



Top Five Reasons Schools Need to Engage Parents

5. Research shows that students with involved parents are more likely to:
 - earn higher grades and test scores;
 - attend school regularly;
 - have better social skills;
 - adapt well to school; and
 - go on to postsecondary education (National Parent Teacher Association, 2009).
4. Parents express a genuine and deep-seated desire to help their children succeed academically, regardless of differences in socioeconomic status, race, ethnicity, and cultural background (Mapp, 2004).
3. Because parents and teachers share an interest in and responsibility for children's learning and development, parents' voices and ideas add important dimensions to school decisions about children's education (Epstein, 2001).
2. Schools that have engaged parents benefit from:
 - improved teacher morale;
 - increased support from families; and
 - improved collaboration across the schools' communities (Henderson & Berla, 1994).
1. Positive student outcomes are evidenced in schools where educators communicate effectively and involve parents in activities focused on specific, targeted content such as behavior, attendance, math proficiency, homework, and/or reading (Epstein, 2005).

Parent Involvement Approaches

To ensure that every child reaches academic proficiency in core academic disciplines regardless of zip code, economic status, race, ethnicity or disability, schools and districts need to consider the importance of parent engagement. Research clearly points to a strong correlation between parent involvement and student achievement (Epstein, 2005; Furger, 2006; Henderson & Berla, 1994; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). When schools implement intentional and intensive parent engagement strategies, there is a significant rise in student achievement scores (Redding, et al., 2004).

Enhancing parent engagement requires school staff to consider various ways in which to connect with parents. The following framework outlines six types of parent involvement approaches for educators to consider when developing comprehensive programs of school-family-community partnerships (Epstein, et al., 1997).

Parenting

Assist families with: parenting and child-rearing skills; understanding child and adolescent development; and setting home conditions that support children as students at each age and grade level.

Communicating

Communicate with families about school programs and student progress through effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications.

Volunteering

Improve recruitment and training opportunities that involve families as both volunteers and active participants that support students and school programs.

Learning at Home

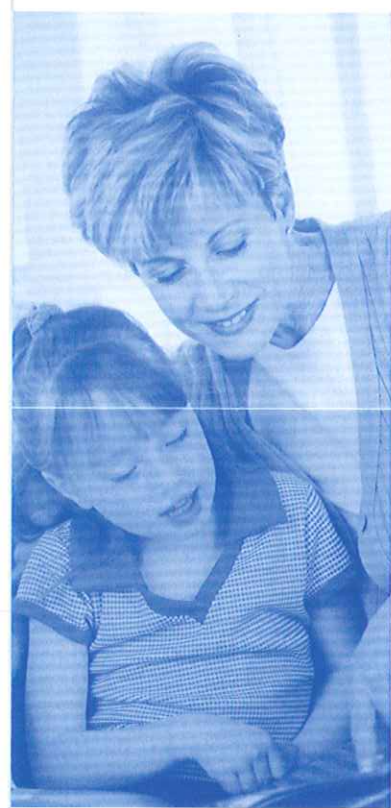
Support families by providing strategies for parents to lead their children in learning activities at home.

Decision-Making

Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy through PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations.

Collaborating with the Community

Engage families, students, and the school with local businesses, agencies, and other community groups.



Enhancing Parent Involvement: A Practical Guide for Pennsylvania's Schools Supporting Students with Disabilities

To assist districts and schools in enhancing parent engagement strategies, a publication entitled *Enhancing Parent Involvement: A Practical Guide for Pennsylvania's Schools Supporting Students with Disabilities* has been developed by Pennsylvania's Federally Funded Parent Centers (HUNE, PEAL, PEN, and The Mentor Parent Project), ConsultLine, and the Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network's Parent Consultants. For more information on the topic of Parent Engagement or to access an electronic copy of *Enhancing Parent Involvement: A Practical Guide for Pennsylvania's Schools Supporting Students with Disabilities*, visit the PaTTAN website at www.pattan.net.

Resources Cited:

Epstein, J. (2001). *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Epstein, J. (2005). *Developing and sustaining research-based programs of school, family, and community partnerships: Summary of five years of NNPS research*. Retrieved January 25, 2009, from [http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/pdf/Research Summary.pdf](http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/pdf/Research%20Summary.pdf).

Epstein, J., Coates, L., Salinas, K., Sanders, M., & Simon, B. (1997). *School, family, and community partnerships: Your handbook for action*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

Furger, R. (2006). *Secret weapon discovered: Parents*. Retrieved January 21, 2009 from <http://www.edutopia.org/secret-weapon-discovered>.

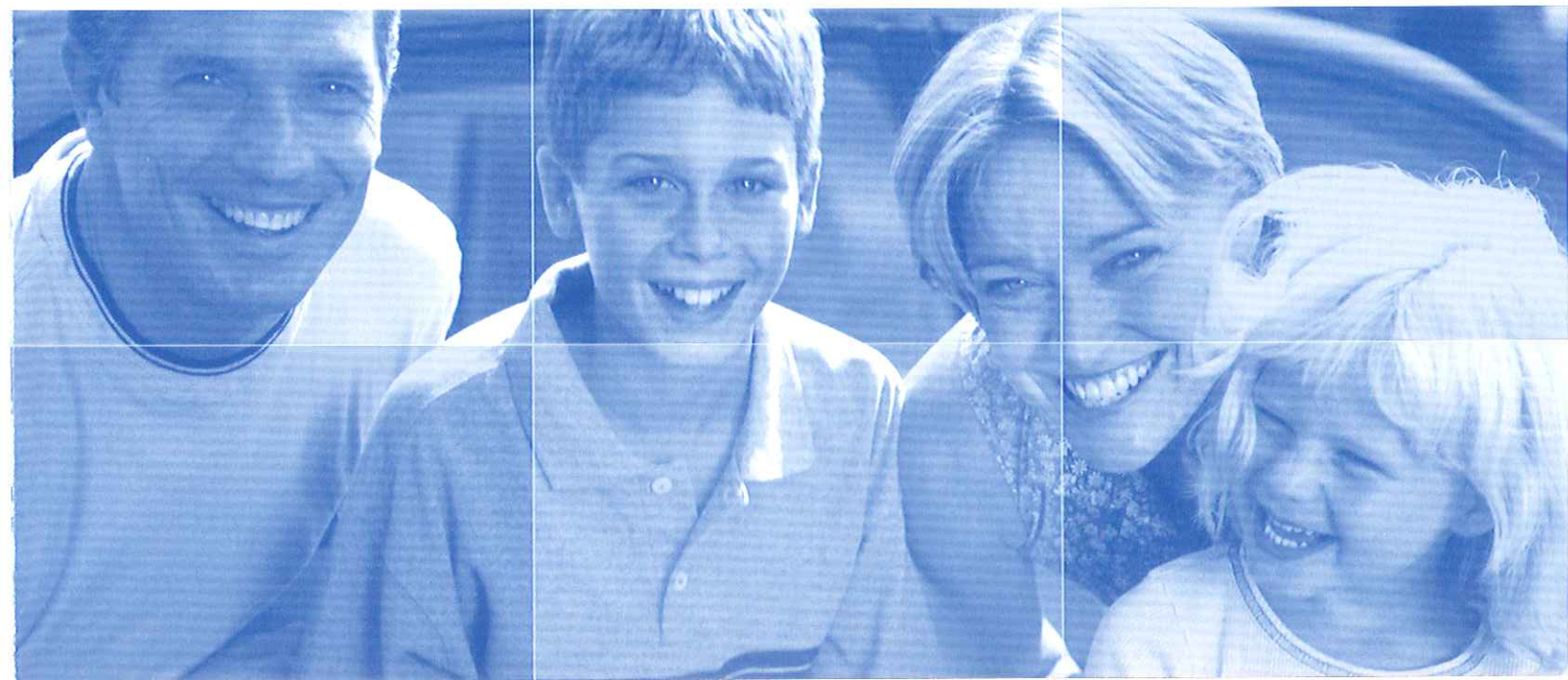
Henderson, A. & Berla, N. (1994). *A new generation of evidence: The family is critical to student achievement*. Washington, DC: Center for Law and Education.

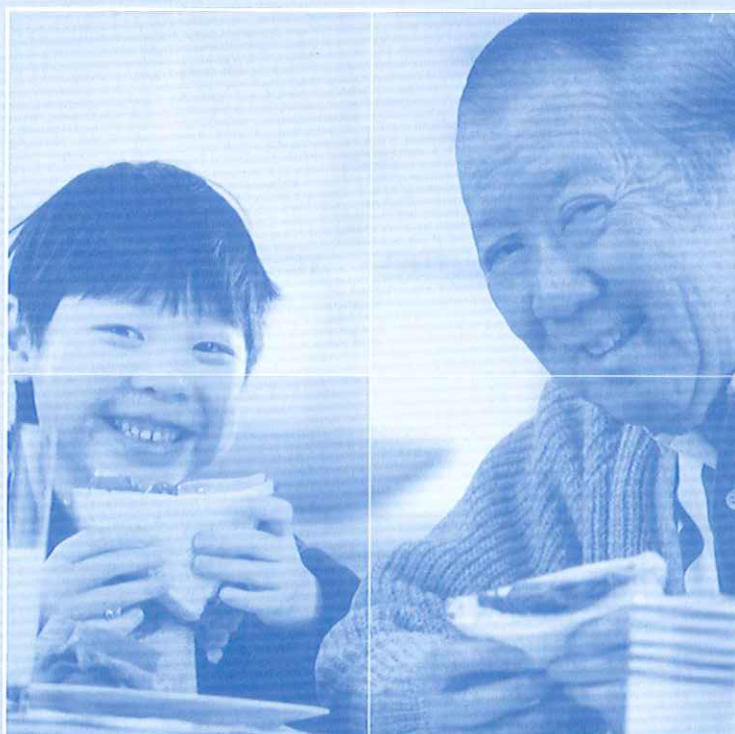
Henderson, A. & Mapp, K. (2002). *A new wave of evidence: The impact of school, family, and community connections on student achievement*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory, National Center for Family & Community Connections with Schools.

Mapp, K. (2004). *Supporting student achievement: Family and community connections with schools*. Retrieved February 17, 2009 from <http://sedl.org/symposium2004/resources.html>.

National Parent Teacher Association. (2009). *Family-school partnerships*. Retrieved March 25, 2009 from http://www.pta.org/family_school_partnerships.asp.

Redding, S., Langdon, J., Meyer, J., & Sheley, P. (2004). *The effects of comprehensive parent engagement on student outcomes*. Retrieved February 24, 2009, from <http://www.hfrp.org/publications-resources/browse-our-publications/the-effects-of-comprehensive-parent-engagement-on-student-learning-outcomes>.





Commonwealth of Pennsylvania

Tom Corbett
Governor

Department of Education

Ronald J. Tomalis
Secretary

Carolyn C. Dumaresq, Ed.D.
Deputy Secretary
Office of Elementary
and Secondary Education

John J. Tommasini
Director
Bureau of Special Education

Patricia Hozella
Assistant Director
Bureau of Special Education



pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Bureau of Special Education
Pennsylvania Training and Technical Assistance Network