



New York State Parental Information and Resource Center

Technical Assistance Guide

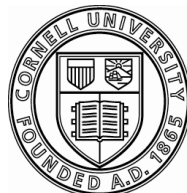
Involving Parents in the School Decision-making Process

When family and community members are involved in school decision-making and developing policies, they feel more deeply invested in the school, more empowered and ultimately more engaged with their children's education. Schools benefit from the feedback and different points of view provided by family and community members. Involved family and community members can help promote public understanding and support for the school. Title I schools are required to involve parents in developing parental involvement policies and school-parent compacts.

Why involve parents/caregivers?

- To give parents, caregivers, teachers and community members the opportunity to formally discuss areas of interest.
- To promote fellowship among parents, teachers, students and the community in order to achieve a mutual understanding of goals and concerns in educating children.
- To assist the school with activities where parent involvement is encouraged.
- To support the School Board in development, communication, and implementation of policies, educational strategies and other activities.
- To promote and support an active PTA/PTO organization.
- To improve the academic achievement of students and the school.

The New York State Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRC) are available to provide information and technical assistance. Visit us on the web at www.nyspirc.org for Fact Sheets on developing parental involvement policies and school-parent compacts.



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Strategies for involving parents in the decision-making process

- Create a School/Parent Partnership Team to address issues that need discussion and cooperation.
- Conduct family focus groups to get input on critical issues.
- Seek out parent perspectives by conducting mini-surveys.
- Include a diverse cross section of the community on decision-making and advisory committees.
- Provide training for parents on how to access, interpret, and use data to promote school reform.
- Provide training for school faculty, staff and family members on collaboration and shared decision making.
- Treat family concerns with respect, actively working to demonstrate a sincere interest in seeking resolutions to their concerns.
- Make a personal invitation to parents who would not typically volunteer.

Tips on creating and using parent surveys

- Determine what it is you want to find out from parents.
- Translate surveys into parents' native languages.
- Keep language simple and free of jargon.
- Minimize open-ended questions. Multiple-choice questions increase response rates.
- Assure parents that surveys are anonymous, unless they choose to sign their names.
- Inform parents ahead of time when to expect the survey.
- Enlist teachers, students, and parents to disseminate and collect the surveys.
- Allow only one response per family.
- Involve the School/Parent Partnership Team in the interpretation of data and development of an appropriate plan.
- Provide feedback on survey results to school staff and parents.

Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC) Families and Communities Together with Schools

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