

Building Bridges to Parent Involvement

Presented by members of the Family Involvement Council of the Corry Area School District

Facilitators

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- Debbie Matthews—Family Involvement Council Member
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- Mary Hammer—Corry Elementary School Counselor

What is parent involvement?

According to the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (No Child Left Behind):

- Parent Involvement means the participation of parents in regular, two-way and meaningful communication involving student academic learning and other school activities, including insuring that parents...assist in their child's learning...are encouraged to be actively involved at school...and that parents are full partners...and are included in decision-making...and on advisory committees.

Unity
By Cleo V. Swart
I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there.
The clay they used was a young child's mind
And they fashioned it with care.
One was a teacher
The tools she used were books and music and art.
One was a parent
With a guiding hand and gentle loving heart.
And when at last their work was done
They were proud of what they had wrought.
For the things they had worked into the child
Could never be sold or bought.
And each agreed she would have failed
If she had worked alone,
For behind the parent stood the school
For behind the teacher stood the home!

Why is parent involvement so important?

- Research proves that when schools and parents work together in an equal partnership, student achievement increases.

What does parent involvement look like?

In the school:

In the community:

**Parent Involvement in the
Corry Area School District**

Family Involvement Council

- Newly formed committee (2009-2010)
- Supported by stimulus funding which was provided for short-term spending that will result in long-term gains
- Parent-driven committee that determines parent and family programming needs throughout the district.

- School district and agency personnel assist the committee but do not lead the committee.
- This first year has been spent recruiting parents, determining family programming needs that are addressed already and identifying areas of need.
- FIC has sponsored several programs this year and has also provided resources for parents.

Corry Area Middle High School

- Parent involvement through PTO/PTA
- Sports programming/parent booster groups
- Special Education programming
- Parent-teacher conferences, open houses, orientations

Corry Elementary Schools

- PTO/PTA
- Title I Parent Involvement Activities
- Parent Volunteers—cafeteria, testing, guest readers, special topics, classroom help, field trips, special events
- Parent/Teacher conferences, open house, meet-the-teacher night

Corry Community

- Community Volunteers in Education—readers, special topics, career education, job shadowing
- Community agencies in schools—mental health services, family support services, juvenile probation, office of children and youth
- Programs for all families in the community
- Corry Area Early Learning Committee

Corry Area Early Learning Committee

- Early learning providers, school district, community engagement group (CEG), early intervention, library, social service agencies
- Kindergarten Registration/Success by 6 Learning Fair (for the past 5 years)
- Transition planning
- Nurturing relationships and networking between kindergarten and early learning staff for a more seamless transition

What makes parent involvement easier?

What are some obstacles to parent involvement?

Continuum of Belief

- What is the biggest obstacle to increasing parent involvement?
(please move to the area you feel is the biggest obstacle)
- Now pretend you were a parent/teacher in your school and move to the area you would feel was the biggest obstacle.
- We need to consider the continuum of belief when addressing these obstacles.

How do we begin to build bridges?

- Opportunities to mix, meet and share ideas
- Looking at things from many points of view
- Use “I-statements”
- Meet others “where they are” and find openings to show by example ideas that may challenge their beliefs
- Ask the help of someone else who may have heard things differently, especially if you have strong feelings surrounding the subject.

- Act with respect
- Be willing to apologize if necessary
- Start with strengths
- Always “fill the glass”
- Don’t give up!

Look at your school district

- How can existing opportunities and programs become more parent-friendly?
- What other opportunities would you like to see?
- How do parents get involved?
- Identify resource people who might help expand areas for parent involvement
- What is one small way you can increase your involvement with school/parents?

Any Questions?

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Thank you for your time and participation!

Parent Involvement Planner

What ways are parents involved in your district?

How can existing opportunities and programs become more parent-friendly?

What other opportunities would you like to see?

Identify resource people who might help expand areas for parent involvement.

What is one small way you can increase your involvement with school/parents?

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