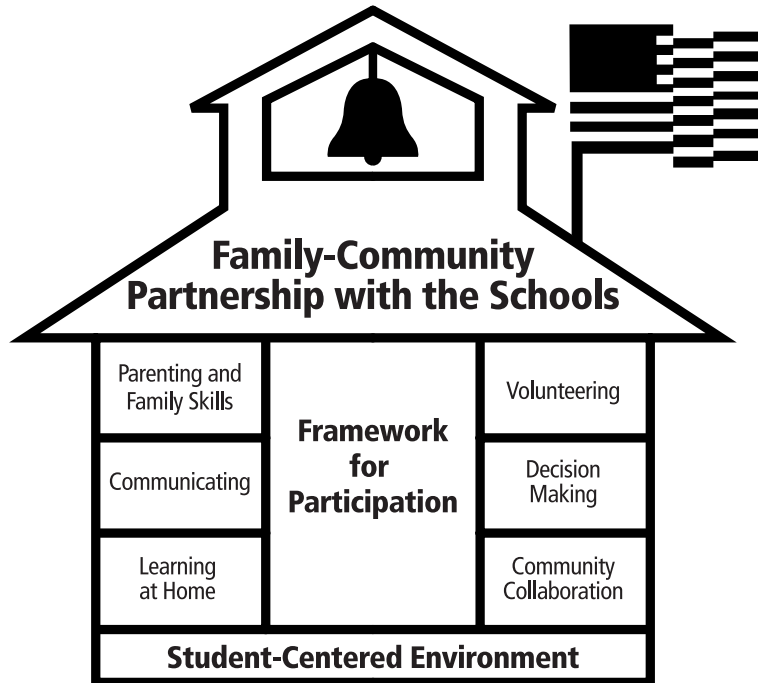


Measuring Your Family-School-Community Partnerships

A Tool for Schools



How does your school reach out to and involve families and the community in children's learning? This tool is based on the Six Types of Partnerships. It can help your school

- Assess the strength of the partnerships it conducts,
- Indicate the focus or direction of your partnerships, and
- Identify areas that can be changed.

Your school may do all, some, or none of the activities or approaches listed. Not every activity is appropriate for every grade level. The items listed were selected because they show that schools in which they happen are meeting the challenge to involve families in many different ways. These activities can improve school climate, strengthen families, and increase student learning.

Your school may also be conducting other activities. Be sure to add them under each type of involvement and include them in your school's assessment of its key partnership practices.

DIRECTIONS: Review the rating scale that follows. For each item, write the rating number that comes closest to describing your school. Practices that are strong and prominent will receive a score of 4. Practices rated 1, 2, or 3 are not yet part of the school's program or need improvement.

After rating your school partnership practices, use the three Discussion Questions on the back page to assess the strengths, goals, and direction of your school partnerships for the next one to three years. Ask the members of your school Partnership Action Team or another parent-teacher decision-making group to participate in this process.

Rating Scale

1. **Never.** This strategy does not happen at our school.
2. **Rarely.** Happens in only one or two classrooms or classes. Receives isolated use or little time. Clearly not emphasized in the school's parent involvement plan.
3. **Sometimes.** Happens in some classes. Receives minimal or modest time or emphasis across grades. Included in, but not a notable part, of the school's parent involvement plan.
4. **Frequently.** Happens in most or all classes or grade levels. Receives substantial time and emphasis. An important part of the school's parent involvement plan.

1. Parenting and Family Skills

Schools can help families build on their strengths and parenting skills. Schools can identify resources and support to help families nurture children. *Please rate using the scale on the right.*

Rating Scale

1. **Never**
2. **Rarely**
3. **Sometimes**
4. **Frequently**

Our School

- ___ Offers workshops and information for parents on child and adolescent development.
- ___ Reaches all families who want or need parenting information or assistance, not just the few who can attend meetings at school.
- ___ Makes sure that information for families is clear, usable, offered in a variety of ways and languages, and linked to children's learning.
- ___ Surveys families about the topics and issues they want information on.
- ___ Asks families about their children's strengths, goals, and learning styles.
- ___ Gives parents ideas and information on creating a "learning-friendly" environment at home.
- ___ Offers opportunities for parents to meet, network, and share parenting ideas.

Other Parenting and Family Skills efforts

2. Communicating

Schools can plan and conduct workable methods of two-way communication—from school to home and from home to school. Communications, whether to groups or individual families, should focus on the child's learning. *Please rate using the above scale.*

Our School

- ___ Schedules parent-teacher-student conferences to monitor student progress at times convenient for parents.
- ___ Informs parents how and when they can reach teachers during and beyond the school day to talk about their child's learning.
- ___ Provides ways for parents to comment on school programs and activities, such as surveys, e-mail, comment forms, and others.
- ___ Develops ways to communicate with parents who do not speak or read English well, including providing translators and videotaped messages.

- ___ Provides parents with clear, regular information about children's progress, including information on testing, report cards, and the curriculum.
- ___ Convenes teachers and support staff to meet with and listen to parents of children with academic or behavior concerns.
- ___ Trains school staff on the value of and need for building effective ties with parents and the community.
- ___ Conducts these activities that research has shown improve children's learning:
 - (a) Sponsors orientations for families new to the school
 - (b) Produces a regular school or district newsletter
 - (c) Sends home weekly folders of students' work
 - (d) Staff makes home visits
- ___ Builds policies that encourage teachers to communicate frequently with parents about the curriculum, homework expectations, and how parents can help.

Other Communicating Activities

3. Learning at Home

Provide ways for families and school staff to, together, develop learning goals and continue children's learning at home and in the community to meet the goals. *Please rate using the above scale.*

Our School

- ___ Gives families information about how to keep track of, discuss, and support schoolwork at home.
- ___ Gives families information about skills required for their children in each subject.
- ___ Gives families information about how to help their children in areas that need improvement.
- ___ Helps families and students set academic goals and select courses and programs.
- ___ Makes families aware of the importance of reading daily to or with children.
- ___ Makes families aware of resources and programs in the community that promote learning.

Other Learning at Home Activities

4. Volunteering

Recruit and organize volunteer help from families and the community. *Please rate using the scale on the right.*

Rating Scale

1. **Never**
2. **Rarely**
3. **Sometimes**
4. **Frequently**

Our School

- ___ Offers flexible volunteer opportunities and schedules that allow all parents to participate.
- ___ Has a family center or other space where families and community members can volunteer, meet, and access resources that enhance their child's learning and development.
- ___ Schedules school events at different times of the day and evening so all parents can attend.
- ___ Surveys families annually to match parent interests, talents, and availability with school and classroom needs.
- ___ Provides childcare, transportation, translators, and food to eliminate barriers preventing some families from participating in school events.
- ___ Trains volunteers so their time is used effectively.
- ___ Recognizes volunteers for their time and effort.
- ___ Encourages families, students, and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (tutoring, assisting with activities, giving talks, etc.)

Other Volunteering Activities

5. Decision making

Include parents in school decisions to develop leaders and represent all families in the school. *Please rate using the above scale.*

Our School

- ___ Has an active PTA, PTO, or other parent group.
- ___ Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, site-based management team, or other committees.

- ___ Involves parents in organized, ongoing, and timely ways to plan, review, and improve school programs.
- ___ Involves parents in revising school and district curricula.
- ___ Has parent leaders who represent the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of all students in the school.
- ___ Asks parents to help plan and develop out-of-school programs.
- ___ Includes students (with parents) in decision-making groups.

Other Decision-making Activities

6. Collaborating with the Community

Identify and connect community resources to strengthen families, school programs, and student learning. *Please rate using the above scale.*

Our School

- ___ Makes staff available to help families locate and use community resources.
- ___ Works with local businesses, parks, museums, libraries, and civic groups to enrich student and adult learning and skills.
- ___ Provides parents and students with a resource directory listing community services, programs, and agencies.
- ___ Makes the school building available for community use outside of regular school hours.
- ___ Offers after-school programs for students, supported by local businesses, agencies and volunteers.
- ___ Informs and involves community members in school building and district decision-making.
- ___ Tackles funding, staffing, and location issues that may arise so collaborative activities may occur.

Other Community Collaboration Activities

Discussion Questions

Question A. What major factors **contributed** to the success of your school's family and community partnerships this year?

Question B. What major factors **limited** the success of your school's family and community partnerships this year?

Question C. What is one of your school's major goals for **improving** its partnerships program over the next three years?

Name of person completing this assessment (optional): _____

Role: _____ for Grade level(s): _____

School: _____ District: _____