

## **Family Engagement Action Toolkit Strategies, November 2016**

### **Welcoming all Families**

- ❖ Greet other parents at school activities and events; sit with someone you don't know and get to know them.
- ❖ Recruit bilingual parents to greet and interpret for families whose first language isn't English. Work with your building leaders to identify families who could help serve as parent liaisons for this role.
- ❖ Offer family activities at low or no cost so everyone can participate; budget PTA/parent group funds for this purpose (If there are events, how can PTA's serve as the direct contact instead of the school SW).
- ❖ Change the conversation to start to meet families where they are
  - Shift from "blame" for not showing up.
  - Stay positive and celebrate the contributions that all families can make to the community.
- ❖ Hold meetings in a variety of community locations and times (e.g., the local library, a community center, a church) to make them accessible to all.
- ❖ Encourage LGBTQ students and families to self-identify. Emphasize the inclusiveness of the PTA and support for LGBTQ issues. Provide welcoming conditions so that self-identifying students and families feel safe and comfortable participating in PTA meetings and events. Respect privacy and confidentiality preferences.

### **Communicating Effectively**

- ❖ Consider using color-coded lines on hallway walls, or footprints on floors and/or translating, to help direct parents to important places like the school office, parent resource center, and library.
- ❖ Include a two-way communication mechanism, such as a mini survey to be given at the beginning and end of year events to determine school's needs and evaluate PTA's progress.
- ❖ Host information nights on parent-teacher conference for families, demonstrating effective ways for parents and teachers to share information and plan for the future.
- ❖ Ensure that all material is in at least English and Spanish whether your school has a TWI program or not.
- ❖ Welcome new families to the district. Communicate the role of the PTA, its goals, and the various ways to be involved.

### **Supporting Student Success**

- ❖ Create a checklist and tip sheets for effective parent-teacher conferences.
- ❖ Work with school leadership to conduct workshops on interpreting standardized test data and school assessments.
- ❖ Invite teachers and professionals from the community to speak at meetings on various topics.
- ❖ Provide workshops for parents and students on topics such as study skills, individual curriculum areas, and college and career planning.

### **Speaking up For Every Child**

- ❖ In collaboration with school staff, provide information sessions addressing topics such as students with special needs, emerging language learners, etc.
  - > Reach out to underrepresented populations to ensure access and equity for all students.
- ❖ Involve parents in ongoing trainings on topics such as being an effective advocate, identifying and supporting learning styles, resolving difficulties, and fostering student achievement.
- ❖ Match new families at the school with a buddy family to show them the ropes.

### **Sharing Power**

- ❖ Working in partnership with the principal, identify ways the PTA/parent group can support one or more goals of the school improvement plan.
- ❖ Consider programs and activities that develop social and political connections.

### **Collaborating with Community**

- ❖ Make sure partnership activities strengthen families and link to student learning.
- ❖ Reach out to senior/retired citizens and invite them to volunteer at the school.