

# Linking Your School's Family-School Partnerships Practices to Student Learning



Linking programs and activities to what students are learning is an important strategy for teams developing action plans and school improvement plans. In family-school partnership programs, the checklist below can be helpful in linking student learning to goals and activities.

Consider if the items in the checklist are things that you are already doing, could do easily, or could do over time.

## Learning What Students are Doing in the Classroom

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- Student work is posted in school hallways and in public places in the community and is rotated often.
- Exhibits of student work highlights features of the work and it demonstrates at different grade levels. The assignments are challenging and the student work is not all the same.
- Families can regularly observe in the classroom and and/or see teacher demonstrations.
- At parent-teacher conferences, students are present and discuss the quality of their work.

## Informative School Communications

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- Articles in the school newsletter and on the website discuss what students are doing in the classroom and include tips on helping at home.
- A regular feature describes interesting approaches that teachers are using in classrooms.
- The articles use data about the school, such as attendance rates and test results, and describe how the school is working to make improvements.

- The school offers regular workshops and other information sessions that help families understand how children learn and are being taught. The topics are suggested by families.
- Families regularly receive information and materials to help their children at home.

## Using Student Achievement Data to Design Programs

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- Programs and activities for families are focused on subjects and skills that students need to strengthen.
- Student achievement data are shared with families in ways that solicit their ideas about how to improve achievement.
- School staff and parents collaborate to collect other data about other learning opportunities for students, such as community programs and resources.

## Collaborating with Community Learning Programs

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- School staff collaborate with community-based after-school programs and exchange ideas and information with program staff. NMOST
- School share curriculum, textbooks, assignments, and learning materials with community after-school programs.
- After-school program staff can attend professional development at school. Staff development is also open to parents.

## Consider the following:

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- Which areas do you want to focus on first?
- How are parents and the parent organization involved in linking family-school partnerships programs to improving student achievement?
- What are your concerns?
- Reflection: What steps could you take to help your programs be better linked to learning? Think short and long term.

Adapted from: Henderson, A.T., Mapp, K.L., Johnson, V.R., & Davies, D. (2007). *Beyond the bake sale: The essential guide to family-school-partnerships*. New York: The New Press.

Packed with tips from principals and teachers, checklists, and an invaluable resource section, *Beyond the Bake Sale* reveals how to build strong collaborative relationships and offers practical advice for improving interactions between parents and teachers, from insuring that PTA groups are constructive and inclusive to navigating the complex issues surrounding diversity in the classroom.

