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Family Engagement

E-News is published on a monthly basis during the school year. Each issue focuses on a specific topic or theme. This month's theme is **Family Engagement**.



November 2013 is Florida Parental Involvement Month



Governor Rick Scott has proclaimed November 2013 as Florida Parental Involvement Month to recognize the importance of parental involvement to student success from preschool to college. Read the Governor's proclamation at <http://www.fldoe.org/family/title1/pdf/Proclamation2013FIParentInvolvEdu.pdf> and the Governor's letter to parents at <http://www.project10.info/files/LettertoParentsSB1108.pdf>.

Additional information and resources for parents and families are available at <http://www.fldoe.org/family/>.

Family Influences on Student Achievement

"The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children's achievement in school and through life" (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 7). For example, a research synthesis conducted by the Harvard Family Research Project indicated that family involvement in middle and high school has positive results in the adolescent outcome areas of "higher grades, school success, higher standardized test scores, higher self-esteem, social competence, reduction in substance abuse, aspiration for college, enrollment in college, and participation in out-of-school time programs" (Kreider, Caspe, Kennedy, & Weiss, 2007, p. 2).

In addition, a literature review conducted by the National Center on Secondary Transition Education and the National Postschool Outcomes Center found that:

- Parental expectations were an evidence-based predictor of post-school success in education and employment.
- Parental involvement was an evidence-based predictor of post-school success in employment (Test, Fowler, & Kohler, 2013).

These research findings are important considerations for schools and transition staff members who collaborate with families to foster

positive relationships and assist students in reaching their postsecondary goals.

The importance of family involvement is also reflected in federal legislation, including the Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000 (DD Act), available on the Administration for Community Living Web site at http://www.acl.gov/Programs/AIDD/DDA_BOR_ACT_2000/index.aspx. Section 101 of the Act states that:

"The purpose of this Title is to assure that people with developmental disabilities and their families participate in the design of and have access to needed community services, individualized supports, and other forms of assistance that promote self-determination, independence, productivity, and integration and inclusion in all facets of community life, through culturally competent programs authorized under this title."

Additional research findings and resources are available to schools and school districts to increase family engagement, many of which are posted on the State Secondary Transition Interagency Committee (SSTIC) Family Involvement page on the Project 10 Web site at <http://www.project10.info/DetailPage.php?MainPageID=260&PageCategory=SSTIC&PageSubCategory=Family%20Involvement>.

References

Henderson, A.T., & Mapp, K.L. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: SEDL. Available at <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>.

Kreider, H., Caspe, M., Kennedy, S., & Weiss, H. (2007, Spring). Family involvement in middle and high school students' education. *Family Involvement Makes a Difference*, Volume 3. Available at <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/publications-series/family-involvement-makes-a-difference>.

Test, D.W., Fowler, C., and Kohler, P. (2013, January). *Evidence-based practices and predictors in secondary transition: What we know and what we still need to know*. Charlotte, NC: National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center. Available at <http://nsttac.org/sites/default/files/assets/pdf/pdf/ebps/ExecsummaryPPs%20Jan2013.pdf>.

The Developmental Disabilities Assistance and Bill of Rights Act of 2000, §101 42 USC 15002. Retrieved October 17, 2013, from http://www.acl.gov/Programs/AIDD/DDA_BOR_ACT_2000/p2_tl_subtitleA.aspx.

A Gauge for Measuring Family and School Partnerships

Research has shown that, "A results-oriented school system incessantly asks at every level of the organization, two questions:

- (1) What evidence do we have that what we are doing is working? and
- (2) How will we respond when find out what we are doing is not working?"

(DuFour, Eaker & DuFour, 2005, as cited by McLeod, 2005, p. 8)

So how do schools and districts measure how well their family engagement efforts are working and whether improvements are needed? Karen Mapp (2013) and colleagues at the Harvard Graduate School of Education (Henderson, Johnson, & Mapp, 2007) developed a school engagement rubric that describes four levels of family engagement:

1. Fortress School (Below Basic)

- School staff believe families don't care and that parents are the reason their children are failing.
- Engagement strategies don't work; parents don't come to conferences.
- Teachers feel that outreach should be left to social workers.
- Staff don't want to share information with parents.
- Staff feel that curricula and standards are too advanced for parents.

2. Come if We Call School (Basic)

- The school attitude is, "don't call us, we'll call you."
- Parents visit the school on report card pickup day and other designated times.
- Parents call the office and get recorded messages from teachers about homework.
- Workshops are planned by staff with no family input.
- Contacts and communication are controlled by the school.

3. Open Door School (Proficient)

- Parents are involved with the curriculum and parent-teacher conferences are held at least twice a year.
- The Action Team for family engagement includes some parents.
- School events are held at least three or four times a year.
- Parents can raise issues at Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) meetings or with the principal.
- The diversity of families is recognized through a multicultural

4. Partnership School (Advanced)

- School staff believe that education is everybody's business—parents, teachers, custodians, etc.
- Families are seen as key partners in improving educational outcomes.
- All family activities are connected to student learning.
- Parents have opportunities to learn, have fun, and practice new skills.

night.
- Information and activities are school controlled; events and activities take place at the school.

- The school has an open door policy, access protocols, and a clear process for resolving problems.
- Parent networks, where parents learn from each other, are valued and cultivated.
- Families are actively involved in decisions relating to school improvement.
- Staff connect with families in the community including visiting families in their homes.

To further assist schools, districts, parent-teacher organizations, and others in assessing family engagement, the Harvard Graduate School of Education and SurveyMonkey have developed a free online assessment that can be accessed at <http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/mappwebinar.cfm>.

References

DuFour, R., Eaker, R., and DuFour, R., Eds. (2005). *On common ground: The power of professional learning communities*. Bloomington, IN: National Educational Service.

Henderson, A. T., Johnson, V. R., Mapp, K. L., & Davies, D. (2007). *Beyond the bake sale: The essential guide to family-school partnerships*. New York, NY: The New Press.

Mapp, K. (2013, August 14). *Moving forward: Building the capacity for family engagement*. (Webinar) Boston, MA: Harvard Graduate School of Education. Recording and transcript available at <http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/mappwebinar.cfm>.

McLeod, S. (2005, May). *Data driven teachers*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota.

Parent Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs)

According to the National PIRC Coordination Center (NPCC), "Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRCs) help implement successful and effective parental involvement in policies, programs, and activities that lead to improvements in student academic achievement and that strengthen partnerships among parents, teachers, principals, administrators, and other school personnel in meeting the educational needs of children" (NPCC, n.d.). Although federal funding for PIRCs has been discontinued, several organizations in Florida continue to provide services to families of students with disabilities.

Family Network on Disabilities (FND)

<http://www.fndfl.org>

The **Parents of the Panhandle Information Network (POPIN)** and the **Parent Education Network (PEN)**, both of which are operated by the Family Network on Disabilities (FND), offer free help and information to families of students with disabilities and the professionals who serve them. POPIN provides services to counties in the Florida Panhandle from Escambia to Alachua. PEN covers the nine most southern counties of Florida, which include Lee, Collier, Hendry, Palm Beach, Broward, Dade, Monroe, Martin and Glades.



Central Florida Parent Center

<http://www.cflparents.org/index.htm>

The mission of the Central Florida Parent Center is to provide parents of children and young adults with all disabilities and special needs (ages 0-26) in Central and Northeast Florida with accurate information, interactive training, quality assistance, and empathetic support.

Parent to Parent of Miami

<http://www.ptopmiami.org/>

Parent to Parent of Miami is a community parent resource center for families of children and adults with all disabilities primarily in Miami-Dade and Monroe counties. The Web site states: With the help of Parent to Parent of Miami's specialized team, parents and professionals can find information, workshops, and other resources to help make decisions about early intervention, early childhood, education, vocational training, employment, college opportunities, as well as the laws that protect the rights of children and adults with disabilities.

Reference

National PIRC Coordination Center. (n.d.) *About the PIRCs: Overview* (Web page). Available at <http://www.nationalpirc.org/pircs/index.html>.

Professional Development and Webinars Focused on Parents and Families

Achieving Excellence and Innovation in Family, School, and Community Engagement: Bringing it All Together: Family and Community Engagement Policies in Action

http://www.nationalpirc.org/engagement_webinars/archive-webinar9.html

This November 2011 Webinar from the National PIRC Coordination Center was the final offering in the Achieving Excellence and Innovation in Family, School, and Community Engagement series. Prominent themes in the series were discussed as well as how family, school, and community engagement bring value to education reform initiatives.



Attendance Works: Online Forum to Highlight Research, Key Steps

Wednesday, November 20, 2013 11:00 a.m. EST (archived webinar)

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/truancy/html/home/home.shtml>

For the past three years, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg has conducted a pilot program in New York City schools that has reduced chronic absence and truancy. On Wednesday, his office and the U.S. Conference of Mayors are hosting an online summit for city leaders, advocates and community partners that will present new research on why reducing chronic absence matters and outline the core steps that any community can take to improve school attendance.

The webcast will include:

- Dr. Robert Balfanz, a Johns Hopkins University researcher, sharing his new research on the effects that the city's three-year pilot program.
- A presentation on Core Action Steps for Cities and others to drive change led by Balfanz and Attendance Works Director Hedy Chang.

Encouraging the Involvement of Parents of Children with Disabilities: A Four-Part Series Developed Specifically for Educators

<http://www.cflparents.org/fgcu/parentinvolvement.htm>

This series of 15-minute modules from the Central Florida Parent Center focuses on parent involvement, evidence-based practices, and parent input.

Moving Forward: Building Effective Family-School Partnerships

<http://www.directionservice.org/cadre/mappwebinar.cfm>

This August 2013 Webinar from the National Center on Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) focused on policies and practices for cultivating and sustaining effective family-school partnerships that support student achievement and school improvement.

Transition Basics: A Guide for Families (webinar)

<http://www.fndfl.org/resources/archived-webinar.aspx>

The goal of this Webinar from the Family Network on Disabilities is to help families of students with disabilities better understand the secondary transition process and how to effectively participate in it.

Resources Focused on Parents and Families

Disability Rights Florida

<http://www.disabilityrightsflorida.org/>

Disability Rights Florida is the statewide designated protection and advocacy system for individuals with disabilities in the State of Florida. Its free and confidential services and programs cover a wide range of issues including transportation, post-secondary education, access to vocational rehabilitation and blind services, access to a free and appropriate public education in the most inclusive environment, housing, assistive technology, information and referrals, advocacy and self-advocacy support, dispute resolution support, and negotiation and mediation support.

Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) and FDDC Resources/Publications

<http://www.fddc.org> and <http://www.fddc.org/publications>

FDDC's purpose is to engage in advocacy, capacity building, and systemic change activities that contribute to a coordinated, consumer and family centered, consumer and family directed, comprehensive system of community services and individualized supports that enable individuals with developmental disabilities to exercise self-determination, be independent, be productive, and be integrated and included in all facets of community life.

Just for Families by the Bureau of Family and Community Outreach, Florida Department of Education

<http://www.fldoe.org/family/Default.asp>

This Web page from the Bureau of Family and Community Outreach in the Florida Department of Education provides links to a newsletter, blog, online community, and numerous resources including the Florida's Path to Success website.

PACER Center

<http://www.pacer.org/>

Originally founded by parents of children with disabilities for parents, the PACER Center is the state PIRC for Minnesota as well as a national resource for families with children with disabilities. PACER resources include the Simon Technology Center focused on communications technology, the Family to Family Health Information Center, and the National Bullying Prevention Center.

Parent Information by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services, Florida Department of Education

<http://www.fldoe.org/ese/parent/>

This Web page from the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services in the Florida Department of Education provides links to parent services and information including district contacts, state laws and regulations, publications, and state and regional resources. A separate website devoted to parents will be available soon.

Project 10 Family Involvement Web Page

<http://www.project10.info/DetailPage.php?MainPageID=260&PageCategory=SSTIC&PageSubCategory=Family%20Involvement>

This Web page of the Family Involvement Subcommittee of Florida's State Secondary Transition Interagency Committee includes research findings, resources, and evidence-based strategies related to family involvement in the secondary transition planning process for students with disabilities.

Transition Planning for Students with Disabilities: A Guide for Families

<http://www.project10.info/Publications.php>

This Project 10 planning guide for the successful transition from school to adult life is written for families of Florida's students with disabilities and is available in English and Spanish. Students, teachers, and others involved in transition planning will also find it helpful.

What Research Says about Parent Involvement in Children's Education in Relation to Academic Achievement

http://www.michigan.gov/documents/Final_Parent_Involvement_Fact_Sheet_14732_7.pdf

This fact sheet from the Michigan Department of Education summarizes the research through March 2002 on parent involvement in education including Epstein's six types of parent involvement and national standards for parent/family involvement programs.

Project 10 Website Updates

The following items were recently updated or added to the Project 10 website at <http://www.project10.info>

A-Z Library

- Bullying Resources
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM)

District Resources

- Ongoing updates to district contacts



SSTIC

- New Postsecondary Education Subcommittee page

What's New

- Education Week Supplement on Diverse Learners and the Common Core
- Florida Executive Order 13-284 on the Employment of Persons with Disabilities
- SEDNET Seeking Regional Coordinators

About Project 10 E-News

Project 10 E-News provides short information summaries and resource links related to secondary transition. Have a question? Want to find or recommend a resource? Have some great news to share? Send us an email at project10@stpete.usf.edu, and we'll take it from there! For back issues of Project 10 E-News, visit the E-News page on the Project 10 website at

<http://www.project10.info/Newsletter.php>.

Join Our Mailing List!

Project 10: Transition Education Network assists Florida school districts and relevant stakeholders in building capacity to provide secondary transition services to students with disabilities in order to improve their academic success and post-school outcomes.

**Project 10: Transition Education Network
University of South Florida St. Petersburg**

Questions or comments?

Email us at

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