



Strategies to Support a Positive School Climate Advocacy Outside of School

Advocacy outside of school refers to the support students receive from their parents and caregivers, family members or members of the broader community. Forms of parental involvement may include helping children with homework, attending meetings, seeking additional resources for the child, and providing general emotional support for their child's educational endeavors (Grolnick et al., 1997).



Why is it important?

- Family involvement in education supports student achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009).
- Students with involved parents are more likely to attend school regularly and have better social skills (El Nokali et al., 2010).
- Family participation in school declines as students progress from the elementary grades through to secondary school (Simon, 2004).
- Parents are more likely to become involved if they perceive that school staff and students want and expect their involvement (Green et al., 2007).

In Practice

Though involvement in education takes many forms, given the benefits to students, it is important that schools take the initiative to reach out and involve student's support networks outside of school.



What can schools do?

Interactions between schools and parents provide opportunities to form partnerships that support student learning. Schools can work to increase student advocacy at home by:

- Creating a welcoming school culture characterized by caring, collaborative relationships among students, parents and caregivers, and school staff.
- Removing barriers to family involvement by creating opportunities for scheduled parent and caregiver engagement held outside of regular school hours.
- Initiating proactive outreach strategies, including house calls, text messages, and sharing student work within a private website portal or learning management system.



In the Classroom

Teachers have the ability to influence the level of family involvement in a child's education. When addressing parents and caregivers, teachers should:

- Consider the socio-economic background of families, which can produce varying levels of parental involvement (Lareau & Benson, 1984)
- Explore a variety of flexible communication strategies that remove barriers to supporting parental engagement (e.g., e-mails, phone calls, in person meetings etc.).
- Provide resources that support student learning at home, including any applicable grade rubrics, curriculum documents and learning strategies.
- Convey to parents and caregivers that meaningful discussions at home concerning academics help support positive educational outcomes.

References

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