Purpose of the Presentation:

- Why school, family and community partnerships are key to student learning and development
- What types of partnership programs work best to support learning
- How to achieve effective school, family and community partnerships
A New Wave Of Evidence:

• The Impact of School, Family and Community Connections on Student Achievement

About the Studies

• Started with a group of 80 studies and literature reviews that focused on the influence of family and community involvement on academic achievement and other outcomes.

• Studies met these standards:
  • Sound methodology
  • Study findings matched the data collected
51 studies were selected

- Early childhood through high school
- All regions of the country
- Diverse populations
- Community as well as family involvement
- A variety of research methods
- Different sources of data

Why Partnerships?

- Impact of Home – School Partnerships
- Impact of Community Partnerships
Overall Finding:

- Home-School Partnerships:

  There is a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement. This relationship holds across families of all economic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds and for students at all ages.

Impact of Home-School Partnerships:

When parents and school staff work together to support learning, students:

- Earn higher grades and test scores
- Enroll in higher level programs
- Are promoted more and earn more credits
- Adapt better to school and attend more regularly
- Have better social skills and behavior
- Graduate and go on to higher education
Overall Finding:

- Community Partnerships: There is less research on the effects of community involvement, but it also suggests benefits for schools, families and students, including improved achievement and behavior.

Impact of Educational Community Partnerships:

- Upgraded school facilities
- Improved school leadership and staffing
- Higher quality learning programs for students
- New resources and programs to improve teaching and curriculum
- Resources for after-school programs and family supports
- Increased social and political capital of participants
What types of programs work best to achieve positive student outcomes?

- Programs and interventions that engage families in supporting their children’s learning at home are linked to higher student achievement.
- Family involvement at home appears to have the greatest effect on student achievement.
• Family Involvement has a protective effect.

• The more families can support their children’s progress:
  • The better their children do in school
  • The longer they stay in school

Families of all cultural backgrounds, education, and income levels:
• Encourage their children,
• Talk with them about school,
• Help them plan for higher education,
• Keep them focused on learning and homework.

All families can, and do, have positive effects on their children’s learning.
• Parent and community involvement that is linked to improving student learning has a greater effect on achievement than more general forms of involvement.

How can we achieve effective school, family, and community partnerships?
Components of Effective Partnerships

• To partner: Implies a relationship, frequently between two people, in which each has equal status and a certain independence but also implicit or formal obligations to the other or others.

The keys to building partnerships:

• When programs and initiatives focus on building trusting and respectful relationships among school staff, families, and community members, these programs are effective in creating and sustaining meaningful partnerships.
• Effective programs to engage families and community embrace a philosophy of partnership. The responsibility for children’s educational development is a shared, collaborative enterprise among parents, school staff, and community members.

• Parent-involvement programs that are effective in engaging diverse families recognize, respect, and address cultural and class differences.
• Programs that successfully connect with families and community invite involvement, are welcoming, and address specific parental and community needs.

The Joining Process*

• Welcoming

• Honoring

• Connecting

* Mapp, K.L. 2003. Having their say: Parents describe why and how they are engaged in their children’s learning. School Community Journal, Volume 13, Number 1
Welcoming

• Families are made to feel at home, comfortable, and a part of the school community.

Honoring

• Family members are respected, validated and affirmed for any type of involvement or contribution they make.
Connecting

- 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.

Putting the Findings into Action
Step One: Form an Action Team

- In order for any partnership initiative to be successful, a diverse team of committed individuals must take **responsibility** for the work.

- An action team can be an existing group that coordinates family engagement initiatives or a subcommittee of your school site council.

Action team membership:

- Parents representing the diversity of the school population
- Teachers from different grade levels
- Support staff (librarian, secretary, custodian, guidance counselors, nurse, cafeteria worker)
- One administrator
- Community representative
Step Two: Conduct a Needs and Assets Inventory

- Ask parents and community members what they need to help support children’s learning.

- Ask parents and community members what they can offer or for suggestions of possible resources to support children’s learning. Tap their “funds of knowledge.”

Asset Mapping:

- *Building Communities from the Inside Out: A Path Toward Finding and Mobilizing a Community’s Assets.* Kretzmann, J. P., & McKnight, J. L.
Asset Questions:

• Ask parents about child’s strengths, hobbies, interests, challenges. Let parents know that you value their knowledge ("You are your child’s first teacher…!")

• Ask parents about their own interests and hobbies, and any type of contribution they could make to the school community.

Sample Needs Assessment Survey

School Name
Date: ________________

We'd like to hear from you about how we can help you support your child’s learning! Use this checklist to identify areas where you feel you could use extra information, advice and guidance from our school staff.

(Check as many as you wish):
For all grades:
- Helping my child with reading
- Helping my child with writing
- Helping my child with mathematics
- Helping my child with completion of their homework
- Helping my child with how they manage their time
- Helping my child perform well on the MCAS
- Helping my child with their attitude about school
- Helping my child improve their behavior at school and at home

For middle and high schools:
- Helping my child with college and career planning
- Helping my child choose courses

Boston Public Schools
Step Three:
Link data from needs and assets inventory to student data. Use the results to develop a partnership initiative that is linked to learning.

Step Four:
Use existing resources. Don’t reinvent the wheel!
Welcome Parents!

- Welcome parents to your classroom.
- List the goals for the open house:
  - To help parents understand the work their child will be doing throughout the school year.
  - To explain your expectations of their child.
  - To share information about how parents can support their child’s learning.
Class Information

- Explain how students will be evaluated and graded.
- Tell parents when report cards and progress reports will be sent home.
- Describe the amount of homework students can expect.
- Provide a calendar of upcoming events, such as class field trips and parent-teacher conferences.

Class Rules

- Explain the behavior you expect in your classroom.
- Your class rules might include:
  - Be respectful.
  - Be responsible.
  - Follow directions.
  - Be punctual.
  - Be organized.
  - Be a self-starter.
  - Be prepared.
School Policies

- Explain how the school addresses academic and behavioral problems.
- Outline the school’s policies regarding tardiness, absence, and discipline.
- Provide policy information about:
  - School cancellations for bad weather and other reasons.
  - Emergency procedures.
  - Transportation.
  - After-school activities.
  - Volunteering.

Changing the Culture:

- See school, family and community partnership as a necessary component and strategy to close the gap, not just an activity that is “NTD.”
Step Five: Measure your outcomes and celebrate your success

• Efforts

• Effects

School, Family and Community Partnership: An Essential Ingredient!
Resource Sites:

- PTA, www.PTA.org