



Continuing Education Units

Engaging and Re-engaging Students and Families: Four Units for Continuing Education

Unit III. Enhancing Family Engagement and Re-engagement

(May, 2012)

Unit I: Motivation: Time to Move Beyond Behavior Modification

Access at: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/enagei.pdf>

Unit II: Strategic Approaches to Enhancing Student Engagement and Re-engagement

Access at: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engageii.pdf>

Unit III: Enhancing Family Engagement and Re-engagement

Access at: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engageiii.pdf>

Unit IV: Embedding Engagement and Re-engagement into a Unified and Comprehensive System of Student and Learning Supports

Access at: <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/engageiv.pdf>

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Preface

Our Center is committed to enhancing continuing education in general and professional development in particular. At this time, we are primarily designing content and tools to aid districts and schools as they address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage disconnected students. We provide these resources at no cost through our website.*

Eventually, we will explore ways to provide continuing education credit. For now, our hope is that locals will be able to build the resources into their professional development and provide "credit" as appropriate.

We view all our efforts as works in progress and invite you to share your ideas about how to improve our existing resources and feel free to suggest additional resources you would like to see us develop.

*See our Center's resources and materials at
<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/materials/resources.htm>
Everything on the site is free for downloading.

Engaging and Re-engaging Students and Families: Four Units of Continuing Education

Moving into Unit III

It is evident that students who are engaged do better than those who are not and that too many students seem unengaged and disconnected from learning in the classroom. The fundamental role played by families in all this is widely acknowledged and, here too, both engagement and re-engagement are major intervention concerns.

Unit I presented a perspective on motivation that goes beyond the application of reinforcers. It emphasized the importance of expanding your understanding of engagement, re-engagement, and intrinsic motivation in the context of school improvement. It also highlighted implications for school climate.

Unit II highlighted strategic approaches to engaging and re-engaging students. Also covered are why it is important to avoid over-relying on extrinsic reinforcers and minimize practices that can produce reactance.

As the first two units clarify, understanding intrinsic motivation underscores matters not only relevant to engaging and re-engaging students, but to connecting with their families as well. Of particular concern are all the many families who are not connected. Practices for preventing family disengagement and efforts to re-engage those who have become disconnected require minimizing conditions that negatively affect intrinsic motivation and maximizing those that enhance it.

This unit provides applications designed to engage and re-engage families. It focuses on differences among families and other primary care-takers with respect to resources, motivation and needs, and barriers to involvement with the school.

Unit IV stresses that teachers can't and should not be expected to do it all alone. Rather, their work needs to be embedded into a unified and comprehensive system of learning supports and that system should be built with a view to engaging and re-engaging students, families, and all the professional who have a stake in improving schools.

As aids for personnel development, each unit begins with a set of questions that can be used to guide independent study and community of learners' discussions. A few topics are amplified with brief supplementary readings; others that can deepen learning and provide specific resource aids are referenced throughout and listed at the end of each unit. A description and examples of a set of self-study surveys also is appended.

Unit III: Enhancing Family Engagement and Re-engagement

A. Who are We Talking About?

B. What's a School to Do?

C. Family Engagement and Re-engagement with the School

Study and Discussion Questions

- (1) What are major individual differences among families that need to be addressed?
- (2) What are a range of things schools should do to connect with newcomer families?
- (3) What can teachers generally do to maintain/enhance family engagement and also account for individual differences among families?
- (4) What practices might help re-engage families who appear Disconnected from the school?

Why don't families connect with schools?



Often for the same reason their kids don't.



Unit II: Enhancing Family Engagement and Re-engagement

Research findings accumulated over ... decades ... show that ... parental encouragement, activities, and interest at home and participation in schools and classrooms affect children's achievement, attitudes, and aspirations, even after student ability and family socioeconomic status are taken into account.

Joyce Epstein

The strongest predictors that a student is likely to drop out are family characteristics such as: socioeconomic status, family structure, family stress (e.g., death, divorce, family moves), and the mother's age. Students who come from low-income families, are the children of single, young, unemployed mothers, or who have experienced high degrees of family stress are more likely than other students to drop out of school. Of those characteristics, low socioeconomic status has been shown to bear the strongest relationship to students' tendency to drop out.

National Education Association

Despite the long-standing call for schools to enhance parent involvement, the challenges in doing so have confounded many schools. Contributing to the problem has been the tendency to view “parents” as a generic concept and not to treat “involvement” as a mutually beneficial and equitable process. Moreover, with respect to students who are not doing well at school, efforts to enhance home involvement need to be embedded into an overall approach to addressing factors interfering with school learning and performance (discussed in Unit IV).

A. Who Are We Talking About?

Research findings over the past 30 plus years have consistently indicated the value of home support for schooling. Researchers also have stressed that “homes” differ in critical ways. For example, increasing attention has been given to single parents. However, intervention implications arising from parent surrogates generally are not sufficiently appreciated. Think about students who are being raised primarily by grandparents, aunts, older siblings, foster home caretakers, and “nannies.”

Other home involvement complications stem from differences in caretaker economic status, work schedules, immigrant status, ethnic and racial considerations, number of children in the home, homes where English is not spoken, extended families, military families, families where parents are in prison, and those who are homeless. Caretakers also differ in attitudes about school, often based on their own past experiences as well as current encounters and how well their child is doing at school. In addition, some caretakers have disabilities, and some are dysfunctional.*

*Because the generic term *caretaker* can be misinterpreted, we use *home* and *family* in its place throughout this report. *Caregivers* is a nicer term, but it obviously may not fit in some instances.

Who's Motivated, Who's Not?

For the most part, the general efforts to involve families with their child's school are aimed at those who want and are able to come to the school. It's important to have activities for such parents. It's also important to remember that, at most schools, these represent a small percent of families.

How can schools address the rest? Especially those whose children are doing poorly at school. Ironically, efforts to involve families whose youngsters are doing poorly often result in parents becoming less involved. For example, a parent of such a youngster typically is called to school to explore the child's problems and leaves with a sense of frustration, anger, and guilt. It is not surprising, then, that the parent subsequently avoids school contact as much as feasible.

If a school is to significantly enhance involvement, the tasks ahead include (1) broadening the focus beyond thinking only in terms of parents and (2) enhancing the range of ways connections are made with primary caretakers. Of particular concern is outreach to those in the home who are reluctant to engage with the school, especially those with a child who is not doing well. For all this to happen, efforts to enhance home involvement need to be embedded into an overall approach to addressing factors interfering with school learning and performance and fully integrated into school improvement policy and practice (as discussed in Unit IV).

Understanding the Range of Needs

Just as with classroom instruction, efforts to involve families must meet them where they are in terms of both their motivation and capabilities. Think in terms of varying needs.

Some families need help in addressing their own basic needs so that they are enabled to meet basic obligations to their children (e.g., family members who need literacy and job skills). Contrast these with families who are ready and able to help their children meet the demands of school. And a few are even ready and able to help the school address its needs (e.g., by becoming volunteers and mentors; by providing additional resources).

Understanding Barriers to Involvement

Analyses of the problem of enhancing home involvement underscore a host of barriers. These can be grouped in terms of institutional, personal, and impersonal barriers.

Institutional barriers stem from deficiencies related to resource availability (money, space, time) and administrative use of what is available to involve families. Deficient use of resources includes failure to establish and maintain formal home involvement mechanisms. It also encompasses general lack of interest or hostile attitudes toward home involvement among school staff. Instances of deficient use of resources occur when there is no policy commitment to facilitating home involvement, when inadequate provisions are made for interacting with family members who don't speak English, or when no resources are devoted to upgrading the skills of staff with respect to home involvement.

Personal barriers stem from differences in motivation and capabilities. Some school personnel and some family members lack requisite skills or find participation uncomfortable. Others may lack interest or feel hostile toward home involvement. For instance, any given teacher may feel it is too much of an added burden to meet to discuss student problems. Others may feel threatened because they think they can't make the necessary interpersonal connections due to racial, cultural, and/or language differences. Still others do not perceive available activities as worth their time and effort.

Impersonal barriers are commonplace and rather obvious (e.g., practical problems related to work schedules, transportation, and childcare). There can also be skill deficiencies related to cultural differences and levels of literacy. There may be lack of interest due to insufficient information about the importance of home involvement.

Activity

Discuss what challenges you think families need help to overcome so they can be more involved with their child's schooling.

Which of these can school's address?

B. What's a Schools to Do?

Overcoming barriers, of course, is a primary intervention concern, with a major emphasis on reducing institutional and impersonal barriers as much as is feasible.

Start with Authentic Welcoming and Social Support for Everyone

Some new students and their families are unsure and sometimes fearful about how to transition into a new school. Teachers and other school personnel all have a role to play in welcoming and providing social support for a successful transition.

Start simple. For example, work with other staff to establish a few basic ways to help students and their families feel welcome and part of things, such as

- giving a new student and family members a *Welcome Folder* containing welcoming materials and information about the school and what it offers them,

(Note: The emphasis is on *Welcoming* – thus, any written material given out at this time specifically states WELCOME and is limited to simple orientation information. To the degree feasible, such material is made available in the various languages of those likely to enroll at the school.)

- inviting them to a *Welcoming Conference* with the teacher so that everyone can get to know each other a bit, and teachers can facilitate positive connections with activities, programs, services in which families seem interested and/or need,
- offering a tour of the school and an introduction to key personnel

(Note: Older students provide a resource for conducting tours and can benefit from the service experience. If an actual tour is not feasible, a virtual tour can be offered through a video/computer.)

- connecting them with peers for social support –

>for new students, assign a *Peer Buddy* to show the new student around, to sit next to the new student, to take the new student to recess and lunch to meet schoolmates

>for family members, connect them with a Family Peer Buddy (e.g., parents who have indicated a willingness to be a special friend to introduce the new family around, to contact them about special activities and take them the first time, and so forth.

Guide III-a lists additional examples of prevention-oriented welcoming and social support strategies.

Guide III-a

Welcoming & Social Support

1. **FRONT DOOR:** Set up a Welcoming Table (identified with a welcoming sign) at the front entrance to the school and recruit and train volunteers to meet and greet everyone who comes through the door.
2. **FRONT OFFICE:** Work with the Office Staff to create ways to meet and greet strangers with a smile and an inviting atmosphere. Provide them with welcoming materials and information sheets regarding registration steps (with appropriate translations). Encourage the use of volunteers in the office so that there are sufficient resources to take the necessary time to greet and assist new students and families. It helps to have a designated registrar and even designated registration times.
3. **WELCOMING MATERIALS:** Prepare a booklet that clearly says WELCOME and provides some helpful info about who's who at the school, what types of assistance are available to new students and families, and offers tips about how the school runs. (Avoid using this as a place to lay down the rules; that can be rather an uninviting first contact.) Prepare other materials to assist students and families in making the transition and connecting with ongoing activities.
4. **STUDENT GREETERS:** Establish a Student Welcoming Club (perhaps the student council or leadership class can make this a project). These students can provide tours and some orientation (including initial introduction to key staff).
5. **PARENT/VOLUNTEER GREETERS:** Establish a General Welcoming Club of parents and/or volunteers who provide regular tours and orientations (including initial introduction to key staff). Develop a Welcoming Video.
6. **WELCOMING BULLETIN BOARD:** Dedicate a bulletin board (somewhere near the entrance to the school) that says WELCOME and includes such things as pictures of school staff, a diagram of the school and its facilities, pictures of students who entered the school during the past 1-2 weeks, information on tours and orientations, special meetings for new students, and so forth.
7. **CLASSROOM GREETERS:** Each teacher should have several students who are willing and able to greet strangers who come to the classroom. Recent arrivals often are interested in welcoming the next set of new enrollees.
8. **CLASSROOM INTRODUCTION:** Each teacher should have a plan to assist new students and families in making a smooth transition into the class. This includes ways to introduce the student to classmates as soon as the student arrives. (Some teachers may want to arrange with the office specified times for bringing a new student to the class.) An introductory Welcoming Conference should be conducted with the student and family as soon as feasible. A useful Welcoming aid is to present both the student and the family member with Welcoming Folders (or some other welcoming gift such as coupons from local businesses that have adopted the school).

(cont.)

9. **PEER BUDDIES:** In addition to the classroom greeter, a teacher can have several students who are trained to be a special buddy to a new student for a couple of weeks (and hopefully thereafter). This can provide the type of social support that allows a new student to learn about the school culture and how to become involved in activities.

10. **OUTREACH FROM ORGANIZED GROUPS:** Establish a way for representatives of organized student and parent groups (including the PTSA) to make direct contact with new students and families to invite them to learn about activities and to assist them in joining in when they find activities that appeal to them.

11. **SUPPORT GROUPS:** Offer groups designed to help new students and families learn about the community and the school and to allow them to express concerns and have them addressed. Such groups also allow them to connect with each other as another form of social support.

12. **ONGOING POSITIVE CONTACTS:** Develop a variety of ways students and their families can feel an ongoing connection with the school and classroom (e.g., opportunities to volunteer, positive feedback regarding participation, letters home that tell “all about what’s happening”)

**Design
Interventions to
Address a Wide
Range of Interests
and Needs**

As highlighted in Guide III-b, the range of interventions to design include a focus on:

- (a) addressing the specific learning and support needs of adults in the home, such as offering them ESL, literacy, vocational and citizenship classes, enrichment and recreational opportunities, and mutual support groups,
- (b) helping those in the home improve how basic student obligations are met, such as providing guidance related to parenting and how to help with schoolwork,
- (c) improving forms of basic communication that promote the well-being of student, family, and school,
- (d) enhancing the home-school connection and sense of community,
- (e) fostering participation in making decisions essential to a student's well-being,
- (f) facilitating home support of student learning and development,
- (g) mobilizing those at home to problem solve related to student needs,
- (h) eliciting help (support, collaborations, and partnerships) from those at home with respect to meeting classroom, school, and community needs.

Guide III-b

Examples of a Focus on Addressing Barriers to Home Involvement in Schooling

- **Improving mechanisms for communication and connecting school and home**

For example:

- >facilitating at school and website opportunities at school for family networking and mutual support, learning, volunteering, recreation, enrichment, and for family members to receive special assistance;
- >facilitating child care and transportation to reduce barriers to coming to school; language translation; phone calls and/or e-mail from teacher and other staff with good news; frequent and balanced conferences – student-led when feasible; outreach to attract and facilitate participation of hard-to-reach families – including student dropouts

- **Addressing specific support and learning needs of families**

For example:

- >support services for those in the home to assist in addressing basic survival needs and obligations to the children;
- >adult education classes to enhance literacy, job skills, English-as-a-second language, citizenship preparation)

- **Involving homes in student decision making**

For example, families prepared for involvement in program planning and problem-solving

- **Enhancing home support for learning and development**

For example, family literacy; family homework projects; family field trips; online learning opportunities as appropriate

- **Recruiting families to strengthen school and community**

For example, volunteers to welcome and support new families and help in various capacities; families prepared for involvement in school governance

- **Capacity building of all stakeholders related to enhancing home involvement**

Note: Our Center provides a range of resources for home involvement in general and for outreach to families of struggling students in particular. A place to start is with the survey on home involvement; appended to this unit and online at <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/homeinvolvementsurvey.pdf> .

Ensuring it's a Schoolwide Enterprise

Teachers can't do it all and they shouldn't be expected to!

As is stressed in Unit IV, home involvement is one of six intervention arenas that are a major facet of a unified and comprehensive system for a school to address barriers to learning and teaching and re-engage those who are disconnected. The other five arenas address the home in a variety of ways. For example: the arena designed to support transitions emphasizes providing welcoming and ongoing social supports for newcomer families. The arena focused on providing student and family assistance is concerned with addressing individual family factors that interfere with family involvement. Efforts related to community engagement include a focus on ways the community can be increasingly supportive of students and their families.

Reflecting on Those Who Aren't Involved

We find that most efforts to involve parents seem aimed at those who want and are able to show up at school. It's important to have activities for such parents. It's also important to remember that, at most schools, these parents represent a small percent of families. What about the rest? Especially those whose children are doing poorly at school. Ironically, efforts to involve families whose youngsters are doing poorly often result in parents becoming less involved. For example, a parent of such a youngster typically is called to school to explore the child's problems and leaves with a sense of frustration, anger, and guilt. It is not surprising, then, that the parent subsequently avoids school contact as much as feasible. If schools really want to involve such families, they must minimize "finger wagging" and move to offer something more than parent education classes.

A colleague describes the typical pattern of messages over time from the school to families of struggling students as follows:

Early messages: We are concerned about ... [missing assignments, poor attendance, lack of academic progress, behavior problems] ...

Over the years the school's messages become more urgent: Dear parents, we need a conference to talk about ... [behavior problems, academic problems, truancy]; please attend student study team meeting...

Finally, the school's messages become more formal: This is to inform you ... [your child will be retained, your child will be suspended]; you must attend an attendance review board meeting ...

We are reminded of the dictum that it can take as many as eight positive interactions to restore a relationship after a negative encounter.

C. Re-engaging Disconnected Families

A poignant reality is that teachers and other school staff often can predict from an early age those students who need extra assistance. They also learn quickly which families are difficult to engage. Too often these matters are related. Logically, schools are concerned about students who are not doing well, especially if a student is misbehaving. Families of such students are commonly called and asked to come to the school. The resulting encounters can be unpleasant for family members and school staff. The dynamics are unlikely to enhance positive engagement of the home with the school; indeed it often is a source of a growing disconnection.

Understanding the concept of *engagement* is key to understanding ways to overcome reluctance (see Units I and II). For example, as stressed in Unit I, engagement has three facets: behavioral, emotional, and cognitive.; all three facets bear attention. Enhancing engagement requires moving from practices that over-rely on the use of reinforcers to strategies that incorporate intrinsic motivation theory and research. Also important it is to maximize positive interactions and avoid processes that (a) mainly emphasize problems, (b) limit options, and (c) make family members feel controlled and coerced.

Remember: research indicates that *engagement* is associated with positive outcomes and is higher when conditions are supportive, authentic, ensure opportunities for choice and provide sufficient structure.

Conversely: *disengagement* is associated with threats to feelings of competence, self-determination, and/or relatedness to valued others. Practices for preventing disengagement and efforts to re-engage disconnected families require minimizing conditions that negatively affect intrinsic motivation and maximizing those that enhance it. Re-engagement provides a major challenge. The challenge is greatest when negative experiences in dealing with the school have resulted in a strong desire to avoid contact.

Obviously, it is no easy task to reverse negative attitudes. As with disconnected students, personalized intervention strategies are required. As with disengaged students, strategies involve outreaching with a view to

- *asking individuals to share their perceptions of the reasons for their disengagement;* (This provides an invaluable basis for formulating a personalized plan to alter their negative perceptions and to prevent others from developing such perceptions.)
- *reframing the reasons for and the processes related to home involvement to establish a good fit with the family's needs and interests;* (The intent is to shift perceptions so that the process is viewed as supportive, not controlling, and the outcomes are perceived as personally valuable and obtainable.)

- *renegotiating involvement*; (The intent is to arrive at a mutual agreement with a delineated process for reevaluating and modifying the agreement as necessary.)
- *reestablishing and maintaining an appropriate working relationship*. (This requires the type of ongoing interactions that over a period of time enhance mutual understanding, provide mutual support, open-up communication, and engender mutual trust and respect.)

There is a parallel between what we see with students who dropout. It has been stressed that dropping out is not so much an “event” as a “process,” a process of progressive disengagement that often traces back to one’s earliest experiences with schools. Much the same can be said about family disengagement from schools. If schools are to enhance home involvement, they must take the lead in developing a culture of authentic collaboration among all stakeholders, must establish standards that promote a welcoming and supportive climate for students, their families, school staff, and community connections, and must establish processes that counter inherent inequities in power and resources. To do less is to make a mockery out of stated policy commitments to connecting home and community with schools

Son: *Mom, will you do my homework for me?*

Mother: *No it wouldn’t be right If I did it.*

Son: *Don’t worry about that, I don’t get them all right either.*

Unit Concluding Comments: The Challenge Ahead

Policy may call for and mandate “parent” involvement, but that has been no guarantee of effective practice. The problem is especially acute in middle and secondary schools, schools serving low income homes, and with respect to families who feel blamed when their child is not doing well at school.

Enhancing home involvement requires greater attention to the full range of caretakers (e.g., grandparents, aunts, older siblings, foster home caretakers). For schools to significantly enhance home involvement will require:

- (1) broadening the focus beyond thinking only in terms of parents and
- (2) enhancing the range of ways in which schools connect with primary caretakers.

Particular attention must be given to outreaching to those who are reluctant to engage with the school, especially if they have a child who is not doing well.

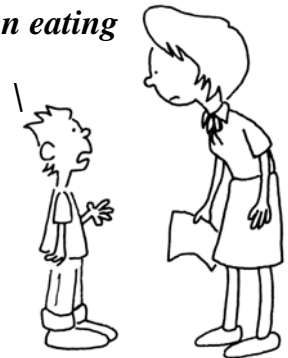
Moreover, to avoid marginalization and minimize fragmentation, it is essential to embed home involvement interventions into an overall approach for addressing factors interfering with school learning and performance and fully integrate the work into school improvement policy and practice. We turn to this matter in Unit IV.

[For a wide range of resources to meet the challenge of enhancing home involvement, see the Center’s Online Clearinghouse Quick Find on *Parent/Home Involvement* – <http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/qf/homework.htm>]

***Your mom said that she never saw this report
I sent her about your work.
What do you know about that?***



***Gee, I guess the dog has been eating
more than my homework.***





Unit III – Reflection & Stimulus for Discussion

Key Insights about:

Why it is difficult to engage the families of some students

Based on what you learned so far, identify (and discuss):

- >what to do about the major barriers that need to be addressed in order to enhance home involvement
- >what additional strategies are needed to re-engage families who appear disconnected from the school?

As an aid, see the self-study surveys appended to this unit.
They highlight a range of home involvement efforts.

- (1) Make a brief outline of what you see as the most important points.
- (2) Discuss them with your study group or other friends and colleagues.
- (3) After the discussion, decide how you might revise your outline.

If there is an opportunity for group discussion, you may find the following group process guidelines helpful:

- Start by identifying someone who will facilitate the group interchange
- Take a few minutes to make a few individual notes on a worksheet
- Be sure all major points are compiled for sharing with other groups.
- Ask someone else to watch the time so that the group doesn't bog down.



Activity

Observe at a School

- (1) What strategies are used to welcome and facilitate social support connections for newcomer families?
- (2) What strategies are used to maintain/enhance home involvement over time?
- (3) What strategies are used to re-engage families who seem unconnected to the school efforts to promote the learning and well-being of a family's child.

TEACHER: *Yes, Chris, what is it?*

CHRIS: *I don't want to scare you, but my Dad says if I don't get better grades someone is in for a spanking.*

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Using Self-Study Surveys as an Aid

1. About the Center's Surveys

2. Two Examples

>*Home Involvement in Schooling*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/homeinvolvementsurvey.pdf>

This survey enables stakeholders to map what is currently being done, analyze strengths and weaknesses, and consider gaps in connecting with families. Particular attention is given to engaging families of struggling students.

>*School-Community Collaboration*

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/toolsforpractice/schoolcommunitysurvey.pdf>

This survey enables stakeholders to map what is currently being done, analyze strengths and weaknesses, and consider gaps related to existing school-community connections and areas for developing an authentic school-community collaboration.

1. About the Center's Self-Study Surveys

Surveying and Planning to Enhance Efforts to Address Barriers to Learning at a School Site

The Center has developed a set of self-study surveys to aid school staff as they try to map and analyze their current programs, services, and systems with a view to developing a comprehensive, multifaceted approach to addressing barriers to learning.

In addition to an overview Survey of Learning Supports System Status, there are self-study surveys to help think about ways to address barriers to student learning by enhancing

- Classroom-based Approaches to Enable and Re-engage Students in Classroom Learning
- Crisis Assistance and Prevention
- Support for Transitions
- Home Involvement in Schooling
- Community Outreach for Involvement and Support
- Student and Family Assistance Programs and Services
- School-Community Collaboration

The entire set are online at:

<http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/pdfdocs/Surveys/Set1.pdf>

*About the Self-Study Process to Enhance
the Component for Addressing Barriers to Student Learning*

This type of self-study is best done by teams.

However, it is *NOT* about having another meeting and/or getting through a task!

It is about moving on to better outcomes for students through

- working together to understand what is and what might be
- clarifying gaps, priorities, and next steps

Done right it can

- counter fragmentation and redundancy
- mobilize support and direction
- enhance linkages with other resources
- facilitate effective systemic change
- integrate all facets of systemic change and counter marginalization of the component to address barriers to student learning

A group of school staff (teachers, support staff, administrators) could use the items to discuss how the school currently addresses any or all of the areas of the component to address barriers (the enabling component). Members of a team initially might work separately in responding to survey items, but the real payoff comes from group discussions.

The items on a survey help to clarify

- what is currently being done and whether it is being done well and
- what else is desired.

This provides a basis for a discussion that

- analyzes whether certain activities should no longer be pursued (because they are not effective or not as high a priority as some others that are needed).
- decides about what resources can be redeployed to enhance current efforts that need embellishment
- identifies gaps with respect to important areas of need.
- establishes priorities, strategies, and timelines for filling gaps.

The discussion and subsequent analyses also provide a form of quality review.

2. Example of a Self-study Survey

Home Involvement in Schooling: A Self-study Survey

This arena expands concern for parent involvement to encompass anyone in the home who is influencing the student's life. In some cases, grandparents, aunts, or older siblings have assumed the parenting role. Older brothers and sisters often are the most significant influences on a youngster's life choices. Thus, schools and communities must go beyond focusing on parents in their efforts to enhance home involvement.

This arena includes school-wide and classroom-based efforts designed to strengthen the home situation, enhance family problem solving capabilities, and increase support for student well-being. Accomplishing all this requires school-wide and classroom-based systems and programs to (a) address the specific learning and support needs of adults in the home, such as offering them ESL, literacy, vocational, and citizenship classes, enrichment and recreational opportunities, and mutual support groups, (b) help those in the home improve how basic student obligations are met, such as providing guidance related to parenting and how to help with schoolwork, (c) improve forms of basic communication that promote the well-being of student, family, and school, (d) enhance the home-school connection and sense of community, (e) foster participation in making decisions essential to a student's well-being, (f) facilitate home support of student learning and development, (g) mobilize those at home to problem solve related to student needs, and (h) elicit help (support, collaborations, and partnerships) from those at home with respect to meeting classroom, school, and community needs. The context for some of this activity may be a *parent or family center* if one has been established at the site. Outcomes include indices of parent learning, student progress, and community enhancement specifically related to home involvement.

Home Involvement in Schooling

Indicate all items that apply.

I. Addressing Specific Learning and Support Needs of the Family

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
A. Does the site offer adult classes focused on				
1. English As a Second Language (ESL)?	___	___	___	___
2. basic literacy skills?	___	___	___	___
3. GED preparation?	___	___	___	___
4. job preparation?	___	___	___	___
5. citizenship preparation?	___	___	___	___
6. other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
B. Are there groups for				
1. mutual support?	___	___	___	___
2. discussion?	___	___	___	___
C. Are adults in the home offered assistance in accessing outside help for personal needs?	___	___	___	___
D. Which of the following are available to help those in the home meet basic survival needs and basic obligations to the student?				
1. Is help provided for addressing special family needs for				
>food?	___	___	___	___
>clothing?	___	___	___	___
>shelter?	___	___	___	___
>health and safety?	___	___	___	___
>school supplies?	___	___	___	___
>other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
2. Are education programs offered on				
>childrearing/parenting?	___	___	___	___
>creating a supportive home environment for students?	___	___	___	___
>reducing factors that interfere with a student's school learning and performance?	___	___	___	___
3. Are guidelines provided for helping a student deal with homework?	___	___	___	___
4. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

II. Improve Mechanisms for Communication and Connecting School & Home

A. Are there periodic general announcements and meetings such as				
1. advertising for incoming students?	___	___	___	___
2. orientation for incoming students and families?	___	___	___	___
3. bulletins/newsletters?	___	___	___	___
4. website	___	___	___	___
5. back to school night/open house?	___	___	___	___
6. parent teacher conferences?	___	___	___	___
7. other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

Home Involvement in Schooling (cont.)

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
B. Is there a system to inform the home on a regular basis (e.g., regular letters, newsletters, email, computerized phone messages, website)	___	___	___	___
1. about general school matters?	___	___	___	___
2. about opportunities for home involvement?	___	___	___	___
3. other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
C. To enhance home involvement in the student's program and progress, are interactive communications used, such as	___	___	___	___
1. sending notes home regularly?	___	___	___	___
2. a computerized phone line?	___	___	___	___
3. email	___	___	___	___
4. frequent in-person conferences with the family?	___	___	___	___
5. other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
D. Which of the following are used to enhance the home-school connection and sense of community?				
1. Does the school offer orientations & open houses?	___	___	___	___
2. Does the school have special receptions for new families?	___	___	___	___
3. Does the school regularly showcase students to the community through				
>student performances?	___	___	___	___
>award ceremonies?	___	___	___	___
>other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
4. Does the school offer the community				
>cultural and sports events?	___	___	___	___
>topical workshops and discussion groups?	___	___	___	___
>health fairs	___	___	___	___
>family preservation fairs	___	___	___	___
>work fairs	___	___	___	___
>newsletters	___	___	___	___
>community bulletin boards	___	___	___	___
>community festivals and celebrations	___	___	___	___
>other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
5. Is there outreach to hard to involve families, such as				
>making home visits?	___	___	___	___
>offering support networks?	___	___	___	___
>other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___
6. Other? (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

III. Involving Homes in Making Decisions Essential to the Student?

A. Families are invited to participate through personal				
1. letters	___	___	___	___
2. phone calls	___	___	___	___
3. email	___	___	___	___
4. other (specify) _____	___	___	___	___

Home Involvement in Schooling (cont.)

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
B. Families are informed about schooling choices through				
1. letters	—	—	—	—
2. phone calls	—	—	—	—
3. email	—	—	—	—
4. conferences	—	—	—	—
5. other (specify) _____	—	—	—	—
C. Families are taught skills to participate effectively in decision making.	—	—	—	—
D. With respect to mobilizing problem solving at home related to student needs				
1. Is instruction provided to enhance family problem solving skills(including increased awareness of resources for assistance)?	—	—	—	—
2. Is good problem solving modeled at conferences with the family?	—	—	—	—
E. Other (specify) _____	—	—	—	—

IV. Enhancing Home Support for Student Learning and Development

A. Are families instructed on how to provide opportunities for students to apply what they are learning?	—	—	—	—
B. Are families instructed on how to use enrichment opportunities to enhance youngsters' social and personal and academic skills and higher order functioning?	—	—	—	—
C. Are family field trips organized?	—	—	—	—
D. Are families provided space and facilitation for meeting together as a community of learners	—	—	—	—
E. Are family literacy programs available?	—	—	—	—
F. Are family homework programs offered?	—	—	—	—
G. Other? (specify) _____	—	—	—	—

Home Involvement in Schooling (cont.)

V. Recruiting Families to Strengthen School and Community

A. For which of the following are those in the home recruited and trained to help meet school/community needs?

1. Improving schooling for students by assisting
 - >administrators
 - >teachers
 - >other staff
 - >others in the community
 - >with lessons or tutoring
 - >on class trips
 - >in the cafeteria
 - >in the library
 - >in computer labs
 - >with homework helplines
 - >the front office to welcome visitors and new enrollees and their families
 - >with phoning/emailing home regarding absences
 - >outreach to the home
 - >other? (specify) _____
2. Improving school operations by assisting with
 - >school and community up-keep and beautification
 - >improving school-community relations
 - >fund raising
 - >PTA
 - >enhancing public support by increasing political awareness about the contributions and needs of the school
 - >school governance
 - >advocacy for school needs
 - >advisory councils
 - >program planning
 - >other? (specify) _____
3. Establishing home-community networks to benefit the community
4. Other? (specify) _____

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
--	-----	--------------------------------	----	------------------------------------

	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
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	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___

VI. Capacity Building to Enhance Home Involvement

A. Are there programs to enhance broad stakeholder involvement in efforts in enhancing home involvement in schools?

B. With respect to programs used to meet the educational needs of personnel related to home involvement

1. Is there ongoing training for learning supports staff with respect to enhancing home involvement?
2. Is there ongoing training for others involved in enhancing home involvement? (e.g., teachers, parent peer buddies, office staff, administrators)?
3. Other (specify) _____

	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___
	___	___	___	___

Home Involvement in Schooling (cont.)

C. Which of the following topics are covered in educating stakeholders?

1. how to facilitate family participation in decision making meetings
2. designing an inclusionary "Parent Center"
3. overcoming barriers to home involvement
4. developing group-led mutual support groups
5. developing families as a community of learners
6. available curriculum for parent education
7. teaching parents to be mentors & leaders at the school
8. Other (specify) _____

D. Indicate below other things you want the school to do in enhancing home involvement.

Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
-----	--------------------------------	----	------------------------------------

- Indicate below other ways the school enhances home involvement.

_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

- Other matters relevant to home involvement are found in the surveys on

- >Classroom-based Approaches ...
- >Support for Transitions
- >Community Involvement and Support
- >Student and Family Assistance

_____	_____	_____	_____
-------	-------	-------	-------

Example of a Self-study Survey

School-Community Collaboration: A Self-study Survey

The following survey is designed as self-study instrument related to school-community collaboration. Stakeholders can use such surveys to map and analyze the current status of their efforts.

Formal efforts to create school-community collaboration to improve school and neighborhood, involve building formal relationships to connect resources involved in preK-12 schooling and resources in the community (including formal and informal organizations such as the home, agencies involved in providing health and human services, religion, policing, justice, economic development; fostering youth development, recreation, and enrichment; as well as businesses, unions, governance bodies, and institutions of higher education).

As you work toward enhancing such collaboration, it helps to clarify what you have in place as a basis for determining what needs to be done. You will want to pay special attention to

- the mechanisms used to enhance collaboration
- clarifying what resources already are available
- how the resources are organized to work together
- what procedures are in place for enhancing resource usefulness

This type of self-study is best done by teams. For example, a group of stakeholders could use the items to discuss how well specific processes and programs are functioning and what's not being done. Members of the team initially might work separately in filling out the items, but the real payoff comes from discussing them as a group.

The instrument also can be used as a form of program quality review. In analyzing, the status of their school-community collaboration, the group may decide that some existing activity is not a high priority and that the resources should be redeployed to help establish more important programs. Other activity may be seen as needing to be embellished so that it is effective. Finally, decisions may be made regarding new desired activities, and since not everything can be added at once, priorities and time lines can be established.

School-Community Collaboration

I. Make two lists:

- 1) activity and collaborators that are focused on improving the *school* and
- 2) those focused on improving the *neighborhood* (through enhancing links with the school, including use of school facilities and resources)

II. Overview: *Areas for School-Community Collaboration*

Indicate the status of collaboration between a given school or family of schools and community with respect to each of the following areas.

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
--	-----	--------------------------------	----	------------------------------------

Indicate all items that apply

A. Improving the School (name of school(s): _____)

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. the instructional component of schooling | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. the governance and management of schooling | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. financial support for schooling | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. stakeholder development | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. school-based programs and services to address barriers to learning | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

B. Improving the Neighborhood (through enhancing linkages with the school, including use of school facilities and resources)

- | | | | | |
|---|-----|-----|-----|-----|
| 1. youth development programs | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 2. youth and family recreation and enrichment opportunities | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 3. physical health services | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 4. mental health services | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 5. programs to address psychosocial problems | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 6. basic living needs services | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 7. college prep programs | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 8. work/career programs | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 9. social services | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 10. crime and juvenile justice programs | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 11. legal assistance | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 12. support for development of neighborhood organizations | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |
| 13. economic development programs | ___ | ___ | ___ | ___ |

III. Overview: *System Status for Enhancing School-Community Collaboration*

Items 1-7 ask about what processes are in place. Use the following ratings in responding.

DK = don't know; 1 = not yet; 2 = planned; 3 = just recently initiated; 4 = has been functional for a while;
5 = well institutionalized (well established with a commitment to maintenance)

- | | | | | | | |
|---|----|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. Is there a stated policy for enhancing school-community collaboration (e.g., from the school, community agencies, government bodies)? | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| B. Is there a designated leader or leaders for enhancing school-community collaboration? | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| C. With respect to each entity involved in the school-community collaboration have specific persons been designated as representatives to meet with each other? | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| D. Do personnel involved in enhancing school-community collaboration meet regularly as a team to evaluate current status and plan next steps? | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| E. Is there a written plan for capacity building related to enhancing the school-community collaboration? | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| F. Are there written descriptions available to give all stakeholders regarding current school-community collaboration efforts? | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| G. Are there effective processes by which stakeholders learn | | | | | | |
| 1. what is available in the way of programs/services? | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. how to access programs/services they need? | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| H. In general, how effective are your local efforts to enhance school-community collaboration? | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| I. With respect to enhancing school-community collaboration, how effective are each of the following: | | | | | | |
| 1. current policy | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. designated leadership | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. designated representatives | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. team monitoring and planning of next steps | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. capacity building efforts | DK | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

IV. School-Community Collaboration to Improve the School

Indicate the status of collaboration between a given school or family of schools and community (name of school(s): _____)

Indicate all items that apply

A. Collaboration to improve school	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
1. the instructional component of schooling				
>kindergarten readiness programs	_____	_____	_____	_____
>tutoring	_____	_____	_____	_____
>mentoring	_____	_____	_____	_____
>school reform initiatives	_____	_____	_____	_____
>homework hotlines	_____	_____	_____	_____
>media/technology	_____	_____	_____	_____
>service learning	_____	_____	_____	_____
>career mentoring	_____	_____	_____	_____
>career academy programs	_____	_____	_____	_____
>adult education, ESL, literacy, citizenship classes	_____	_____	_____	_____
>others _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. the governance and management of schooling				
>PTA/PTSA	_____	_____	_____	_____
>shared leadership	_____	_____	_____	_____
>advisory bodies	_____	_____	_____	_____
>others _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. school-based programs and services to address barriers to learning				
>student and family assistance programs/services*	_____	_____	_____	_____
>transition programs*	_____	_____	_____	_____
>crisis response and prevention programs*	_____	_____	_____	_____
>home involvement programs*	_____	_____	_____	_____
>community involvement programs*	_____	_____	_____	_____
>classroom-based approaches*	_____	_____	_____	_____
>pre and inservice staff development programs	_____	_____	_____	_____
>others _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. stakeholder development				
>school staff	_____	_____	_____	_____
>staff from community programs and services	_____	_____	_____	_____
>family members	_____	_____	_____	_____
>others _____	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. financial support for schooling				
a. adopt-a-school	_____	_____	_____	_____
b. grant programs and funded projects	_____	_____	_____	_____
c. donations/fund raising	_____	_____	_____	_____
d. other _____	_____	_____	_____	_____

*See surveys for each of these arenas of school intervention.

B. Collaboration to improve *neighborhood*

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
1. youth development programs	___	___	___	___
>home visitation programs	___	___	___	___
>parent education	___	___	___	___
>infant and toddler programs	___	___	___	___
>child care/children's centers/preschool programs	___	___	___	___
>community service programs	___	___	___	___
>public health and safety programs	___	___	___	___
>leadership development programs	___	___	___	___
>others _____	___	___	___	___
2. youth/family recreation & enrichment opportunities				
>art/music/cultural programs	___	___	___	___
>parks' programs	___	___	___	___
>youth clubs	___	___	___	___
>scouts	___	___	___	___
>youth sports leagues	___	___	___	___
>community centers	___	___	___	___
>library programs	___	___	___	___
>faith community's activities	___	___	___	___
>camping programs	___	___	___	___
>others _____	___	___	___	___
3. physical health services				
>school-based/linked clinics for primary care	___	___	___	___
>immunization clinics	___	___	___	___
>communicable disease control programs	___	___	___	___
>EPSDT programs	___	___	___	___
>pro bono/volunteer programs	___	___	___	___
>AIDS/HIV programs	___	___	___	___
>asthma programs	___	___	___	___
>pregnant and parenting minors programs	___	___	___	___
>dental services	___	___	___	___
>vision and hearing services	___	___	___	___
>referral facilitation	___	___	___	___
>emergency care	___	___	___	___
>others _____	___	___	___	___
4. mental health services				
>school-based/linked clinics w/ MH component	___	___	___	___
>EPSDT mental health focus	___	___	___	___
>pro bono/volunteer programs	___	___	___	___
>referral facilitation	___	___	___	___
>counseling	___	___	___	___
>crisis hotlines	___	___	___	___
>others _____	___	___	___	___
5. programs to address psychosocial problems				
>conflict mediation/resolution	___	___	___	___
>substance abuse	___	___	___	___
>community/school safe havens	___	___	___	___
>safe passages	___	___	___	___
>youth violence prevention	___	___	___	___
>gang alternatives	___	___	___	___
>pregnancy prevention and counseling	___	___	___	___
>case management of programs for high risk youth	___	___	___	___
>child abuse and domestic violence programs	___	___	___	___
>others _____	___	___	___	___

B. Collaboration to improve *neighborhood* (cont.)

	Yes	Yes but more of this is needed	No	If no, is this something you want?
6. basic living needs services				
>food	---	---	---	---
>clothing	---	---	---	---
>housing	---	---	---	---
>child care	---	---	---	---
>transportation assistance	---	---	---	---
>others _____	---	---	---	---
7. work/career/higher education programs				
>college prep programs	---	---	---	---
>job mentoring	---	---	---	---
>job shadowing	---	---	---	---
>job programs and employment opportunities	---	---	---	---
>others _____	---	---	---	---
8. social services				
>school-based/linked family resource centers	---	---	---	---
>integrated services initiatives	---	---	---	---
>budgeting/financial management counseling	---	---	---	---
>family preservation and support	---	---	---	---
>foster care school transition programs	---	---	---	---
>case management	---	---	---	---
>immigration and cultural transition assistance	---	---	---	---
>language translation	---	---	---	---
>others _____	---	---	---	---
9. crime and juvenile justice programs				
>camp returnee programs	---	---	---	---
>children's court liaison	---	---	---	---
>truancy mediation	---	---	---	---
>juvenile diversion programs with school	---	---	---	---
>probation services at school	---	---	---	---
>police protection programs	---	---	---	---
>others _____	---	---	---	---
10. legal assistance				
>legal aide programs	---	---	---	---
>others _____	---	---	---	---
11. support for development of neighborhood organizations				
>neighborhood protective associations	---	---	---	---
>emergency response planning and implementation	---	---	---	---
>neighborhood coalitions and advocacy groups	---	---	---	---
>volunteer services	---	---	---	---
>welcoming clubs	---	---	---	---
>social support networks	---	---	---	---
>others _____	---	---	---	---
12. economic development and housing programs				
>empowerment zones	---	---	---	---
>urban village programs	---	---	---	---
>accessing affordable housing	---	---	---	---
>others _____	---	---	---	---