

Communicating and Collaborating with Families and the Community about PBS

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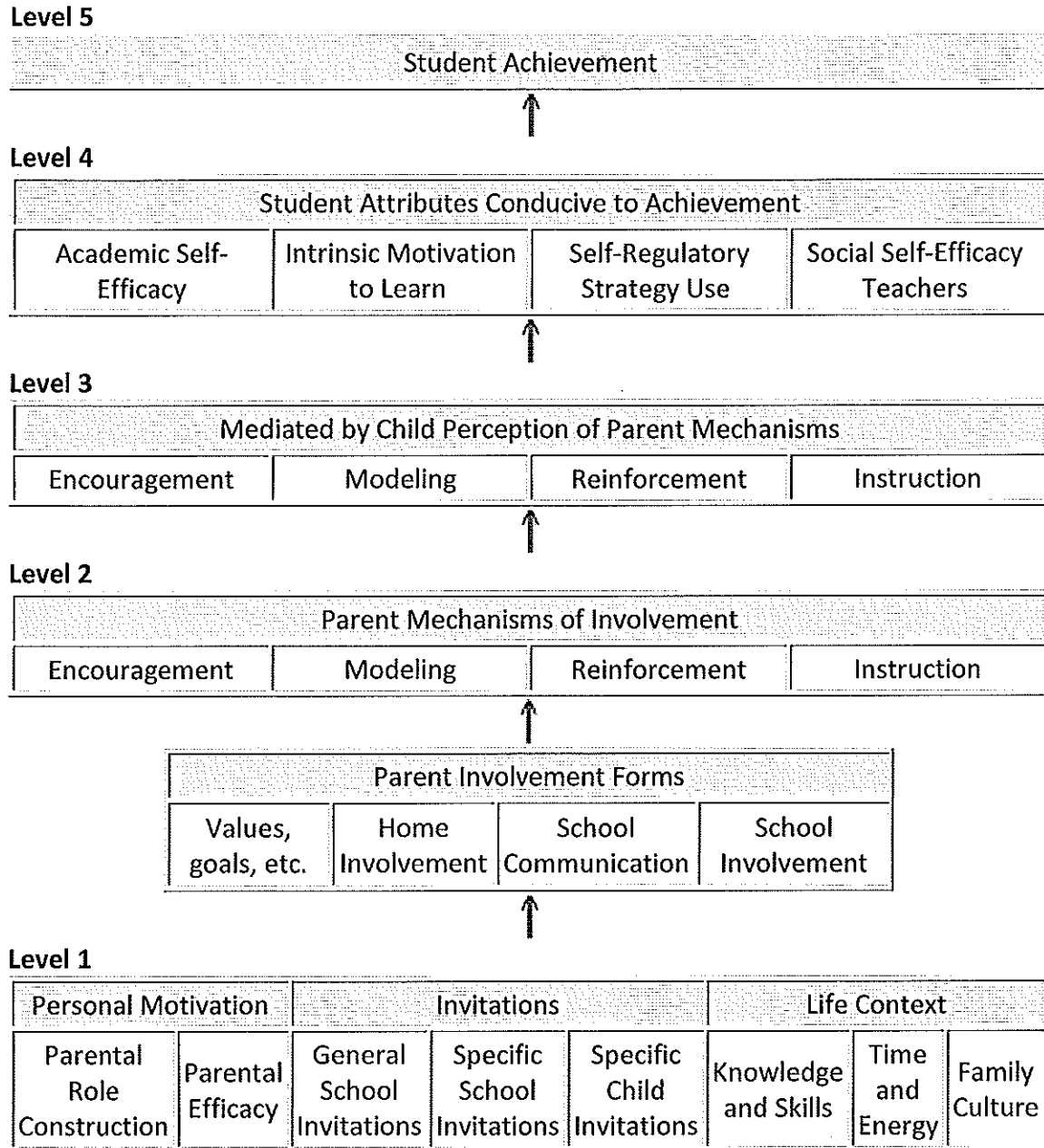
**The University of Oregon Institute on Violence and Destructive
Behavior**

Session Goals

- Describe PBS in schools
- Discuss why it's critical to involve parents and the Community in PBS systems
- Outline effective methods for communicating with parents and community members about PBS and effective childrearing
 - Invitation
 - Encourage effective communication
 - Things to avoid when working with parents
 - Seven skills for school success

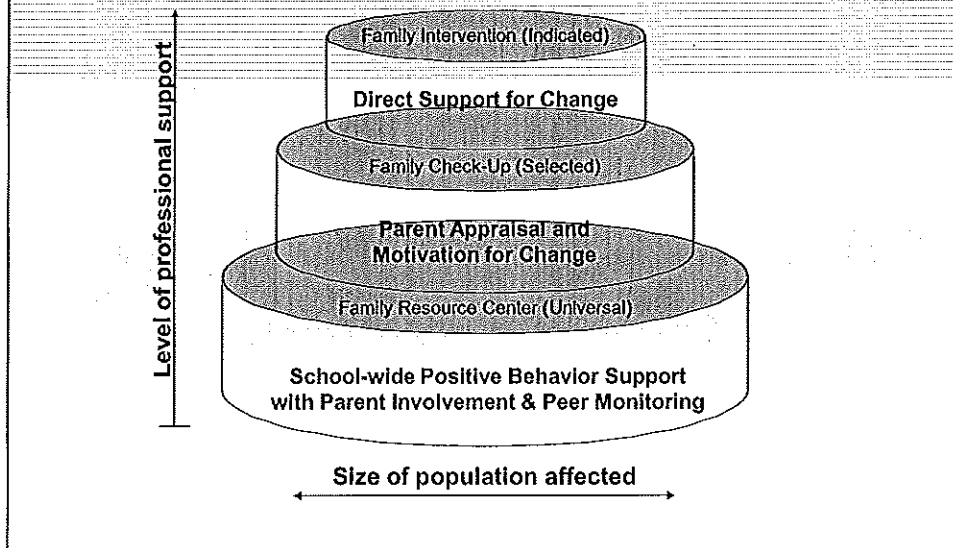
The Model

The Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler Model of Parental Involvement



Adapted from Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; 2005.

A Multilevel Model for Parenting Interventions Within a PBS Framework



Positive Behavior Support Information for Families

Positive Behavior Support (PBS) is an approach used at our school to support students' success. This information sheet describes what PBS is, how it is used at our school, and how you can get involved in PBS to help your student succeed.

What is Positive Behavior Support (PBS)?

PBS is an approach for supporting students' academic success by making schools more safe, predictable, and supportive of all students. It is based on over 40 years of scientific research and work in schools, and is used in thousands of schools across the country. Through PBS, we put routines in place that help all students be successful with their behavior. We consider all of the things (both positive and negative) that might affect students and their behavior in school. Through PBS, we also pay attention to understanding why a student may be showing challenging behaviors at school, and then create a personalized strategy to help that student succeed.

How is Positive Behavior Support used in our school?

PBS uses strategies that are respectful and tailored to each student's behavior, learning and communication style, and strengths. The strategies are focused on helping the student control negative behaviors, have positive social interactions, develop friendships, improve communication skills, and develop school success skills in a healthy nurturing environment.

PBS offers different levels of support to students and their families. First, for all students in our school, we set the following behavioral expectations: *Be Safe, Be Respectful, and Be Responsible*. We regularly teach what these expectations mean, and we recognize and reward students when these expectations are followed. We also focus on positive adult supervision in common areas such as hallways, lunchroom, and recreational areas.

A second level of support that PBS offers is identifying the purpose and function of a student's challenging behaviors that are interfering with his or her learning. After we study these behaviors and get an understanding of them, we develop a behavior support plan to reduce them. We also teach and practice positive behaviors to take their place, as well as positive ways to cope with stresses, such as peer conflicts or academic difficulties, that can affect learning.

How do parents get involved?

If your child is having some behavioral, social or emotional difficulties that are interfering with school success, then he or she could benefit from PBS.

What we discover at school is shared with parents, and we encourage students to practice these new skills and behaviors both at home and at school to strengthen them. We have

learned that the more these behaviors are practiced, the sooner the child will experience better learning and positive relations with teachers and other students. You can help your child benefit by giving him or her praise and positive attention for positive behaviors, by providing opportunities to practice these positive behaviors, and by partnering with our school to ensure your students' success.

Family Support Systems

Current Status			Feature	Priority for Improvement		
In Place	Partial in Place	Not in Place		High	Med	Low
			Family systems are defined as school driven activities to invite and empower parents to support their child's success in school.			
			1. Staff endorse family support and collaboration as one of the top goals of their school.			
			2. The school has defined systems for regular, positive contacts with families.			
			3. Families are active participants in supporting whole school discipline systems.			
			4. There is a staff person in the school assigned to support families.			
			5. At least one parent is a member of the whole school positive behavior support team.			
			6. Teachers are informed at least annually about best practice parenting principles.			
			7. The school supports good parenting practices by providing information and support to families.			
			8. Office staff has the ability to welcome and answer questions for any parent at their school who is not a native English speaker.			
			9. There is a family room in the school with materials on parenting and school success (in a variety of modes such as brochures, audio, video, internet sites).			
			10. Teachers have information for non-English speaking parents in their native language.			
			11. School staff provide regular information to parents about school events.			
			12. School events are scheduled at family friendly times in the evenings after normal work hours.			
			13. Teachers provide specific information to parents relevant to child's attendance,			

Current Status			Feature	Priority for Improvement		
In Place	Partial in Place	Not in Place		High	Med	Low
			Family systems are defined as school driven activities to invite and empower parents to support their child's success in school.			
			behavior, school assignments, and successes.			
			14. There is a system in place to encourage family support of academics (homework support, school engagement).			
			15. The school has a system and methods for parents to self assess developmental and behavior management needs for their children.			
			16. Parents are informed by the teacher about a school-based problem right away (usually within 2 days).			
			17. Home visits are provided by the parent resource personnel and school counselors.			

NH Center for Effective Behavioral Interventions and Supports (NH-CEBIS)

"Committed to the emotional well-being of all New Hampshire's children."

A SERESC / Rivier College Partnership

Family Engagement Checklist

Muscott & Mann, 2004

Adapted from Epstein (2003) and Fullen (1991)

School: _____ Team: _____ Date: _____

STATUS: In place Partially in place Not in place	TASK	PRIORITY: High Medium Low
	Climate	
	1. There is a process for assessing how welcomed, valued, and satisfied parents are in and with the school.	
	2. There is a plan for addressing ways to help families feel welcomed and valued.	
	3. There is a plan for training all staff to work collaboratively and respectfully with families.	
	4. Plans for addressing ways to help families feel welcomed and valued address diverse families including those with students in the universal, targeted and intensive levels of PBIS.	
	Parent Involvement in Learning Activities at Home	
	5. There is a process for assessing parents' opinions about their own involvement in learning activities at home.	
	6. There is a plan or set of activities for helping families to support their child's learning at home.	
	7. The plan includes activities for helping diverse families, including those with students in the universal, targeted and intensive levels of PBIS, support their child's learning.	
	Communication with Parents/Families	
	8. There is a process for assessing parents' opinions about how well schools communicate with them.	
	9. There is a plan for communicating with families in varied and helpful ways.	

STATUS: In place Partially in place Not in place	TASK	PRIORITY: High Medium Low
	10. The plan includes activities for communicating with diverse families, including those with students in the universal, targeted and intensive levels of PBIS, about important school/home matters including discipline.	
	Parent/Family Involvement at School (Volunteering, Assisting)	
	11. There is a process for assessing parents' opinions about how they can support schools through their involvement at school.	
	12. There is a plan for how parents can be involved in supporting learning at school through volunteering and assisting.	
	13. The plan for parental involvement in school activities addresses how diverse families, including those with students in the universal, targeted and intensive levels of PBIS, can participate.	
	Parent/Family Involvement in Decision-Making	
	14. There is a process for assessing parents' opinions about the extent to which they are encouraged to participate in decision-making committees and activities (e.g., leadership teams).	
	15. There is a plan for encouraging and supporting parent participation in decision-making committees and activities.	
	16. The plan for parental participation in decision-making committees and activities addresses how diverse families, including those with students in the universal, targeted and intensive levels of PBIS, can participate.	
	17. There is a process for assessing parents' opinions about the extent to which they can provide input to school personnel about matters of importance including discipline that is taken seriously.	
	18. There is a plan for gathering and incorporating parents' input about matters of importance including discipline that is taken seriously.	
	19. The plan for gathering and incorporating parents' input about matters of importance including discipline addresses how diverse families, including those with students in the universal, targeted and intensive levels of PBIS, can be heard.	

Parent Communication Log

Date	Type	With	Requested By	Reason	Outcome

Letter of Introduction

Dear Parents,

Welcome to our school and classroom! I am looking forward to the school year and getting to know each of you and your child.

You are welcome to leave a message for me at school (phone #0, or email me (XXXXX@XXX.net)) and I will try to get back to you in the same day.

At Riverbend school, we are safe, respectful and responsible. Over the first few weeks of school we will be explaining and teaching expected behavior to our students across the whole school. I will send home notes reminding you to discuss good behavior with your child.

Respectfully,

Teacher Name

Sample Classroom Calendar

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
13	14	15	16	17
Math Lab Be respectful in the Cafeteria Read chapters 1 & 2 social studies textbook Study spelling words	Study spelling words Homework: Math worksheet 1	Study spelling words Homework: Read Chapter 1 of "Moby Dick"	Study spelling words	Spelling Test Classwide "Good Behavior" drawing

Sample Classroom Newsletter

Riverview Tigers are Safe, Respectful and Responsible!

From Ms. Jones,

We are off to a good start this year. We all have learned to use the cafeteria and playground appropriately, and all classrooms routines have been taught and reviewed.

Ask your child to tell you what being "respectful" on the playground means, and encourage her/him to keep up the good work!

Research shows the importance of parent encouragement of school work, so please talk with your child daily about required work and schedule a set time for homework everyday.

New Activity

We are preparing for our field trip to the planetarium by reading books on astronomy. You can support your child by talking about the stars, space etc. I will be sending home some "parent tips" on Wednesday to help you.

Student of the week

Our student of the week this week is Maria Gomez. Her classmates will thank her each morning for being safe, respectful and responsible!

Parent Orientation Night

On September 29, we will have our first open house and you are encouraged to come and learn about all of the new things your child is doing. Child care will be provided for no charge to encourage your attendance!

Good News Note or Postcard

Name: _____

Date: _____

I am sending this good news note home because your child has been

Safe _____

Respectful _____

Responsible _____

Demonstrating good behavior in school is a key to success, and we all appreciate it! Be sure to let your child know how proud you are!

Sincerely,

Daily Home-School Communication Sheet

Today is: _____

1st Period: Math with Ms. Jones in Room X03.

2nd Period: English with Ms. Jones in Room X03.

3rd Period: P.E. with Mr. Wesson in the Gym.

4th Period: Computers with Mrs. Byte in Room 210.

LUNCH: (Best Buddies and Interact every other Tuesday in X02)

5th Period: Reading with Ms. Elmer in Room X03.

6th Period: Social Studies with Ms. Elmer in Room X03.

Homework/Comments:

Parent Signature: _____

Parent Comments/Questions:

Self Management Checklist or School Home Note Sample

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Behavior Goals:

1. Arrive on time
2. Complete work
3. Stop and Listen

Allow student to rate her behavior first. Then initial if you agree.

	Arrive on Time	Complete work	Stop and Listen	Teacher Initial
Morning Check In	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
Math	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
Reading	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
Social Studies	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
Lunch	Yes/No	n/a	Yes/No	
Language arts	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
Music	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
Science	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
Afternoon Check Out	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	
Total for Goal	/9	/9	/9	/9

Reward:

Parent Signature and Date:

Resources

Walker, Ramsey, Gresham (2004) Antisocial Behavior in School Chapter 9. Available from:
www.wadsworth.com

Sprague & Golly (2004), Best Behavior: Building Positive Behavior Supports in Schools. Chapter
18 Available from: www.sopriswest.com

- National Network of Partnership Schools
 - www.partnershipschools.org
- UO Child and Family Center
 - <http://cfc.uoregon.edu/>
- The Family-school partnership lab
 - <http://www.vanderbilt.edu/Peabody/family-school/index.html>
- Triple P Parenting
 - <http://www.triplep.net/>
- Incredible Years
 - <http://www.incredibleyears.com/Program/parent.asp>

Respecting All Families

An Excerpt from Teaching Tolerance's free kit, Starting Small: Teaching Tolerance in Preschool and the Early Grades

Schools that operate on a single cultural model will have difficulty providing meaningful services to all children. Teachers must be aware that universal lessons and activities directed to a "typical" U.S. child minimize learning opportunities because they do not take into account the unique family background and knowledge-in-progress that each child brings to school.

The following activities will help you discern and celebrate family diversity in the classroom. They will also encourage you to gain knowledge of other cultures, as well as deeper understanding of you own family experiences. Changes in your own and your students' attitudes and behaviors and in your interaction with classroom families will help you evaluate and plan your program.

Value the cultural knowledge children bring to school by acknowledging family diversity through discussion, affirmation and celebration. For example:

- » **View linguistic and cultural diversity as strengths (e.g., bilingualism is an asset).**
- » **Use books and other resources that reflect all kinds of families.**
- » **Display pictures that children draw of their families, or have each child make a page in a class book titled "Our Families."**
- » **Discuss feelings and experiences children choose to share about what makes their family special.**
- » **Avoid family-related activities that potentially exclude some children (e.g., holding a Mother's Tea, making Father's Day cards, creating "family trees").**
- » **Observe a "Someone Special Day" and have children make gifts and invite significant others of their choice to school for breakfast, a play, a concert or other event.**

Build cultural continuity between home and school to encourage parent involvement in school activities. For example:

- » **Seek ways to communicate with parents in their home language.**
- » **Encourage and foster home-language learning by explaining to families that language skills learned in the home language transfer to the second language.**
- » **Invite parents to share cultural knowledge such as traditional stories or songs, or to demonstrate job skills or unique talents.**
- » **Participate in in-service training courses that will assist you in working with culturally diverse children and their families.**
- » **Provide workshops for parents on meaningful topics bases on their interests and needs (e.g., classes on English language, parenting).**
- » **Identify any adverse social factors (such as poor nutrition, abuse, homelessness, parental depression, violence and drugs) that may affect your classroom families, and bring in experts to advise staff and/or small groups of parents on more effectively meeting the needs of children exposed to these circumstances.**

Explore your own family background as well as the diversity specific to your classroom community. For example:

- » **Examine how your ethnicity, religion, lifestyle and economic status guide your perceptions, attitudes and behaviors.**
- » **Invite speakers to your staff meetings to explain the basic tenets of religions practiced in your school community.**
- » **Use parent conferences and community resources to increase your understanding of the various cultural groups represented in your school.**

The Mid-Atlantic Equity Center Parent Involvement Survey

School: _____ Date: _____

Number of Children: ___ Grade level(s): Pre-K K 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 (circle all that apply)

Language(s) spoken at home: _____ County of origin: _____

The _____ Public School system is working to strengthen partnerships between schools and families in order to help children perform better in school. In order to continue to do so, they would like to collect as much information as possible regarding the involvement of parents of diverse backgrounds and the schools their children attend. The purpose of this survey is to get your opinion on how well the schools have met your family's and children's needs and how do you feel about your and/or the involvement of other parents in the schools. There are no right or wrong answers. We are only interested in your opinions. The findings of the survey will be summarized and used to make improvements.

DIRECTIONS: Please circle or check the selection that most closely matches your answer for each item. The last page provides room for written comments.

A. PARENTING

1. Last year, did the school sponsor workshops or courses to help parents understand and work with children?

Yes No Do not know

2. Approximately how many workshops or courses did the school provide for parents on parenting skills (e.g. discipline, child development, etc) last year?

1 2-3 4-5 6 or more Do not know

3. How many workshops or courses did you or your family attend last year?

1 2-3 4-5 6 or more

4. If you did attend workshops or courses, overall, were they well prepared and interesting?

Yes always
 Usually
 Not usually
 Never

5. If you did attend workshops or courses, overall, did they provide you with useful information?

- Yes always
- Usually
- Not usually
- Never

6. Are workshops or courses provided in different languages? Are interpreters used?

- No, workshops are only in English
- Yes, workshops are in different languages (specify other languages: _____)
- Yes, interpreters are available (specify other languages: _____)
- I do not know

7. If you did not attend many workshops, please specify why (check all that apply):

- I was not provided with enough information or notice
- Workshops were not held at convenient times
- No child care was available
- Workshop information provided is difficult for parents to understand
- I am not interested in workshop topics

8. If you attended workshops, respond to the following:

STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The workshops helped me better understand my child's needs				
I have used the techniques offered in the workshops				
I believe that my child has improved his/her skills and/or behaviors as a result of using the techniques suggested in the workshops				

9. How much of the following information has the school provided to you or your family:

Topic	A lot	Some	Very little	None
Child development and parenting				
How to support learning at home				
Discipline techniques				

B. COMMUNICATION

10. When you visit your child's school . . .

Question	Yes	Somewhat	No
Is the reception staff friendly and helpful?			
Are the teachers easy to talk to?			

Is the principal easy to talk to?			
Do you feel comfortable interacting with parents of cultural & ethnic backgrounds different from yours?			

11. Are written communications from school, such as report cards and newsletters . . .

12. Available in a language you understand?

Yes No

13. Clearly written?

Yes No

14. The best way to communicate with you and/or your family is: (check your two preferred methods)

- School memos
- Children's teachers
- PTA newsletter
- Parent liaison
- Counselor
- Parent representative (your own culture)
- Parent representative (of any given culture)

15. How many parent-teacher conferences did you attend last year?

None 1 2 or more

16. Did you receive sufficient information about:

Category	Yes	Somewhat	No
English-as-a-second language programs			
Special education programs			
Gifted & talented programs			
Bilingual education programs			
Title I programs			
Report cards			
Standardized testing			

17. How often do you communicate with teachers about your child's performance?

Often A little Never

18. Are report card grades fully explained to you?

Yes Somewhat No

19. Are standardized tests fully explained to you?

Yes Somewhat No

20. Does the school provide translators, when needed, for:

21. Parent conferences?

Yes No Not Sure

22. Private individual meetings?

Yes No Not Sure

23. When requested by parent?

Yes No Not Sure

C. VOLUNTEERING

24. Were you asked about your interests, talents, and availability for volunteering at school?

Yes
 No

25. Last year, did you volunteer at school?

Yes No

26. If you did volunteer, please indicate for what type of activity and the frequency:

Activity	Never	1 Time	2-3 Times	3+ Times
Helping on trips or at parties				
Sharing food, stories and customs from your culture				
Assisting in the classroom (e.g., tutoring, grading papers, etc.)				
Leading club and/or activities				
Other (please specify) _____				

27. If you have not volunteered at school, please indicate why:

- Have never been asked
- I don't know how
- Conflict with work schedule
- Have other children to care for
- I do not feel comfortable
- Not interested
- Other (please specify) _____

D. LEARNING AT HOME

28. Do teachers suggest homework activities for you and your child?

Often Sometimes Very Little Never

29. Do you listen to your child read or read aloud to your child?

Often Sometimes Very Little Never

30. Is the information related to home learning activities provided in different languages?

No, information only in English
 Yes, information is in different languages (specify other languages: _____)
 I do not know

E. DECISION MAKING

31. Does the school have an active parent-teacher organization (e.g. PTA, PTO)?

Yes No Do not know

32. If yes, how many parent-teacher organization meetings have you attended?

1 2 or more None

33. Are parents involved in planning and evaluating school programs?

Yes No Do not know

34. If yes, have you participated on any school councils or committees?

Yes (please specify: _____)
 No, I have not participated on any school councils or committees.

35. Does the school actively seek ideas from parents on school-related issues (e.g. selecting staff, developing programs)?

Yes No Do not know

36. If yes, have you given your ideas or advice on school-related issues?

Yes (please specify _____)
 No, I have not offered my ideas or advice on school-related issues
 No, I have not been asked for my ideas or advice on school-related issues

37. Which of these statements best reflect your opinion and/or level of participation?

--	--

23

STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
I feel my opinion is taken in consideration when it comes to school policy decisions.				
I actively participate in PTA meetings.				
I actively participate in school committees and/or school improvement teams.				
School staff consider my opinion when it comes to decisions concerning my child.				
I don't feel part of the decision making body at the school at any level.				
I believe Latino parents are very involved in decision making at the school.				
I have not been asked for my ideas or advice on school-related issues.				

38. Would you like to participate more in school decisions? (Please check all that apply.)

- Yes, I would like to participate more but I don't feel encouraged by the school.
- Yes, I would like to participate more but I do not know how to get involved.
- Yes, I would like to participate more but I do not have time.
- Yes, I would like to participate more but communicating in English is difficult for me.
- Yes, I would like to participate more but I do not understand the issues very well.
- Yes, I would like to participate more but I do not feel comfortable.
- No, I am not interested in participating in school decision making.
- No, I would rather become involved in other school activities.
- Other reasons: _____

F. COMMUNITY COLLABORATION

39. Does the school participate in events planned by members of the ethnic community?

- Yes No Do not know

40. Does the school provide any of the following support programs for families of diverse educational and linguistic backgrounds?

Family literacy programs

PROGRAM	Yes	No	Do not know
G.E.D. programs			
English-as-a-second-language programs			
Computer training programs			

41. In which of these support programs have you participated?

Family literacy programs

PROGRAM	Yes	No
G.E.D. programs		
English-as-a-second-language programs		
Computer training programs		

42. What kind of support programs would you like the school to offer to you and your family?

- Family literacy programs
- G.E.D. programs
- English-as-a-second language programs
- Computer training programs
- Other programs:

(1) _____

(2) _____

43. What is your opinion about the following statements? Please indicate.

STATEMENT	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The school provides information about community organizations that support my child's learning.				
The school participates in community events organized by diverse ethnic groups				
The parent liaison assists parents and communities to become more involved in the schools				

44. What best describes your education level

- Informal Education
- Elementary School
- High School
- Trade school/Community College degree
- College degree
- Master's/Doctorate degree

45. What best describes your household?

- Two parents or guardians, both working outside the home
- Two parents or guardians, one working outside the home
- Two parents or guardians, none working outside the home
- One parent or guardian, working outside the home
- One parent or guardian not working outside the home
- Other, please specify _____

46. Do any other relatives (or other persons) live in your home? Please specify.

47. Other comments or suggestions on how the school can create better connections with families:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION IN COMPLETING THIS FORM.

[Return to MAEC Homepage](#)

Parent Survey

I am comfortable approaching my child's teacher with problems or concerns.

NEVER					ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5	
<i>(circle one)</i>					

I am comfortable approaching my child's teacher for periodic progress checks.

NEVER					ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5	
<i>(circle one)</i>					

I know my child's teacher has the best interests of my child in mind and practice.

NEVER					ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5	
<i>(circle one)</i>					

I know my child's teacher is interested in my child as a person.

NEVER					ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5	
<i>(circle one)</i>					

I know my child's teacher expects my child to master new skills and achieve at high levels.

NEVER					ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5	
<i>(circle one)</i>					

My child is actively engaged in the classroom.

NEVER					ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5	
<i>(circle one)</i>					

My child is eager to go to school and has a positive view of his/her teacher.

NEVER					ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5	
<i>(circle one)</i>					

My child's classroom is a safe and happy place where learning is the primary activity.

NEVER					ALWAYS
1	2	3	4	5	
<i>(circle one)</i>					

Parent/Guardian Information and Preference Form

Dear Parent or Guardian,

I believe that parent-teacher and/or family teacher communication is important for student success. Please take a few minutes to let me know about your schedule, means of contact and preferences. I will not share this information with anyone, unless you allow it.

May I share this information with another teacher? _____ yes _____ no

May I call you at home? _____

Time when you are at home: _____

May I call you on your cell phone? _____

If yes, what's the number? _____

May I call you at work? _____

If yes, what is the business's name? _____

If yes, what is the phone number (and extension)? _____

May I contact you by e-mail? _____

If yes, what is the address? _____

Please print clearly.

Work or home e-mail? _____ How often do you check it? _____

About contacting me:

During school hours, I am available during my planning period, which is from _____ to _____, and you can reach me at this number: _____.

Outside of that time block, I cannot come to the telephone, because I am teaching or supervising students. I am also available to speak with you in the evenings. Just leave a message for me and **be sure to include a description of what you'd like to discuss**, so I can bring any necessary files home and be prepared to answer your questions. Thanks!

EDITORS' NOTE: *The Forum section of the Journal of Positive Behavior Interventions is presented to encourage communication among readers and provide for an exchange of opinions, perspectives, ideas, and informative personal accounts. We welcome brief articles from family members, professionals, friends, advocates, administrators, researchers, and other individuals who are concerned*

with behavioral support issues. The purpose of the Forum is to facilitate a constructive dialogue among our many stakeholders regarding important issues in practice, research, training, program development, and policy. Submissions to the Forum undergo an expedited review and may be submitted to either editor.

Family–School Collaboration and Positive Behavior Support



Kathleen M. Minke
Kellie J. Anderson
University of Delaware

Positive behavior support (PBS) offers schools a structured approach to address children's behavior from the individual level to the schoolwide level. Professionals are encouraged to include all relevant stakeholders, especially families, in actively planning, implementing, and evaluating the supports provided (Carr et al., 2002). However, successfully involving families in children's education is a complex and often difficult task (e.g., Harry, Allen, & McLaughlin, 1995); PBS practitioners can expect family–school collaboration efforts to be similarly challenging. This article reviews some of those challenges briefly, then advocates for ways in which family–school collaboration efforts can complement PBS initiatives in schools.

Parent Involvement in Education

Empirical literature strongly supports the association of parent involvement in education with substantial benefits, including greater academic success for children (e.g., Epstein, 1991; Rumberger, 1995) and increased parent support for teachers and schools (e.g., Ames, 1993; Epstein, 1986). Students whose families are involved in their education, regardless of family background or income, are more likely to earn higher grades, be promoted, show improved behavior, and enroll in postsecondary education programs (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). However, there is debate in the literature about whether and how parent involvement programs can affect such outcomes, given that supporting data are largely correlational rather than causal, and stud-

ies often have significant methodological flaws (Mattingly, Prislin, McKenzie, Rodriguez, & Kayzar, 2002). Still, a growing number of studies show that the outreach practices of schools are a critical variable in engaging families in the learning process (e.g., Dauber & Epstein, 1993; Patrikakou & Weissberg, 2000; Watkins, 1997), linking this outreach directly to student achievement (Epstein, Simon, & Salinas, 1997; Shaver & Walls, 1998). Thus, it appears that parent involvement matters in children's achievement and that schools can influence parent involvement processes.

Despite these many benefits, there is also evidence, less frequently discussed, that efforts to involve parents in their children's education may have unintended negative consequences. In a series of ethnographic studies, Lareau and her colleagues (Lareau, 1989; Lareau & Horvat, 1999; Lareau & Shumar, 1996) documented a number of serious difficulties. For example, some families' attempts to comply with demands from the school to help with homework resulted in increased conflict between parents and children or embarrassment when parents themselves did not know how to do the homework. Further, Lareau's data suggested that parents' ability to comply with school demands varies by social class. Specifically, middle-class parents tended to have greater flexibility in job schedules, better access to transportation and child care, and more extensive social networks of other parents from whom information about the school could be obtained than parents considered "working" or "lower" class. These resource differences made it easier for middle-class families to behave in ways con-

sistent with the school's expectations. Also, parents in working-class families defined their role with respect to the school differently than middle-class parents. Whereas middle-class parents were likely to express concerns directly to the teacher, working-class parents were more likely to engage in a pattern of "watchful waiting." These working-class parents saw themselves as very involved in their children's education, but teachers defined them as uninvolved. Parent involvement efforts that fail to account for these differences are not likely to accomplish their goals.

Differences in perceptions of teachers and parents can be explained in part by the definition of "parent involvement." Researchers and educators often use a "school-centric" definition (Lawson, 2003), in which involvement means parents assisting the school in reaching goals defined by the school (e.g., volunteering in classrooms, attending meetings, helping with homework). Such an approach inadvertently ignores the voices of many families, especially those from outside the mainstream culture who prefer to delegate responsibility for education to the school (Lareau, 1989). Lawson's ethnographic study was conducted in a low-income, ethnically diverse urban school and included parents described as "involved" and "uninvolved" by school personnel. Both groups of parents endorsed a "communitycentric" view of involvement, in which their role was to provide basic necessities (food, shelter) for their families and to protect their children from the influences of "the street" after school ends each day. These parents saw the school as a place where their children's physical safety was relatively assured; the school day enabled parents to attend to their other survival needs. Conversely, teachers tended to define involvement, in large part, as participation at the school. They were particularly unforgiving of parents who did not work outside the home; their lack of presence at the school was viewed as lack of caring. This study was also instructive with respect to differing views between parents and teachers regarding children's behavior. Parents perceived school personnel as afraid of students, resulting in a greater emphasis on controlling behavior than teaching. Further, they felt blamed for their children's misbehavior, which teachers attributed to parental irresponsibility and neglect. When school personnel see families as the *cause* of students' behavior problems, their "involvement" of these families may increase the likelihood of adversarial rather than cooperative interactions (Skiba & Peterson, 2000). In sum, it appears that parent involvement in children's education is an important goal, but care must be taken in how such involvement is encouraged.

Beyond "Parent Involvement"

One way in which these potential difficulties are addressed is through a more expansive definition of parent involvement. Partnership or collaborative approaches to parent

involvement emphasize the development of shared goals, trusting relationships, mutual respect, and complementary expertise (Christenson, Rounds, & Franklin, 1992; Swap, 1993). From this perspective, providing support to families and learning from families are at least as important as gaining the support of families for school goals. Further, there is an emphasis on respecting differences in the ways in which families define their roles; it is understood that not all families will participate in the same ways. Family-school collaboration is seen not as an isolated set of activities, but rather as an essential element of student success that permeates every aspect of schooling (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001; Weiss & Edwards, 1992).

Epstein's (1995) typology is probably the best-known example outlining the various ways in which parents can support children's learning. She described six types of parent involvement activities, including parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community. Epstein emphasized the need to have multiple options available for each type of involvement; however, her typology has been criticized for its limited recognition of how challenging it is for some families to meet expectations the school considers "basic" (Lawson, 2003). Other authors have made more explicit the necessity of respecting parental choices by conceptualizing family-school collaboration along a continuum involving smaller numbers of families as demands for time and expertise increase (Moles, 1993; Comer, Haynes, Joyner, & Ben Avie, 1996; Petr, 2003). In these approaches, all (or nearly all) families and educators are involved in providing support for children's learning and social emotional development through frequent, active communication. A large number of families and educators are involved in support activities at home and/or at school. Some families and teachers actively engage in learning/teaching activities such as workshops. Relatively few families and teachers are involved in governance and decision-making activities at the school or district level. At each level, there are multiple means for participation, and both families and educators are welcomed and active partners at all levels.

Central to the collaborative approach is the development of supportive relationships between families and educators. Although varying labels are used to describe the key elements of these relationships, multiple studies have documented the importance of interrelated constructs including trust, two-way communication, respect, and commitment (e.g., Adams & Christenson, 2000; Blue-Banning, Summers, Frankland, Nelson, & Beegle, 2004; Bryk & Schneider, 2002). Collaborative approaches also emphasize the importance of empowerment, which builds the capacity of families to serve as life-long advocates for their children. Embedded in this concept is the value that families should be asked to define their own needs and preferences; interventions should be individualized based on family-

identified priorities, and parental decision making should be supported. Families are seen as possessing strengths and competencies that can be applied to collaborative efforts; professionals attempt to understand and access families' informal social supports as part of intervention planning and implementation (Dunst, 2002; Dunst, Trivette, & La-Pointe, 1994).

There is emerging evidence that family-school collaboration principles can be effectively applied to a broad spectrum of school issues. For example, programs based in collaborative principles have been shown to improve school safety (Smith et al., 2004), to increase adolescent self-regulation and decrease behavior problems (Coatsworth, Pantin, & Szapocznik, 2002), and to ease the transition to kindergarten (Pianta, Kraft-Sayre, Rimm-Kaufman, Gercke, & Higgins, 2001). At the schoolwide level, the School Development Program (SDP; Comer et al., 1996) is one of the best-known examples of the utility of collaboration in affecting positive school change. SDP schools operate on principles of collaboration (working cooperatively in respectful relationships toward common goals), consensus (rather than majority rule), and no-fault decision making (shared responsibility and avoidance of blaming). There is an emphasis on relationship building at all levels of the system (e.g., student-teacher, teacher-parent), and empowerment of both teachers and families is a key component. Although the model has proved difficult to implement broadly (Cook et al., 1999), there is evidence that the program has positive effects on student achievement and school climate in challenging urban schools (Cook, Murphy, & Hunt, 2000; Noblit, Malloy, & Malloy, 2001).

Collaboration and PBS

Within the PBS literature, the value of collaboration is mentioned frequently (e.g., Dunlap et al., 2000; Snell, 2002; Walker & Singer, 1993), particularly in the context of working with students with more severe disabilities. Recently, attention also has been directed to collaboration at the schoolwide level by applying principles associated with wraparound services (Scott & Eber, 2003). These authors noted the importance of taking a collaborative rather than an expert stance, avoiding blame, and focusing on student success in planning and implementing schoolwide support plans. Lucyshyn, Horner, Dunlap, Albin, and Ben (2002) defined collaborative partnerships with families in PBS as "the establishment of a truly respectful, trusting, caring, and reciprocal relationship in which interventionists and family members believe in each other's ability to make important contributions to the support process; share their knowledge and expertise; and mutually influence the selection goals, the design of behavior support plans, and the quality of family-practitioner interactions" (p. 12). Such relationships may help teachers and families better under-

stand each other's perspectives and avoid miscommunications that yield frustration on both sides.

Promoting Collaboration in PBS Schools

Despite increasing illustrations of the advantages of family-school collaboration, implementation in schools has been slow (Dunst, 2002; McWilliam, Maxwell, & Sloper, 1999). There are substantial structural (e.g., time and other resources) and psychological (e.g., feelings of efficacy) barriers to increased collaboration (Christenson, 2003). Overcoming these barriers is made more difficult by limited training opportunities for teachers. Few states require training in family involvement for teacher certification, and few teacher training programs emphasize those skills (Shartrand, Weiss, Kreider, & Lopez, 1997). Recently, lack of training in working with families was cited by 48% of schools surveyed as a significant barrier to improving family participation in education (U.S. Department of Education, 1998). Thus, although both educators and parents see parent involvement as desirable, educators are not typically provided with the skills to successfully support effective family-school collaboration. PBS training offers an opportunity to help teachers develop those skills.

When discussing how best to collaborate with families, the literature tends to emphasize the "what" rather than the "how" (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001). This pattern also is evident in the PBS literature. That is, even within the processes in which families are expected to be active members, most attention may be given to procedures and forms, while relatively less attention is given to the communication and collaboration skills needed to successfully facilitate such interactions. For example, Crone and Horner (2003) offered a detailed method for implementing behavioral support teams and functional behavior analysis in schools. In discussing how to get the team to work together, the authors review a number of important processes, including efficiency, organization, and accountability in the team. However, there is little attention to other process issues, such as coping with emotionality, conflict, and strained relationships among team members. These latter issues could derail an otherwise well-planned PBS program. As noted in a commentary by Bambara (2002), the social process of enlisting and maintaining the support of others is at least as important as the technology, in the view of many practitioners. Although some skilled facilitators (e.g., psychologists, social workers) may already be part of building-based teams (Eber, Sugai, Smith, & Scott, 2002), most teachers have little training in communication skills and other process issues. Attention to relationship building at all levels of implementation may be a critical element in program success.

Examples are beginning to emerge that demonstrate the effectiveness of preservice (Blasi, 2002) and inservice

(Minke & Anderson, 2003) interventions in developing teachers' skills in these areas. However, there is not a single "right" set of activities that will yield effective collaboration (Christenson & Sheridan, 2001); rather, each school community needs to assess its particular context and develop relationship-building opportunities responsive to its specific circumstances. The needs assessment and school climate surveying that are part of many PBS initiatives offer vehicles in which these issues can be explored at the individual school level. Christenson and Sheridan (2001) provided an excellent overview of collaboration principles and offered multiple examples of ways schools can improve their relationships with families. Their book is recommended for PBS teams that have identified improved collaborative relationships as a priority.

Involving families effectively at all levels of PBS is challenging yet critical to meaningful implementation. Trusting, respectful relationships among teachers and families appear to be the foundation of successful interventions. Although each school must chart its own path, this review provides a starting point for discussion for school-based teams interested in creating and nurturing relationship-building opportunities at all levels of the PBS process.

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Action Editor: Robert H. Horner