

Broad support increases student achievement

For today's students, the school-family-community partnership represents an expanding circle of stakeholders. Teachers and administrators continue to educate and motivate within the boundaries of their budgets. Shifting family definitions take into account parents, step-parents, foster parents, grandparents, and others. Finally, the growing involvement of business leaders, foundations, and community groups demonstrates to students that academic achievement has a real connection to the world beyond the classroom door.

Added involvement delivers benefits

According to an NEA policy brief, "Parent, Family, Community Involvement in Education," expanded involvement "correlates with higher academic performance and school improvement."¹

Students enjoying greater levels of support tend to:

- Earn better grades
- Improve attendance
- Remain in school longer
- Enroll in advanced programs

Support from family, school, and the community has positive benefits for students at both the primary and secondary levels, and increases students' desire for education attainment. Overall, community involvement is a common characteristic shared by high-performing schools.²

Recognizing the obstacles

With potential support springing up from various sources, it appears natural that new barriers to involvement may also emerge. For parents, the existing demand of their daily schedules often limits involvement in their student's education. Language and culture also create challenges, especially when a lack of confidence or understanding occurs.

A range of challenges for parents and families exist, including:

- Lack of time to be involved
- Past negative encounters with educators
- Limited information about methods and resources
- Difficulty working within school policies and procedures

An ideal environment focused on student success will have the ways and means to address any challenge, in part by tapping into the expanding levels of support.

"Parents, families, educators, and communities—there's no better partnership to assure that all students pre-K-to high school—have the support and resources they need to succeed in school and life."

Dennis Van Roekel
NEA Past President



ROLE OF FAMILY AND COMMUNITY IN K-12 EDUCATION



7 tips for increasing family and community involvement

Educators can develop effective plans to increase engagement on behalf of students by combining past experience with new thinking.

- 1 Bolster professional development – Revise faculty training programs to include approaches for boosting family and community engagement.
- 2 Expand training opportunities – Parents and community stakeholders gain support traction sooner when they receive communication and partnering skills training.
- 3 Improve transparency – Foster a greater understanding among stakeholders, especially parents and families, about official policies and procedures.
- 4 Focus on communication – One-size-fits-all communications fall short when a school community is multilingual and multicultural; consider flexible means and styles of communication to reach everyone.
- 5 Identify community champions – Train liaisons familiar with community background and culture to approach parents and facilitate new activities to support students.
- 6 Connect with higher education – Promote parent, family, and community involvement as critical areas for inclusion in teacher and administrator courses and certification programs.
- 7 Commit to outreach – Once the local potential for involvement is known, create a strategy to inform and convince parents and the community of why and how their involvement is meaningful.

An organic collaboration of parents, educators, and community members strengthens local education, assures all community members that they can participate, and signals to students that they have a strong foundation of support to achieve academic success.

- ▶ To learn how Rosetta Stone® language learning solutions contribute to student success, visit: www.RosettaStone.com/K12

Sources

1. NEA Policy Brief. http://www.nea.org/assets/docs/PB11_ParentInvolvement08.pdf
2. Henderson, Anne T. and K.L. Mapp. 2002. A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement. Austin, TX: National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools, Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.



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