

The Learning Bar

Parent & Caregiver Survey Success Strategies

Community Involvement

School-community partnerships entail mutually beneficial relationships between schools and the broader community and are principally intended to improve student development (Sanders, 2006). By partnering with local community organizations, school-community partnerships can meet the varied needs of students and families in ways that schools are often ill-equipped to do alone (Valli et al., 2014). For example, local community agencies offer additional resources and support, such as experiential learning and mentorship opportunities, that can supplement student learning (Eden et al., 2024a). Effective partnerships contribute not only to student success, but also support a positive school climate, the development of parenting and leadership skills, and help establish connections with others in the school and community (Epstein, 2009).



Why is it important?

- School-community partnerships allow for deeper family involvement, increased student support and shared solutions to local issues (Afrianti et al., 2024).
- Collaborations between community and school allow participants to leverage their respective skill sets and resources, including access to health and social services, to the benefit of the broader school community (Anderson-Butcher, 2022).
- By engaging in community partnerships and involving families from diverse backgrounds, schools can enhance inclusivity and expand cross-cultural relationships (Eden et al., 2024b)

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In Practice



What can schools do to facilitate school-community partnerships?

Initiate Structured School-Community Partnerships

- Buy-in and collaboration are crucial antecedents to successful partnerships; as such, ensure that teachers and staff at all levels are actively involved in early discussions. Most importantly, carefully consider student perspectives, as school-partnerships are largely intended to benefit them.
- Clearly define expectations through ongoing communication with all stakeholders. Highlight the mutual benefits of the prospective partnership and clearly stipulate how students will prosper from the mechanisms of the partnership arrangement.
- Outline parameters for change from the outset. Set the tone for an adaptive collaboration by defining how partnership activities will be evaluated and adjusted over time.

Anticipate and Address Potential Conflicts and Challenges

- Welcome community partners into schools to embed an understanding of the school culture and protocols and determine who has authority in a variety of scenarios.
- Communicate the mutual goals and tangible benefits that align the school and broader community. Demonstrate how student success benefits the greater community.
- Investigate school and district-level policies to ensure that partnership agreements fall within the mandated expectations set forth by relevant governing bodies.

By carefully engaging in sustainable partnership process, schools can provide additional skills, knowledge and resources to bolster student learning and, in turn, enhance the greater community (Hands, 2023).

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