



“Good schools engage ... Parents. My vision for family engagement is ambitious. I want to have too many parents demanding excellence in their schools. I want all parents to be real partners in education with their children’s teachers, from cradle to career. In this partnership, students and parents should feel connected--and teachers should feel supported. Parents can serve in at least one of three roles: Partners in learning, advocates and advisors who push for better schools, and decision-makers, who choose the best educational options for their children.”

– Secretary Arne Duncan, Looking in the Mirror, Mom Congress Georgetown University, Washington D.C., May 3, 2010,

State Superintendent Promotes Family Engagement

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Tony Bennett and Indiana Pacers Center Jeff Foster launched Indiana’s Parent Pledge for schools, educators and parents across the state. The pledge aims to increase parent engagement and enhance academic collaboration between parents and teachers.

Stressing collaboration, engagement and accountability, the Parent Pledge seeks to celebrate parents who are already contributing in big ways to help their children excel,

as well as bring more parents on board as partners in promoting students’ academic achievement. The pledge emphasizes important principles such as reading every day, homework completion, and school attendance. It was developed with input from both teachers and parents, including Dr. Bennett’s Parent Teacher Association Advisory Committee.

More than 80 schools have signed up to pilot the pledge in Hoosier classrooms. These schools received a copy of the

pledge and a packet of supporting materials including useful activities and strategies to assist in developing a “Parent-Pledge culture” in school buildings. Throughout the year, schools and educators using the pledge will be honored as a way to engage more parents in school communities across the state.

To view the pledge or a copy of the packet delivered to educators, visit the Parent Pledge webpage at www.doe.in.gov/parentpledge.

Special points of interest:

- State promotes family engagement
Parent involvement makes a difference for Blue Ribbon schools
Tips on how the parents can help and schools become more welcoming
Lists Regional offices with family engagement specialists
Parents role seen at a national level

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Parent Engagement - Contributing Factor at Blue Ribbon School

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Charter Oak Primary School, located in Peoria, Illinois, enrolls 405 kindergarten through fourth grade students. The student population is both

economically and racially diverse: nearly half of Charter Oak’s students are eligible for free and reduced-price lunch. About half the students

are white and just under 39% of students are African American (remaining students are of other ethnicities). One in five students has been ident

Promoting Family Engagement

Regional Offices with

Family Engagement Specialists

Region II—Sherry Benjamin, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania,
sherry.benjamin@ed.gov

Region IV—Jonava Johnson, Atlanta, Georgia,
Jonava.johnson@ed.gov

Region V—Shirley Jones, Chicago, Illinois,
Shirley.jones@ed.gov

Region X—Linda Pauley, Tacoma Washington,
Linda.pauley@ed.gov

Please contact your regional office concerning events, activities, questions or concerns.

Tip

How to get parents to school:

Principals can invite parents to meet and greet classroom teachers. Principals then provide classroom teachers with a powerpoint presentation about information and activities that are going on in the school. This will keep parents informed and help garner parent participation.

(tip shared by the principal at Maree Elementary School in Baltimore Maryland)

Parents Encourage Your Child

In a survey of young people, the most influential people in the lives of young people are their parents, NOT peers, entertainers or athletes, BUT parents.

Encouragement can come in many forms. One way is with the use of words. Encourage your child with words, such as,

I'm proud of you!

I knew you could do it.

Well done!

WOW!

You're special!

...and be there for your child.

Parent Engagement - Contributing Factor at Blue Ribbon School

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fied as having special needs. According to its mission statement, Charter Oak is "... dedicated to providing a solid foundation for lifelong educational and social success to a diverse population of learners." Charter Oak principal, administrators, and staff identified support from parents as a contributing factor that helps students meet high standards. Teachers said that families value academic achievement and set clear expectations for their children. When learning or discipline problems arise, parents respond to teachers' request for assistance.

While other teachers affirmed how parents support their efforts by volunteering, fundraising and staff recognition activities, parent leaders described how teachers keep them "in the know." To promote reading habits, children bring home library books each week that are selected to match their independent reading level. Parents gave teachers credit for "talking up" the monthly events that the Parent Teacher Club (PTC) offers and for "coming out in force" themselves to support fundraising events and information evenings, such as how to prepare your child for the ISAT.

To learn more go to www.ed.gov.

One parent characterized the Charter Oak climate this way: "This school is run like a tight ship, but in a loving and nurturing way. The teachers care about the kids, all of the kids. And the kids respect the teachers. ... These teachers are seasoned and can handle anything that comes up."

NABSE Parent Summit

For the past five years Gloria Noland, Co-Chairperson, and Anthony White, Sr, Parent Commissioner and Co-Chairperson of the Parent Summits have been holding the event during the National Alliance of Black School Educators Conference. The platform has provided parents and educators with a means to share information and network and to realize they are working toward the same goal, achievement for all children. This year NABSE partnered with the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The partnership brought about forums for parents during regional conferences.

The first was held January 2010 in Galveston, Texas. There the Texas Alliance of Black School Educators with, state, district, and ED staff planned the first NABSE regional forum for parents. Over 400 parents attended from the surrounding school districts. Beaumont Texas sent over 80 parents to the event. The forums consisted of workshops with presenters from the Parent Training Institutes, Parent Information Resource Centers, the state, and ED. Parents left feeling excited and requested more forums for the future. Interpreters for Spanish speaking parents were in all the workshops.

Additional forums have been held in Chicago, Illinois, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and New Orleans, Louisiana. Plans are now being made for parent forums in 2011 for Charlotte North Carolina and Tacoma, Washington.

ED partnered with Modern Parents Magazine for the parent forum in New Orleans, Louisiana. Southern University at New Orleans hosted the event. Over 40 of its education candidates attended.

Next year NABSE will have the Parent Summit in New Orleans, Louisiana. Go to www.nabse.org for more information.

Parents Speak with U.S. Department of Education Senior Staff

On May 26, 2010 over 250 parents met with senior staff at the U. S, Department of Education. Senior staff present were Peter Cunningham, Assistant Secretary of communications and Outreach, Russlynn Ali, Assistant Secretary of Office of Civil Rights, Carl Harris, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Office of elementary and Secondary Education, Emma Vadehra, Office of Planning and

Evaluation, Jim Shelton, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Office of Improvement and Innovation, Alberto Retana, Director of Community Outreach and Zollie Stevenson, Director of Title I and Title III. These parents represented over 17 states. This was the first time parents as a group had met with ED senior staff.

To read more about the meeting and

see photos, go to <http://www.ed.gov/blog/2010/06/parents-gather-in-washington-d-c-to-discuss-rights-and-responsibilities/#more-3615>

"I am my child's first teacher," said George Camacho, a father from Detroit. "I don't want the teacher—or, rather, teachers—raising my children. I want to be the one raising them. But I want teachers involved by engaging my children, and then I will do my part at home."

Obama Promotes Family Friendly Workplace

On Oct. 5, 2010, addressing Fortune magazine's 2010 "Most Powerful Women Summit," President Barack Obama promoted flexible hours and other family-friendly workplace policies. Obama said companies with flexible arrange-

ments can have lower turnover and absenteeism and higher productivity. Obama also stated that he wants federal agencies to be models with policies like mobile workplaces and flexible schedules. Obama also

supports paid leave programs and child tax credits.

U. S. Department of Education

400 Maryland Avenue S.W.
Washington D.C. 20202

Fax: 202-260-7956
E-mail: parents@ed.gov

Every investment in a parent is an investment in the child.

The Office of Communications and Outreach has a team of family engagement specialists that will work with the state and local education agencies to empower parents with the information, training, and education needed to be full partners in learning in the academic progress of their child(ren). The team recognizes that parents need to be equipped with the tools necessary to make them informed partners and equal stakeholders.

For more information about the team email parent@ed.gov.

Provide Effective Services for Families of Children with Special Needs

The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) has technical assistance centers that offer statewide resource for families of children with disabilities and special health care needs. Staff are parent/professionals and are available to talk to parents and professionals about special education, other services and disability specific information. The staff provide training, information and support to parents and others who have an interest in children from birth through twenty-six and who receive or who might need special education or related services. They enable parents to have the capacity to improve educational outcomes for all children.

Visit <http://www.parentcenternetwork.org/region1/links.html> to find the Parent Technical Assistance Center near you.

Parent Teacher Home Visit Project

Home visits are not "drop ins", but rather an appointment set between two willing colleagues in a setting where teachers do not have the power/institutional advantage.

Teachers visit families once in the fall and then again in the spring.

The focus of the first visit is on building a relationship. In this visit, teachers and parents (known in the model as co-educators) get to know each other, and teachers learn about families' and students' strengths. The focus of the second

visit is on building capacity. During this visit, teachers shares important and meaningful tools and information with families. The home visits project and training is based on a community organizing model and principals of family empowerment, endorsed by the state and local teachers union, local interfaith organizing group, and championed by school district leaders who are willing to do business a little differently for the sake of student success. Nine states have adopted and adapted the model of parent/

teacher home visits: Alaska, California, Colorado, Montana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Nevada, Ohio, and Virginia. To learn more, visit www.teachervisits.org or call 916-448-5290.