The Art of Family Engagement

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Why is Family Engagement Important?

No matter what their family income or background may be, students with involved parents are more likely to:

- Have better social skills
- Pass their classes
- Attend school regularly
- Earn higher grades and test scores
- Graduate and go on to postsecondary education

Effective Parent Involvement Improves Achievement

New research shows that meaningful family and community engagement is one of five essential ingredients for effective school reform:

- (Principal) leadership as the driver for change
- Parent-school-community ties
- Professional capacity
- Student centered learning climate
- Instructional guidance

We know that family engagement is important.

So, how do we engage all families in their children’s education?
National Standards for Family-School Partnerships

Welcoming All Families
Standard 1

Communicating Effectively
Standard 2

Supporting Student Success
Standard 3

Sharing Power
Standard 4

Collaborating with Community
Standard 5

National PTA
everychild. one voice.
Standard 1: Welcoming All Families

Goals

1. Creating a Climate that Welcomes All Families
2. Building a Respectful, Inclusive School Community
Arts Strategies for Welcoming All Families

• **Encourage parents** to volunteer as art exhibit docents.
• **Provide time and materials for students and their families to create art together.**
• **Include parents and grandparents in classroom activities.**
• **Offer workshops** for students with disabilities to learn with their families (e.g. PTA Special Artist Workshop).
• **Collect arts supplies** for low-income families.
Standard 2: Communicating Effectively

Goal
1. Sharing Information Between School and Families

“I Found a Friend!” PTA Reflections® Student Artwork by Makanani Aki, HI
Arts Strategies for Communicating Effectively

• Utilize a variety of communication channels to announce art exhibit openings (e.g. social media, school paper and website, community bulletin boards, etc.)

• Survey families to learn about their arts and cultural backgrounds.

• Use images/artwork to breakdown communication/language barriers that will best inform all families.

• Host student artwork showcases that encourage interaction between educators, principals and families in a fun, social way.
Standard 3: Supporting Student Success

Goals

1. Sharing Information About Student Progress
2. Supporting Learning by Engaging Families

“The Moment of an Artist”
PTA Reflections® Student Artwork by Johanna Cordcruz, IL
Arts Strategies for Supporting Student Success

- **Link skills** learned in art class to 21st Century Skills and CCSS. **Demonstrate** this success to school leadership.

- **Collaborate with parent leaders** to provide fun, student-focused and family-centered workshop/events on topics such as arts integration or college and career planning (e.g. PTA Creative Career Fair).

- Communicate student success with **parent testimonials** at PTA and school board meetings.

- Invite families and community leaders to **recognize student participation and achievement** in the arts at your school awards ceremony or celebration event (e.g. PTA Reflections® Celebration).
Standard 4: Speaking Up for Every Child

Goals

1. Understanding How the School System Works

2. Empowering Families to Support Their Own and Other Children’s Success in School
Arts Strategies for Speaking Up for Every Child

- **Host information sessions about special opportunities**; reach out to under-represented populations to ensure access and equity for all students.

- **Involve families in ongoing training** on topics such as being an effective advocate for your child, identifying and supporting learning styles, resolving difficulties, and fostering student achievement.

- **Share the school’s policy and procedures** for resolving concerns frequently.

- **Celebrate any successful changes** fueled by family engagement.

- **Facilitate family participation** in school clubs, parent committees and during school-community collaborations.
Goals

1. Strengthening the Family’s Voice in Shared Decision Making

2. Building Families’ Social and Political Connections

“Many Hands, One World”
PTA Reflections® Student Artwork by Jessica Hubbard, FL
Arts Strategies for Sharing Power

- Identify how families can **support the school improvement plan**
- **Lead an arts advocacy task force** to survey families and develop new opportunities for arts learning.
- **Provide opportunities for arts students and their parents to interact** with school leaders and elected officials.
- **Conduct an annual family survey** or focus groups to develop new arts learning opportunities and to influence school policies that support the development of young artists.
- **Host an event** (e.g. PTA Take Your Family To School Week) to inform families about arts learning, available opportunities and student assessment/achievement data.
Standard 6: Collaborating with Community

Goal
1. Connecting the School with Community Resources

“Friendship”
PTA Reflections® Student Artwork by Jadyn Sano, OH
Arts Strategies for Collaborating with Community

• **Identify your goals** and determine opportunities for community collaboration that will help you to achieve your desired results for family engagement and student learning.

• **Leverage individual community connections** and encourage connected individuals to take the lead on forging and sustaining the collaboration on behalf of the PTA/school.

• **Bring partners together** around a shared vision. Start an arts advisory committee involving community arts professionals, parent leaders, student leaders and school leaders.

• **Recognize PTA and community arts partners and thank them whenever you can**
IRON ARTIST

You have **5 minutes** to use the **2 required “ingredients”** and any art supplies on the front table to **illustrate a strategy** for engaging families in arts education.

Your required ingredients are: **Chart paper & Pipe cleaners**
SHARK TANK!

Why should we invest in your strategy?

Each team has 3 minutes to convince the sharks that their strategy is the best...
Meet the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships with PTA’s Reflections program.

To get started, visit PTA.org/Reflections.

To help your PTA use these Standards, be sure to download the Assessment Guide and Implementation Guide from PTA.org/FamilyEngagement.