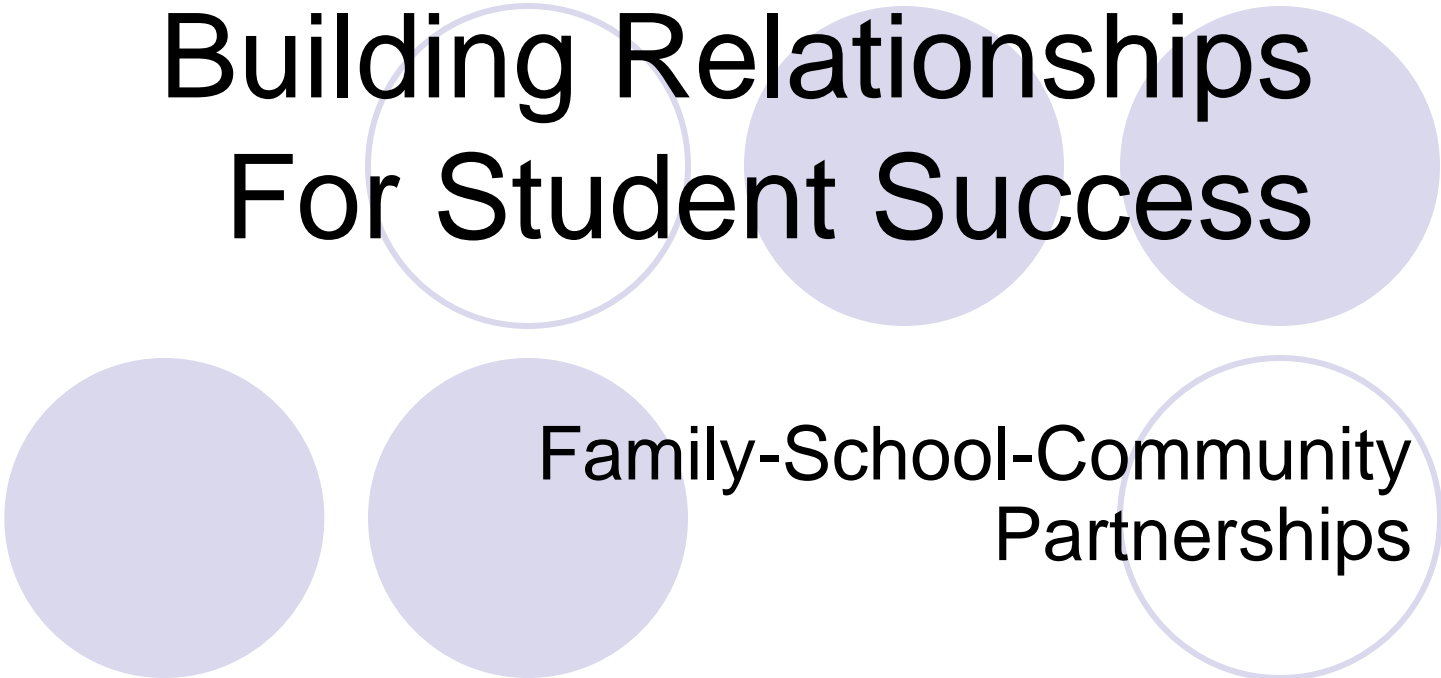


Building Relationships For Student Success

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Family-School-Community
Partnerships

Presenters



- Jane Grinde, Director
DPI Community Learning and Partnerships, 608-266-9356
jane.grinde@dpi.wi.gov
- Betsy Prueter, Coordinator, DPI VISTA Family-School-Community Partnership Project, 608-267-7290
betsy.prueter@dpi.wi.gov

Building Relationships for Student Success



Learn and share strategies that focus on the core values of partnerships:

1. All parents have dreams for their children and want the best for them.
2. All parents have the capacity to support their children's learning.
3. Parents and school staff should be equal partners.
4. The responsibility for building partnerships between school and home rests primarily with school staff, especially school leaders.

Building Relationships for Student Success



- Based on the research*, when parents know they **should be involved** in their children's education, **know what to do**, and **feel welcome**, students do better in school.

*Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler

Building Relationships for Student Success



- What are the successes and challenges from the Department of Public Instruction's VISTA project and Wisconsin schools and districts ?

What is culture?

- Culture is a force that shapes lives. Individuals are immersed in their own culture. It encompasses the ordinary and daily experiences of people, as well as the extraordinary celebrations and rituals that define a group. It solidifies bonds between similar people and instills a sense of worth that arises from identifying with others.

"A Culturally Competent System of Care for Children with Emotional Disturbances," by Terry Cross and the Minority Initiative Resource Committee at Georgetown University.

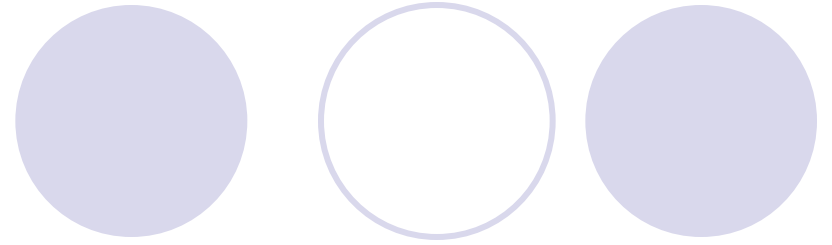
School Culture



Most schools in the United States are based on mainstream American cultural values, including:

- obedience of children,
- standards for polite behavior,
- respect for formal education,
- preference for direct communication,
- focus on linear time,
- expectation for competition, and
- focus on the importance of individual achievement.

What do you think?



- Share with those near with you about your own culture.

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Reviewing the Research

What are the results?

Regardless of income and background, involved families help students:

- Earn higher grades and test scores and enroll in higher-level programs
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and earn credits
- Attend school regularly
- Have better social skills, better behavior, and adapt well to school
- Graduate and go on to post-secondary education



A program of family partnerships

- Especially benefits children from disadvantaged families
- Helps schools increase the performance of all children in the school
- Provides the support enabling families from all backgrounds to be involved
- Is important Pre-K through Grade 12
- Increases teacher morale, performance

What do we know about School Staff and Partnerships?

- Teachers and administrators initially resist increasing family involvement
- Teachers and administrators need preservice, inservice, and continuing education on partnerships
- Teachers with effective partnerships report that parents of all backgrounds can help their children
- Many families won't be involved **unless** schools reach out



Engagement

When school staff engage in caring and trustful relationships with families, the families are more apt to participate in their children's educational development.

This is the most significant finding of the research (Mapp)

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Culture from Anne Henderson

Film clip

Key Findings about Making Connections

Successful programs

- Are welcoming and address specific family-community needs
- Recognize cultural and class differences and build on strengths
- Share power with parents; learning is a collaborative enterprise

-- Anne Henderson

State Superintendent's Parent Leadership Corps: Parents Want Staff to Know

Respect

- Parents want you to respect them and their commitment to their child.

Relationships

- Parents want to have a trusting relationship with teachers.

Rules

- Parents want to know the rules and be part of how learning at school works.



Traditional Family Involvement

- Geared to parents with “social capital”
- Knowledge of American system
- Comfortable being at school
- Feel they have a right to be heard



Another Perspective

Immigrant and refugee families, for example, may

- believe it is not their role
- respect school at a distance
- often work with children at home

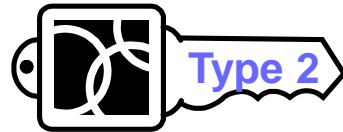
What do you think? What has been your experience?

The Keys to Successful School-Family-Community Partnerships

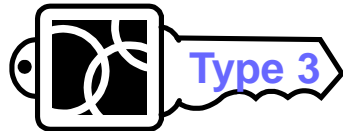
Epstein's 6 Types



Parenting



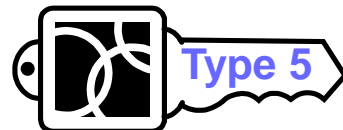
Communicating



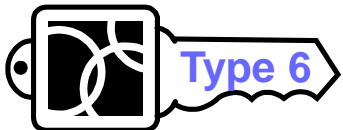
Volunteering



Learning at Home



Decision-Making/Advocating



Collaborating with Community

Type 1: Parenting



- Help families with parenting and child-rearing skills and with understanding child and adolescent development
- Encourage families to set home conditions that support students at each grade level
- Help schools in understanding families



Parenting Challenges

- Provide Information to *all* families who need it, not just to those who are active.
- Enable families to share information about background, culture, and student talents
- Make all information for families clear, usable, age-appropriate, and linked to student success



Type 2: Communicating

- Communicate with families about school programs and student progress
- Establish effective school-to-home and home-to-school communications



Communicating Challenges

- Make all communications clear and understandable for all families
- Communicate with parents who do not speak English well, do not read well, or need large type
- Obtain ideas from families for ideas on major communications
- Establish a culture of respectful communication.
- Establish easy-to-use two way communication

Type 3: Volunteering



- Improve recruitment, training, schedules, and work to involve all families as volunteers or audiences
- Create opportunities both at the school and at other locations to reach more families
- Encourage families and community members to support student and school programs



Volunteering Challenges

- Recruit widely for volunteers from all families
- Make flexible schedules to enable working parents to participate
- Provide training, matching time and talents
- Recognize all volunteers

Type 4: Learning at Home



- Involve families with their children in learning activities at home and in the community
- Learning at home may include homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions

Learning at Home Challenges

- Involve families and their children in all important curriculum-related decisions
- Assist families on how to encourage, listen, react to, praise, guide, monitor, and discuss schoolwork with their children.
- Implement a regular schedule of interactive homework (e.g., weekly or bi-monthly) for which students take responsibility to discuss important things they are learning with their families.
(e.g., www.partnershipschools.org.)



Type 5: Decision Making

- Include families as participants in school decisions, governance, and advocacy
- Media may include PTA/PTO, school councils, committees, action teams, and other parent organizations



Decision Making Challenges

- Include parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups
- Offer training to enable parent leaders to serve as representatives of other families
- Include student representatives on decision-making committees



Type 6: Collaborating with Community

- Collaborate resources and services for students, families, and the school
- Use businesses, agencies, and other groups
- Provide services to the community



Collaborating Challenges

- Match business and community volunteers and resources with school goals
- Resolve turf problems
- Inform families about community services
- Ensure equal opportunities for families to participate in community programs



Tailor Outreach to the Culture

Find out issues in the community and be sensitive to cultural nuances

- Time
- Extended family
- Communication styles

Involve parents from that culture in planning and implementing outreach



Collaborate with Community

Go beyond stereotypes to learn about culture from

- Parents and extended family
- Cultural, religious, community leaders

Partner with cultural groups in community

- Cultural brokers
- Additional resources

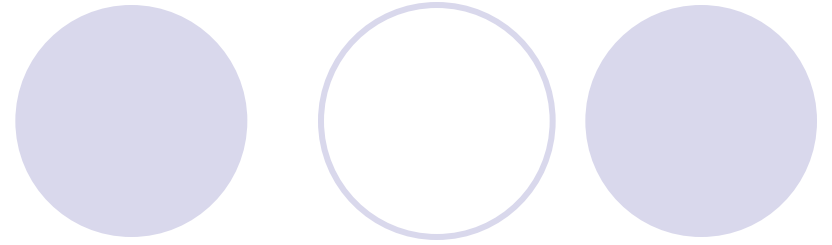
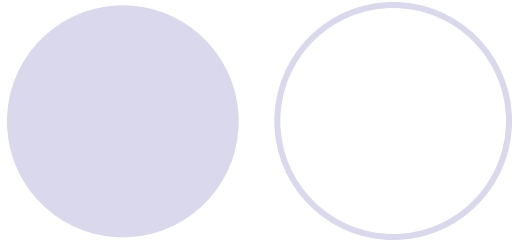
Connect with community service agencies



Checklist

*How Well is Your School
Bridging Racial, Class, and
Cultural Differences?*

handout



WHAT DID YOU LEARN?

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DPI VISTA Project

Successes and Challenges



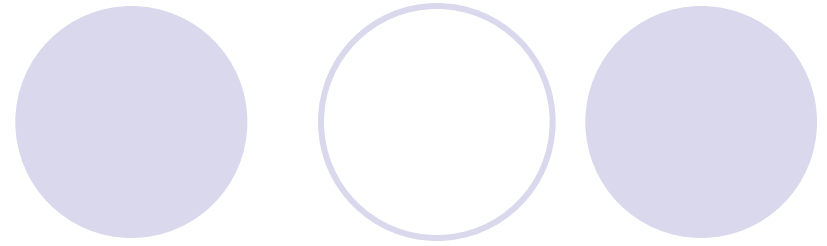
Overall Project Goal

The goal of the DPI VISTA Project is to build capacity for family involvement in low-income schools and communities by implementing a research-based, sustainable process for partnerships

Broad Duties of VISTA with DPI

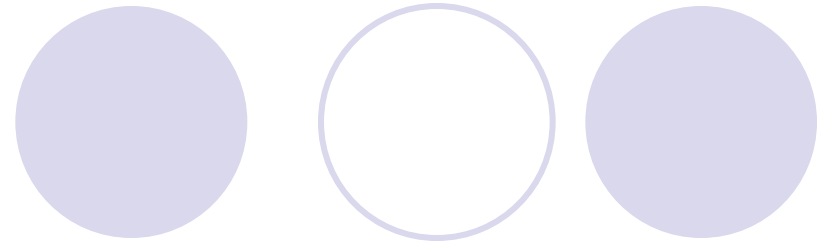
- Develop and expand ongoing collaborative partnerships between schools and their respective families and communities
- Involve families in learning at home, volunteering, communication with teachers and administrators, and decision making processes that affect students' education
- Facilitate an Action Team for Partnerships that designs, implements, and sustains partnership practices

End Outcome #1



- Sites have an identified process for partnerships that enables families to experience a connection with their children's learning

End Outcome #2



- Parents and other community members feel they should be involved with their children's learning, know how to be involved, and feel welcome as contributing partners

End Outcome #3

- The cumulative effects of more frequent and higher quality interactions among teachers and parents are:
 - A greater reservoir of trust and respect
 - increased social capital for children
 - and a community more supportive of each child's success

12 Trust-Building Activities to Engage All Families



1. Assess the level of trust in your school.
2. Develop families' participation skills.
3. Personally welcome students and families.
4. Begin parent-teacher relationships with the positive.
5. Recognize diverse family structures.
6. Create a family resource center.
7. Connect families who speak the same language.

12 Trust-Building Activities to Engage All Families--continued

8. Brainstorm with families on ways they can and want to be involved.
9. Train teachers on how to work with families; include in job performance review.
10. Make involvement meaningful.
11. Use families' "funds of knowledge."
12. Voice high expectations for family involvement frequently.



Create Welcoming School

Signs in multiple languages

Welcoming and supportive staff

Administrators who personally reach out

Teachers who make personal contact

with each family sharing positive messages
as well as concerns

Materials in home languages



Create targeted programming

Small group events

- Multiple, personal invitations:
 - Notes home
 - Phone calls
 - Notices in cultural newspapers
- Encourage “snowballing”
- Hold programs in the community**



Home Visits

- Sign of respect
- Gain insights into family, culture



Resources

- ✓ DPI Community Learning & Partnerships Team
www.dpi.wi.gov/fscp/index.html
- ✓ National Network of Partnership Schools
www.partnershipschools.org
- ✓ Parents Plus www.parentspluswi.org
- ✓ SEDL www.sedl.org/connections/about.html
- ✓ REACH <http://reachwi.org/>
- ✓ Family Involvement Network of Educators (FINE)
<http://gse.harvard.edu/hfrp/projects/fine.html>

Jane Grinde: jane.grinde@dpi.wi.gov

Betsy Prueter: betsy.prueter@dpi.wi.gov

Attitudes influencing Involvement

- ✓ 1. Parents need to understand that being actively involved in their children's learning is something they should do, and that it will help their child. They also need to understand what this role involves. (role construction)

- 2. Parents need also to feel that if they become involved, they can make a difference, and they can do a good job of it. (efficacy)

- 3. Finally, parents need to feel invited -- by the school and by their child -- to do this. That if they come to school, they will be treated with respect and made to feel welcome. (invitation)

Kathy Hoover-Dempsey and Howard Sandler