

From the 2002 research review *A New Wave of Evidence: The Impact of School, Family, and Community Connections on Student Achievement* by Anne T. Henderson and Karen L. Mapp.

### **Finding 1: Involvement programs that link to learning improve student achievement.**

It's simple: The more parent and community involvement activities focus on improving student learning, the more student learning improves. Learning-focused involvement activities may include

- Family nights on math or literacy.
- Family-teacher conferences that involve students.
- Family workshops on planning for college.

### **Finding 2: Speaking up for children protects and promotes their success.**

Children whose parents are advocates for them at school are more confident at school and take on and achieve more. The more families advocate for their children and support their children's progress, the longer their children stay in school and the better their children do. Families should

- Become knowledgeable about the operations of schools and the laws that govern those operations.
- Be confident about their ability to work with schools.
- Expect only the best from their children and for their children.
- Join PTA.

### **Finding 3: All families can contribute to their children's success.**

Family involvement improves student success, regardless of race/ethnicity, class, or parents' level of education. For involvement to happen, however, principals, teachers, and parents themselves must believe that all parents can contribute to their children's success in school. Parents can promote their children's academic success by

- Teaching their children the importance of education.
- Finding out what their children are expected to know and to be able to do and reinforcing lessons at home.
- Sending their children to school ready to learn every day.

Principals and teachers must support parent involvement by

- Making parent involvement a priority.
- Recognizing and removing barriers to parent involvement.
- Sharing decision-making power with parents and community members.
- Working to understand class and cultural differences.

### **Finding 4: Community organizing gets results.**

Engaging community members, businesses, and organizations as partners in children's education can improve the learning community in many ways. For example, community partners may be able to

- Provide expanded learning opportunities.
- Build broad-based support for increased school funding.
- Provide quality after-school programs.

PTA's *Building Successful Partnership* promotes a four-step process for planning programs and events that demonstrate why PTA continues to be a powerful voice for all children. Using the National Standards for Family-School Partnerships can:

1. **EDUCATE** key stakeholders (e.g. superintendents, governor, mayors, legislators, etc.) about the critical connection between parent and community involvement with schools and student success.
2. **CREATE** a process for assessing and strengthening current policies and practices for family and community involvement.
3. **EVALUATE** progress towards increased parent and community involvement with schools throughout your state and its impact on student learning.
4. **CELEBRATE** your successes and keep on going!