

STARTING POINTS

Measure of School, Family, and Community Partnerships

Karen Clark Salinas, Joyce L. Epstein, & Mavis G. Sanders
Johns Hopkins University ¹

Take **30 - 60 minutes** to reflect as a team how involved families and communities were with the school in the last school year.

This instrument helps assess whether your school is involving parents, community members, and students in meaningful ways. The measure is based on the framework of six types of involvement and focuses on how well activities are meeting challenges to involve all families in their children's education.

Your school may conduct all, some, or none of the activities or approaches listed. Not every activity is appropriate at every class level. Not every activity should be conducted often—some may be implemented once or twice a year. In a goal-linked partnership program, activities will be selected and outlined in detail in your school's *One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships* to help reach specific school improvement goals. Each activity will be conducted on an appropriate schedule.

Your school may implement other activities for each type of involvement. Add these on the blank lines in each section and rate them to account for all of the major partnership practices that your school conducts.

Directions: Use the scoring rubric below to rate your school on the six types of involvement. As you review each item, circle the response that *comes closest* to describing how the activity is implemented at your school.

Scoring Rubric:

1—Never: Not used at our school.

2— Rarely: Conducted in one or two classes or with a few families. Not emphasized in this school's partnership program.

3— Sometimes: Conducted in a few classes or with some families. Receives minimal emphasis in this school's partnership program across the grades. Quality of implementation needs to improve.

4— Often: Conducted in many but not all classes, or with many but not all families. Given substantial emphasis in this school's partnership program across the grades. Quality of implementation is high; only minor changes are needed.

5— Frequently: Occurs in most or all classes and grade levels, with most or all families. An important part of this school's partnership program. Quality of implementation is excellent.

The *Measure* should be discussed and completed annually or every other year by an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) to assess the progress of the school's program of family and community engagement. The results indicate the scope and quality of involvement activities and should suggest new directions and needed improvements for the next *One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships*.

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I. PARENTING: Help all families understand child and adolescent development and establish home environments to support children as students. Help schools understand families' backgrounds, cultures, and goals for students.

Our School	Rating				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
1. Conducts workshops or provides information for parents on child and adolescent development.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Provides information to all families who want or who need it, not just to the few who can attend workshops or meetings at the school building.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Produces information for families that is clear, usable, and linked to children's success in school.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Asks families for information about children's goals, strengths, and talents.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Supports home visiting programs or community meetings to help families understand schools and to help schools understand families.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Provides families with age-appropriate information on developing home conditions or environments that support learning.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Respects the different cultures represented in our student population.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Other Type 1–Parenting activities:					
i.	1	2	3	4	5
ii.	1	2	3	4	5

II. COMMUNICATING: Use effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and children’s progress.

Our School	Rating				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
1. Reviews the readability, clarity, form, and frequency of memos, notices, and other print and nonprint communications.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Develops communications with parents who do not speak or read English well, or who need large type.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Provides communications in the language of the parents and provides interpreters and translators as needed.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Has clear two-way channels for communication from home to school and from school to home.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Conducts a formal parent-teacher meeting with every parent at least once a year.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Conducts a periodic survey for families to use to share information and concerns about student needs, reactions to school programs, and satisfaction with their involvement in their children’s education at school and at home.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Conducts an orientation for parents who are new to the school.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Sends home folders of student work weekly or monthly for parent review and comment.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Provides clear information about the curriculum, standardised tests, school and student results.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Contacts families of students having academic or behaviour problems.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Uses e-mail and the school website to communicate with parents, including information on internet safety and children’s use of social media.	1	2	3	4	5
12. Trains teachers, staff, and principals on the value and utility of family involvement and ways to build positive ties between school and home.	1	2	3	4	5
13. Implements policies that encourage all teachers to communicate with parents about the curriculum, expectations for homework, and how parents can help at home.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Produces a regularly scheduled school blog or newsletter with up-to-date information about the school, special events, organisations, and meetings as well as parenting tips.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Provides paper copies of e-communications for families who do not have computers, internet access, e-mail, or connections on social media platforms.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Other Type 2- Communicating activities:					
i.	1	2	3	4	5
ii.	1	2	3	4	5

III. VOLUNTEERING: Recruit and organise parents to support the school and students.

1. Conducts annual surveys to identify interests, talents, and availability of parent volunteers to match their skills and talents with school and classroom needs.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Provides a parent or family room for volunteers and family members to meet and work, and to access resources about parenting, and related topics.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Creates flexible volunteering opportunities and schedules to enable employed parents to participate.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Schedules special events at different times of the day and evening so that all families can attend as audiences.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Increases opportunities for parent volunteers by providing transportation, child care, and/or interpreters and translators, as needed.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Trains volunteers so they use their time productively.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Recognises volunteers for their time and efforts.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Encourages families and the community to be involved with the school in various ways (e.g., assist in classrooms, supervise activities, lead talks or activities, serve as audiences).	1	2	3	4	5
9. Other Type 3- Volunteering activities:					
i.	1	2	3	4	5
ii.	1	2	3	4	5

IV. LEARNING AT HOME: Provide information to families on how to help students with homework, other curriculum- related activities, course decisions, and future plans.

1. Provides information to families on ways to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Provides information to families on required skills in major subjects.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Provides specific information to parents on ways to assist students with skills that they need to improve.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Asks parents to focus on reading, listen to children read, or read aloud with their child.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Assists families to help students set high but realistic academic goals.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Provides information and ideas for families to use in talking with students about post-primary plans.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Schedules regular interactive homework that requires students to demonstrate and discuss what they are learning with a family member.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Other Type 3- Learning At Home activities:					
i.	1	2	3	4	5
ii.	1	2	3	4	5

V. DECISION MAKING: Include parents in school decisions and develop parent leaders and representatives.

1. Has an active Parent Association	1	2	3	4	5
2. Includes parent representatives on the Board of Management	1	2	3	4	5
3. Involves parents in organised, ongoing, and timely ways in planning and improving school programs.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Involves parents in reviewing school curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Recruits parent leaders for committees from all racial, ethnic, linguistic, socioeconomic, and other groups in the school.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Develops formal social networks to link all families with their parent representatives.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Includes students (with parents) in decision making groups.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Addresses parents' questions, concerns, and conflict openly and respectfully.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Guides parent representatives to contact all parents for input to school decisions, including those who are, typically, less involved.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Develops the school's plan and program of family and community involvement with input from educators, parents, and others.	1	2	3	4	5
11. Other Type 5- Decision Making activities:	1	2	3	4	5
i.					
ii.	1	2	3	4	5

VI. COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY: Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, students, and the school, and provide services to the community.

Our School	Rating				
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Frequently
1. Provides a resource directory for parents and students on community agencies, services, and programs.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Involves families in locating and using community resources.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Works with local businesses, industries, libraries, parks, museums, and other organisations on programs to enhance student skills and learning.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Offers afterschool programs for students with support from community businesses, agencies, and volunteers.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Clarifies who has the responsibility for funding, staff, and locations for community collaborations to succeed.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Provides "one-stop shop" as a full-service school with family services, counselling, health services, recreation, job training, summer programs, and connections with other agencies.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Other Type 6–Collaborating with the Community activities:					
i.	1	2	3	4	5
ii.	1	2	3	4	5

REFLECTIONS

Review the ratings of activities for all six types of involvement. Discuss the following questions and consider ways to improve the school's plans and practices of family and community involvement in the next *One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships*.

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

B. What major factors limited the success of your school's family and community involvement efforts this year?

C. What are your school's major goals for improving its program of school, family, and community partnerships?