
Importance of Community Engagement

Community engagement is critical to success because:

- School personnel can't do the work alone.
- Alterations in power relationships can create new opportunities. Sustainability is most likely with key partner involvement.
- Local knowledge can guide reform implementation.
- Cost of not having community support can create an enormous barrier to change.
- If the community believes short-term struggle will lead to long-term improvements, they may tolerate difficult reforms.

Reasons to Engage Community and Families:

1. Decades of research show when families are involved, students demonstrate higher grades, test scores and graduation rates, better school attendance, increased motivation, better self-esteem, lower rates of suspension, decreased use of drugs and alcohol, fewer instances of violent behavior (National Parent Teacher Association).
2. Family participation in education is twice as predictive of students' academic success as family socioeconomic status. Some of the more intensive programs had effects that were 10 times greater than other factors (Herbert J. Walberg in his review of 29 studies of school-parent programs, 1984).
3. School benefits include improved teacher morale, higher ratings of teachers by families, more support from families, higher student achievement, better reputations in the community ("A New Generation of Evidence: The Family is Critical to Student Achievement," Anne T. Henderson and Nancy Berla, Center for Law and Education, Washington, D.C., 1996).