

Parent Partnership Team Program Final Report 2008– 2009

Introduction

New forces are changing the current landscape of schools in significant ways. The Title I legislation, now known as “No Child Left Behind” (NCLB), increased the accountability for students and schools. Until recently, parent involvement was a minor priority in Title I designated schools. One new entire section of the NCLB legislation focuses directly on parents, giving them many new rights and requiring schools to provide new opportunities for parents to be involved in schools.

Schools are complex organizations that are sometimes little understood by the community.

When parents interact with the school, there are many possible outcomes. Parents often come to the school environment based upon their own rules about the way school was for them. That is, they use their own school experiences to reflect their paradigm of the way schools should be. If parents’ experience in school was positive, they approach the school with a positive attitude. If, however, their experiences were negative, and if their rules for the way schools are grow out of that experience, then they will approach the school environment much differently. These parents have a built-in distrust for the school staff, especially if they themselves were unsuccessful.

Added to this is the fact that schools are changing in fundamental ways. Increased emphasis on accountability, new test, new curriculums, rising academic standards, one parent families, poverty, diversity and gender issues, all increase the level of misunderstanding that can exist for parents.

Parents face barriers in interacting with the school such as transportation, language, and a lack of understanding of school rules. Trouble dealing with administration, teachers and other staff,

feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, work schedules, childcare, child custody issues and health issues, can produce parents who stay away from the school environment. These barriers are real and must be dealt with if we want to make a difference for all our students, regardless of their home situation.

The Schenectady City School District's Parent Partnership Team plan is designed to encourage parent involvement in activities, both at school and in the home, that promote the agenda of the school and the parents' desire for the academic and social development of their children.

The U.S. Department of Education further defines Parent Involvement as the participation of parent in regularly, two-way, meaningful communications involving student academic learning.

Where parents play an integral part in assisting their child's learning;

Encourages parents to be actively involved in their child's education at school;

and *that parents are full partners in their child's education.*

Research has shown that when parents participate in their children's education student attendance and achievement improve along with a more positive attitude about schools.

Background

In the fall of 2002, a project was begun to establish Parent Partnership Teams (PPT) in each building of the Schenectady City School District, except Schenectady High School (During the 2004-2005 school year, Schenectady High School joined the program).

During the 2007-2008 school year the District opened Fulton Early Childhood Center. This school, also choose to join the PPT process beginning in December 2007.

During the 2008-2009 school year the District opened three additional elementary schools, William C. Keane, Franklin D. Roosevelt and Katharine Burr Blodgett, making the total number of schools, served by this program, twenty.

The Federal and State Program Office, under the leadership of Mr. James Lucca, Director of Federal and State Programs, initiated the PPT program. This program has continued and has now completed its seventh year under the direction of Ms. Lori McKenna.

Ms. McKenna, the current Director of Federal and State Programs has chosen to continue the program for the upcoming 2009-2010 school year.

The “No Child Left Behind” legislation approved by the federal government in 2002, set in place many new guidelines for the program commonly known as “Title I”. Contained within that legislation (section 1118) were new provisions for involving parents in the school by providing a variety of improvements for parents whose children reside in schools receiving funds under “No Child Left Behind”.

The “No Child Left Behind” legislation requires that districts spend at least one percent of their total allocation on parent involvement activities.

In order to implement these requirements, it was decided to implement a coordinated program of parent and community involvement for the District known as the Parent Partnership Team program.

Consultants, Dr. Charles Amodeo and Dr. Suomi Erin Amodeo, from Lighthouse Education Associates, Ltd., were contracted to train staff and implement the program for the past several years.

Team recruitment

Building principals were asked to recommend one person in each building to serve as a Team chairperson. These staff members and several parents were invited to attend a three-day training in the summer and in each successive summer. After the training was held, participants were asked to recruit a team in their respective buildings to evaluate, plan and implement activities

related to parent involvement and school goals.

Additional one day training was held during the summer as a refresher for chairpersons and to serve as awareness for PTO members.

Stipend

Team chairpersons received a stipend of \$500. Team members received a stipend of \$250 each.

The majority of Team members have continued to log their hours of involvement beyond the school day. Though not all staff or parents reported their hours, we have had 3,811 hours recorded. The range of hours consisted of 111 members reporting:

- 50 – 86 hours = 13
- 30 – 49 hours = 70
- 5 – 29 hours = 28

Team

Each Team was composed of a chairperson and six Team members. A balanced representation of parents and staff member was sought. Each team held building meetings monthly to plan and implement events for students and parents that supported the goals and mission of their school. The Team chairpersons' met with Drs. Amodeo during one-hour meetings held monthly after school to receive additional training and to share "best practices" and discuss concerns and plans with the group

Budget

Each of the 20 schools participating in the project received a budget amount from Title I or State funds.

Annual Celebration

An annual celebration was held at the Career Center @ Steinmetz cafeteria near the close of school. Ninth-four individuals were present at this years celebration, they consisted of parents,

teachers, BOE members, administrators, the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent and the Associate Superintendent. Each school set up a display highlighting the events and successes accomplished during the school year. Each Team chairperson got a chance to talk about their successes. Dinner was served to all. Ten school administrators also attended the event

Summary

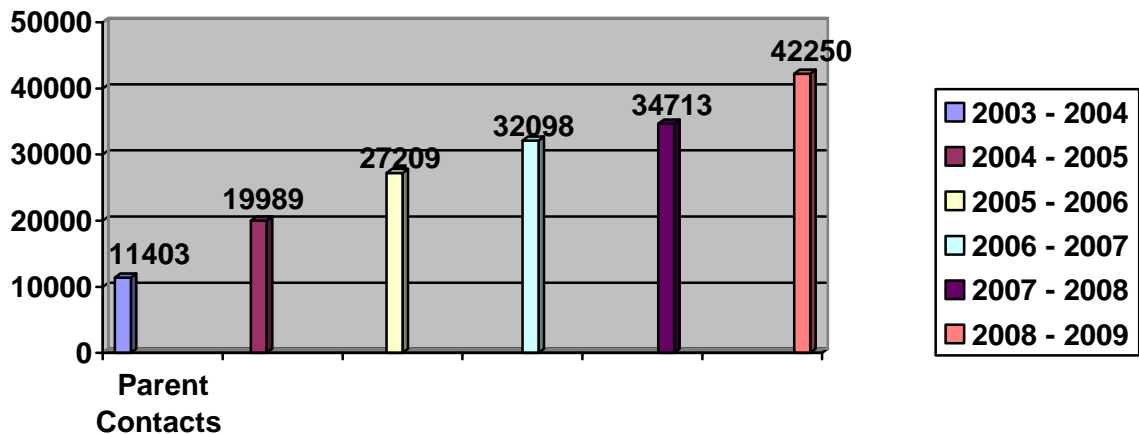
The goals of the Parent Partnership Teams were to:

- Satisfy the requirements of “No Child Left Behind” legislation, section 1118e (Parent Involvement).
- To address school needs bases upon gaps shown in the school survey
- To offer events that supported school goals for students and parents
- To find ways to help parents help their children be successful
- To increase the attendance at school events
- To increase volunteering in the schools

Attendance

A total of 42,250 parents attended school activities in the schools (duplicated count). This information was gathered from sign-in sheets arranged by the Parent Partnership Teams in each school and attendance reported by the principal or PPT chairperson at other school activities.

Measured against the baseline attendance numbers at the start of the program **11,403**, in 2003 – 2004 to 2008 – 2009, there has been an increase of approximately **271% over the past six years of data collection.**



Assessment

A 10 question survey was distributed to staff and parents in the fall of 2008 and again in the spring of 2009. The data will be analyzed and used by school Teams this summer as a planning tool for the upcoming school year. Any gaps shown between the staff and the parent surveys will become the subject of planning ways to reduce those gaps in the coming school year. Each school that conducted a survey has their data represented graphically by school.

Findings

- There are over 111 members involved in school Parent Partnership Teams. They consist of parents, community members, teachers and administrators in each school. Committees are using their budgets appropriately
- Principals are supportive of the program
- The mandates of Title I “No Child Left Behind” are being met
- Support for the program has remained constant

Note* A more detailed report will be given to Ms. McKenna at the end of the summer after all survey data has been analyzed.