

Framework for School, Family and Community Partnerships

Introduction and Purpose

Partnerships are key to the success of Ohio's educational system. While our schools work diligently to provide all students with high-quality instruction in a nurturing environment, they cannot do it alone. The education and well-being of Ohio's students is the responsibility of families, schools, businesses, faith communities, community organizations and others. It involves anyone who desires a bright future for Ohio. While other initiatives have focused on promoting community collaborations for supporting learning, or collaborative leadership for administrators and teachers, this *Framework for School, Family and Community Partnerships* provides guidance on effective and lasting partnerships with families. This Framework is a unique, focused tool for districts, schools and their partners who recognize the importance of families in the academic success and well-being of Ohio's children.

The *Framework for School, Family and Community Partnerships* presents a structure for school-family-community partnership development and offers guidance for implementation. It outlines ideas and strategies to help districts and schools improve upon their efforts to engage and strengthen families. It also is intended to stimulate dialogue for further enhancing family-school-community partnerships to serve the needs of all children and families.

A true partnership of families, schools and communities is one in which these collaborative partners work together to provide environments and relationships that promote the academic success and the physical, mental, social and emotional well-being of children and teens.

These partnerships are most successful when strategies support, empower and engage the families of students. As a result, families are better able to support their children's education and healthy development and have meaningful and direct input into, and influence on, the policies, programs or practices of the school.

What is a partnership?

There are many terms associated with family, school and community partnerships throughout the literature and programs in this area. The term partnerships is used to encompass the meaningful and effective practices that many call parent or family engagement, involvement, support, and participation. Partnerships entail sharing goals and vision. When educators, families and community members work in partnership they all bring strengths, resources and needs to the table and initiation and communication is always two-way. It is through partnership between families, schools and communities that Ohio's students will receive the support they need to achieve.

Ohio's families are diverse and may speak a host of languages. Its members include parents, of course, and also friends and relatives. Families may live together or apart, may change housing frequently or never and may include many generations or just a few. Schools that build successful relationships recognize the strengths of each individual family and the hopes and dreams they hold for their children.

Where This Framework Fits

Information about the Family Engagement Framework was developed by an intra-agency team from the Ohio Department of Education, working together with families, and community representatives, as well as outside consultants. The team responded to requests by school support teams, districts and schools for guidance about the development of school, family and partnerships – an area that, until now, has not been addressed adequately. To ensure that the Framework is aligned and complimentary with existing legislation, policies and guidance, the team reviewed the following:

- *No Child Left Behind* legislation and entitlement programs;
- Ohio’s School Climate Guidelines;
- Ohio Standards for the Teaching Profession;
- Ohio Standards for Principals;
- Ohio’s Parent Involvement Policy, which was approved by the State Board of Education;
- Ohio’s Decision Framework;
- National PTA Standards for Family-School Partnerships;
- Ohio’s Comprehensive System of Learning Supports;
- Ohio Public-Private Collaborative Commission report, *Supporting Student Success*;
- The National Network of Partnership Schools’ framework for Family, School and Community Partnerships;
- Ohio Family and Children First commitments;
- Ohio’s Leadership Development Framework;
- Federal Initiatives —
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers;
- Early Childhood Special Education;
- Early Learning Initiative;
- Early Reading First;
- Even Start;
- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- Mentoring Grants;
- Poverty-Based Assistance;
- Reading First;
- Safe Schools-Healthy Students Initiative; and
- State Initiatives:
- Alternative Education Challenge Grant;
- Learn and Serve America;
- Parent Mentors of Ohio.