



# Parent Friendly Schools— Starting the Conversation

5 Tools for Schools

## Who should use this document?

Schools interested in improving student achievement.

## What is the purpose of this document?

To help you understand if you are moving toward best practice in parent engagement. Specifically this tool is designed to help your school begin a conversation about environment and how welcome people feel in your building. This initial conversation will start you on your way to continued conversations about honoring and connecting with parents in ways which support student achievement.

February 2008

## Why is parent engagement important?

Many years of research show that involving families and the community contributes to children's academic and social success.

The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: families have a major influence on their children's achievement. When schools, families, and community groups work together to support learning, children tend to do better in school, stay in school longer, and like school more.

This statement summarizes the conclusions of *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement*, the most recent comprehensive review of the research. Here are some key findings:

- Students whose families are involved in their learning earn better grades, enroll in higher-level programs, have higher graduation rates, and are more likely to enroll in postsecondary education.
- When families take an active interest in what they're learning, students display more positive attitudes towards school and behave better both in and out of school.
- Children do best if parents can play a variety of roles in their learning: helping at home, volunteering at school, planning their children's future, and taking part in key decisions about the school program.
- Children from diverse cultural backgrounds tend to do better when families and school staff join forces to bridge the gap between home and school cultures.

From early childhood through high school, families make key contributions to student learning. School improvement programs are much more effective when schools enlist families in the process. Regardless of income level or education background, all families can—and do—support their children's success.

Excerpted from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) (pp 2-3)

## Core Beliefs

In most districts and schools throughout the country, educators will readily agree that families must be involved in their children’s education and that home-school partnerships are vitally important. With such overwhelming agreement, why can’t we find real partnerships in every school? The reality is that educators and parents have many beliefs, attitudes, and fears about each other that hinder their coming together to promote children’s education.

From our conversations with district leaders, principals, teachers, and other school staff, Dr. Karen Mapp and others have identified four core beliefs that serve as the foundation for the work of engaging families.

### **Core Belief 1**

All parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them.

### **Core Belief 2**

All parents have the capacity to support their children’s learning.

### **Core Belief 3**

Parents and school staff should be equal partners in children’s learning.

### **Core Belief 4**

The responsibility for building partnerships between schools and home rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders.

Excerpted from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) (pp 26-39)

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## Welcome, Honor, Connect

Dr. Karen Mapp (Harvard Graduate School of Education) is an expert in school, family and community partnerships. Dr. Mapp co-authored a synthesis of the research that has been done on the effects of parent involvement on student achievement. This synthesis, *A New Wave of Evidence*, resulted in the following conclusions:

- The evidence is consistent, positive, and convincing: many forms of family and community involvement influence student achievement.
- When programs and initiatives focus on building respectful and trusting relationships among school staff, families, and community members, they are more effective in creating and sustaining connections that support student achievement.
- In addition, the research studies reviewed in *A New Wave of Evidence* found that students with involved parents are more likely to:
  - Earn higher grades and test scores
  - Be promoted, pass their courses, and earn credits
  - Attend school regularly
  - Have better social skills and improved behavior
  - Graduate and go on to postsecondary education

Karen Mapp talks about The Joining Process as a framework for developing positive relationships between schools and families. This framework for thinking, which originates from the field of Anthropology, consists of three elements—Welcome, Honor, and Connect. A DVD and an mp4 video file are available of Dr. Mapp making a presentation about her model.

**W****elcome:** Families are made to feel at home, comfortable, and a part of the school community. If schools want to become more welcoming to parents and families, they must first examine numerous aspects of their current practice. By asking themselves questions about their school’s physical environment, its policies and practices, staff behaviors, and written materials, school leadership teams can begin to assess the “current reality” of their school as a welcoming-or an unwelcoming- place. The definition of “welcoming” states that families feel at home, are comfortable, and feel a part of the school community. To feel “at home” infers a familiarity, a functional yet relaxed environment, and the sense that a person “belongs”. Educators could begin by asking how they help parents to become familiar with the school and the staff who work in it. They must find ways to create places within the school building where parents can feel comfortable and that they “belong.” To be a part of a school community means that there is a common interest, common goals, common values, and expectations of each community member. People feel as if they belong when they positively contribute to the good of the organization, as do all of the other members, though perhaps in different ways. Finding ways for parents to positively contribute is one way to welcome them into the school community. (DVD Section: A Karen Mapp Presentation, Chapter 6: Time- 49:10)

**H****onor:** Family members are respected, validated and affirmed for any type of involvement or contribution they make. In schools that honor families, the entire staff shares the belief that all families/parents want their students to be successful in school, and recognize that family members are as concerned about student achievement as educators are. Schools that truly engage parents seek ways to insure that they actively partici-

pate in their student's education in ways that are a good match with their own backgrounds, interests and skills. When educators take the time to understand each family's interests and priorities, it sends a powerful message to parents that educators honor what parents have to offer in support of their student's achievement. Basing their involvement on each parent's personal strengths and interests also helps to insure a sense of efficacy on the part of the parents- a sense that they truly have something to contribute. This sense of self-worth on the part of parents can lead to continued parent involvement over time.

Educators can establish a school culture that honors parents by making a conscious and consistent effort to seek information from them. Information that increases educators' awareness of and sensitivity to each family's individual culture and perspective on the role of the school, will aid in the development of positive relationships. This can be accomplished for example, through class and building-wide surveys, questionnaires and suggestion boxes. However, the most effective and meaningful way for educators to get first-hand information from parents is by meeting with parents on a one-to-one basis. Scheduling intake meetings and making home visits are excellent ways for educators to better understand the family's priorities, expectations and goals. These strategies also demonstrate to parents that educators truly honor parents as trusted and respected partners in the pursuit of improved achievement for every child.

Another way that schools can honor parents is by offering workshops to them in the areas of leadership, school improvement or other topics suggested by parents. Helping to improve the skills of parents not only honors their contributions and increases their sense that they can contribute, but can ultimately develop an invaluable resource that will benefit the entire school. (DVD Section: A Karen Mapp Presentation, Chapter 7: Time- 101:09)

**Connect:** School staff and families put children at the center, and connect on education issues of common interest, designed to improve educational opportunities for the children. One way to accomplish this is to consciously link all parent involvement activities to learning. While parents have the right and responsibility to be involved in their children's education, educators are primarily given the authority to open the door and invite parents to take an active role. This focus of "Welcoming, Honoring, and Connecting" was designed to assist educators in opening the door of the classroom, office, or school to partner with parents in the education of their children. We must share with parents the research that makes it crystal clear--students do better in school when parents are actively engaged in their child's education. We want parents to see themselves in a partnering role with the school and we want them to see the results of their efforts. Parents will more likely choose to be involved if they: have the interest and perceive they have the time, skill, and ability to help, are given opportunities to learn how to help, and if they understand that they can make a difference in their child's success.

Our charge and challenge are clear if we want our students to be the best they can be and do the best they can do. We need to embrace parents as partners by not only welcoming and honoring them but also by building a sense of efficacy within the parents. We need to supply them with the skills and tools they need for being a vital link to learning between the school and the child. (DVD Section: A Karen Mapp Presentation, Chapter 7: Time- 107:06)



# Tool #1

## *Partnership Rubric #1*

**What?** This is a 1-page tool that you can use to assess what kind of partnerships your school has with parents.

**Who?** This tool should be completed by a team from an individual school. It is important to have some parents be a part of the team that completes the tool.

**How Much Time?** Teams using this 1 page tool can complete the tool in an hour by using their “best guesses.” The tool can be completed over a longer time or revisited if the team decides to gather data to support their “best guesses.”

**How?** The tool is completed through a group discussion format. Group members look at the bulleted descriptors under each heading and, as a group, decide which ones best describe their school.

**What will you be able to do afterwards?** Team members will have a basic assessment of partnerships in 5 different areas—Building Relationships, Linking to Learning, Addressing Differences, Support Advocacy, and Sharing Power. This basic assessment can provide the information to start your local conversations about partnerships with families.

## 4 Versions of Partnership

Where is your school when it comes to partnering with families? Does your school cling to attitudes and practices that confine parents to limited, traditional roles? Has your school tried to define what it means by parent involvement and partnership with families? How is your school connecting with community resources?

Ask yourself this question: what might a school look like that has created a genuine culture of school-family-community partnership, *and* that has made real progress toward high social and academic achievement for all students?

We would like to offer a rubric, or description, that sets a high, but attainable standard for partnership. The four levels of achievement are called: Partnership School, Open-Door School, Come-if-We-Call School, and Fortress School. Using the scoring guide on the next page, you can get a rough idea of where your school falls. Look at the bulleted descriptors under each heading and mark the ones that best describe your school.

*Excerpted from Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships (2006) (pp. 14-18)*

## 4 Versions of Family-School Partnerships

Check the boxes that have the most statements under them marked or circled. Check only 1 box in each row

<p><b>Element/ Key Question</b></p> <p><i>Answers the question: How family friendly is your school?</i></p>	<p><i>These schools believe:</i> All families &amp; communities have something great to offer—we do whatever it takes to work closely together to make sure every single student succeeds.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Building Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family center is always open, full of interesting materials to borrow</li> <li>Home visits are made to every new family</li> <li>Activities honor families' contributions</li> <li>Building is open to community use &amp; social services are available to families</li> </ul>	<p><i>These schools believe:</i> Parents can be involved at our school in many ways—we're working hard to get an even bigger turnout for our activities. When we ask the community to help, people often respond.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Building Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers contact families once a year</li> <li>Parent coordinator is available if families have questions or need help</li> <li>Office staff are friendly</li> <li>Staff contact community agencies &amp; organizations when help is needed</li> </ul>	<p><i>These schools believe:</i> Parents are welcome when we ask them, but there's only so much they can offer. The most important thing they can do is help their kids at home. We know where to get community help if we need it.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Building Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better-educated parents are more involved</li> <li>"Many immigrant parents don't have time to come or contribute"</li> <li>Staff are very selective about who comes into the school</li> </ul>	<p><i>These schools believe:</i> Parents belong at home, not at school. If students don't do well, it's because their families don't give them enough support. We're already doing all we can. Our school is an oasis in a troubled community. We want to keep it that way.</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> <b>Building Relationships</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Families do not "bother" school staff</li> <li>"Minority families don't value education"</li> <li>Parents need security clearance to come in</li> <li>It is important to keep community influences out of the school</li> </ul>
	<p><i>These schools believe:</i> A school consciously and conscientiously tapping parent energy to improve student achievement (Partnership School)</p>	<p><i>These schools believe:</i> A school focused on tapping parent energy for improving student achievement (Open-Door School)</p>	<p><i>These schools believe:</i> A school that may value the idea of tapping parent energy for the purpose of improving student achievement, but hasn't implemented the idea into actions (Come-if-We-Call School)</p>	<p><i>These schools believe:</i> A school not maximizing parent energy as a strategy for improving student achievement (Fortress School)</p>





<p><i>Answers the question:</i> <b>How closely is your school's parent involvement program linked to student learning?</b></p>	<p><b>Linking to Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All family activities connect to what students are learning</li> <li>Parents &amp; teachers look at student work &amp; test results together</li> <li>Community groups offer tutoring &amp; homework programs at the school</li> <li>Students' work goes home every week, with a scoring guide</li> </ul>	<p><b>Linking to Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers explain test scores if asked</li> <li>Folders of student work go home occasionally</li> <li>School holds curriculum nights 3 or 4 times a year</li> <li>Staff let families know about out-of-school classes in the community</li> </ul>	<p><b>Linking to Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents are told what students will be learning at the fall open house</li> <li>Parents can call the office to get teacher-recorded messages about homework</li> <li>Workshops are offered on parenting</li> </ul>	<p><b>Linking to Learning</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Curriculum &amp; standards are considered too complex for parents to understand</li> <li>"If parents want more information, they can ask for it"</li> <li>"We're teachers, not social workers"</li> </ul>
<p><i>Answers the question:</i> <b>How well is your school bridging racial, class and cultural differences?</b></p>	<p><b>Addressing Differences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Translators are readily available</li> <li>Teachers use books &amp; materials about families' cultures</li> <li>PTA/PTO includes all families</li> <li>Local groups help staff reach families</li> </ul>	<p><b>Addressing Differences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office staff will find a translator if parents ask in advance</li> <li>Multicultural nights are held once a year</li> <li>"Minority" parents have their own group</li> </ul>	<p><b>Addressing Differences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"We can't deal with 20 different languages"</li> <li>"Parents can bring a translator with them"</li> <li>"This school just isn't the same as it used to be"</li> </ul>	<p><b>Addressing Differences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Those parents need to learn English"</li> <li>"We teach about our country—that's what those parents need to know"</li> <li>"This neighborhood is going downhill"</li> </ul>
<p><i>Answers the question:</i> <b>How well does your school support parents as advocates?</b></p>	<p><b>Supporting Advocacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There is a clear, open process for resolving problems</li> <li>Teachers contact families each month to discuss student progress</li> <li>Student-led parent-teacher conferences are held 3 times a year for 30 minutes</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supporting Advocacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal will meet with parents to discuss a problem</li> <li>Regular progress reports go to parents, but test data can be hard to understand</li> <li>Parent-teacher conferences are held twice a year</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supporting Advocacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School calls families when children have problems</li> <li>Families visit school on report card pick up day &amp; can see a teacher if they call first</li> </ul>	<p><b>Supporting Advocacy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents don't come to conferences</li> <li>Problems are dealt with by the professional staff</li> <li>Teachers don't feel safe with parents</li> </ul>
<p><i>Answers the question:</i> <b>How well is your school sharing power and practicing democracy?</b></p>	<p><b>Sharing Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents &amp; teachers research issues such as prejudice &amp; tracking</li> <li>Parent group is focused on improving student achievement</li> <li>Families are involved in all major decisions</li> <li>Parents can use the school's phone, copier, fax, &amp; computers</li> <li>Staff work with local organizations to improve the school &amp; the neighborhood</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sharing Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents can raise issues at PTA/PTO meetings or see the principal</li> <li>Parent group sets its own agenda &amp; raises money for the school</li> <li>Resource center for low-income families is housed in a portable classroom next to the school</li> <li>PTA/PTO officers can use the school office</li> <li>A community representative sits on the school council</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sharing Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal sets agenda for parent meetings</li> <li>PTA/PTO gets the school's message out</li> <li>"Parents are not experts in education"</li> <li>Community groups can address the school board if they have concerns</li> </ul>	<p><b>Sharing Power</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal picks a small group of "cooperative parents" to help out</li> <li>Families are afraid to complain. "They might take it out on my kid"</li> <li>"Community groups should mind their own business; they don't know about education."</li> </ul>

—from "Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships" (2007) by Henderson, Mapp, Johnson & Davies



# Tool #2

## *Partnership Checklists*

**What?** This is a tool that you can use to assess what kind of partnership your school has with parents.

**Who?** This tool should be completed by a team from an individual school. It is important to have some parents be a part of the team that completes the tool.

**How Much Time?** Teams using this tool can complete the tool in 1-2 hours by using their “best guesses.” The tool can be revisited if the team decides to gather data to support their “best guesses.”

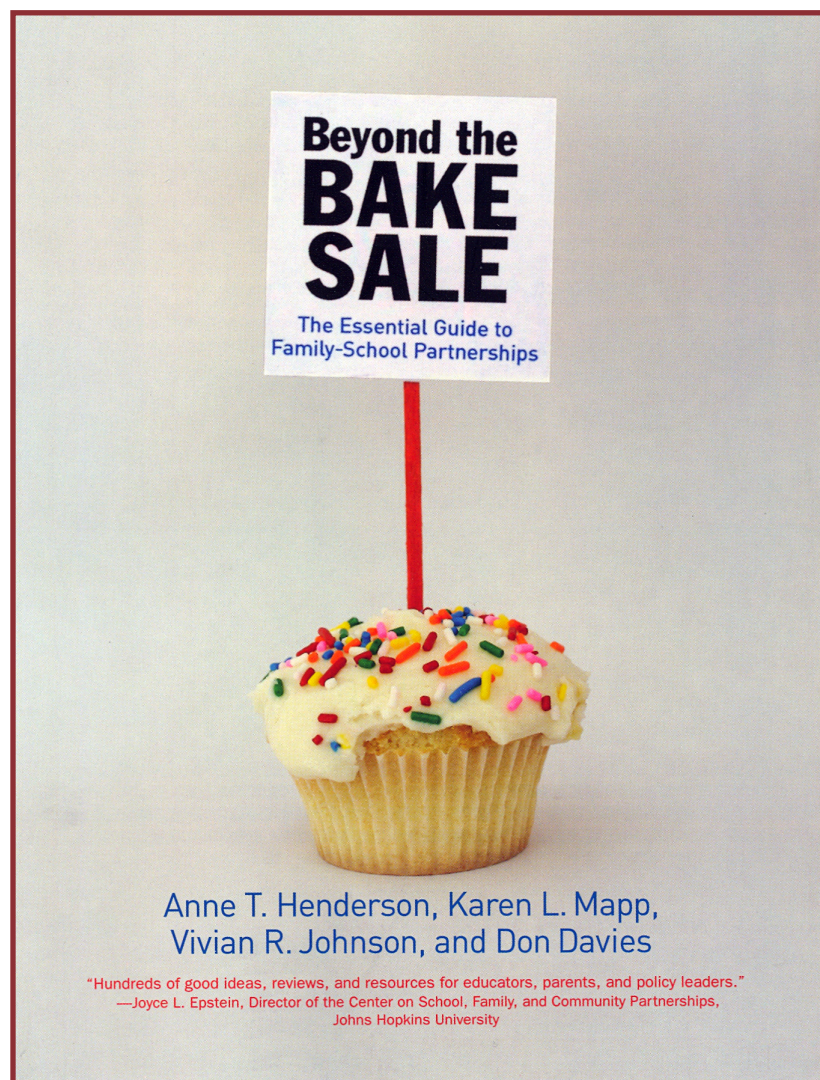
**How?** The tool is completed through a group discussion format. Group members look at the bulleted descriptors under each heading and, as a group, decide which ones best describe their school.

**What will you be able to do afterwards?** Team members will have a basic assessment of partnerships in 5 different areas—Building Relationships, Linking to Learning, Addressing Differences, Support Advocacy, and Sharing Power. This basic assessment can provide the information to start your local conversations about partnerships with families.

## Using the Partnership Checklists

**Directions:** On the following 10 pages you will find 5 separate checklists for use by your school improvement or other planning team. These checklists have been taken from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies. The checklists are printed on 2 pages in this toolkit and can be run front-to-back.

Each checklist involves multiple questions for rating your school, followed by several reflection questions that can assist you in the development of plan for addressing the issues at your school. As you complete the checklists and begin to develop a plan, make sure to consult *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) for ideas about how to bring about change in your school.



## How Family Friendly Is Your School?

This checklist is taken from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (pages 75-79).

**Directions:** As a team, review and rate the following items, then complete the reflection questions at the end of the survey to help you design a plan for improving the “family-friendliness” of your school.

Welcoming Environment		Check one for each question			
1. Friendly signs inside and out welcome families and visitors and explain how to get around the building	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
2. The school has standards of welcoming behavior that apply to all staff, including bus drivers, security guards, custodians, and cafeteria workers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
3. Front office staff are friendly—recognize visitors right away, provide information easily, and answer the phone in a way that makes people glad they have called.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
4. There is a comfortable family resource room stocked with books, games, and educational information that families can borrow and where parents can meet.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Programs & Activities to Engage Families in Improving Student Achievement		Check one for each question			
5. Current student work is displayed throughout the building. Exhibits clearly explain the purpose of the work and the high standards it is to meet.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
6. All programs and activities for families focus on student achievement—they help families understand what their children are learning and promote high standards.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
7. Special workshops, learning kits, and other activities show families how to help their children at home—and respond to what families say they want to know about.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
8. The school reports to parents about student progress and how teachers, parents, and community members can work together to make improvement.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Strong Relationships Between Teachers & Families		Check one for each question			
9. A “joining process” welcomes families to the school, offers tours, makes bilingual speakers available, and introduces them to staff and other families.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
10. Teachers and families have frequent opportunities to meet face-to-face and get to know each other—class meetings, breakfasts, home visits, class observations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
11. Teachers or advisors make personal contact with each family at least once a month.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
12. A family liaison helps teachers connect to families and bridge barriers of language and culture.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Developing Families' Self-Confidence & Power		Check one for each question			
13. Families are involved in planning how they would like to be involved at the school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
14. School communities and the PTA/PTO reflect the diversity of the school community and actively recruit and welcome families from all backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
15. The school is open and accessible—it is easy for parents to meet with the principal, talk to the teachers and counselors, and bring up issues and concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
16. Parents develop school improvement projects and do action research—survey other families, observe in classrooms, review materials, and visit other schools and programs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	



## Parent Friendly Schools—Starting the Conversation

Professional Development for Families & Staff	<i>Check one for each question</i>			
17. Families learn how the school system works and how to be an effective advocate for their child.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Already doing this</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Could do this easily</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>This will take time</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>This will be hard</i>
18. Teachers learn about effective approaches to working with families of diverse cultural backgrounds.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Already doing this</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Could do this easily</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>This will take time</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>This will be hard</i>
19. Families and staff have opportunities to learn together how to collaborate to improve student achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Already doing this</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Could do this easily</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>This will take time</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>This will be hard</i>
20. The school reaches out to identify and draw in local community resources that can assist staff and families.	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Already doing this</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Could do this easily</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>This will take time</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> <i>This will be hard</i>

### *Use the following questions to reflect on the answers from your checklist*

In which areas are you doing well?

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Which areas need more work?

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How are parents involved in making the school more open, welcoming, and collaborative?

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What are your concerns?

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What steps could you take to help your school become more family-friendly?

*Right now?*

*Over the long term?*

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This checklist is taken from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (pages 75-79).

# How Closely Is your School’s Parent Involvement Program Linked to Student Learning?

This checklist is taken from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (pages 108-111).

**Directions:** As a team, review and rate the following items, then complete the reflection questions at the end of the survey to help you design a plan for improving the linking parent involvement with student learning.

Learning What Students are Doing in Class		Check one for each question			
1. Student work is posted in school hallways and in public places in the community and is rotated often.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
2. Exhibits of student work show how to recognize high-level work at different grade levels. The assignments are challenging and the student work is not all the same.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
3. Families can regularly observe in the classroom and/or see teaching demonstrations.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
4. At parent-teacher conferences, students are present and discuss the quality of their work.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Informative School Communications		Check one for each question			
5. Articles in the school newsletter and on the Web site discuss what students are doing in class and include tips on helping at home.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
6. A regular feature describes interesting approaches that teachers are using in class.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
7. The articles use data about the school, such as attendance rates and test results, and describe how the school is working to make improvements.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
8. The school offers regular workshops and other information sessions that help families understand how children learn and are being taught. The topics are suggested by families.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
9. Families regularly receive information and materials to help their children at home.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Using Student Achievement Data to Design Programs		Check one for each question			
10. Programs and activities for families are focused on skills and subjects that students need to strengthen.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
11. Student achievement data are shared with families in ways that solicit their ideas about how to improve achievement.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
12. School staff and parents collaborate to collect other data about learning opportunities for students, such as community programs and resources.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Collaborating with Community Learning Programs		Check one for each question			
13. School staff collaborate with community-based after-school programs and exchange ideas and information with program staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
14. School shares curriculum, textbooks, assignments, and learning materials with community after-school programs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
15. After-school program staff can attend professional development at school. Staff development is also open to parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	



*Use the following questions to reflect on the answers from your checklist*

In which areas are you doing well?

---

Which areas need more work?

---

How are parents and the parent organization involved in linking family involvement activities and programs to improving student achievement?

---

What are your concerns?

---

What steps could you take to help your programs be better linked to learning?

*Right now?*

*Over the long term?*

---

This checklist is taken from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (pages 108-111).

# How Well is Your School Bridging Racial, Class and Cultural Differences?

This checklist is taken from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (pages 146-149).

**Directions:** As a team, review and rate the following items, then complete the reflection questions at the end of the checklist to help you design a plan for bridging racial, class and cultural differences at your school.

Promoting Understanding of Different Cultures		Check one for each question			
1. The school's racial and cultural diversity is recognized and openly discussed in a constructive way at parent group and faculty meetings, school council meetings, and discussion groups that include staff and families.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
2. The school's curriculum reflects cultures of families, and there are books and materials about families' cultures in classrooms and the library/media centers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
3. Families' cultural traditions, values, and practices are discussed in class.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
4. Activities and events honor all the cultures in the school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Recognizing & Addressing Class and Language Differences		Check one for each question			
5. The PTA/PTO is not dominated by any one group of parents, and its officers reflect the school's diversity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
6. Extra efforts are made to recruit and welcome all families, and families of all backgrounds are involved at the school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
7. School activities and events are planned with parents and respond to their interests.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
8. Interpreters are available for all meetings and events, and report cards, newsletters, signs, and other communications are translated into the school's major languages.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
9. English-speaking staff and families make an effort to mix with families who speak other languages.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Addressing Issues of Race and Racism		Check one for each question			
10. School staff and families use books and stories about different groups' experiences, including African Americans, to stimulate discussions about their own backgrounds and values.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
11. Teachers and other staff use "teachable moments" and stories from local media to comment on and discuss racially motivated incidents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
12. Professional development for staff explores negative attitudes, practices and expectations for students of color, and aims to create high standards, rigorous practice, and increased expectations for all students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Welcoming and Respecting All Families		Check one for each question			
13. Parents and teachers are surveyed about school climate, and school staff and parent group leaders follow up on the results.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
14. The school has a system for helping staff and students learn how to pronounce all students' first and last names correctly.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
15. Front office staff are warm and welcoming to all families and visitors and compliment family members on their contributions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	





*Use the following questions to reflect on the answers from your checklist*

In which areas are you doing well?

---

Which areas need more work?

---

How are parents and the parent organization involved in addressing differences?

---

What are your concerns?

---

What steps could you take to address differences of culture, race, and class?

*Right now?*

*Over the long term?*

---

This checklist is taken from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (pages 146-149).



## How Well Does Your School Support Parents as Advocates?

This checklist is taken from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (pages 182-186).

**Directions:** As a team, review and rate the following items, then complete the reflection questions at the end of the survey to help you design a plan for supporting parents as advocates in your school.

Promoting Understanding of Different Cultures		Check one for each question			
1. The school handbook and Web site show how the school is organized and provide information for contacting school staff.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
2. All families get information about academic and after-school programs for students and how to apply for them.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
3. There is a clear written process for resolving complaints or problems, and all families know how to use it.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Conferring with Teachers		Check one for each question			
4. Teachers contact each family at least once a month with an update on their child and send graded student work home for review once a week.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
5. Parents can easily contact teachers and other staff with information and questions about their children.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
6. If your school is a middle or high school, each family knows an adult in the school they can contact about their child.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Supporting Advocacy		Check one for each question			
7. At workshops and other information sessions, parents learn how to ask the right questions about their children's progress and placement.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
8. The school confers with families about which program is best for their children and gives them the information they need to make the best choice.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
9. The school actively recruits students for gifted and advanced programs and works with families to explain the program and obtain their support	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
10. Parents are part of the decision-making process about student placement in these programs.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
11. Counselors and teachers refer families to education and recreation programs in the community that can help their children.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Transition Programs		Check one for each question			
12. The school make personal contact with all new families before the school year begins.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
13. Teachers and students visit preschool program and feeder schools to talk about the school and answer questions.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
14. Special events for students and families welcome them to the school, give them a tour of the building, and connect them to "buddies" or mentors.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
Planning for the Future		Check one for each question			
15. If your school is an elementary school, school staff ask families about their goals for their children and discusses how the school can prepare them for that future.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	
16. If your school is a middle school, all sixth-grade parents get information about what courses are required for college or other postsecondary education and what students should take in middle school to qualify for those courses in high school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard	



17. If your school is a high school, all ninth-grade families get a college or career planning handbook that contains an individual graduation plan and explains all the steps for applying to college. It also lists what courses are required for college admission.

*Already doing this*

*Could do this easily*

*This will take time*

*This will be hard*

***Use the following questions to reflect on the answers from your checklist***

In which areas are you doing well?

Which areas need more work?

How are parents involved in your school to promote constructive advocacy?

What are your concerns?

What steps could you take to develop a program to support parents as advocates?

*Right now?*

*Over the long term?*

This checklist is taken from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (pages 182-186).



## How Well is Your School Sharing Power & Practicing Democracy?

This checklist is taken from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (pages 214-218).

**Directions:** As a team, review and rate the following items, then complete the reflection questions at the end of the survey to help you design a plan for sharing power and practicing democracy.

Promoting Understanding of Different Cultures	Check one for each question			
1. The school has a governance council that ha a voice in all major decisions and that includes parent representatives elected by a broad base of parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
2. Parents and community members sit on the principal selection committee.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
3. The school does an annual survey of parents to get their ideas about programs and policies. The survey is codesigned and tallied by parents.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
Building a Strong, Broad-Based Parent Organization	Check one for each question			
4. The parent group is focused on improving achievement for all students.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
5. Surveys and focus groups are some of the ways that the parent association reaches out to families, builds it membership, and draws out their ideas and concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
6. The PTA or parent organization invites the principal to report on student academic performance, review the school’s scores on the state test, and describe how the school plans to improve.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
Developing Social and Political Connections	Check one for each question			
7. Families can learn how to vote and get a voter registration form in the school office.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
8. The school or parent group invites candidates for office to speak at the school and actively encourages and prepares parents to bring up their issues and concerns.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
9. Parent leadership and other training is offered, either by the school or by community groups, in collaboration with the school.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
Drawing on Community Resources	Check one for each question			
10. The school works closely with local public libraries and takes families on field trips to get library cards and borrow books and media.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
11. A family resource center, school social worker, and/or other staff help families make connections to social services such as a food bank, a medical clinic, or housing assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
12. The school taps local businesses and community institutions for technical services, job opportunities for families and students, reduced fees, tutoring and mentoring, and training.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
Collaborating with Community Organizers	Check one for each question			
13. Teachers and parents work with community organizers to research solutions to problems that families and students face, such as bullying, traffic hazards, and gang activity.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
14. The school hosts “accountability sessions” with local elected officials, so that families can raise their concerns about public services, such as street lights, community policing, drug trafficking, or poor trash collection.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard
15. If community organizers raise issues like class size, teacher qualifications, achievement gaps, and crumbling facilities, the school is willing to work with them to make improvements. If community organizers have not approached the school, the school reaches out to them.	<input type="checkbox"/> Already doing this	<input type="checkbox"/> Could do this easily	<input type="checkbox"/> This will take time	<input type="checkbox"/> This will be hard



*Use the following questions to reflect on the answers from your checklist*

In which areas are you doing well?

---

Which areas need more work?

---

In what ways does your school share power with parents and build their social and political connections?

---

What are your concerns?

---

What steps could you take to make your school a laboratory of democracy?

*Right now?*

*Over the long term?*

---

This checklist is taken from *Beyond the Bake Sale—The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships* (2006) by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (pages 214-218).



# Tool #3

## *Mapp DVD*

**What?** This is a DVD and discussion tool that you can use to have a better understanding of effective parent engagement and building more effective partnerships with families.

**Who?** You can show this DVD and complete the discussion tool with a team from an individual school. It is important to have parents be a part of the team that completes the tool.

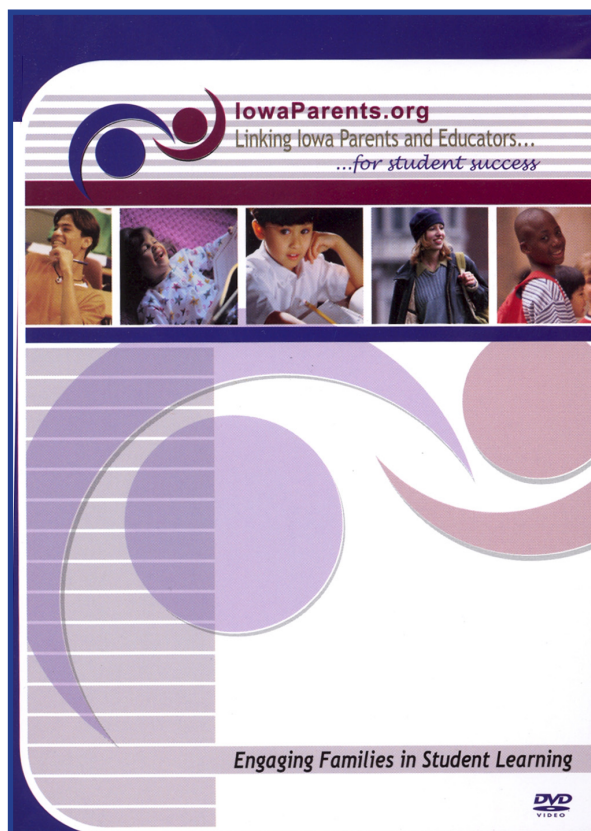
**How Much Time?** The video lasts approximately 1 hour. Teams can have an initial discussion about the information presented in 1 hour following the video.

**How?** The tool is completed through a group discussion format.

**What will you be able to do afterwards?** Team members will have a better understanding of which types of parent engagement are effective in supporting increased student achievement. In addition, the discussion following the video can serve as an initial conversation about partnerships with families.

## Using the Partnership Checklists

**Directions:** Watch the DVD of Dr. Karen Mapp entitled “Engaging Families in Student Learning.” This DVD is designed to assist educators, parents and communities in connecting with effective practices in family engagement that impact student learning. Following your viewing of the DVD your team can engage in a discussion about the video and begin to develop a plan for improve family involvement in your school.



# **Tool #4**

## *Welcoming Walk-Through*

**What?** This is a tool that you can use to assess how others see your school. The tool assesses the physical environment, schoolwide practices and policies, personal interactions, and written materials and communications.

**Who?** This tool should be completed by a team of 12 people from an individual school. It is important to have parents be a part of the team that completes the tool.

**How Much Time?** Teams using this tool can complete the tool in 2-4 hours by dividing into teams and completing the checklists and planning tools provided here.

**How?** The 12 team members divide into 4 groups and make an initial assessment in 4 different areas, with each team taking 1 of the 4 areas. Following the initial assessment, all 12 members meet as a group to review and reflect on observations. The last step involves creating an action plan for addressing concerns identified during the assessment.

**What will you be able to do afterwards?** This tool will help your school understand how welcoming your school is and how others perceive your school—one of the three components in Dr. Mapp's Joining Process (Welcome, Honor, Connect).





## The Welcoming Walk Through— Overview

Another way to better understand how others see your school is to conduct a Welcoming Walk Through. In the remainder of this document you will find the instructions and corresponding tools for conducting a Welcoming Walk Through. The materials presented here have been adapted from materials provided by the JeffCo Public Schools in Colorado.

### What is the Welcoming Environment Walk Through?

As a team, your selected staff members and school community members will take a tour of your school. The team will look at four components of the school that let parents and community members know they are welcome there as partners in the school. Based on their observations, the team will complete a Welcoming Recommendation Form that will help your school plan for improving the environment for parents.

### What is the purpose of the Welcoming Environment Walk Through?

The purpose of the walk through is to examine how inviting the school appears to its diverse community. Teams will look at strategies that can be employed to make the school more inviting to the families and community, increase parent involvement, and gather information to set school goals for next year.

### What are the components of the Welcoming Environment Walk Through?

The Welcoming Walk Through has 4 components:

- The physical environment: parking areas, classrooms, lobby, hallways, etc.
- School-wide practices and policies: interview with principal/administrative staff.
- Personal interaction: observations in the main office, hallways, and places open to the public; listening and looking for inviting, friendly tones
- Written materials and communications: newsletters, parent handbook, fliers, and other materials distributed by the school. Web sites and telephone message lines are also included, if applicable.

### Who will do the Welcoming Environment Walk Through?

You should select 12 people (four staff members and eight representatives of your school communities) for your teams. Consider choosing team members who represent the diversity of your parents, your staff, and your community. For example, you may want to include an administrator, a teacher, a custodian, a secretary, a bus driver, a cafeteria worker, a neighbor, a community leader, a special education parent, a PTA board member, an English as a second language parent, a general education parent, and/or others who represent the various cultures in your school community.

### What is the Welcoming Environment Walk Through procedure?

**First**, you select walk-through team members who are representative of your school community. Schools may wish to schedule evening walk throughs for “schoolwide practices and policies” and “written materials and communications” components to accommodate those who cannot meet during the day. **Second**, you provide a meeting room large enough for your team members and space for each of the four teams to meet and talk separately. This could be the same room with teams moving to separate corners. **Third**, you provide the name of the administrator(s) who will be interviewed. **Fourth**, you will need a map of the school. **Fifth**, you will need samples of all written material sent to school communities from your school, i.e., a parent/student handbook, two recent newsletters, a student directory, and a packet of materials for new students and families, etc.



## Welcoming Walk Through—Team Members

### Physical Environment Team:

School Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Member 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Member 2: \_\_\_\_\_

### Practices and Policies Team:

School Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Member 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Member 2: \_\_\_\_\_

### Personal Interaction Team:

School Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Member 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Member 2: \_\_\_\_\_

### Written Materials and Communications Team:

School Staff Member: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Member 1: \_\_\_\_\_

Community Member 2: \_\_\_\_\_

Group Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_



## Welcoming Walk Through—Meeting with your teams

Thank you for being a part of the school’s Welcoming Environment Walk-Through Team. Your input will be helpful in making future visitors to the building feel a welcomed part of the school. As you participate in the walk-through today, please think about the things that say “Welcome!” to you when you enter a school.

Try to assume a role as a visitor new to the school. Look at your school from any or all of the following perspectives:

- You are a parent of a child who will go to kindergarten next fall.
- You are thinking about moving into the area.
- You are a first-time volunteer.
- You just moved here from another state.
- You just moved from another area within this state.
- You know a little English.
- You are a father.
- You just moved to the USA.
- You have difficulty walking.
- You have difficulty seeing.
- You are a neighbor of the school

During the day’s walk-through, you will become a member of one of four Welcoming Environment Component Teams. These teams will examine the following elements:

- The physical environment
- School-wide practices and policies
- Personal interaction
- Written materials and communications

In order to remember your thoughts during the walk-through process, please put your name at the top of your individual Welcoming Environment Walk-Through Commendations and Recommendations Form and make notes about the following:

- What is the school doing well?
- What could the school do to make the school more welcoming for parents and visitors?

At the conclusion of the walk-through time period, each team will discuss its observations and complete the Action Plan Tool that has been provided for the team. The teams will then gather to share each of their findings. When all teams have shared their observations, we’ll create a summary report and set the time line for outlining improvement goals and implementation plans for next year.



## Checklist 1—The Physical Environment

The **physical** appearance of the facility is an essential element in creating a welcoming environment. Your team will tour the school’s entrances, offices, hallways, cafeteria, gym, library, clinic, work room, etc., and a sampling of classrooms.

While you and your teammates tour the building, consider the items listed below. Be sure to make notes so you will be able to discuss your observations.

- Are the parking lots, landscaped areas, playground areas and sports fields clean?
- Is there signage to direct visitors from parking lots to the main entrance?
- Is a welcome sign displayed near the entrance? in more than one language?
- Is the sign welcoming?
- Are signs giving clear directions from the main entrance to the office clearly posted near the main entrance?
- Is there a school directory near the main entrance that highlights frequently requested locations?
- Are the school day hours and office hours clearly noted near the main entrance?
- Are there friendly, clear instructions for all visitors to sign in at the office and obtain a building badge/pass?
- When entering the school, are visitors directed to pick up a badge that says “Parent,” “Volunteer,” or “Visitor,” indicating that the school considers them to be especially important?
- Is a guest book kept in the main office for guests to sign when they come into the school?
- Are hallways well lit?
- Do bulletin boards thank volunteers, the PTA/PTO, and community members for their contributions?
- Are bulletin boards and displays throughout the building student-oriented, colorful, well maintained, and current?
- Do pictures, photographs, bulletin boards, showcases, and displays reflect the faces of the school’s children and their families, including cultural, racial, and linguistic diversity and a variety of family structures?
- Is there a place where district and school publications are displayed and easily accessible to visitors?
- Are restrooms clean and orderly?
- Is there signage for people with disabilities to let them know which doors are accessible? where the accessible restrooms are?
- Does signage include braille?



## Note-Taking Page 1—The Physical Environment

Use this sheet to take notes as you conduct the Welcoming Walk Through.

<b>Commendations:</b> <i>What's Working</i>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.

<b>Recommendations:</b> <i>How to make your school more welcoming</i>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.



## Prioritizing Recommendations 1—The Physical Environment

Use this sheet to prioritize the recommendations your group has selected to address the physical environment. List the recommendations and then first decide if the school has the power to change the problem. If the answer is “yes,” next determine if the recommendation needs to be addressed immediately or if it can wait. Finally, for those items that should be addressed immediately, rank the recommendations in the order that they should be addressed.

After you are finished ranking the recommendations, use the Desired State Chart to plan the action steps to address the items.

<b>Recommendations:</b> <i>How to make your school more welcoming</i>	<i>Does the school have the power to change this?</i>	<i>Does it need to be addressed immediately?</i>	<i>Rank Order</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			

Notes:





## Checklist 2—School wide Practices & Policies

**School wide practices and policies** can enhance or undermine a welcoming atmosphere. Your team will interview the school’s principal/chief administrator. Use the list of questions on this page to conduct the interview. You can ask the principal/chief administrator to provide samples to support his/her answers. Please take notes so you will be able to discuss the answers with your teammates at the conclusion of the interview.

- \_\_\_ How does your back-to-school program engage families?
- \_\_\_ How are school emergency procedures and rules from the student conduct code outlined for families at the beginning of each year?
- \_\_\_ How does the school provide information packets for new families?
- \_\_\_ How often do teachers call each student’s family early in the school year to invite them to an event or report something positive?
- \_\_\_ How are parent-teacher conferences offered at convenient times for parents?
- \_\_\_ How are school office hours convenient for parents?
- \_\_\_ How are the principal’s office hours convenient for parents?
- \_\_\_ How do school staff and families have informal occasions/events during which they can get to know each other?
- \_\_\_ Describe alternative communication methods used with parents speaking limited English in order for them to understand the curriculum and participate in activities.
- \_\_\_ How is information about school and classroom policies, school rules, parent-teacher conferences, and bus and lunch schedules available to parents who don’t speak English as their primary language? How is this information provided?
- \_\_\_ How does the school assist parents in choosing appropriate educational programs for their children?
- \_\_\_ How do you ensure attention paid to pronouncing parents’ names correctly?
- \_\_\_ How/when does the school provide bilingual speakers who can be called upon to translate or become a “buddy family” if needed?
- \_\_\_ How are parent leaders kept informed about important school matters and encouraged to form a parent network to pass the word?
- \_\_\_ How are parents and others in the school community invited to use the school for planned events?
- \_\_\_ How does the principal involve parents in making decisions?
- \_\_\_ How are volunteer opportunities available to parents and others in the school community?
- \_\_\_ How are parent engagement activities linked to learning?
- \_\_\_ How do you promote 2-way communication?





## Note-Taking Page 2—Schoolwide Practices & Policies

Use this sheet to take notes as you conduct the welcoming walk through.

<b>Commendations:</b> <i>What's Working</i>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.

<b>Recommendations:</b> <i>How to improve schoolwide practices and policies</i>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.



## Prioritizing Recommendations 2—Schoolwide Practices & Policies

Use this sheet to prioritize the recommendations your group has selected to address the physical environment. List the recommendations and then first decide if the school has the power to change the problem. If the answer is “yes,” next determine if the recommendation needs to be addressed immediately or if it can wait. Finally, for those items that should be addressed immediately, rank the recommendations in the order that they should be addressed.

After you are finished ranking the recommendations, use the [Desired State Chart](#) to plan the action steps to address the items.

<b>Recommendations:</b> <i>How to improve schoolwide practices and policies</i>	<i>Does the school have the power to change this?</i>	<i>Does it need to be addressed immediately?</i>	<i>Rank Order</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			

Notes:



## Action Plan 2—Schoolwide Practices & Policies

A team from the building can use this sheet to plan the steps for addressing the prioritized recommendations. First, describe the “current reality”—what the situation is now. Next, discuss and describe the “desired state” you would like to see. Third, on the right side of the arrow, list the steps the building needs to take to reach the desired state. Finally, on the left side of the arrow, list the steps the district needs to take (if any) to help the building reach the desired state.

**Desired State**

*Steps the district needs to take*

*Steps the building needs to take*

**Current Reality**



## Checklist 3—Personal Interaction

The **interaction** between school staff members and the public is an essential element of a welcoming atmosphere. Your team should quietly observe the school staff and visitors, watch their behavior, and listen to interactions between staff and adults who call or visit the building. This assessment isn't intended to be an evaluation tool for individual staff members, but rather is intended to evaluate the climate and culture of the building.

While you and your teammates are touring the building, please consider the items listed below. Be sure to take notes so you will be able to discuss your observations with your teammates at the conclusion of your tour. You can have multiple team members call the school to gather some of this data.

You may want to use tally marks to indicate the number of staff members observed and the number of times you observed a particular behavior. For example, when 6 staff members passed a parent in the hall, 2 asked if s/he could be helped, 3 did not acknowledge the parent at all, and 1 looked at the parent and smiled.

- \_\_\_ Does the office staff greet visitors quickly with a smile and in a friendly, courteous way?
- \_\_\_ Do people who answer the telephone do so in a friendly, professional way?
- \_\_\_ Is prompt attention given to telephone calls and messages?
- \_\_\_ How does the person answering the phone invite two-way communication?
- \_\_\_ When a person with limited English proficiency calls (if possible, simulated by a phone call from a team member who fluently speaks another language), how does the staff member answering the phone demonstrate patience and attempt to find someone who can speak his/her language or refers him/her to a phone number or person who can help?
- \_\_\_ When an irate parent calls (if possible, simulated by a phone call from a team member), does the staff member answering the phone remain calm, listen attentively and attempt to solve the problem or find someone who can?
- \_\_\_ Is there a suggestion box where parents and other visitors can contribute ideas?
- \_\_\_ Do staff members passing in the hall ask visitors if they may be of assistance?
- \_\_\_ When a team member attempts to walk through the hallway without a badge or pass, do staff members approach him/her politely and cordially and then invite/escort him/her to the office to sign in?
- \_\_\_ Are there parent and community volunteers in the building?



## Note Taking Page 3—Personal Interaction

Use this sheet to take notes as you conduct the welcoming walk through.

<b>Commendations:</b> <i>What's Working</i>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.

<b>Recommendations:</b> <i>How to improve personal interactions</i>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.



## Prioritizing Recommendations 3—Personal Interaction

Use this sheet to prioritize the recommendations your group has selected to address the physical environment. List the recommendations and then first decide if the school has the power to change the problem. If the answer is “yes,” next determine if the recommendation needs to be addressed immediately or if it can wait. Finally, for those items that should be addressed immediately, rank the recommendations in the order that they should be addressed.

After you are finished ranking the recommendations, use the Desired State Chart to plan the action steps to address the items.

<b>Recommendations:</b> <i>How to improve personal interactions</i>	<i>Does the school have the power to change this?</i>	<i>Does it need to be addressed immediately?</i>	<i>Rank Order</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			

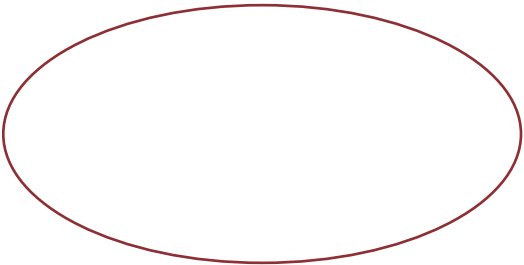
Notes:



### Action Plan 3—Personal Interaction

A team from the building can use this sheet to plan the steps for addressing the prioritized recommendations. First, describe the “current reality”—what the situation is now. Next, discuss and describe the “desired state” you would like to see. Third, on the right side of the arrow, list the steps the building needs to take to reach the desired state. Finally, on the left side of the arrow, list the steps the district needs to take (if any) to help the building reach the desired state.

**Desired State**



*Steps the district needs to take*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

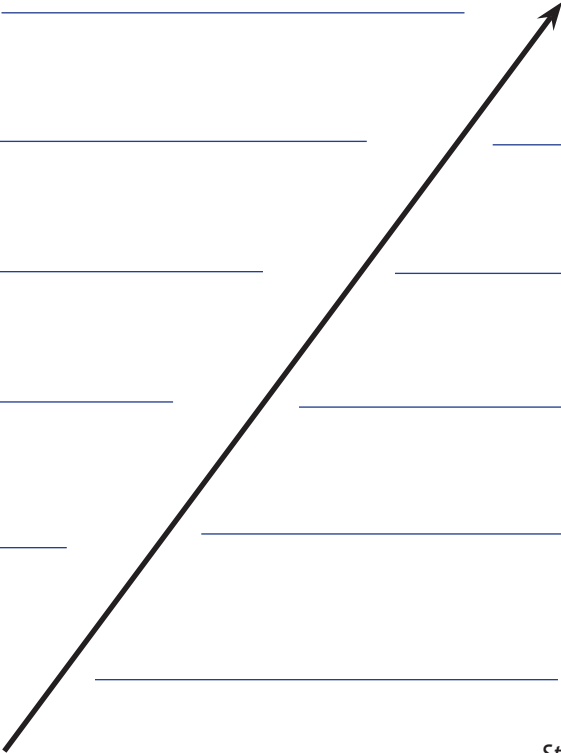
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**Current Reality**

*Steps the building needs to take*

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## Checklist 4—Written Materials & Communications

A more welcoming atmosphere is created when the written materials and communications sent from the school are clear, understandable, and meaningful to parents and others reading them. While you and your teammates review the school’s handbooks, newsletters, directories, calendar of school events, web sites, fliers, and other printed materials, consider the items listed below. Be sure to take notes so you will be able to discuss your observations with your teammates at the conclusion of your review.

- \_\_\_ Are printed materials clear and understandable to someone who is new to the school?
- \_\_\_ At what level are the materials written? Ask for a word version of some documents and run the “readability statistics.”
- \_\_\_ How often does the school provide a regular newsletter with information for parents?
- \_\_\_ Are printed materials free of educational jargon; are acronyms explained?
- \_\_\_ Do printed materials use a font that is easy to read and are they neat and clean?
- \_\_\_ How does the school communicate regularly with non-custodial parents?
- \_\_\_ Are a variety of school programs highlighted, including special education, music programs, general education, English as a Second Language, Head Start, etc.?
- \_\_\_ How is collaboration with the school’s PTA and other parent groups obvious?
- \_\_\_ How is collaboration with the community obvious?
- \_\_\_ How do the publications mirror the diversity of the student body and school community?
- \_\_\_ How are parent and community volunteers are recognized?
- \_\_\_ How are new students and their families officially welcomed?
- \_\_\_ Do articles about staff members, volunteers, students, and their families appear in the publications?
- \_\_\_ Is student work (drawings, photographs, poems, etc.) highlighted in the publications?
- \_\_\_ How are the school’s educational and extra-curricular programs explained?
- \_\_\_ How are translated publications readily available and distributed to families who need them?
- \_\_\_ How is the school web site address communicated?
- \_\_\_ Is the school web site up to date? When was it last updated?
- \_\_\_ Are hotline messages and voice mail messages up to date?
- \_\_\_ Can families get through to the office when they call?
- \_\_\_ Are phone calls returned within 24 hours?
- \_\_\_ How are families notified when safety issues arise?
- \_\_\_ How does the school make available to families resources on parenting and becoming involved in their child’s education?





## Note Taking Page 4—Written Materials & Communications

Use this sheet to take notes as you conduct the welcoming walk through.

<b>Commendations:</b> <i>What's Working</i>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.

<b>Recommendations:</b> <i>How to improve written materials and communications</i>
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.
11.



## Prioritizing Recommendations 4—Written Materials & Communications

Use this sheet to prioritize the recommendations your group has selected to address the physical environment. List the recommendations and then first decide if the school has the power to change the problem. If the answer is “yes,” next determine if the recommendation needs to be addressed immediately or if it can wait. Finally, for those items that should be addressed immediately, rank the recommendations in the order that they should be addressed.

After you are finished ranking the recommendations, use the [Desired State Chart](#) to plan the action steps to address the items.

<b>Recommendations:</b> <i>How to improve written materials and communications</i>	<i>Does the school have the power to change this?</i>	<i>Does it need to be addressed immediately?</i>	<i>Rank Order</i>
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			

Notes:



## Action Plan 4—Written Materials & Communications

A team from the building can use this sheet to plan the steps for addressing the prioritized recommendations. First, describe the “current reality”—what the situation is now. Next, discuss and describe the “desired state” you would like to see. Third, on the right side of the arrow, list the steps the building needs to take to reach the desired state. Finally, on the left side of the arrow, list the steps the district needs to take (if any) to help the building reach the desired state.

**Desired State**

Steps the district needs to take

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Steps the building needs to take

**Current Reality**



# Tool #5

## *Perception Data*

**What?** In this section you will find several surveys you can use to gather perception data from parents and educators. You can select from among the tools here to provide additional information to your school improvement team about how parents and educators perceive parent engagement.

**Who?** Surveys included here are designed to gather data from both educators and parents. It is important to gather data from as many of the parents and educators in your building as possible.

**How Much Time?** All of these surveys are designed to be easy to complete. The amount of time the surveys will take depends on when and how you choose to collect the data.

**How?** These surveys can be sent home to parents and distributed to teachers in your school. You may also choose to ask parents to complete surveys following school events (e.g., conferences, back-to-school night, etc.).

**What will you be able to do afterwards?** Data from these perception surveys will inform your initial conversations about parent engagement in your school. If you gather data from both parents and educators, you can begin to discuss if parents and educators have the same beliefs about parent engagement.

## Additional Data—Parent & Teacher Surveys

As you consider how to more actively engage parents, it can be helpful to gather data from parents and school staff that help you understand how they view parent engagement. On the following pages you will find some survey tools that can help you with this task.

The first set of surveys are taken from the work of Dr. Kathleen Hoover-Dempsey and her colleagues (<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/family-school/scaledescriptions.html>). Spanish language versions of these surveys are available at Dr. Hoover-Dempsey's web site.

The second survey was provided by Dr. Karen Mapp.

The third set of surveys was developed as part of the original Welcoming Walk Through Exercise by the JeffCo (Colorado) Public Schools. The survey from JeffCo is presented in English and in Spanish.

The final survey was developed by the PTA and should be taken by parents, teachers and administrators so you compare their perceptions.

At the end of this section you will find a set of discussion questions that can be used to guide your group's discussion of the data. This set of questions can also help your group begin to develop an action plan for change.



**Teacher Perceptions of Parent Efficacy for Helping Children Succeed in School**

Last updated: May, 2005

Please indicate how much you **AGREE** or **Disagree** with each of the statements.

1. My students' parents help their children learn.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
2. My students' parents have little influence on their children's motivation to do well in school.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
3. If my students' parents try really hard, they can help their children learn even when the children are unmotivated.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
4. My students' parents feel successful about helping their children learn.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
5. My students' parents don't know how to help their children make educational progress.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
6. My students' parents help their children with school work at home.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
7. My students' parents make a significant, positive educational difference in their children's lives.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/family-school/scaledescriptions.html>



**Teacher Beliefs about Parent Involvement**

*Last updated: May, 2005*

*Please indicate how much you AGREE or Disagree with each of the statements.*

1. Parent involvement is important for a good school.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
2. Most parents know how to help their children with schoolwork at home.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
3. Every family has some strengths that can be tapped to increase student success in school.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
4. All parents could learn ways to help their children with schoolwork at home, if shown how.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
5. Parent involvement can help teachers be more effective with more students.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
6. Parents of children at this school want to be involved more than they are.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
7. Parent involvement is important for student success in school.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
8. This school views parents as important partners.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/family-school/scaledescriptions.html>



**Teacher Report of Invitations to Parental Involvement**

Last updated: May, 2005

Please indicate how often you have done each of the following this year.

1. Have a conference with a parent.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
2. Contact a parent if the child has problems or experiences failure.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
3. Contact a parent if the child does something well or improves.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
4. Involve a parent as a volunteer in my classroom.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
5. Tell a parent about the skills the child must learn in each subject I teach.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
6. Provide specific activities for a parent to do with the child in order to improve the child's grades.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
7. Give a parent ideas about discussing specific TV shows with the children.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
8. Assign homework that requires a parent to interact with the child.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
9. Suggest ways to practice spelling or other skills at home before a test.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
10. Ask a parent to listen to the child read.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
11. Ask a parent to help the child with homework.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
12. Encourage a parent to ask the child about the school day.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
13. Ask a parent to visit my classroom.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
14. Ask a parent to take the child to the library or community events.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
15. Give a parent ideas to help him or her become an effective advocate for the child.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week
16. Send home 'letters' telling parents what the children have been learning and doing in class.	Never	Once this year	Once each semester	Once a month	Once every 1-2 weeks	1+ time(s) each week

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/family-school/scaledescriptions.html>





**Teacher Beliefs about the Importance of Specific Involvement Practices**

Last updated: May, 2005

Please indicate how much you **AGREE** or **Disagree** with each of the statements.

1. Having a conference with each of my students' parents at least once a year.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
2. Contacting parents about their children's problems or failures.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
3. Contacting parents when their children do something well or improve.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
4. Involving parents as volunteers in my classroom.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
5. Telling parents about the skills their children must learn in each subject I teach.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
6. Providing specific activities for parents to do with their children in order to improve their grades.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
7. Giving parents ideas about discussing specific TV shows with their children.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
8. Assigning homework that requires parents to interact with their children.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
9. Suggesting ways to practice spelling or other skills at home before a test.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
10. Asking parents to listen to their children read.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
11. Asking my students' parents to help the child with homework.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
12. Asking my students' parents to ask the child about the school day.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
13. Inviting my students' parents to visit my classroom.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
14. Asking my students' parents to take the child to the library or community events.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
15. Giving parents ideas to help them become effective advocates for their children.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly
16. Sending home 'letters' telling parents what the children have been learning and doing in class.	Disagree very strongly	Disagree	Disagree just a little	Agree just a little	Agree	Agree very strongly

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/family-school/scaledescriptions.html>



**Role Construction for Parents**

Last updated: May, 2005

Please indicate how much you **AGREE** or **Disagree** with each of the statements.

Parent Beliefs	Please indicate how much you <b>AGREE</b> or <b>Disagree</b> with each of the statements.					
1. It's my job to explain tough assignments to my child.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
2. It's my job to make sure my child understands his or her assignments.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
3. I make it my business to stay on top of things at school.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
Parent Behaviors	Please indicate how often you have done each of the following this year.					
4. I kept an eye on my child's progress.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once so far this year</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Once every 2 weeks</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Daily</i>
5. I made sure that my child's homework got done.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once so far this year</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Once every 2 weeks</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Daily</i>
6. I helped my child study for tests or quizzes.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once so far this year</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Once every 2 weeks</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Daily</i>
7. I talked to my child about what he or she is learning.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once so far this year</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Once every 2 weeks</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Daily</i>
8. I took my child to the library, community events, or similar places.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once so far this year</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Once every 2 weeks</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Daily</i>
School Beliefs	Please indicate how much you <b>AGREE</b> or <b>Disagree</b> with each of the statements.					
9. I assume my child is doing all right when I don't hear anything from the school.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
10. The teacher has to let me know about a problem before I can do something about it.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
11. I get most of my information about my child's progress from report cards.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
12. My child's learning is mainly up to the teacher and my child.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
School Behaviors	Please indicate how often you have done each of the following this year.					
13. I expected the school to notify me if my child had a problem.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once so far this year</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Once every 2 weeks</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Daily</i>
14. I expected my child to do his or her homework at school.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once so far this year</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Once every 2 weeks</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Daily</i>
15. I relied on the teacher to make sure my child understands his or her assignments.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once so far this year</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Once every 2 weeks</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Daily</i>



Parent Friendly Schools—**Starting** the Conversation

Partnership Beliefs	<i>Please indicate how much you AGREE or Disagree with each of the statements.</i>					
16. I like to spend time at my child's school when I can.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
17. It's important that I let the teacher know about things that concern my child.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
18. I find it helpful to talk with the teacher.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
19. My child's teacher(s) know(s) me.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
Partnership Behaviors	<i>Please indicate how often you have done each of the following this year.</i>					
20. I exchanged phone calls or notes with my child's teacher.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once so far this year</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Once every 2 weeks</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Daily</i>
21. I got advice from the teacher.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once so far this year</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Once every 2 weeks</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Daily</i>
22. I contacted the teacher with questions about schoolwork.	<i>Never</i>	<i>Once so far this year</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Once every 2 weeks</i>	<i>Once a week</i>	<i>Daily</i>

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/family-school/scaledescriptions.html>



**Parental Perceptions of Personal Knowledge and Skills for Involvement Activities**

Last updated: May, 2005

Please indicate how much you **AGREE** or **Disagree** with each of the statements.

1. I know about volunteering opportunities at my child's school.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
2. I know how to communicate effectively with my child about the school day.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
3. I know how to explain things to my child about his or her homework.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
4. I know about special events at school.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
5. I know enough about the subjects of my child's homework to help him or her.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
6. I know how to communicate effectively with my child's teacher.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
7. I know how to supervise my child's homework.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
8. I have the skills to help out at my child's school.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>
9. I know effective ways to contact my child's teacher.	<i>Disagree very strongly</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Disagree just a little</i>	<i>Agree just a little</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Agree very strongly</i>

<http://www.vanderbilt.edu/peabody/family-school/scaledescriptions.html>



**Family & Community Engagement Assessment Survey**

*Rate your School in the following areas:*

1. Our school recognizes that all parents, regardless of income, educational level or cultural background, are involved in their children’s learning and want their children to do well in school.	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Always</i>
2. Our school creates programs that will support families to guide their children’s learning at home.	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Always</i>
3. Our school works with parents to build their social and political connections.	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Always</i>
4. Our school develops the capacity of school staff to work with families.	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Always</i>
5. Our school links family and community engagement efforts to student learning.	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Always</i>
6. Our school focuses efforts to engage families on developing trusting and respectful relationships.	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Always</i>
7. Our school embraces a philosophy of partnership and share power with families and community.	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Always</i>
8. Our school builds strong connections between schools and community organizations.	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Regularly</i>	<i>Always</i>

Source: Dr. Karen Mapp, Harvard Graduate School of Education



**Parent Involvement in Our Schools**

For the purposes of this survey, I am responding as a(n):  
 parent    teacher    administrator    other: \_\_\_\_\_

Some of these questions are deliberately intended to expose differences of opinions between parents and school professionals. The survey is not intended to be an end in itself, but rather to serve as a means for opening up a dialogue between the two groups.

**Section 1: Respond to the following statements by checking “Yes” or “No.”**

1. There should be many school activities that involve students, parents, and teachers, such as reading enrichment programs, sports events, and recognition ceremonies to honor student achievement. \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
2. Parents should be encouraged to work in the school as volunteers. \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
3. Parents should supervise children with homework. \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
4. Parents should be able to schedule visits to the school during the day to understand the kinds of experiences their child is having in school. \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
5. There should be parent education classes run by the PTA, in cooperation with resource personnel provided by the school, to teach parents how to help their children benefit from school. \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
6. Parents’ primary connection with the school should be to sponsor activities such as potluck suppers, fund-raising activities, open houses, and the like. \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
7. Parents should initiate personal conferences with teachers when they feel it is necessary (outside of regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences). \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
8. Parents should attend school board meetings. \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no

**Section 2: Please respond to each statement by circling the number that comes closest to your thoughts about the appropriate level of parent involvement.**

Ratings: 3 = Parents should be actively involved throughout this process.  
 2 = Parents should be asked for input before education professionals plan programs or set policies.  
 1 = Parents should be asked to review revised programs and policies.  
 0 = Not an appropriate role for parents—should be left solely to education professionals.

1. Developing written school district policies (such as attendance, homework, and graduation requirements) 1 2 3 4
2. Developing written goals for increasing parent involvement 1 2 3 4
3. Planning written goals for increasing parent involvement 1 2 3 4
4. Deciding/evaluating how well teachers and principals do their jobs and how to reward and retain good teachers 1 2 3 4
5. Determining policy on when students should be held back rather than promoted to the next grade 1 2 3 4
6. Setting up a school advisory group to bring suggestions for changes to the principal and school board 1 2 3 4
7. Establishing the discipline code in the school 1 2 3 4
8. Selecting textbooks and other learning materials 1 2 3 4
9. Developing the school budget 1 2 3 4
10. Serving on the team that revises report cards 1 2 3 4
11. Participating in school events such as parties, field trips, sports events, plays, etc. 1 2 3 4
12. Establishing a policy for recognizing outstanding teacher performance 1 2 3 4

**Section 3: Please answer the following question.**

The PTA program in our school should be (check one):  expanded    maintained    reduced

## What the Scores Mean

### Section 1: Answers

***If you responded as a parent:***

The more “yes” answers you circled (with the exception of question 6), the more you value parent involvement in education and believe that parents have an important role in the school environment.

***If you responded as a teacher or as an administrator:***

The more “yes” answers you circled (with the exception of number 6), the more open you are to including parents in the education process and having them play a visible role at the school.

### Section 2: Scores

***If you responded as a parent:***

The lower the number circled in Section 2 the more you believe the schools should handle education decisions. You are unsure of the appropriateness of parents becoming involved as cooperative partners with school professionals. The higher your score, the more you want to help make school decisions on behalf of your own and all children in the community. You are highly motivated and want to empower other parents to be meaningfully involved.

***If you responded as a teacher or as an administrator:***

The lower the number circled in Section 2, the more you question the value of parent involvement in education. The higher your score, the more open you are to including parents in education planning. You are receptive to trying new ideas because the ultimate beneficiaries are the children. You have an easy relationship with parents in your community, and they ask your opinions and trust your judgment.



## How Welcome Do You Feel In Our School?

**Directions:** Thank you for taking a few minutes to give us feedback on your experience with our school. Please be honest. Your responses are anonymous and will be used to improve our school.

*Circle one for each question*

When I come to this school, signs help me find parking areas and the main office.	Yes	No	Don't Know
This school is clean and kept in good repair.	Yes	No	Don't Know
School bulletin boards and displays are up-to-date and attractive.	Yes	No	Don't Know
I am satisfied with the way the school included me in programs.	Yes	No	Don't Know
The school keeps me informed about school rules, classroom policies, and school schedules.	Yes	No	Don't Know
The school staff actively encourages parent and community involvement.	Yes	No	Don't Know
I feel welcome at this school.	Yes	No	Don't Know
When I come to this school, I receive prompt and friendly attention.	Yes	No	Don't Know
When I call this school, staff is courteous and helpful on the phone.	Yes	No	Don't Know
This school provides useful information for parents and community members.	Yes	No	Don't Know
This school does a good job of communicating to limited-English speaking parents/community members.	Yes	No	Don't Know
School staff return my phone calls promptly.	Yes	No	Don't Know
When I volunteer at this school, I feel appreciated.	Yes	No	Don't Know
I am a...	Student	Parent	Community Member
Other Comments or suggestions			





## ¿Qué recibimiento le dan en su escuela?

**Instrucciones:** Gracias por tomarse unos momentos e informarnos que concepto tiene respecto a su escuela. Por favor sea honesto. Sus respuestas son anónimas y serán usadas para el mejoramiento de nuestras escuelas.

*Circule una respuesta por cada pregunta*

Cuándo vengo a esta escuela, hay carteles que indican los estacionamientos y la oficina de la dirección escolar.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
Esta escuela está limpia y en buen estado.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
Las exhibiciones y boletines informativos escolares lucen atractivos y están al corriente.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
Me siento satisfecho con la forma que la escuela me incluye en los programas escolares.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
La escuela me mantiene informado acerca de las normas, reglamento en el salón de clases y horarios escolares.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
El personal docente/escolar incentiva activamente la participación de los padres y la comunidad.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
La escuela me brinda un buen recibimiento.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
Cuando vengo a esta escuela, recibo una pronta y amable atención.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
Cuando llamo por teléfono, el personal es atento y cortés.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
Esta escuela provee información útil para los padres y miembros de la comunidad.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
Esta escuela realiza un buen trabajo comunicándose con los padres y miembros de la comunidad que no hablan inglés.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
El personal escolar regresa mis llamadas con prontitud.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
Cuando sirvo como voluntario en la escuela, me siento apreciado.	<i>Sí</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>No se</i>
Información provista por (marcar uno)	<i>Estudiante</i>	<i>Padre</i>	<i>Miembro de la comunidad</i>

Siéntase con libertad de escribir aquí cualquier comentario o sugerencia para nuestra escuela:



## Guide for Discussing Parent Engagement Data

**Directions:** Share the data you gathered with your group. After the group has had a chance to review the results, ask the group to reflect on the data by responding to the following questions in the order presented.

1. What additional data sources may be useful in helping you understand your local parent engagement data?
2. What in particular concerns you about your data? How will the situation continue in the future if you maintain current programming? Is this trend acceptable? If not, how would you prefer the trendline to look in the future?
3. What have you already done to address parent engagement issues in your area?
4. What does the research say will improve parent engagement in ways which support student achievement?
5. Based on your data, what do you propose to do in the future to address parent engagement issues in your area? (Include at least one low-cost/no-cost idea).
6. Who will your partners be? Who else is concerned about these issues? What resources do you need? How could you spend existing resources more effectively?
7. How will you know that the students are better off as a result of your planned efforts?
8. Is there additional information you will need to collect to monitor your progress and verify that your plan is effective?

