Powerful Partnerships for Parent Engagement

Samanda S. Miller
Title I Specialist
Family Involvement
Arlington ISD

Objectives

- Identify various district departments that share common goal of increasing family engagement
- Identify community agencies/organizations for collaboration
- Develop a plan of action for creating partnerships among departments and agencies
- Identify potential projects and programs that will benefit parents and students

Arlington ISD

- 64,500 Students
- 71 Schools
- 8000 Employees
- Majority Minority District
  - 43% Hispanic
  - 24% Black
  - 24% White
  - 7% Asian
- 45 Title I Campuses
AISD Family Involvement Department

1 Family Involvement Specialist
   1 Teacher
2 Family Liaisons
1 Dads’ Outreach Liaisons
1 Clerk
45 Family School Representatives (1 on each Title I campus)

*Family Involvement staff provides support, training, and professional development for all Family Liaisons
**Monitors compliance for all 45 campuses
***46 Title I campuses in 2013-2014 School year with opening of new Elementary campus

Why form Partnerships?

- Improve access to Resources, i.e. $$$$
- Greater Impact in Community
- Cross departmental approach to finding solutions
- Other entities want/need Parents
- Shifts family engagement model from a campus-based to a shared responsibility across departments

Partnerships Add Value to our Efforts

Why form Partnerships?

The quality of life for children and families in communities depends on the strength and diversity of all institutions and organizations that serve and support them, not exclusively on schools. Moreover, the improvement of underperforming schools may depend on the community-based resources available to meet the needs of children and families.

What is a Partnership?

"...a collaborative relationship between entities to work toward shared objectives through a mutually agreed division of labor"
Types of Partnerships

1. Partnerships among Community-based Nonprofit Service Organizations
2. Cross-Sector Partnerships
3. Partnerships between Donors and Recipients

Types of Partnership

1. Collaboration
2. Strategic Alliance
3. Integration
4. Funding Alliances
5. Cost-Sharing/Grant-Match Partnerships

Collaborative Efforts

Southwest Educational Development Library (SEDL) defines collaboration as....

Collaboration is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals. The relationship includes a commitment to: a definition of mutual relationships and goals, mutual authority and accountability for success and sharing of resources and rewards.
Interdepartmental Collaboration

Community Collaboration

Co Working or Collaborating?

- Unconnected
- Communicating
- Cooperating
- Coordinated
- Integrated

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdf/docs/worktogether/worktogether

The Chicken or the Egg??

Identify Key Stakeholders who share your goal

OR

Identify a problem or area that could benefit from a Strategic Partnership
Laying the Foundation

Identify stakeholders who share your goal.
Our Goal: Engaged Parents

Making Initial Contact

- Research any potential partners to ensure a clear understanding of that department's responsibilities
- Have a specific problem, proposal or program in mind before making contact
- Use proper protocol when contacting, whether by phone, email, etc.
Before the first meeting

- Prepare an Agenda
- Know what resources you bring to the table (funding, manpower, resources, time)
- If Collaboration is required as part of a Grant; know your department's function as written in the grant

Goals for the First Meeting

- Define the parameters of the partnership (Informal, Formal)
- Determine expected outcome or goal of the partnership
- Determine level of commitment from each partner
- Gain an understanding of each department's expected role in the partnership
- Determine whether additional departments should be invited to the partnership
- Determine a decision-making process

Once you have scheduled this first meeting, you will need to adequately prepare. No one wants to sit through a meeting and feel like their time was wasted, so this preparation is necessary. You should have an agenda for your meeting. This is more for you to help keep you on track and make sure that you cover the important points you need to make. You should also know enough about the department that you are meeting with to know where your department goals align or intersect. You also need to know what you bring to the table in terms of staffing, manpower, funding and the amount of time you can commit to the potential project.

Responsibilities within the Partnerships

- Consider the tasks that need to be done:
  - Communication
  - Purchases
  - Building a Timeline
  - Measuring Effectiveness
  - Managing Tasks
  - Holding Group Accountable

What Role Will You Play?
Ground Rules

- Where, when, and how often will we meet?
- What will be our time frame for working together?
- How will we share responsibility for organizing and conducting the meetings?
- Who will prepare and contribute to the meeting agenda?
- What rules will guide discussion during meetings? Guard confidentiality?
- How will we handle information needs, data gathering, and record keeping?
- How will we make decisions? By majority rule or consensus?
- What steps will we take to make sure decisions are not made behind the scenes?
- What will happen when there is a conflict?
- How will we evaluate the progress of our work?


How do Community Partnerships Arise?

1. District/Department Engages a Community Agency

2. Community Agency Engages a District/Department

Identifying Community Partners

Questions to Ask:

1) What segments of our community are impacted and should be a part of this discussion?
2) What are the greatest challenges that we must overcome?
3) What community resources and strengths can we draw upon?
4) What opportunities are available for effective action?

Community Partnerships

Does your school or department:
- Want a Community Partnership?
- Value a Community Partnership?
- Currently have a Community Partnership in Place?
- Have a Policy in Place to Govern Partnerships?
- Have the Organizational Capacity to Maintain a Partnership?

Needs Assessment
- Parents
- Students
- Staff
- Neighborhood Entities (Businesses, Churches, etc.)

*You will need buy-in from all Community Members for a successful Community Collaboration

**If the problem is significant, it may be necessary to begin moving forward before all partners are on board

Community Partnerships
- County Agencies
- Municipal Agencies
- Mental Health Providers
- Child Care/Pre-School
- Universities/Colleges
- Service Agencies (United Way, Salvation Army)
- Philanthropic Agencies (Lions, Junior League)
- Youth Agencies (Boy/Girl Scouts)
- Sports Teams
- Community Based Organizations (Neighborhood Associations)
- Faith-Based Organizations
- Cultural/Ethnic Organizations (LULAC, Alumni Greek Chapters)
- Artistic/Cultural Organizations
- Businesses
- Media

www.ncrel.org/sdrs/areas/issues/envrnmntcss

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/guides/schoolcomm
Community Partnerships

- Require more formal structure than Interdepartmental partnership
- Must adhere to all district policies
- Do you need a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)?

Memorandum of Understanding Contents:

1. The Reason for the Partnership
2. The Anticipated Outcome
3. The general terms and conditions that will govern the arrangement
4. Each Party's Responsibilities and Requirements

Plan for Action
Planning Cycle

- Assessment
  - What are we trying to achieve?
  - What are we working with?
  - What are we working towards?

- Clarity
  - Clear vision
  - Clearly defined and measurable goals

- Communication
  - Clearly communicated
  - Effectively communicated

- Action
  - Clearly outlined
  - Clearly defined
  - Clearly measurable

Obstacles to Success

- Time
- Unclear roles/responsibilities
- Lack of commitment
- Failure to communicate
- Unclear vision
- Not feeling valued
- Not connected to the community

Keys to Successful Partnerships

- Trust
- Mutual respect
- Clear communication
- Clearly defined and measurable goals
- Adequately funded
- Supported by administration (school, district level)
Collaborative Projects

- Special Education Department - Community Resource Fair
- Instructional Coaches/Facilitators - Academic Events
- Language Arts Department - School Readiness Program
- Social Workers - Coat Drive
- Communications Department - Create Online Parent Education Content
- 21st Century Community Schools - ongoing campus collaboration for projects
- Technology Department - provide technology training for parent liaisons
- Library Services - allow parents to check books out from school libraries

Community Collaborations

- HOA Collaboration to educate residents about School District Issues
- Churches - use facility to provide ongoing Parent Education Classes
- Public Library Field Trips for all Pre-K Students
- University Planetarium for Science Academic Nights

Your Turn.....

1. What Partnerships Already Exist in your school, district, neighborhood?
2. What are the goals of the partnerships that are already in place?
3. Is there a mismatch between the partnerships and the current goals?
4. Do existing partnerships need to be adjusted or modified to produce better outcomes?

Southwest Educational Development Laboratory (2002). What do we mean by “family and community connections with schools?”
Your Turn......

What types of collaborative projects would you like to see:

○ At your School
○ In your District
○ In your Community

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.

-Margaret Mead

Samanda S. Miller
Title I Specialist
Family Involvement
Arlington ISD
(682) 867-7386
smiller8@aisd.net
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