

Engaging Families in Leadership and Participation

What this means: Families are empowered to be advocates for their own and other children to ensure that children are treated fairly and have access to learning opportunities that will support their success. Families are participants in the school as volunteers and in school decisions, policies and development of school plans. This can include Title I, continuous improvement and governance, school councils, committees, and other parent organizations. Families that are representative of the student body should be on district/school planning teams and as volunteers.

Change happens when families and schools recognize their shared goals and work together to meet those goals. It is important to include families in decisions regarding programs and classes for their children and preparing their child for their future. Families can be a powerful force and resource for education. Effective volunteering is coordinated, aligning volunteers with desired outcomes for students. Volunteers who are trained, supported and valued provide the most successful support. Schools should provide a wide variety of volunteer and leadership opportunities that allow volunteers to match their interests with their activity.



Sample Action Steps for Decision-Making and Leadership

Universal Strategies (for all students and families)

- The school supports active parent-led organizations such as booster groups, PTA/PTO, parent support groups.
- Family input is solicited for school improvement efforts.
- Families are included in decisions about their child's classes and discussions about a student's future plans.
- Volunteers offer guidance to students planning for careers and college.
- Community volunteers help with supervision and support during the school day in classrooms, library, cafeteria, playground, crosswalks, etc.
- Families are given information on school policies, procedures and planning.

Targeted Strategies (for some students and families)

- The school provides training to help parents be strong advocates for their children and effective volunteers.
- Families participate in Title I planning, school governance, and district- and building-level committees planning for family-school-community partnerships.
- Volunteers listen to students read and encourage students in their reading.
- Volunteers help students with a specific project like a class garden, recycling project or science experiment.

Intensive Strategies (for a few students and families)

- The school provides parent mentors, social workers, nurses and counselors to assist families in advocating for and obtaining services for their child.
- The school links families to community advocates to obtain community-based services for their child.
- Trained volunteers mentor students one-on-one.
- Volunteers help low-income families with purchasing school supplies or clothing, providing legal or financial advice, or providing health screenings.

Resources

No Child Left Behind: A Parents Guide

The Parents Guide offers information for parents about NCLB, family rights, Public School Choice, Supplemental Educational Services, School Improvement and Title I.

<http://www.ed.gov/parents/academic/involve/nclbguide/parentsguide.html>

National Network of Partnership Schools: Decision-Making

The NNPS offers a handbook, training and support for implementation of Epstein's *Six Types of Parent Involvement*. Decision Making is highlighted as the fifth "type." The Web site offers examples of decision-making, challenges and redefinitions.

http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/nnps_model/school/sixtypes/type5.htm

National Network of Partnership Schools: Volunteering

The NNPS offers a handbook, training and support for implementation of Epstein's *Six Types of Parent Involvement*. Volunteering is highlighted as the third "type." The Web site offers examples of volunteering, challenges and redefinitions.

http://www.csos.jhu.edu/p2000/nnps_model/school/sixtypes/type3.htm

National PTA

The PTA offers standards for parent involvement in schools that include volunteering as a key standard. The organization offers many supports for parents and schools.

<http://www.pta.org/Index.asp>

Project Appleseed

Project Appleseed supports volunteerism in schools with a parent compact and other resources to promote parent involvement. The organization has established *National Parental Involvement Day* and *Public School Volunteer Week* (third full week of April).

<http://www.projectappleseed.org/index.html>

Watch D.O.G.S.

WATCH D.O.G.S.® (Dads Of Great Students) is the safe school initiative of the National Center for Fathering that involves fathers and father figures to help create a more safe and secure learning environment in our nation's schools.

http://www.fathers.com/content/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=21&Itemid=60

www.fathers.com see D.O.G.S. on front page

Ohio Parent Information and Resource Center

Ohio PIRC is a nonprofit parent information and resource center established in partnership with Every Child Succeeds, United Way 211 and Cincinnati Parents for Public Schools, and is funded by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Innovation and Improvement. Ohio PIRC provides parents, families, students, educators, and communities with information, resources and training as mandated by the *No Child Left Behind Act*.

<http://www.ohiopirc.org/>

Parent Academy for School Improvement

This program helps families understand the *No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act* and what it means for their child, school and district. In this workshop, participants discuss:

- Ohio's system of school accountability;
- Benefits that may be offered to families under NCLB; and
- The school improvement process.

<http://education.ohio.gov/GD/Templates/Pages/ODE/ODEDetail.aspx?page=3&TopicRelationID=1532&ContentID=36601&Content=67724>

www.education.ohio.gov keywords: *Parent Academy*

