

4 Versions of Family-School Partnerships

Check the boxes that have the most statements under them marked or circled. Check only 1 box in each row

<p>A school consciously and conscientiously tapping parent energy to improve student achievement</p> <p>(Partnership School)</p>	<p>A school focused on tapping parent energy for improving student achievement</p> <p>(Open-Door School)</p>	<p>A school that may value the idea of tapping parent energy for the purpose of improving student achievement, but hasn't implemented the idea into actions</p> <p>(Come-if-We-Call School)</p>	<p>A school not maximizing parent energy as a strategy for improving student achievement</p> <p>(Fortress School)</p>
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Element/ Key Question	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>These schools believe:</i></p> <p>All families & communities have something great to offer—we do whatever it takes to work closely together to make sure every single student succeeds.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>These schools believe:</i></p> <p>Parents can be involved at our school in many ways—we're working hard to get an even bigger turnout for our activities. When we ask the community to help, people often respond.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>These schools believe:</i></p> <p>Parents are welcome when we ask them, but there's only so much they can offer. The most important thing they can do is help their kids at home. We know where to get community help if we need it.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><i>These schools believe:</i></p> <p>Parents belong at home, not at school. If students don't do well, it's because their families don't give them enough support. We're already doing all we can. Our school is an oasis in a troubled community. We want to keep it that way.</p>
<p><i>Answers the question:</i> How family friendly is your school?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Building Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family center is always open, full of interesting materials to borrow • Home visits are made to every new family • Activities honor families' contributions • Building is open to community use & social services are available to families 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Building Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers contact families once a year • Parent coordinator is available if families have questions or need help • Office staff are friendly • Staff contact community agencies & organizations when help is needed 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Building Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better-educated parents are more involved • "Many immigrant parents don't have time to come or contribute" • Staff are very selective about who comes into the school 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Building Relationships</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Families do not "bother" school staff • "Minority families don't value education" • Parents need security clearance to come in • It is important to keep community influences out of the school

<p><i>Answers the question:</i> How closely is your school's parent involvement program linked to student learning?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Linking to Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All family activities connect to what students are learning • Parents & teachers look at student work & test results together • Community groups offer tutoring & homework programs at the school • Students' work goes home every week, with a scoring guide 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Linking to Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers explain test scores if asked • Folders of student work go home occasionally • School holds curriculum nights 3 or 4 times a year • Staff let families know about out-of-school classes in the community 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Linking to Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are told what students will be learning at the fall open house • Parents can call the office to get teacher-recorded messages about homework • Workshops are offered on parenting 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Linking to Learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum & standards are considered too complex for parents to understand • "If parents want more information, they can ask for it" • "We're teachers, not social workers"
<p><i>Answers the question:</i> How well is your school bridging racial, class and cultural differences?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Addressing Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translators are readily available • Teachers use books & materials about families' cultures • PTA/PTO includes all families • Local groups help staff reach families 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Addressing Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office staff will find a translator if parents ask in advance • Multicultural nights are held once a year • "Minority" parents have their own group 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Addressing Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "We can't deal with 20 different languages" • "Parents can bring a translator with them" • "This school just isn't the same as it used to be" 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Addressing Differences</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "Those parents need to learn English" • "We teach about our country—that's what those parents need to know" • "This neighborhood is going downhill"
<p><i>Answers the question:</i> How well does your school support parents as advocates?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is a clear, open process for resolving problems • Teachers contact families each month to discuss student progress • Student-led parent-teacher conferences are held 3 times a year for 30 minutes 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal will meet with parents to discuss a problem • Regular progress reports go to parents, but test data can be hard to understand • Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School calls families when children have problems • Families visit school on report card pick up day & can see a teacher if they call first 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Advocacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents don't come to conferences • Problems are dealt with by the professional staff • Teachers don't feel safe with parents
<p><i>Answers the question:</i> How well is your school sharing power and practicing democracy?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sharing Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents & teachers research issues such as prejudice & tracking • Parent group is focused on improving student achievement • Families are involved in all major decisions • Parents can use the school's phone, copier, fax, & computers • Staff work with local organizers to improve the school & the neighborhood 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sharing Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents can raise issues at PTA/PTO meetings or see the principal • Parent group sets its own agenda & raises money for the school • Resource center for low-income families is housed in a portable classroom next to the school • PTA/PTO officers can use the school office • A community representative sits on the school council 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sharing Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal sets agenda for parent meetings • PTA/PTO gets the school's message out • "Parents are not experts in education" • Community groups can address the school board if they have concerns 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Sharing Power</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Principal picks a small group of "cooperative parents" to help out • Families are afraid to complain. "They might take it out on my kid" • "Community groups should mind their own business; they don't know about education."

—from "Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships" (2007) by Henderson, Mapp, Johnson & Davies