

The Value and Utility of Contributions of Parents

Parent involvement components are required in the federal [Elementary and Secondary Education Act \(ESEA\)](#) and in various federal and state education programs including Title I. Furthermore, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) requires campuses that receive Title I to “educate teachers, specialized instructional support personnel, principals, and other school leaders, and other staff, with the assistance of parents, in the value and utility of contributions of parents, and in how to reach out to, communicate with, and work with parents as equal partners, implement and coordinate parent programs, and build ties between parents and the school” (ESSA Section 1116 (e)(3)).



Because school age children spend 70% of their waking hours (including weekends and holidays) outside of school,¹ parental involvement and engagement is essential to the success of children in school. While volunteering at school is beneficial, and attending parent-teacher conferences, school events, and parent involvement activities are important, “the most significant type of involvement is what parents do at home. By monitoring, supporting and advocating, parents can be engaged in ways that ensure that their children have every opportunity for success.”²



“Do not confuse having physical presence with parental involvement. The research seems to indicate that when a parent provides support, insistence, and expectations to the child, the presence or absence of a parent in the physical school building is immaterial.”³

Involvement encompasses:

- setting goals with children and fostering achievement of those goals,
- accessing and using children’s academic scores to ensure they’re on track,
- frequently viewing the parent portal (or whichever tool their school uses),
- developing a relationship with children’s teachers and keeping in touch with them often, and
- advocating for improvements in the school building and with local school boards and state and federal government to ensure schools have the resources they need to provide a world class education to every student.”²



[Extensive research](#) demonstrates “a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement. This relationship holds across families of all economic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for students at all ages. The benefits for students include:

- higher grade point averages and scores on standardized tests or rating scales,
- enrollment in more challenging academic programs,
- more classes passed and credits earned,
- better attendance,
- improved behavior at home and at school, and
- better social skills and adaptation to school.”⁴

In 1997, the National Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) responded to the challenge of ensuring student achievement by issuing its national standards for parent and family involvement. Using the most recent research and working with national experts, PTA updated its national standards in 2007. When developed in 1997, the standards were called the National Standards for Parent/Family Involvement Programs. With a shift in focus from what *schools* should do to involve parents to what *parents, schools, and communities can do together* to support student success, the updated standards were renamed the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships.⁵ The six standards include:



1. Welcoming all families into the school community—Families are active participants in the life of the school, and feel welcomed, valued, and connected to each other, to school staff, and to what students are learning and doing in class.
2. Communicating effectively—Families and school staff engage in regular, two-way, meaningful communication about student learning.
3. Supporting student success—Families and school staff continuously collaborate to support students' learning and healthy development both at home and at school, and have regular opportunities to strengthen their knowledge and skills to do so effectively.
4. Speaking up for every child—Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children, to ensure that students are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success.
5. Sharing power—Families and school staff are equal partners in decisions that affect children and families and together inform, influence, and create policies, practices, and programs.
6. Collaborating with community—Families and school staff collaborate with community members to connect students, families, and staff to expanded learning opportunities, community services, and civic participation.⁶

Works Cited

¹ Clark, R.M. (1990). Why Disadvantaged Children Succeed. *Public Welfare* (Spring): 17-23.

² Payne, Ruby K., Ph.D. (2005) *Working with Parents—Building Relationships for Student Success*: 1.

³ <http://neatoday.org/2014/11/18/the-enduring-importance-of-parental-involvement-2/>

⁴ <http://www.sedl.org/connections/resources/evidence.pdf>

⁵ <http://www.pta.org/programs/content.cfm?ItemNumber=1813>

⁶ <http://www.pta.org/nationalstandards>