resources.</p> <p><i>For example, the school office has a bulletin board and resource table with brochures about local colleges, health services, sports teams, and service-learning opportunities.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

## Standard 6—Collaborating with Community, continued

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Organizing support from community partners</b>	<p>Community and business representatives work with school and parent leaders to assess needs and develop programs to support student success and find creative ways to provide funding and staff.</p> <p><i>For example, the local Rotary Club collaborates with the school and parents to create a Student Leadership Academy.</i></p>	<p>School staff and parents reach out to community organizations and businesses about offering donations and sponsoring scholarship programs.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group appeals to local businesses to sponsor a family science program.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group invites community leaders to make presentations on programs available to children and families outside of school.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group plans an After-school or Summer Camp Resource Fair.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet
<b>Turning the school into a hub of community life</b>	<p>School facilities such as the computer lab, library/media center, classrooms, and gym are open year-round for broad community use.</p> <p><i>For example, PTA/parent group members work with community members to run micro-enterprises such as party planning, Web design, and computer programming.</i></p>	<p>Adult education, recreation, and GED programs are offered after hours at the school.</p> <p><i>For example, based on a survey, classes are offered in creative writing, Web design, English as a Second Language, storytelling, cooking, computer repair, plumbing, hair braiding, and playing the drums.</i></p>	<p>A variety of community groups use school facilities for events and activities during the school year.</p> <p><i>For example, the PTA/parent group approaches Scout groups and 4-H clubs about organizing chapters that can meet at the school.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

## Standard 6—Collaborating with Community, *continued*

Indicators	Quality of Implementation			Your Current Level
	Level 3: <b>Excelling</b>	Level 2: <b>Progressing</b>	Level 1: <b>Emerging</b>	
<b>Partnering with community groups to strengthen families and support student success</b>	<p>Teachers and families work with grassroots groups to develop solutions to local problems.</p> <p><i>For example, community groups donate supplies and labor to work with families and students on fixing up a deteriorating park, renovating a home for a needy family, or planting a community garden.</i></p>	<p>The PTA/parent group works with school staff to sponsor student businesses to bring student skills to the community.</p> <p><i>For example, high school students start up a local café and bookstore, offer graphic design and printing, or do carpentry and light home repair.</i></p>	<p>School staff and the PTA/parent group partner with local community event organizers to sponsor resource fairs.</p> <p><i>For example, holding a health expo at a Cinco de Mayo celebration or a job fair on a soccer field.</i></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Level 3 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 2 <input type="checkbox"/> Level 1 <input type="checkbox"/> Not here yet

“Families” and “parents” are used interchangeably to refer to adults who are responsible for a student. “Families from all backgrounds and neighborhoods” and “diverse families” include families from all races, ethnicities, cultures, religions, family structures, and economic levels, as well as those with physical or mental challenges.

# Family-School Partnership Action Plan – Template

**School/Location:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Year:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Lead Person(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Standard:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Goal(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

**Results (How will you know when your school reaches this goal? What does success look like?):** \_\_\_\_\_

Activities, Practices, Policies	Persons Responsible, Including Lead(s)	Timeline	Resources and Funding (What do you need and who can supply it?)	Evaluation (How will you determine whether the activity achieved its desired effect?)

# Family-School Partnership Action Plan – Sample

**School/Location:** Roundtree Elementary School, Anytown, State **Year:** 2009–2010 school year

**Lead Person(s):** Frank Johnson, Standard 1 action team leader

**Standard:** Welcoming All Families into the School Community (Standard 1)

**Goal(s):** 1. When families walk into the school building, they feel the school is inviting and is a place where they “belong.”  
 2. The school’s policies and programs reflect, respect, and value the diversity of the families in the school community.

**Results (How will you know when your school reaches this goal? What does success look like?):** More families are participating in school-sponsored events; parents and teachers report increased communication between home and school; increase in volunteer hours; increased presence of principal during student drop-off and pick-up; improved student attendance/decrease in tardiness and absences.

Activities, Practices, Policies	Persons Responsible, Including Lead(s)*	Timeline	Resources and Funding (What do you need and who can supply it?)	Evaluation (How will you determine whether the activity achieved its desired effect?)
<p>1. Hang welcome signs in all the languages spoken in the homes of the students.</p> <p>2. Work with the art, social studies, or history teachers to organize a classroom activity in which students make state and national flags representing their heritages; hang the flags in the school.</p> <p>3. Create reception area by school office for parents and other visitors, with comfortable chairs, reading materials, and access to coffee, tea, and water.</p>	<p>School staff member, parents/family members</p> <p>School staff member, parents/family members Coordinate with art/social studies/history teachers</p> <p>School office staff, parent/family member, community member Coordinate with PTA fundraising chair</p>	<p>Start Aug. 1; Done by 1st day of school</p> <p>Talk to teachers at start of school year; Create flags as fits with curriculum; Host event to unveil flag display</p> <p>Launch plan at start of school year; Funds by Nov.; Complete by start of 2nd semester</p>	<p>Translators—bilingual or multilingual volunteers</p> <p>Signs—\$___ from PTA/school funds; discount or donation from local print/copy shop</p> <p>Art supplies—\$___ from PTA/school funds, donations from community businesses/organizations</p> <p>Place to hang flags—e.g., cafeteria, multipurpose room, library, gym, halls</p> <p>Furniture/accessories—\$___ raised in special fundraiser, or furniture donated by families/businesses</p> <p>Space—near front office</p> <p>Beverages/cups/napkins—\$___ from PTA funds; prepared by office staff</p>	<p>Applicable to all activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback (formal end-of-year survey and informal comments) from family and community members</li> <li>• Improved family and community perception of the school</li> <li>• Increased presence of parents and family members in the school</li> <li>• Increased participation of families in school and PTA events</li> </ul>



<p>4. Offer a wide range of volunteer opportunities—in classrooms/school, for PTA programs, and at home.</p>	<p>School staff member, teacher representative, parent/family member, community member Coordinate with PTA volunteer coordinator</p>	<p>List ready to go at Back-to-School night; Ongoing</p>	<p>Training for volunteers, depending on opportunity—PTA/school/community leaders</p>	
<p>5. Create a school policy that ensures that all families are able to participate in school activities/events, regardless of their ability to pay.</p>	<p>School staff member, parents/family members, community member Coordinate with principal (or designee), PTA fundraising chair</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Funding to cover activity costs for all parents, or parents unable to pay—PTA fundraising (specify)</p>	
<p>6. Host at least two school events (fun or informational) each semester at community locations to increase access/participation.</p>	<p>School staff member, parents/family members, community member Coordinate with principal (or designee), PTA programs chair</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Space—commitments from community partners (e.g., library, community center, neighborhood place of worship)</p>	

\* When filling out this action plan, be sure to record the names—not just titles—of the persons responsible. The descriptors given here are suggestions as to which stakeholders should be represented. The persons listed here will likely form the action team for the standard. Be sure to designate one person to be the lead on each activity.

## Notes

## Special Thanks

The National Standards Implementation Guide was developed with the invaluable guidance and support of several leaders and practitioners in the field of family involvement at the local, state, and national level. They include

- ❖ **Michele Brooks**, Assistant Superintendent for Family and Student Engagement, Boston Public Schools
- ❖ **Sue Ferguson**, Chair, National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education
- ❖ **Anne T. Henderson**, Senior Consultant, Community Organizing and Engagement, Annenberg Institute for School Reform
- ❖ **Eileen Kugler**, Author, and Founder of Embrace Diverse Schools
- ❖ **Karen L. Mapp**, Lecturer, Harvard Graduate School of Education
- ❖ **Abby Weiss**, Executive Director, Full-Service Schools Roundtable, Boston Public Schools

A special thank-you is also extended to **Joyce L. Epstein** of the Center on School, Family, and Community Partnerships at Johns Hopkins University, whose research and identification of six types of parent involvement serves as the foundation of PTA's National Standards.

## About PTA

PTA comprises millions of families, students, teachers, administrators, and business and community leaders devoted to the educational success of children and the promotion of parent involvement in schools. PTA is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that prides itself on being a powerful voice for all children, a relevant resource for families and communities, and a strong advocate for public education. Membership in PTA is open to anyone who wants to be involved and make a difference for the education, health, and welfare of children and youth.



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