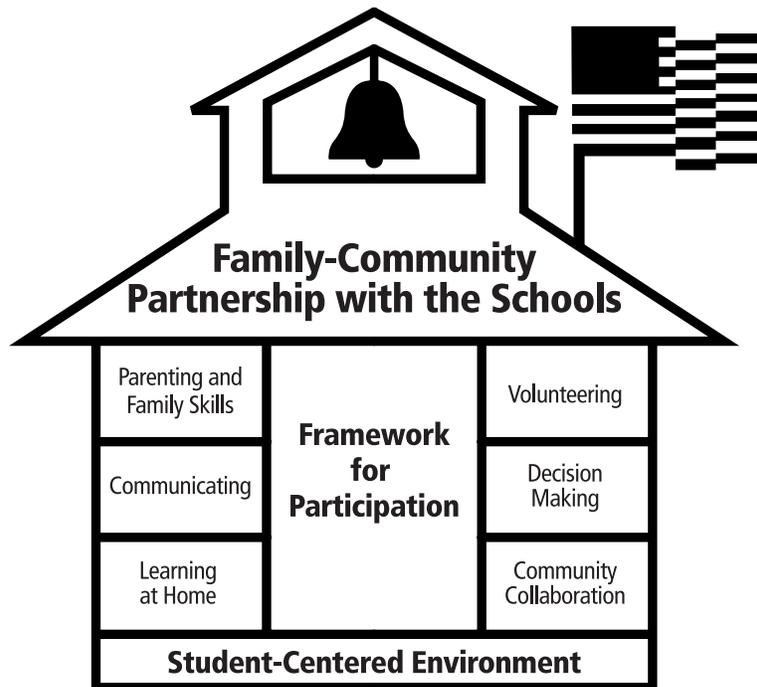


# Measuring Your Family-School-Community Partnerships

## A Tool for Schools



How does your school reach out to and involve families and the community in children's learning? This tool is based on the Six Types of Partnerships. It can help your school

- Assess the strength of the partnerships it conducts,
- Indicate the focus or direction of your partnerships, and
- Identify areas that can be changed.

Your school may do all, some, or none of the activities or approaches listed. Not every activity is appropriate for every grade level. The items listed were selected because they show that schools in which they happen are meeting the challenge to involve families in many different ways. These activities can improve school climate, strengthen families, and increase student learning.

Your school may also be conducting other activities. Be sure to add them under each type of involvement and include them in your school's assessment of its key partnership practices.

**DIRECTIONS:** Review the rating scale that follows. For each item, write the rating number that comes closest to describing your school. Practices that are strong and prominent will receive a score of 4. Practices rated 1, 2, or 3 are not yet part of the school's program or need improvement.

After rating your school partnership practices, use the three Discussion Questions on the back page to assess the strengths, goals, and direction of your school partnerships for the next one to three years. Ask the members of your school Partnership Action Team or another parent-teacher decision-making group to participate in this process.

### Rating Scale

1. **Never.** This strategy does not happen at our school.
2. **Rarely.** Happens in only one or two classrooms or classes. Receives isolated use or little time. Clearly not emphasized in the school's parent involvement plan.
3. **Sometimes.** Happens in some classes. Receives minimal or modest time or emphasis across grades. Included in, but not a notable part, of the school's parent involvement plan.
4. **Frequently.** Happens in most or all classes or grade levels. Receives substantial time and emphasis. An important part of the school's parent involvement plan.

## 1. Parenting and Family Skills

Schools can help families build on their strengths and parenting skills. Schools can identify resources and support to help families nurture children. *Please rate using the scale on the right.*

### Rating Scale

1. **Never**
2. **Rarely**
3. **Sometimes**
4. **Frequently**

#### Our School

- \_\_\_ Offers workshops and information for parents on child and adolescent development.
- \_\_\_ Reaches all families who want or need parenting information or assistance, not just the few who can attend meetings at school.
- \_\_\_ Makes sure that information for families is clear, usable, offered in a variety of ways and languages, and linked to children's learning.
- \_\_\_ Surveys families about the topics and issues they want information on.
- \_\_\_ Asks families about their children's strengths, goals, and learning styles.
- \_\_\_ Gives parents ideas and information on creating a "learning-friendly" environment at home.
- \_\_\_ Offers opportunities for parents to meet, network, and share parenting ideas.

#### Other Parenting and Family Skills efforts:

## 2. Communicating

Schools can plan and conduct workable methods of two-way communication—from school to home and from home to school. Communications, whether to groups or individual families, should focus on the child's learning. *Please rate using the above scale.*

#### Our School

- \_\_\_ Schedules parent-teacher-student conferences to monitor student progress at times convenient for parents.
- \_\_\_ Informs parents how and when they can reach teachers during and beyond the school day to talk about their child's learning.
- \_\_\_ Provides ways for parents to comment on school programs and activities, such as surveys, e-mail, comment forms, and others.
- \_\_\_ Develops ways to communicate with parents who do not speak or read English well, including providing translators and videotaped messages.

- \_\_\_ Provides parents with clear, regular information about children's progress, including information on testing, report cards, and the curriculum.
- \_\_\_ Convenes teachers and support staff to meet with and listen to parents of children with academic or behavior concerns.
- \_\_\_ Trains school staff on the value of and need for building effective ties with parents and the community.
- \_\_\_ Conducts these activities that research has shown improve children's learning:
  - (a) Sponsors orientations for families new to the school
  - (b) Produces a regular school or district newsletter
  - (c) Sends home weekly folders of students' work
  - (d) Staff makes home visits
- \_\_\_ Builds policies that encourage teachers to communicate frequently with parents about the curriculum, homework expectations, and how parents can help.

#### Other Communicating Activities

## 3. Learning at Home

Provide ways for families and school staff to, together, develop learning goals and continue children's learning at home and in the community to meet the goals. *Please rate using the above scale.*

#### Our School

- \_\_\_ Gives families information about how to keep track of, discuss, and support schoolwork at home.
- \_\_\_ Gives families information about skills required for their children in each subject.
- \_\_\_ Gives families information about how to help their children in areas that need improvement.
- \_\_\_ Helps families and students set academic goals and select courses and programs.
- \_\_\_ Makes families aware of the importance of reading daily to or with children.
- \_\_\_ Makes families aware of resources and programs in the community that promote learning.

#### Other Learning at Home Activities

#### 4. Volunteering

Recruit and organize volunteer help from families and the community. *Please rate using the scale on the right.*

##### Rating Scale

1. **Never**
2. **Rarely**
3. **Sometimes**
4. **Frequently**

##### Our School

- \_\_\_ Offers flexible volunteer opportunities and schedules that allow all parents to participate.
- \_\_\_ Has a family center or other space where families and community members can volunteer, meet, and access resources that enhance their child's learning and development.
- \_\_\_ Schedules school events at different times of the day and evening so all parents can attend.
- \_\_\_ Surveys families annually to match parent interests, talents, and availability with school and classroom needs.
- \_\_\_ Provides childcare, transportation, translators, and food to eliminate barriers preventing some families from participating in school events.
- \_\_\_ Trains volunteers so their time is used effectively.
- \_\_\_ Recognizes volunteers for their time and effort.
- \_\_\_ Encourages families, students, and the community to be involved with the school in a variety of ways (tutoring, assisting with activities, giving talks, etc.)

##### Other Volunteering Activities

#### 5. Decision making

Include parents in school decisions to develop leaders and represent all families in the school. *Please rate using the above scale.*

##### Our School

- \_\_\_ Has an active PTA, PTO, or other parent group.
- \_\_\_ Includes parent representatives on the school's advisory council, improvement team, site-based management team, or other committees.

- \_\_\_ Involves parents in organized, ongoing, and timely ways to plan, review, and improve school programs.
- \_\_\_ Involves parents in revising school and district curricula.
- \_\_\_ Has parent leaders who represent the ethnic and socioeconomic diversity of all students in the school.
- \_\_\_ Asks parents to help plan and develop out-of-school programs.
- \_\_\_ Includes students (with parents) in decision-making groups.

##### Other Decision-making Activities

#### 6. Collaborating with the Community

Identify and connect community resources to strengthen families, school programs, and student learning. *Please rate using the above scale.*

##### Our School

- \_\_\_ Makes staff available to help families locate and use community resources.
- \_\_\_ Works with local businesses, parks, museums, libraries, and civic groups to enrich student and adult learning and skills.
- \_\_\_ Provides parents and students with a resource directory listing community services, programs, and agencies.
- \_\_\_ Makes the school building available for community use outside of regular school hours.
- \_\_\_ Offers after-school programs for students, supported by local businesses, agencies and volunteers.
- \_\_\_ Informs and involves community members in school building and district decision-making.
- \_\_\_ Tackles funding, staffing, and location issues that may arise so collaborative activities may occur.

##### Other Community Collaboration Activities

## Discussion Questions

**Question A.** What major factors **contributed** to the success of your school's family and community partnerships this year?

**Question B.** What major factors **limited** the success of your school's family and community partnerships this year?

**Question C.** What is one of your school's major goals for **improving** its partnerships program over the next three years?

Name of person completing this assessment (optional):

Role:

for Grade level(s):

School: