

A District Framework for Improving Family/School Linkages for Family/Parent Involvement

Vision:

All families of Adams County School District 14(ACSD) students and ACSD staff will be encouraged, supported, and enabled to actively collaborate in the educational efforts and experiences of their children and youth. This collaboration will contribute to students' interest in learning and school as well as their achievement and accomplishments.

Goals:

1. Develop and continuously improve district-wide policy that facilitates family/school linkages while meeting the requirements of NCLB and IDEA.
2. Use State template for school compacts with families as a guide to provide the supports, assistance and professional development required to promulgate these compacts in all ACSD14 schools.
3. Coordinate district-wide positive meaningful learning opportunities that complement school compacts to improve and maintain effective family/school linkages.
4. Coordinate and compile school-based inquiry and ongoing data collection that documents the perspectives, needs, and satisfaction of ACSD14 families. Facilitate analysis to increase family engagement and participation in the education of their children and youth.
5. To provide professional development to ACSD14 staff, especially Principals, as building leaders, for strengthening parent involvement in the schools.

Principles

Principle 1: Inclusive of All Families and Cultures

Effective family/school linkages reach out to families from all parts of the school community, including communities that are culturally, linguistically, and economically different from school personnel or economically depressed. Definitions and understandings of family/school relationships take into account the cultural differences in the roles of families in school and family members' understandings of school expectations.

Principle 2: Inclusive of All Family Members

Effective family/school linkages respect the various family structures and include all family members including parents, grandparents, and other extended family members that have nurturing and caretaking roles with students.

Principle 3: Accommodating of All Perspectives

Effective family/school linkages rely upon the communication of the points of view of all participants including family members, teachers, administrators, and other school assistants, specialists and personnel.

Principle 4: Partnering and Collaboration

These interpretations of perspectives rely upon the partnership and collaboration of all stakeholders. Teamwork that includes a mix of family members and school personnel ensures accommodation of multiple perspectives and cultural recognition and responsiveness leading to more and more effective working relationships and results.

Principle 5: Focus on Inquiry and Research

Effective family/school linkages rely upon research in two ways. First, families and school personnel use what is already known to inform their discussions, interpretations, and decision about how to improve family/school relationships. Second, schools systemically inquire into the perspectives, opinions and advice of school personnel and families through ongoing collection and interpretation of information through surveys, interviews, and discussions.

Principle 6: Shared Agendas and Outcomes

Effective family/school linkages rely on dialogue to arrive at and continually confirm that plans and initiatives are shared among families and school personnel. Similarly, the judgment about whether or not efforts are working – anticipated outcomes are being achieved – is a judgment that relies on the perspectives and interpretations of both family members and school personnel and is supported by data.

Parent Involvement

Literature Review and Definition:

After a thorough review of the literature, we find that most researchers do not have a concrete definition of parent involvement, but for the purposes of defining parent involvement in ACSD 14, we have developed the following definition. The term "parent involvement" has a broad definition. We define parent involvement as “families and community supporting their children in a variety of ways to ensure their child is successful in school and in the 21st Century.”

Therefore, parents may choose various avenues to support their child at home and at school. In ACSD 14 parents participate in school events and functions, parent/teacher conferences, and decision making teams. According to researchers, parents can become equal partners in their child’s education by providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space, modeling desired behavior, reading with their child, monitoring homework, and actively tutoring their children at home. In addition, parents can be advocates for the school. Parents can volunteer to help out with school activities or work in the classroom. Parents can take an active role in their school’s Building Accountability Advisory Committee and District Accountability Advisory Committee to contribute to the governance and decision making necessary for planning, developing, and providing an education for the community's children.

Our Parent Involvement definition and framework include a vision statement, goals, principles, and types of involvement. The framework is based on the work of several researchers including Joyce Epstein, Mavis G. Sanders, Beth S. Simon, Karen Clark Salinas, Natalie Rodriguez Jansorn, Frances L. Van Voorhis (2002); Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson and Don Davies (2007); Janet Chrispeels and Elvira Rivero (2000); the National Coalition of Parent Involvement (2007); the Academic Development Institute (2005); and the San Diego County Office of Education (2007). Each work contributes to the following types of parent involvement.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

A parent involvement liaison at each school would be ideal. The liaison would recruit and support parents, conduct parent meetings, conduct or organize parent training; homework routines, reading with your student, positive parent teacher meetings, how to be a partner in your child's education

Types of Family/Parent Involvement:

PARENTING: Help all families establish home environments to support children as students

- Parent education and other courses or training for parents (e.g., GED, college credit, family literacy).
- Family support programs to assist families with health, nutrition, and other services.
- Home visits at transition points to pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school.

COMMUNICATING: Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress

- Conferences with every parent at least once a year.
- Language translators to assist families as needed.
- Regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters, and other communications.

VOLUNTEERING: Recruit and organize parent help and support.

- School and classroom volunteer program to help teachers, administrators, students, and other parents.
- Parent room or family center for volunteer work, meetings, resources for families.
- Annual postcard survey to identify all available talents, times, and locations of volunteers.

LEARNING AT HOME: Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning

- Information for families on skills required for student in all subjects at each grade.
- Information on homework policies and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.
- Family participation in setting students goals each year and in planning for college or work.

DECISION MAKING: Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

- Active PTA/PTO or other parent organizations, advisory councils, or committees for parent leadership and participation.
- Independent advocacy groups to lobby and work for school reform and improvements.
- Networks to link all families with parent representatives.

COLLABORATING WITH COMMUNITY: Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development

- Information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other programs or services.
- Information on community activities that link to learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students.

- Service to the community by students, families, and schools (e.g. recycling, art, music, drama, and other activities for seniors or others).

SUPPORTING THE CHILD: Support of the child, family, and the school; this includes meeting the basic needs of the child

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