

Beginning Educator Support Team NEWSLETTER

October 2017

PARENTS AS PARTNERS

The body of literature around parent and community involvement with schools is clear: the more frequently we can engage parents and families as partners in students' learning, the better the outcomes are for those students.

While we tend to focus on curricular and instructional matters this time of year, the role that parents play in shaping student success cannot be overstated.

We must find meaningful ways to communicate with families and invite parents to be part of the education process.

"The work of developing the hearts and minds of young people is too large and important of a task for schools to take on in isolation."

(Kraft, M., *Educational Leadership*, vol. 75 no. 1, 2017)



TALKING POINTS

Teaching, planning, conferencing... a lot happens in school this time of year!

Here are some possible topics of conversation for mentors and early career teachers:

Successes and challenges

Talking with parents

Using curriculum effectively

Lesson pacing/ making the most of instructional time

Refining routines and procedures

Maintaining a work/home life balance

Creating emergency sub plans

WHY I [ENGAGE]

"I engage families and the community in the education process so that they are informed of what we are learning at school and they can help support the best they can at home."



~ Angie Pedroza, Kindergarten Bilingual teacher, Edison Elementary

For more info, visit:

<http://bit.ly/WWPS-families>

NEED TO KNOW

Danielson framework follow-up

October 19, 3:30 - 6:30
WWPS Transportation Bldg.

No School for students

October 6, 12, 13
November 10, 23, 24

Parent Conferences

Week of October 9 (exact schedule varies by building)

OSPI Southeastern Regional Mentor Roundtable

October 24, 4:00 - 6:00
SEA-Tech Skills Center

Connecting with Mentors

Find time to connect, reflect, and engage in learning through observation.

BRIGHT IDEAS



Build relationships before you need relationships.

Parents who have had largely negative interactions with schools are not likely to reach out, themselves. This may be due to their own childhood experiences, inexperience with today's school systems, or simply because they haven't felt comfortable in the school setting. Initiating contact and nurturing relationships with parents is an important component to student success.

Every teacher has their own approach to engaging parents and families, but here are a few bright ideas from the field:

Set up a calendar to ensure you call /email every family regularly with positive news. If you share students with another teacher, divide the names and make a call from the "team."

Develop a class newsletter that goes home to parents in print or electronically. Enlist students to contribute to the newsletter!

Create a class website to share what students are doing and learning in school.

Use tech tools like Class Dojo or REMIND to connect parents and keep them informed.

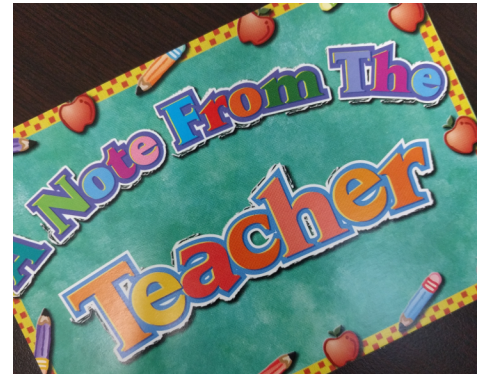
Survey parents about areas of expertise, skills, and knowledge and invite them to speak or participate in specific lessons.

Team up with other teachers to host events like Family Literacy or STEM Nights.

Share "try this" strategies with parents to help support their child's learning.

Keep reiterating your shared goal of supporting student learning together!

MENTORING SPOTLIGHT



(Upper right: Marilyn Melgoza, Latino(a) Outreach Coord. - for program info, visit <http://www.wmps.org/departments/bilingual>
Lower left: Tensie Lovejoy and Anne Marie Jones - Green Park Elementary)

We know that the opportunity to observe experienced teachers is a powerful tool for growth for early career educators. While demo observations traditionally take place in the classroom setting with students, Anne Marie Jones and her mentor Tensie Lovejoy took observation to another context this school year. Lovejoy invited Jones to observe her conducting kindergarten interviews with families, then they debriefed and practiced together before Jones's interview began. "Making a positive connection right at the start is really valuable," says Lovejoy. She explained that she invited a family to come early and obtained their consent for Jones to observe. Jones reflects that this experience gave her "an idea of what she's building toward" in terms of rapport and relationships with parents. They plan to flip it for conferences so Lovejoy can be the observer and offer timely feedback to Jones. As we enter fall conferences, consider how you might use observation to foster effective communication with families.

CONTACT

Comments, questions, or want to know more about supporting early career teachers in Walla Walla?

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