

When Silence Isn't Golden: Strategies for Partnering Up with Parents to Help All Children Succeed.



York County
Public Schools





Why is there a Divide?





Reason #1: School Experience of Parent(s)



- Parent's limited education and personal difficulties with the school often leads to fear and mistrust
 - Pena, D. 2000



Reason #2: Family Economics

- 20% of US children grow up in poor families
- 18.5% of YCSD students on free and reduced lunch





Reason #3: Linguistic & Cultural Differences

- Language differences between teachers and parents and a lack of a bilingual staff makes parents feel powerless.
- 18% of US families, and 7% of York County families speak a language other than English at home.





Reason #4: Difference in values and expectations

- Historically, teachers tend to blame parents, especially from low SES and minority backgrounds, for the academic failures of their children.
 - Lazar & Slostad (2000)





Reason #5: Lack of Neutrality related to service delivery



- Most educators do not receive college or school division level training on how to network with and understand parents from low SES and minority groups.



Reason #6: “If Only we Didn’t Have Those kids at our School”

- Some educators view low SES and minority families as, “*Problems to Overcome.*”
 - Gail, 2003





Reflection: What do you think about the previous slides?





So, what is the Solution?





Strategies to Partner Up with Families



- Introductory letter
- Beginning of year phone call home
- Use Edline and teacher Webpage (*only if the parents you want to reach have access)



Strategies for Partnering Up with Parents

- Have an “open door policy” for classroom visitations
- Be visible in the community. Attend community wide events special services at churches, and organizational events where students and families are involved.
- Be visible at after school events.





Strategies for Partnering Up with Parents



- Positive calls and notes home
- Invite parents to school during student presentations and speeches
- Have parents share careers or talents.



Strategies for Partnering Up with parents

- Host a parent tea, coffee, or brown bag session to share information.
- Monthly or quarterly class newsletters





Strategies to Partner Up with Parents



- Tape lessons and allow students to check them out.
- Provide a native language translation of correspondence and papers home if necessary.



Why is this so important?

- Well, did you know...





- “When I was growing up, my parents use to say, ‘Tom, finish your dinner—people in China and India are starving. My advice today is...finish your homework, people in China and India are starving for your JOBS!’”



– Friedman (2005) *The World is Flat*



The Global Achievement Gap



- The US high school on-time graduation rate of 70% is well behind
 - Denmark (96%)
 - Japan (93%)
 - Poland (92%)
 - Italy (79%)
 - Wagner, 2008



The Global Achievement Gap

- 65% of college professors report that what is taught in high school does not prepare students for college work. Primarily because most 9-11 grade work focuses on multiple choice questions and not critical thinking assignments.
 - Wagner (2008)





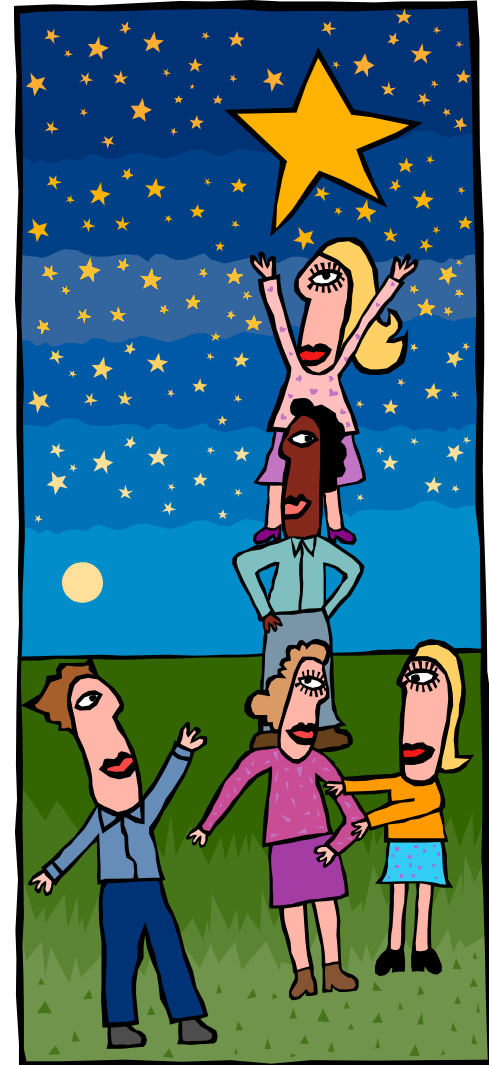
Thoughts, reflections, Oh My moments





Trust Matters

- “They don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”
- “Once one has developed trust, and they really know you care, you can push students and learning really takes off.”
 - Tschannen-Moran (2004)





Have Yourself a Kick Butt Kick-Off

- “Our vision is nothing less than to make where we work a place we love to be.”
- “We are going to encourage and celebrate every positive thing we do, and we’re going to discourage and eliminate negativity.”

