

# Examples of Massachusetts District Efforts to Increase Family Involvement



Compiled by  
The Parent and Community Education and Involvement  
Advisory Council to the Massachusetts Board of Education

November 2005

## ***The Parent and Community Education and Involvement Advisory Council***

The Parent and Community Education and Involvement Advisory Council advises the Commissioner and Board of Education on matters pertaining to the development of parent and community involvement in education. Its function is to be proactive on policy issues that relate to the enhancement of educational achievement of students in Massachusetts. Specifically, the Council assesses statewide trends and needs; seeks public and professional input; analyzes information regarding parent and community education and involvement; advises and makes recommendations regarding legislation, regulations, and program guidelines; and provides other programmatic recommendations as it deems necessary to fulfill the goals for parent and community involvement established by the Board of Education.

## **Standards of Successful Parent, Family and Community Involvement**

The council believes that student achievement increases, schools improve, and parent and community involvement thrives with the following:

1. **Student Learning:**  
Parents, families, and community members play an integral role in assisting student learning at all grade levels.
2. **Communication:**  
Communication between home and school is consistent, two-way, and meaningful.
3. **Responsibility:**  
Sound parenting practices are promoted and supported.
4. **Volunteering:**  
Parents, families and community members are welcome in the school and their support and assistance are sought.
5. **School Decision-Making and Advocacy**  
Parents and community members contribute to school planning and decision-making.
6. **Community Collaboration**  
Community resources are sought to strengthen schools, communities, and families.
7. **Educator/Staff Development**  
Personnel training (pre-service and in-service) includes courses and workshops on parent, family, and community involvement.

## **Contact Information**

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## **Introduction**

The following information was compiled by members of the 2005-2006 Parent and Community Education and Involvement Advisory Council to the Massachusetts Board of Education. The information included in this document was submitted to the Department on a volunteer basis by districts in the Commonwealth, in response to a request included in the April 5, 2005 Commissioner's Update posted on the Department's website (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/news/news.asp?id=2326>). The council, comprised of parents from around the state of Massachusetts, developed this document as part of their ongoing work to gather and disseminate effective practices that have increased parental and community involvement in Massachusetts' schools.

In November 2000, the council developed a set of guidelines for parent and community involvement that were endorsed by the Massachusetts Board of Education. These guidelines are published by the Massachusetts Department of Education and are available as the *Guide to Parent and Family Involvement* on the Massachusetts DOE website (<http://www.doe.mass.edu/boe/sac/parent/pandc.pdf>). The guidelines highlight goals for schools regarding parental and community involvement, as well as diverse and changing roles that parent and community members would need to take in education reform initiatives that were well underway as a result of the Education Reform Act of 1993. These guidelines were and remain based on the most current evidence and research in the field of parent and family involvement. They point to the need for parents and community members to be involved as partners in a range of involvement areas including school governance, strategic planning for improvement, homework/learning at home, fundraising, and volunteering in schools.

This past year, as schools have developed and implemented new goals and programs to increase parental and community involvement, the Parent and Community Education and Involvement Advisory Council has shifted its focus from disseminating these guidelines to researching what districts have been doing to follow them, and reviewing how school-based and district-based practices are having positive results in our Commonwealth. In an effort to make helpful strategies and practices across the state more accessible, the council recommended that the Commissioner request information from districts regarding self-identified examples of promising practices. The work in reviewing these practices and creating a mechanism for sharing good programs and practices among school districts is in progress. The work will eventually result in an increased amount of online resources that will be available to the public on the Family and Community pages of the Department's Website ([http://www.doe.mass.edu/FamComm/f\\_involvement.html](http://www.doe.mass.edu/FamComm/f_involvement.html)).

This publication provides a sample of activities taking place in schools. It is intended to offer ideas and provide contact information, so that others working to expand and improve family and community involvement in schools can benefit from shared experience. School districts and schools have implemented additional practices and policies to address the requirements of federal programs such as Title I and to comply with regulations and guidelines of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Law. Please contact the Department or Council (see page 1) with feedback, suggestions, or further contributions.

## Literacy/Skills Development

### **Acton Parent Involvement Project (PIP)**

*Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools  
Acton, Massachusetts*

#### **Student Age Group Targeted**

K-12

#### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents/caregivers, educators, middle and high school students, community partners

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
✓ <b>Student Learning</b>
✓ <b>Volunteering</b>
✓ <b>Community Collaboration</b>



#### **Activity/Program Description**

The Acton Parent Involvement Project (PIP) is a coalition of parents, educators, and community partners working together to offer math, science, and technology enrichment activities for students and families. PIP originated as an elementary initiative in the 2001-2002 Mass PIP grant but (due to success and interest) has since expanded to include programming and resources spanning grades K-12.

A hallmark of all PIP programs is that they incorporate parent/caregiver involvement and promote the hands-on application of knowledge and concepts in math, science and technology. Where possible, Acton PIP programming is aligned with Acton Public School curriculum standards.

PIP offers community service credit to junior high and high school students and scouts volunteering for PIP events and is a regular participant in the Acton-Boxborough High School volunteer opportunities fair.

Acton PIP offers the following ongoing Programs:

- PIP Take Home Math and Science Kits – an opportunity for families to interact while learning math and science. Translated into 3 different languages based on the international population.
- 3rd and 5th Grade Market Math - a hands on math extravaganza with real world math stations set up throughout the store, i.e., veggie math (weights and measures), To What Degree (thermometry and measurement), and Scan It (estimation).
- 4th Grade Star Party - sponsored by the Acton Public Schools, Amateur Telescope Makers of Boston and Acton PIP. Star Party is integrated with the 4th Grade astronomy curriculum.

Examples of Other PIP Events and Activities include:

- Pilot of ESL/After-School Homework Club integrating homework, technology and cultural perspective
- Biodiversity in Your Backyard Community Event tied in with Mass. Biodiversity Days
- Family Domino Math Night in conjunction with Concord Math Consortium (fun and engaging way to reinforce and master math facts)
- Summer Resources and Links including a special offering of Summerskill's Math Sharpeners (K-12) along with summer math resources, links and summer fun activities related to math, science and technology
- Magic with Mathematics: Is the Formula More than Meets the Eye? Math "lecture" by Prof. Ed Burger attended by older students and their families

Acton PIP has been in existence in the Acton community since the initial Mass DOE/ MassPIP grant was awarded in 2001. Acton PIP received the PIP grant later than most communities and therefore only had 2 years to build its coalition (vs. the traditional 3 years). Since Mass PIP grant funding ended in 2002, PIP has sustained and expanded its programming to support and enrich math, science and technology education relying on the generosity of volunteers, the schools, business partners and the larger community. PIP has received donations working with local businesses, holding fundraisers with matching grants, and obtaining grants and donations in kind from businesses, e.g. IBM, Philips Medical, Staples, and Haartz Corporation.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

Acton PIP facilitates and encourages participation by culturally and linguistically diverse students, including PIP hands-on "take home" math and science kits translated into several languages (i.e., Korean, Portuguese and Russian) to reach out to those parents in the community under-represented in traditional education initiatives, and a highly successful pilot after-school international club, which provided academic and homework assistance, integrating technology and cultural support for students attending. In addition, PIP events and the PIP family e-loop always have strong representation among international students and families.

### **Contact**

Susan Horn  
Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction  
Acton and Acton-Boxborough Regional Schools  
16 Charter Road  
Acton, MA 01720  
978-264-4700

**Beginner Bookworm Club**

*Fitchburg Public Schools  
Fitchburg, Massachusetts*

**Student Age Group Targeted**

Children ages 2.9 to kindergarten

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Student Learning</li> <li>✓ Community Collaboration</li> </ul>

**Stakeholders Involved**

Parents/guardians and siblings of young children, community agencies

**Activity/Program Description**

The Fitchburg Public School system has implemented the Beginning Bookworm Group, which is an interactive literacy group for young children and their parents. The group meets monthly to provide stories, plays, songs and related activities to strengthen literacy skills for children ages 2.9 to kindergarten. Children receive a book for their participation in the program, which is provided free of charge to the families. All families and ages are encouraged to come, with many older siblings attending activities. The program reaches out to a wide group of parents and the community through their collaborations with the Spanish American Centers, Hmong Lao Foundation, and direct mailings.

**Outcomes/Effectiveness**

Fall River has been running the program since the fall of 2004 and has had positive results in the strengthening of parent/child bonds and in fostering the development of knowledge/literacy in young children. The Beginner Bookworm Group is currently serving from 30 to 40 children and 30 adults per month.

**Contact**

Karen Driscoll  
Early Childhood Department/Community Partnership for Children Program  
376 South Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420  
978-343-2118

**Community Reading Day – Title 1**

*Warren Community Elementary School  
Warren, Massachusetts*

**Student Age Group Targeted**

Preschool – 6<sup>th</sup> grade

**Stakeholders Involved**

Community leaders, retired teachers, seniors, parents, grandparents, community members, business people, State Senator and State Representative, principal and staff.

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>	
✓	<b>Student Learning</b>
✓	<b>Volunteering</b>
✓	<b>Community Collaboration</b>

**Activity/Program Description**

Originally the Alliance For Education sponsored an annual Community Reading Day in conjunction with a Central Massachusetts bank. The Warren Community Elementary School has continued this activity annually by popular request of the volunteer readers. Many of the Celebrity Readers call to participate as soon as the invitation arrives. The school has so many eager participants that each classroom has a morning and afternoon “Celebrity Reader.” Many of the readers prepare props and baked goods or wear costumes that center on the chosen books theme. An important aspect of the program is that the book read by the readers that day are purchased and then presented to the class for their classroom library.

**Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The Celebrity Readers provide adult role models from various professions who love to read. The students are an attentive audience and the classroom teachers make contact with community volunteers.

**Contact**

Carol Jacobs  
Superintendent  
413-436-5983

Frances Slowaski  
QRSD Title 1 Director  
slowafra1@quaboag.org

## **Family Literacy Breakfast**

*Southbridge Public Schools  
Southbridge, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

PreK-5

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Families, high school students, community businesses

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>	
✓	<b>Student Learning</b>
✓	<b>Volunteering</b>
✓	<b>Community Collaboration</b>

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Family Literacy Breakfast provides families with children in preschool through grade five the opportunity to come together and enjoy breakfast while children engage in activities that include story hour, book making, and performances. Local high school students volunteer as active readers for the story hour. This is a no cost program for families, with costs being covered through local PTOs and donations from the community.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The program has been running for five years, with approximately 250 people attending the breakfast.

### **Contact**

Ann Vasey  
Early Childhood Coordinator  
Southbridge Public Schools  
41 Elm Street  
Southbridge, MA 01550  
508-764-8599

## **Math Packs**

*Center School*

*East Bridgewater, MA*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Pre-K – Grade 3

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Families

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Math Packs' Program is designed to provide families with mathematic basics through simple games that can be done anywhere and anytime. While the children are enjoying time with their parents and siblings, they are also improving their mathematical fluency, which translates into higher levels of success in math. The program is targeted for children in Pre-K through grade three with age appropriate individualized packs for each grade level. The program ends with a year-end math night where families are invited to come and play math games.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

Math Packs has been running for five years at Central School and has reached out to families and the community to strengthen their ability to support the development of mathematics for children. Central School has received positive feedback from parents, students, and teachers. Parents have seen a growth of enthusiasm in their children toward math and have a better understanding the school's math curriculum.

### **Contact**

Candace Woods

Central School

107 Central Street

East Bridgewater, MA 02333

508-378-8204

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
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✓ Student Learning
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## **Reading Across America**

*Dracut Public Schools  
Dracut, Massachusetts*

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
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- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Student Learning</b></li><li>✓ <b>Volunteering</b></li><li>✓ <b>Community Collaboration</b></li></ul> |
|--|

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Local and state representatives of the business community, police and fire departments, and government.

### **Activity/Program Description**

Once a year, invited community volunteers come into the classroom and participate in the reading program.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

This twenty-year-old program reinforces the connections and commitments between our schools and a generous and supportive community that contributes to the success of our schools in a variety of ways.

### **Contact**

Elaine A. Espindle  
Superintendent of Schools  
978-957-2660  
978-957-2682  
espindle@dracut.k12.ma.us

## **Storytelling With Eshu Bumpus**

*Quaboag Regional School District  
Warren, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

K-6

### **Involvement Standards Addressed**

- ✓ Student Learning
- ✓ Volunteering
- ✓ Community Collaboration
- ✓ Educator/Staff Development

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents

### **Activity/Program Description**

The storyteller presents his tales to the students in general assemblies grouped separately, pre-k to 3 and Grade 4-6. The stories are interactive and involve the students. The storyteller spends a staff meeting training staff on how to encourage students to write their own stories, which can be told to a group. He focuses on setting, plot and character development. The storyteller spends a day in the sixth grade classroom explaining story development to the students and getting them started on a story. The students spend the next day working with the classroom teacher writing and editing the story. The third day the storyteller returns so the students may share their stories with him and their group. A parent workshop where the storyteller helped students and parents work together on story development was also a success.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

Now in its fifth year, enthusiasm from staff, students and parents for the storytelling program is always contagious. Students love developing stories and sharing them.

### **Contact**

Carol Jacobs  
Superintendent  
413-436-5983

Frances Slowaski  
QRSD Title 1 Director  
slowafra1@quaboag.org

## **Title 1 Kindergarten Book Bag Program**

*Doran Elementary School*

*Fall River, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Kindergarten

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>	
✓	<b>Student Learning</b>
✓	<b>Volunteering</b>



### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents and families

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Doran Elementary School, in Fall River, developed the Title 1 Kindergarten Book Bag Program that sends a grade level book bag home every third week. Parents are given a description of the program and a permission form that must be signed before book bags go home. In the book bags, materials are provided that will be needed for the activities. Suggestions for reading to and with their child are glued to the inside of the book. The Title I Parent worker collects the bags from the classrooms when students return them and the parent liaison/volunteer hands out the book bags on Monday. All Title I and classroom teachers work together as a team to encourage parent participation. The Title I Parent worker speaks Portuguese and is available for those families needing further assistance.

After reading the book to or with their child, parents are encouraged to work on a simple seasonal book report. These reports are saved for the end of year celebration and are displayed on a wall for parents to see. Parents and families are invited to this celebration. Students are given prizes for working all year on this project. Refreshments are offered.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The program has been running for 9 years and is a popular parent-child activity, making families eager to be part of their child's learning. Ninety percent of families are actively participating. Parents often verbalize how they enjoy the program and their child is excited and engaged in reading and family participation.

### **Contact**

Diane Gouveia and Margaret Lafleur

Fall River Public Schools, 417 Rock Street, Fall River MA 02720

508.675.8420 x421

## **Wareham Community Partnerships for Children Family Literacy Program**

*Wareham Public Schools  
Wareham, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Preschool

### **Stakeholders Involved**

We invite parents, guardians and others interested in early childhood education as well as our legislators and human service agencies to participate.

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
✓ <b>Student Learning</b>
✓ <b>Responsibility</b>
✓ <b>Community Collaboration</b>



### **Activity/Program Description**

Each year we promote family literacy and community involvement and awareness with various events. In November, we celebrate Family Literacy Month and in April, the Week of the Young Child. We have an event with a performer/storyteller. Each child receives a literacy packet with a book and other information on the importance of reading to your child, library card application, parent and child activities, grant programs, and daycare choices. Our Community Resource Guide and brochures are given out to families. We hold Community Fairs to also promote literacy and community resources. At these fairs, organizations such as WIC and South Coast Hospital Group set up tables. All of our events are very well attended with hundreds participating. We feel this information will help to better prepare children and families for school readiness, success, and community involvement.

We have been holding these programs for nine years. Before this, we had the Even Start Grant, which sponsored these events. We have also collaborated with the Reading Excellence Grant for the Book of the Month program, which promoted parent-child interaction. Now we collaborate with The Parent Child Home Program Grant as well as community agencies.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The parent evaluations have indicated that these programs are not only successful but also worthwhile. We have also conducted surveys and studied school readiness for our preschoolers going into kindergarten, and we have documented that these programs do make a difference.

### **Contact**

Mary Jane Sullivan, M.Ed., Community Partnerships Coordinator  
East Wareham School, 27 Depot Street, East Wareham MA 02538  
508-291-3547 (tel.), 508-291-3545 (fax)  
mjsullivan@wareham.k12.ma.us

# Increasing Parent Involvement in Schools

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## **Academic Volunteer Program**

*Boxborough School District  
Boxborough, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

K-6

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Student Learning</b></li><li>✓ <b>Volunteering</b></li></ul> |
|---|

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents and community members

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Academic Volunteer Program encourages parents to become involved in their children's educations. School personnel send parents a list of ways they can assist the school including those during school hours and those that can be completed at home, outside of school hours. Activities include academic assistance, sharing hobbies or skills, copying and helping in the art room, library, computer lab, and health office. The program has been in place for over 5 years.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

This program involves the community in the schools.

### **Contact**

Richard Bergeron  
Superintendent  
rbergeron@boxboroughschool.org

## **Family Fun Nights**

*Memorial School*

*Upton, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Elementary

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>	
✓	<b>Student Learning</b>
✓	<b>Responsibility</b>
✓	<b>Community Collaboration</b>



### **Activity/Program Description**

Initiated in 2004-05, Family Fun Nights are a joint project of the Memorial School Parent –Teacher Organization and Memorial School Staff. Their purpose is to provide educational experiences that encourage parent participation in the learning process. These organized evenings give students the opportunity to interact with their families, peers and staff while practicing skills learned during the school day. Each night focuses on a different theme. Adventures in Storyland gave families the opportunity to enjoy a storyteller and a play put on by members of our high school drama club. There were storybook characters roaming the building, crafts, games and music that connected to favorite characters.

Family Fitness Night provided mentally and physically challenging games and activities including obstacle courses and relays, and timed skill events. Community businesses related to fitness held demonstrations. These included Jazzercise, Curves and Gymboree. The school nursing staff gave talks on healthy eating, and samples of healthy snacks were provided with donations from local grocery stores.

Our Math Madness Night provided measuring, estimating and patterning activities. There were graphing stations as well as problem solving challenges. A measure and mix activity allowed participants to create their own snacks.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The program increases parent involvement and support

### **Contact**

Ruth A. Danforth, Principal

Memorial School, 69 Main Street, Upton MA 01568

508-529-1020

Rdanforth@mu-regional.k12.ma.us

## **Family Support Programs**

*Framingham Public Schools  
Framingham, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

PreK-12

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>	
✓	<b>Communication</b>
✓	<b>Community Collaboration</b>



### **Stakeholders Involved**

Various cultural and linguistic members of the community and staff

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Department of Family Support Programs serves as the umbrella structure for several grant and district parent involvement programs including: Parent Information Center; Framingham Family Central/CPC; Parent Child Home Program; McKinney- Vento Homeless Program; and Let's Go to Kindergarten program. The creation of the Parent Information Center provided the original focus. Family Support Programs was created in 2002 as a way to organize and provide a comprehensive site for several parent involvement programs.

Each program area serves a specific group but all groups reach out to cultural and linguistic members of our community. Each program specifically recruits staff members who speak a language other than English. Framingham Family Central involves community members as Council members of the CPC. Community members and staff are also involved in the McKinney Vento program.

The Parent Information Center is the central registration and information center for the Framingham Public Schools. All incoming families to the district register through PIC. In addition to registration, PIC is a vital component of Family Support Programs and has provided a physical focus for gathering other programs that serve parents. PIC has been in place since 1996. It was begun with funding from Chapter 636 to implement a school choice program in Framingham. When state funding was eliminated the district made a commitment to maintaining the Parent Information Center because of the obvious benefits to families and schools.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

Communication in a large school district is a challenge both for parents and staff. Parents who are beginning their educational careers with their children can feel overwhelmed. The main benefit of having a Parent Information Center has been that it serves as a positive first point of contact for many families. It acts as a neutral setting where parents feel they can ask and receive information that is objective and accurate. Because each family has contact with PIC it has also helped organize other services for families such as

support for homeless families, nursing services, special education services, bilingual assessments and placements, quick and effective communication with parents regarding district-wide policy changes, and most importantly, it has been critical in responding to parent feedback and concerns. With PIC as the central hub a number of programs have been linked which enhances opportunities for collaboration and sharing of resources that directly impact families.

**Contact**

Anna C. Cross  
Director of Family Support Programs  
454 Water Street  
Framingham, Ma. 01701  
508-424-3420 (tel.)  
508-877-0733 (fax)  
across@framingham.k12.ma.us

**Friday Night Parent Club**

*Somerville School District  
Somerville, MA*

**Student Age Group Targeted**

K-8 (elementary and middle school students)

**Stakeholders Involved**

Friday Night Parent Clubs are aimed at parents and family members or caregivers of students, K-8. These parent clubs take place in different languages at different schools.

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>	
✓	<b>Student Learning</b>
✓	<b>Communication</b>
✓	<b>Responsibility</b>
✓	<b>School Decision Making and Advocacy</b>

**Activity/Program Description**

Clubs are designed to provide a supportive environment for parents to discuss any issues that they identify as important to the children's achievement in school. These issues include communication with teachers, homework help strategies, access to health care, ideas for learning at home and community resources.

**Outcomes/Effectiveness**

We are at beginning stages of building our clubs.

**Contact**

Regina Bertholdo  
Director  
Parent Information Center  
617-625-6600 x 6962  
rbertholdo@k12.somerville.ma.us

*This program was cut in 2005-06 due to funding.*

## **Healy Cross Cultural Parent Group (HCCPG)**

*Healy School*

*Somerville, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

K-8 (Elementary and Middle School Students)

### **Involvement Standards Addressed**

- ✓ **Student Learning**
- ✓ **School Decision Making and Advocacy**

### **Stakeholders Involved**

This program serves parents, family members and caregivers of students in elementary and middle school. This is a multicultural group. Invitations are made in the major languages represented in the school district including Portuguese, Spanish and Haitian Creole. Multilingual phone calls are made to parents. Meetings are interpreted in Spanish and Portuguese.

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Healy Cross Cultural Parent Group (HCCPG) was conceived in an effort to more systematically involve parents that truly represent the diversity of the Healey School. Initially we recruited a group of parents that crossed the various cultural, linguistic, socio-economic and programmatic divisions. Initially this group participated in several focus groups in which the groups worked to explore each others' educational experiences while relating them to experiences as parents at the Healey School. The goal was to make parents feel more comfortable and seek input on potent issues, ideas and concerns that truly represent our school community as a whole. The HCCPG has been in place since January 2005. Child care is provided.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The group was successful in bringing together a small and diverse group of parents. The group has engaged in powerful conversations and has made parents within the group more comfortable in presenting their ideas and being a stronger presence in the school and in their children's education.

### **Contact**

Peter Botelho  
Vice Principal  
Healy School  
617-625-6600 x 6537  
pbotelho@.k12.somerville.ma.us

Regina Bertholdo  
Director, Parent Information Center  
617-625-6600 x 6962  
rbertholdo@k12.somerville.ma.us

# Building Parenting Skills

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## **Alliance for Teen Safety**

*Concord and Carlisle Public Schools  
Concord, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Teenagers in middle and high school.

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
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- |  |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Responsibility</b></li><li>✓ <b>Community Collaboration</b></li></ul> |
|--|

### **Stakeholders Involved**

The Alliance is a community coalition, involving schools, hospitals, police, youth, parents, business leaders, The Council of Aging, clergy, media, the town manager, elected personnel, mental health professionals, and others.

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Alliance was formed in 1999 in response to the results of a Youth Risk Behavior Survey sponsored by a local hospital. The group has focused on the top three risky behaviors reported. It employs a strength-based approach and a prevention strategy.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The Alliance has brought the community together around the assets of youth. The community reaches out to its young people, community programs are intergenerational, parents are communicating to parents around youth concerns, and the risk taking behaviors of our youth are decreasing, as illustrated in subsequent survey results.

### **Contact**

Barbara Howland  
Executive Director  
Alliance for Teen Safety, Inc  
978-835-2729  
cc4youth@colonial.net

## **Center for Parents and Teachers (CPT)**

*Concord and Carlisle Public Schools*

*Concord - Carlisle, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

PreK-12

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>	
✓	<b>Responsibility</b>
✓	<b>Community Collaboration</b>
✓	<b>Educator/Staff Development</b>



### **Stakeholders Involved**

The Center for Parents and Teachers (CPT) collaborates closely with other community groups to meet the needs of families in Concord and Carlisle. Working with groups such as First Connections at Emerson Hospital, Concord Carlisle Community Education, Concord Public Schools Health Education, PTA's and others has greatly enhanced program delivery.

### **Activity/Program Description**

Since 1987 The CPT has provided a wide range of parenting education programs and early childhood teacher training and resources. Its workshops, such as "How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk" are multi-session, small-group, highly participatory programs. Its forums, such as "Raising a Teenage Boy" are single-session programs that attract large number of parents. The CPT also offers training for early childhood educators in conjunction with Tufts University.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The CPT evaluates program effectiveness by surveying participants. The participants rate the programs highly as to presenters, new skills learned, and greater confidence to address family dilemmas and raise happy, well-adjusted children.

### **Contact**

Sally Quinn Reed, Director

Center for Parents and Teachers

978-202-1145

ssquinnreed@colonial.net

## **Guiding Good Choices (GGC)**

*Worcester Public Schools  
Worcester, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Grades 4 - 8

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
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✓ <b>Responsibility</b>
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### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents students in grades 4- 8

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Guiding Good Choices (GGC) program started in May 2004, encourages the involvement of parents from diverse backgrounds. During five two-hour sessions parents increase their ability to provide their adolescent with appropriate opportunities for family involvement, recognize competencies and skills, teach them how to keep their friends while using drug refusal skills, and set and communicate healthy beliefs and clear standards for behavior.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The program has helped parents become familiar with the resources in the school and the community. In addition, the program allows parents an opportunity to establish a support network to help deal with issues of raising an adolescent. At one middle school, for example, participants continue to meet weekly even though they have completed the program curriculum.

### **Contact**

Colleen O'Brien, Director  
Safe Schools/Healthy Students Office  
Lisa Maddox, Community Resource Liaison  
508-799-3497  
maddoxl@worc.k12.ma.us

## **North Middlesex Regional School District Parent Resource Center**

*North Middlesex Regional School District  
Townsend - Ashby - Pepperell, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Infancy through early childhood

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>	
✓	<b>Student Learning</b>
✓	<b>Responsibility</b>



### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents, guardians and citizens from Ashby, Pepperell and Townsend

### **Activity/Program Description**

The North Middlesex Regional School District Parent Resource Center (PRC) began in 1998 with one resource center in Townsend. It has now grown to include the Ashby and Pepperell elementary schools. Parent participation has grown each year and now numbers in the hundreds. The center offers three activity components: 1) a variety of targeted parent/child formats such as discussion/play groups, Adoptive, Foster or Kinship Parent Group, The Multiple Birth Group, to name a few; 2) parent drop-in hours, and 3) Resource centers at each elementary school. The PRC is led by a Parent Outreach Coordinator, who is an R.N. and has a Master's Degree in Education and a graduate certificate in Parent Education and Support.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

Tracking parent resource center participants over the past seven years the District believes that the participants are more likely to take part in school activities, be active in parent-teacher organizations, have more positive attitudes toward their child's school and are more likely to support school programs and initiatives. The District also notes that 12 parent-child playgroups are active within the three communities, as a direct result of parent participation in the Resource Center programs.

### **Contact**

Mr. William Smith  
Professional Development Director &  
Title I Director  
978-597-8713  
bsmith@nmiddlesex.mec.edu

Mrs. Nancy Amante  
District Parent Outreach Coordinator  
978-597-6161  
namante@nmiddlesex.mec.edu

## **Parents for Parents Group**

*Fitchburg Public Schools  
Fitchburg, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Children ages 2.9 years to Kindergarten entry

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
✓ <b>Responsibility</b>
✓ <b>Community Collaboration</b>



### **Stakeholders Involved**

This program serves teen mothers, families participating in the Community Partnership Program, single parents, Fitchburg residents, community agency clients and staff. Culturally and linguistically diverse members from the Spanish American Center and Hmong Lao Foundation are recruited.

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Parents for Parents Group is an informal parenting network where parents gather once a month to share experiences and ideas with each other. This is a great way for parents to spend an evening out with their peers and acquire new and valuable information that will benefit their families. We also have guest speakers that present topics for parents that address issues that face families of today. Many times we offer interactive groups with both the parent and child. The group meets once a month for one hour usually from 6-7 p.m.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The location of the group allows parents without transportation to walk to the group. Childcare and refreshments are offered. Local community members are represented in the group. The groups are child-friendly and interactive. Parents feel comfortable in the setting and the group size is usually between 5-10 participants.

### **Contact**

Bonnie Baer-Simahk, Early Childhood Director  
Early Childhood Department/Community Partnership for Children  
978-343-2118  
baer-simahkb@fitchburg.k12.ma.us or driscollk@fitchburg.k12.ma.us

## **Responsive Home Parenting Program**

*Fitchburg Public Schools  
Fitchburg, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Children ages 2.9 years to Kindergarten entry

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
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✓ <b>Responsibility</b>
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### **Stakeholders Involved**

Teen mothers, families participating in the Community Partnership Program, single parents, Fitchburg residents, community agency clients and staff. Culturally and linguistically diverse members from the Spanish American Center and Hmong Lao Foundation are recruited.

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Responsive Home Parenting Program holds two sessions of eight classes throughout the year. Consistent with the Responsive Classroom® approach used in the Fitchburg Public Schools, parents find out how to help children develop social skills including cooperation, responsibility, empathy, assertion and self-control. Parents are given practical strategies that help build healthy family relationships, while exploring connections between children's development and their behavior. *Parenting Young Children, Systematic Training for Effective Parenting Children (STEP)* through AGS American Guidance Service, Inc., and *How to Talk So Kids Will Listen and Listen So Kids Will Talk* by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish are the two books used in the eight week session. The groups meet once a week on Tuesday evenings from 5:30-8:00 p.m. Refreshments and childcare are provided.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

This free program is in its seventh year. Parents receive information on child guidance and discipline that is consistent with strategies in place in their child's school. The group allows parents to share and compare parenting ideas with other participants of the group while feeling comfortable and secure. After attending the groups, parents tend to refer their family and friends to the group. Often times we have repeat participants. The parent group offers childcare, refreshments, and two books for the participants, all free of charge.

**Contact**

Bonnie Baer-Simahk  
Early Childhood Director  
Early Childhood Department/Community  
Partnership for Children  
978-343-2118  
baer-simahkb@fitchburg.k12.ma.us or

Karen Driscoll  
Early Childhood Department/Community  
Partnership for Children Program  
376 South Street  
Fitchburg, MA 01420  
978-343-2118  
driscollk@fitchburg.k12.ma.us

## **SQUIRT (Sustained Quiet Uninterrupted Reading Time)**

*Dracut Public Schools*

*Dracut, Massachusetts*

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Student Learning</li><li>✓ Volunteering</li></ul> |
|---|

### **Activity/Program Description**

This program requires daily involvement of parents who are scheduled for a month at a time. They sit with students, listen to them read, question their comprehension, and evaluate students' abilities to retell a story

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The program is very successful because the parents feel a part of and in partnership with the school, and students get the message that school is important to their parents

### **Contact**

Elaine A. Espindle  
Superintendent of Schools  
978-957-2660 (tel.)  
978-957-2682 (fax)  
espindle@dracut.k12.ma.us

**Violence Prevention Program**

*Hingham Public Schools  
Hingham, Massachusetts*

**Student Age Group Targeted**

PreK – 3

<p><b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Responsibility</li> <li>✓ Community Collaboration</li> </ul>
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**Stakeholders Involved**

Community preschool teachers and parents from three towns: Hingham, Norwell and Scituate.

**Activity/Program Description**

This three-year old DOE grant-funded program has trained teachers, community preschools and parents in the areas of violence prevention. It has provided workshops for surrounding community preschools in Autism, Strategies for Sensory Integration and Handwriting without Tears. It also offered a workshop for parents of young children that demonstrated ways in which they could use the arts as a tool for playing and interacting with their children.

**Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The model has promoted teamwork throughout Hingham to benefit the social and emotional well-being of children.

**Contact**

Becky Case  
Preschool Coordinator  
781-741-1540 x138  
bcase@hinghamschools.com

# Parent Advisory Committees

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## **Title I Parent Advisory Committees**

*Somerville Public Schools  
Somerville, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

K-12

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Communication</b></li><li>✓ <b>Responsibility</b></li><li>✓ <b>Community Collaboration</b></li></ul> |
|---|

### **Stakeholders Involved**

The Title I PAC involves parents and grandparents. Given the linguistic and cultural diversity in the City of Somerville, interpreters are provided as necessary.

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Title I PAC provides monthly parent meetings to discuss and learn about citywide community programs, school programs, parent education trainings, workshops and topic discussions. For example, currently parents have been meeting in a 10-week session to focus on the issue of “bullying”.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The program has been in place for about 22 years. We have had positive feedback from children coming back to the center as adults, long after college, graduation or marriage, to talk about the importance of this program and how their families benefited from it.

### **Contact**

Ellie Blute  
Title I Parent Liaison  
617-625-6600  
eblute@k12.somerville.ma.us

## **Parent Advisory Committees for Structured English Immersion Programs**

*Somerville Public Schools  
Somerville, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

K-12

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents and other family members or caregivers. These PAC meetings are held in four different schools and facilitated in four languages: Haitian Creole, Spanish, Portuguese, and English.

### **Involvement Standards Addressed**

- ✓ **Communication**
- ✓ **School Decision Making and Advocacy**

### **Activity/Program Description**

PACs have been meeting approximately four times a year for information-sharing and celebrations. The primary function is to facilitate communication between parents and Structured English Immersion (SEI) programs. PAC Coordinators also assist in testing and placement of students. PAC Coordinators visit with SEI teachers on a regular basis and organize workshops and events for families. We are planning a joint PAC meeting at the High School to talk about MCAS. Information will be provided in Spanish, Portuguese, and Haitian Creole.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

PACs have been part of the Transitional Bilingual Program and now Structured English Immersion Program for approximately 20 years. PACs have provided an avenue for communication for parents whose first language is not English to get information and to become involved in their children's education.

### **Contact**

Sarah Slive Davila  
Structured English Immersion Coordinator  
617-625-6600 x 6140  
sdavila@k12.somerville.ma.us

*PACs are no longer existent due to budget changes/cuts.*

# School-Community Partnerships

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## **Accountability: Communicating Performance to the Community**

*Needham Public Schools  
Needham, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

K-12

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ <b>Communication</b></li><li>✓ <b>Community Collaboration</b></li></ul> |
|---|

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Community, staff, funders, key Needham municipal staff, and Boston families who attend Needham schools through the METCO desegregation program

### **Activity/Program Description**

The District publishes an annual performance report, which it mails to all Needham households, staff, Boston families who attend Needham schools through the METCO desegregation program, funders, and key Needham municipal staff.

This practice involves the Needham Public Schools approach for reporting the schools' performance to stakeholders. To develop the report, the District conducted focus groups with 75 people. Results were compiled, and then translated into an information framework, with the assistance of a team of students from the Harvard Graduate School of Business Volunteer Consulting Organization. Five key performance areas were identified: Student Performance; Staff Performance, Learning and Growth, Financial Performance; Education Planning; and Stakeholder Satisfaction.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

Focus groups and anecdotal feedback on the report was overwhelmingly positive. Community members and staff felt proud to be part of a system that reflected on its own performance and set clear goals and expectation for improvement. A very high percentage of parents surveyed said they had read the report and had found it informative. The current challenge is to produce the report annually yet make the information fresh, relevant and informative.

### **Contact**

Susan Bonaiuto  
Director of Community Education Programs and External Funding  
781-445-0400 x211  
susan\_bonaiuto@needham.k12.ma.us



## **Foster Grandparent Program**

*Dracut Public Schools*

*Dracut, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Usually K-6

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Community seniors

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>	
✓	<b>Student Learning</b>
✓	<b>Volunteering</b>
✓	<b>Community Collaboration</b>

### **Activity/Program Description**

We solicit our “senior-retired” population for those individuals who can assist the teacher in the classroom for either a half-day program or for a full day extension. These citizens serve as aides in the classroom on a daily basis and are part of the structured lessons in the classroom. We provide transportation for them, their lunch, and a small stipend.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

If one program could be cited for its sustaining good work, it would be our Foster Grandparent Program. A committed foster grandparent is worth his/her weight in gold.

### **Contact**

Elaine A. Espindle  
Superintendent of Schools  
978-957-2660 (tel.)  
978-957-2682 (fax)  
espindle@dracut.k12.ma.us

## **Happy Birthday Seniors**

*Savoy Elementary School  
Savoy, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

K-1

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
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✓ <b>Community Collaboration</b>
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### **Stakeholders Involved**

Community seniors

### **Activity/Program Description**

The Savoy Elementary School over the past 7 years has had their student in grades kindergarten through 1<sup>st</sup> grade create and send birthday cards to local area senior citizens. The students also host, four times a year, birthday parties for their local pen pals.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The program has developed excellent intergenerational involvement and communication between the school and community.

### **Contact**

Marjorie R Senecal  
Principal  
Savoy Elementary School  
26 Chapel Rd  
Savoy, MA 01256  
413-743-1992

## **Kindergarten Readiness Bag Project**

*Quaboag Regional School District  
Quaboag, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Incoming kindergarten students

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Senior citizens and families of the children.

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>	
✓	<b>Student Learning</b>
✓	<b>Volunteering</b>
✓	<b>Community Collaboration</b>

### **Activity/Program Description**

Seniors cut and sew approximately 120-130 cloth tote bags in time for Kindergarten Orientation Day. The completed tote bags are filled with school supplies by the SPED and Title 1 Directors along with the kindergarten teachers and the seniors at the senior center. The seniors distribute the bags to students.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The project provides all students with basic school supplies to involve and encourage parents to practice readiness skills with their preschooler over the summer prior to kindergarten. The seniors feel they are a part of students' success, and each year are anxious to start the project. Kindergarten teachers look forward to preparing activities to help students with readiness skills, and students and parents appreciate the supplies and support.

### **Contact**

Carol Jacobs  
Superintendent  
413-436-5983

Frances Slowaski  
QRSD Title 1 Director  
slowafra1@quaboag.org

## **Putting MCAS to Work**

*Palmer High School  
Palmer, Massachusetts*

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
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- |   |
|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Student Learning</b></li> <li>✓ <b>Community Collaboration</b></li> </ul> |
|---|

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

This program is designed for high school students who are still working towards meeting their competency determination for high school graduation.

### **Stakeholders Involved**

The program is a collaboration between the Palmer High School faculty, school-to-career partners (River east School-to-Career, Inc.) and local businesses with support from administration, parents and students.

### **Activity/Program Description**

“Putting MCAS to Work” is a special summer program for academic support, targeting those students who need to boost their English and math skills to pass MCAS. Students spend the morning working with teachers for direct instruction and on PLATO software program, lunch is provided, and then students spend the afternoon at jobs provided through local businesses. School-to-Career provides the work-based model to prepare students for employment. Incentives (movie passes, restaurant coupons, CD’s, etc.) are provided, but the biggest incentive is combining a summer job with academic support.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

This program is in its third year. MCAS retests have improved. Students in need of summer jobs are provided with them and school-community connections are strengthened.

### **Contact**

Mary Beth Eagan  
Guidance Counselor  
Palmer High School  
4105 Main Street  
Palmer, MA 02069-1868  
413-283-6511  
meagan@palmerschools.org

## **School and Community Connections**

*Ayer Middle School*

*Ayer, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Middle school grades (5-8)

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
✓ <b>Community Collaboration</b>

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Middle school parents and extended families, business leaders, Council on Aging, and the Apple Valley Rehabilitation Center for Seniors are involved in this program. The school system and community are made up of diversified populations, allowing all who attend these functions to feel comfortable.

### **Activity/Program Description**

This program has been in place within the middle school since September 2004, and includes a number of events that bring together middle school children with various members of the community. Listed below are examples of what the program has done this year.

- Hosted a concert and play for our local senior citizens and after these events we also hosted a tea party, which our guests were served by the students Council for the Middle School.
- Put on a 3 on 3 Basketball Tournament for all students in the middle school with over 200 community members were attending
- Developed a Brown Bag Program that provided non-perishable goods for senior citizens of our community.
- Raised money for The American Red Cross Tsunami Relief Fund. All middle and high school students participated in raising a large donation for this cause.
- Loaves and Fishes Food Drive to benefit needy families in the local pantry.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

This program has been effective in bringing together diverse populations of young and old. It links community leaders and local businesses with our students. The students help others who are in need. For example, one of our students was serving an elderly guest during the Tea Party event and the guest commented to her that this was the only time she has been out of the rehabilitation center in ten months. This student was so upset that she asked if we could do something for them all the time. Stories like this illustrate why it's so important that our young people interact with the older people of our community.

### **Contact**

Terri Rollins, School & Community Liaison

141 Washington Street, Ayer MA 01432, 978-772-8600 x 463, t\_rollins@ayer.mec.edu

# Comprehensive Programs

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## **Brockton Public Schools Parent Involvement Program**

*Brockton Public Schools  
Brockton, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

Pre-K-12

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents

<b>Involvement Standards Addressed</b>
✓ <b>Student Learning</b>
✓ <b>Communication</b>
✓ <b>Responsibility</b>
✓ <b>Volunteering</b>
✓ <b>School Decision Making and Advocacy</b>
✓ <b>Community Collaboration</b>



### **Activity/Program Description**

The parent involvement program has been in place for eight years and is active in all schools at all levels. The Parent Involvement Program strives to include parents of all students in our school district with the aim of eliminating or reducing the linguistic and cultural impediments that can sometimes minimize participation by diverse community members. The School Registration and Parent Information Center provides a welcoming atmosphere where parents conduct business in English or in their native language. The Center has full-time staff representing Brockton's four major cultural and linguistic minority populations: Cape Verdean, Hispanic, Haitian and Portuguese. The goal is to ensure that the parents' initial experience becomes the first of many positive interactions with the Brockton Public Schools.

Bilingual liaisons from the district's Department of Bilingual and ESL Services explain sheltered English immersion programs and encourage parents to tour the schools and acquaint the new families with general medical, employment and community support services available to them in Brockton. Once children are settled in at school in a sheltered English immersion or regular education program, parents are encouraged to attend monthly Parent Advisory Council meetings at the school. The Bilingual Department conducts meetings in parents' native languages.

The Parent Involvement Specialist visits the work site and sets up a Brockton Public School Resource Table to provide parents with opportunities to ask questions, relate their concerns or to receive school updates. The Parent Involvement program sponsors evening and weekend events with guest speakers in native language along with dinner and babysitting service. All notices, flyers and newsletters are translated into four major

languages. Evening parent workshops in nutrition, academics and MCAS support also provide translators for limited English proficient speakers.

The Brockton Public Schools Parent Involvement Program conducted by the School Registration and Parent Information Center subscribes to the belief embraced by all staff members that parents are partners in quality education and student performance. The functions of registration and outreach set the tone for a successful and positive learning experience. The registration segment focuses on welcoming families to the Brockton school district, and the parent is assisted by staff members in the registration and assignment process to make informed school choices. The Parent Outreach portion is coordinated by Parent Involvement Specialist with a staff of twenty-five parent liaisons.

The parent liaisons, guided by the Parent Involvement Specialist and building principals, provide services in 16 elementary schools, four junior highs and Brockton High School. The focus of the liaisons' work is to facilitate and enhance the home-school-community connections and to provide ways for parents to get involved in their children's education. Liaisons work on maintaining contacts with parents and encourage a parent presence at the schools. They typically welcome new parents to the schools, coordinate school tours for parents with the registration center and conduct open house orientation sessions for new families.

Liaisons create and publish school newsletters, monthly parent information calendars of events and design parent information bulletins, portfolios and scrapbooks. They assist the School Registration Center with the annual kindergarten, grade 1 and grade 7 registration periods, the transition points when Brockton Public Schools parents are asked choose their children's elementary and junior high schools.

Liaisons recruit parent volunteers, coordinate parent workshops, produce promotional flyers and conduct surveys of parent and teacher needs and interests. Some unique participatory events at which parent liaisons assist include Family Nutrition Nights; Family Math, Science, and Literacy Nights; Family Craft Nights; The Magic of Science Nights; Title 1 Parent and Child Breakfasts; and Saturday Family Field Trips. These and similar events efforts are reviewed and discussed at weekly meetings coordinated by the Parent Involvement Specialist. Parent liaisons are also responsible for maintaining parent participation data for their individual schools.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

The Brockton Public Schools Parent Involvement Program is patterned after the national standards of parent involvement – communicating, parenting, student learning, volunteering, school decision-making, and collaborating with the community – and has learned from its own experience. The best indicator of parental involvement is simply the degree of parent participation. To date, BPS parent liaisons have made and received a total of 170,094 telephone calls, welcomed 16,080 parents to regular PAC/PTO/PTA meetings, received 88,414 written responses to the Home/School Connection newsletter

and assisted 308,117 parents and children who have attended parent involvement events outside of the school day.

**Contact**

Jane E. Feroli  
Parent Involvement Specialist  
Brockton Public Schools  
144 Main Street, 3rd Floor  
Brockton, Massachusetts 02301  
508-894-4328

Brockton Public Schools  
School Registration and Parent Information  
Center  
Prudence Buckley, Director  
144 Main Street, 3rd Floor  
Brockton, Massachusetts 02301  
508-580-7950  
prudencebuckley@brocktonpublicschools.com  
janeferoli@brocktonpublicschools.com

## **Building Educational Success Together (BEST) (Taunton)**

*Taunton Public Schools  
Taunton, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

K-12

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents, guardians and extended family, business community, church community and social service agencies.

#### **Involvement Standards Addressed**

- ✓ Student Learning
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Responsibility
- ✓ Volunteering
- ✓ School Decision Making and Advocacy
- ✓ Community Collaboration
- ✓ Educator/Staff Development

### **Activity/Program Description**

The program was developed through conversation and frequent meetings with community leaders, parents of students, administrative and teaching staff during the 1990-91 school year. Three fundamental goals emerged from our conversations and these goals continue to be embraced:

1. Develop and improve strategies for involvement at each school site
2. Broaden and redefine the role of the parent teacher organization within each school, moving their activities closer to academic success and out of the “fundraising hinterland”
3. Communicate publicly and in practice, our belief that education is a shared responsibility

In 1995 we forged a relationship with the National Partnership Schools at Johns Hopkins University. Dr. Joyce Epstein conducted a full day professional development training for all staff to explore the multiple facets of involvement and to alter staff perception that involvement only included on-site visits. That relationship and her work have been highly instrumental in our continued growth over time. We viewed involvement in a campaign framework and developed images, colors, logos etc. that were sprinkled generously across the district to make a public statement of our intent to improve this facet of education within the community of Taunton.

### **Outcomes/Effectiveness**

Project B.E.S.T. has been extremely effective. Parent and family involvement is no longer incidental, or driven by one school and not others, and the breadth and scope of involvement activities has exploded. We can document higher levels of homework completion, increased volunteer hours, more diverse programming, more frequent enrichment offerings, expanded library hours to include summer vacation, improved facilities for our learners, positive teacher morale, and a greater percentage of parents indicating by survey that they are more

informed, that their principal is more responsive, that district personnel make themselves available, and they feel welcome in schools.

**Contact**

Kathleen Callahan  
Community Liaison/Administrative Facilitator  
508-821-1183 (tel.)  
508-821-1177 (fax)  
kcallahan@tauntonschoools.org

## Including Every Parent

*Patrick O'Hearn Elementary School  
Dorchester, Massachusetts*

### Student Age Group Targeted

Elementary

### Stakeholders Involved

Parents and families of all students

#### Involvement Standards Addressed

- ✓ Student Learning
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Responsibility
- ✓ School Decision Making and Advocacy
- ✓ Community Collaboration
- ✓ Educator/Staff Development

### Activity/Program Description

#### Parents Are Present:

1. For the Principal: Genuinely welcome all parents. Focus on their positive contributions to their children's success. Acknowledge and affirm all levels of participation. Have visitation days for prospective students and parents. Be accessible and available to parents. Be a familiar face in the classroom.
2. Family Outreach Program: An all-parent outreach team welcomes new families through home visits. The team gives out books and information about the school, answers questions and establishes initial parent-to-parent relationships.
3. Family Center: Dedicate a space and time where families and children will always be welcome. Extend invitations. Provide food and drink. Talk about children, school, projects and ideas. Brainstorm ways that parents can contribute. Invite guests with expertise.

#### Parents Are Participating:

1. Parent Volunteers: Survey teachers for ways parents can contribute to classrooms, and survey parents for skills, willingness and time to participate. Make assembled data available to all teachers and families in a parent-volunteer binder. Ask parents to volunteer for simple, specific and necessary tasks. Follow up and celebrate their contributions. Keep lines of communication open.
2. School Newsletter: Parents communicate with parents about school and community events by organizing, writing, editing and publishing a newsletter about the school community.
3. Performing Arts: Parents organize, direct and participate in one to several productions each year. They encourage and recruit school and family talent, and they make videos of the performances available to all families.

Parents Are Partners:

1. Home Reading Program: Parents and teachers create a home reading contract to ensure younger students will read or be read to at home, at least fifteen minutes per night, four nights per week. The program is introduced and promoted through the Family Outreach Program and is supported and reinforced within the classroom. We track reading data, and reward children and parent participation. With difficult cases we try to be creatively persistently affirming. We aim for 100% participation.
2. The Book Swap: Parent volunteers build a book collection through donations and inexpensive purchases. Swaps are scheduled for children to exchange books. We believe in always being generous with books and children, and do not require that children give a book to get one.
3. After School Program: Survey parents about after school needs/ideas, such as homework, sports and activity clubs. Develop a plan and a budget. Raise funds, hire staff or recruit volunteers. Always evaluate.
4. Family Math Night: Parent volunteers and teachers oversee a variety of math games for students and families to play. With food and a focus on including everyone, this is an entertaining and community-building event.

Parents Are Empowered:

1. School Governance Council: Regularly invite any and all parents to attend meetings, and welcome their participation. Advertise meetings and agendas. Provide food, and make child care available. Set and stick to clear agendas. Welcome multiple perspectives. Give parents a voice.
2. Parent-Initiated Projects: How can we empower parents as leaders? Effectively involving parents is everyone's job, but Parent empowerment begins in the Principal's office. Make the parent-volunteer binder an organizing centerpiece. Look for and make funding available to support volunteer projects. Support parent-to-parent communication. Accommodate and affirm all parents.

**Outcomes/Effectiveness**

Including Every Parent grew from a recognition that parent involvement in the life of the school leads to greater academic and emotional success and well being for the children. Parents are everywhere engaged and involved in a wide variety of ways to support teaching and learning at the school. They volunteer at the front desk, organize the family center and the book swap, direct rehearsals for the talent show in the gymnasium, put out the school newsletter, volunteer and substitute teach in the classroom, and the list goes on. Today the Patrick O'Hearn is well known as an exemplary elementary school, consistently placing among Boston's top schools on standardized tests. In and out of school, our students shine. Under Boston's Controlled Choice Assignment Plan, so many parents rank the O'Hearn as their first choice that many families end up on a long waiting list. The parent involvement culture even led to collaboration with the national Project for School Innovation (PSI) and the publication and national distribution of a how-to parent involvement manual and videotape entitled Including Every Parent.

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## **Title 1 Family Liaison Positions**

*Holyoke Public Schools*

*Holyoke, Massachusetts*

### **Student Age Group Targeted**

K-12

### **Stakeholders Involved**

Parents/guardians, grandparents, business leaders, community agencies (i.e. Holyoke Health Center, Holyoke Community Education Project, Enlace De Familia).

### **Involvement Standards Addressed**

- ✓ Student Learning
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Responsibility
- ✓ Volunteering
- ✓ Community Collaboration

### **Activity/Program Description**

Title 1 Family Liaisons are situated in every school and work with the school staff, administrators, and parents to coordinate and advocate for family involvement to help students to learn.

The Family Liaisons work to involve the “hard to reach” parents and create effective communications to enable the families to play various roles at school and at home.

Family Liaisons have been in place for the 2004-'05 school year.

This program is unique because each school has individualized the activities to their needs. Examples:

- Translating daily to make parents feel comfortable and welcome in the schools
- Personal phone calls to parents reminding them of Parent/Teacher meetings
- Attending I.E.P. meetings to translate
- Incentive Program to recognize students “caught being good” and personal calls to the parents with the “GOOD NEWS”
- ”Make Your Own Sundae” an incentive program to get parents to come to parent/teacher conference – yielding over 475 participants
- Parent’s Club at the two high schools
- Coffee Hours to speak with the parents of “At Risk” students (i.e. attendance, grades etc.)
- Working with the Guidance Counselors and Outreach Workers
- Attending Title 1 Parent /Student activities
- Setting up volunteer programs
- Disseminating all pertinent information to parents
- Monthly training sessions which included a focus group with the Holyoke Health Center and a focus group with The Community Education Project
- Set up a Public Transportation program which allows parents to receive free bus tokens to attend school functions

**Outcomes/Effectiveness**

This program has only been in place since the 2004-05 school year. However, when staff and parents were informally surveyed the results were quite clear – these new positions are extremely valuable and add the necessary personal touch to getting parents involved in the schools.

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