

Is Our Group a Partnership Action Team?

Questions for Teams

Schools convene many groups of parents, teachers, school staff, and community members who consider and discuss school-related issues, but does your school truly have a Partnership Action Teams? Action Teams have a structure, function, and goals different from most school groups and are essential for family-school-community partnerships to be effective, long-lasting, and meaningful.

Schools sometimes call their Action Teams by various names. Other times, schools refer to the school site council or the parent group board as their "Partnership Action Team." Following, are a few questions to help determine if your school group really **functions** as a Partnership Action Team. Whatever group is selected to steer them, partnerships in your school deserve focused energy, time, and commitment.

Membership

- Yes No 1. Is our team composed of two to three parents and teachers representing various grade levels, other school staff, community members, and the principal?
- Yes No 2. Does our team include a liaison with the school improvement (or site-based management) team to keep both groups informed of each other's goals, issues, and activities?

A Partnership Action Team typically has 6 to 12 members and includes:

- The school principal
- Two or three teachers from different grade levels
- Two or three parents with children in different grade levels
- The parent liaison
- A PTA/PTO officer or representative
- Two students from different grade levels (on middle and high school ATPs).

It can also include other school staff members and community members informed about and in contact with families.

Activities

Does our team do the following:

- Yes No Sometimes 3. Spend most of its time planning and carrying out activities that involve families in children's learning throughout the school year?
- Yes No Sometimes 4. Commit school resources – space, funds, staff time, materials — to involving families in children's learning at school and at home?
- Yes No Sometimes 5. Develop and schedule family involvement activities using the ideas and suggestions of families?

- Yes No 6. Keep families and the community informed about activities designed to promote family involvement in school and student learning?
 Sometimes

School Goals

Does our school do the following:

- Yes No 7. Have school goals that clearly state the desire for and value of involving families in the school and in children's learning?
 Sometimes

- Yes No 8. Take steps to engage the family of **every** child in school?
 Sometimes

- Yes No 9. Keep all school committees* whose work relates to families informed about ideas and efforts to involve families in the school and in children's learning?
 Sometimes

**Other school committees include the school improvement or site council, the school parent group, school faculty, and other groups.*

So, do you have a Partnership Action Team?

If you answered "Yes" to all or most of the questions, you most likely have a Partnership Action Team in place. Keep meeting and acting!

If you answered "Yes" only to the questions about **membership**, your group has a structure appropriate for a partnership action team, but may need to more focus on the involvement of **families** in the school, to be doing the work of a Partnership Action Team.

If you answered "Yes" only to the questions about **activities**, your group may be doing wonderful things to involve families. A Partnership Action Team is a great way to ensure that the activities and focus on families remains a **permanent** part of your school infrastructure, even when school administrators, school staff, or parent leaders change.

If you answered "Yes" only to **school goals**, your intentions are good, but you may need more people and time to make family involvement happen in your school. A Partnership Action Team provides the "people power" and collective effort required to meaningfully involve families in the activities and goals of the school.