



Parenting Matters: A Powerful Partnership between Families, School & the Community Leads to Student Success!

What is the best predictor of your child's academic success? Studies conducted over the last 20 years show clearly that the involvement of parents in their children's education is the best predictor. The family makes critical contributions to a child's achievement from early childhood through high school. Your involvement in your child's education is not only critical to your child's success but also to the overall quality of the school. The difference between a good school and a great school is the parents!

This is what the Parenting Matters initiative at the Monte Vista School District is about. Parents, school staff and the community all share the commitment to the educational success of our children. When we work together, we can help our children achieve great things!

Increasing family involvement in the education of their children is an important goal for schools. It appears that strong parent involvement is an important feature of many schools that succeed in raising student achievement. Many schools that make parent involvement a priority also see student outcomes improve. These positive outcomes may be due to increased parent involvement itself, or, what is more likely, to a whole constellation of factors, including a strong instructional program and a commitment to high standards for all students. Nevertheless, it appears that strong parent involvement is an important feature of many schools that succeed in raising student achievement.

If families are to work with schools as partners in the education of their children, schools must provide them with the opportunities and support they need to become involved. Developing partnerships also requires that school staff provide parents with the information and training they need to become involved and that they reach out to parents with invitations to participate in their children's learning. Developing effective partnerships with families requires that all school staff (administrators, teachers, and support staff) create a school environment that welcomes parents and encourages them to raise questions and voice their concerns as well as to participate appropriately in decision making. Some of the programs involve parents in school planning and governance activities and as volunteers. Some also provide coordinated essential non-educational services for families to support their children's academic development. Successful school-family partnerships require the sustained mutual collaboration, support, and participation

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of school staffs and families at home and at school in activities that can directly affect the success of children's learning.

Schools that have developed successful partnerships with parents view student achievement as a shared responsibility, and all stakeholders--including parents, administrators, teachers, and community leaders--play important roles in supporting the children's learning. The outcomes from these partnerships are: having a positive impact on homework and grades, improved attitudes and behaviors, attendance, graduation rates, and involvement in higher education, and enhanced parent-school communications.

When parents, families, and members of the community are involved with schools, all children benefit. Adult participation sends the message that school is important and the work children do there is worthy of adult attention.

This article is part of the PARENTING MATTERS initiative to increase parenting resources in Rio Grande County. More information can be found at www.rgpp.org. In addition, books and DVDs are located at the Carnegie Library in Monte Vista.