

Phase II- E-Learning Courses: Increasing Parent Engagement in Secondary Schools

Project 3- E-Learning Plan

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Introduction

The role of families in the academic life of their children is an integral part of each child's academic, social and overall well-being. Parent engagement in schools is defined as parents and school staff working together to support and improve the learning, development and health of children and adolescents (Promoting Parent Engagement: Improving Student Health and Academic Achievement, n.d.). Research substantiates that not socioeconomic status, nor how prestigious the school is that a child attends, the best predictor of student success is the extent to which families encourage learning at home and involve themselves in their child's education (Ferlazzo, 2018). Intentional time and resources have been placed on the importance of establishing parent involvement in preschool and primary school. However, the same is not true in the secondary school setting. In spite of the fact that studies substantiate that brains continue to mature and develop throughout childhood and adolescence and well into early adulthood (American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, 2016), society has yet to invest equal resources into post primary school home to school connections.

Data supports the need for districts to place a spotlight on increasing parent engagement to support student outcomes, particularly in secondary schools. Secondary school teachers experience an absence of parents at school (Lusse et al., 2019, p203). Research has demonstrated a connection between parent engagement and child's achievement and emotional adjustment, irrespective of the socioeconomic background of the family. However, factors such as cultural background, language barriers, limited school resources, parent education and families' limited understanding of the importance of being

involved in their child's education can limit parents' engagement with educators (Beecher & Buzhardt, 2016, p50)

Vision

Based on the curriculum implementation plan created and approved late Spring from this program, MXS High School is offering a series of parent workshop sessions (Appendix B), based on platforms that the school uses to host student data. Each unique platform has been vetted and is already in practical use on the district and school level. The goal of these workshops are to introduce each platform to each parent, eliminate barriers that may impede parent utilization, and have each parent download the application onto their mobile device and begin practical use immediately. In specific circumstances, utilize the translation feature to amend the language to the language found on the Home Language Survey or language of comfortability and lastly, equip each family with their specific login credentials. Each participant will gain access to their child's data (IEP for Frontline, grades and attendance on PowerSchool etc.). However, with the knowledge gained from the pandemic and the new practicality to virtual learning, this e-learning plan will offer parents the ability to take these same classes online. E-learning is defined as instruction delivered on a digital device (such as a desktop computer, laptop computer, tablet, or smartphone) that is intended to support learning (Clark and Mayer p.8). Based on a survey conducted in the Spring of 2013, cell phone ownership in America reached 91%, making it the fastest consumer technology to achieve adoption rate (Beecher & Buzhardt, 2016, p51).

As a secondary school building leader, the need to ensure that parents partner with high schools is a critical part of young adult success.

Systems-Based Proposal

The funding for these parent workshops will come from Title I, Part A (Title I) of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESEA) provides financial assistance to local educational agencies (LEAs) (United States Department of Education, 2018). Additional funding for district level applications will come from The American Rescue Plan Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ARP ESSER) Fund which was enacted March 2021. ARP ESSER provides direct aid to states and districts to help safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of COVID-19 on schools (New Jersey Department of Education, n.d.).

This parent initiative is multi-tiered. Phase I- These workshops will be held in person at 6PM for five consecutive evenings in September. Each session will also be accessible by zoom, with a co-facilitator. Phase II- The e-learning courses will be available to everyone via the school website under the tab labeled, Parent. Families will be able to take one of five course offerings (Appendix A). These courses will cover the same material shared with families during the Back to School Night Parent Workshop Series (Appendix B).

As a Title I, Secondary School Building Leader in an urban district it is imperative that every effort is made to partner with parents to increase student outcomes. This school is located in Newark's Southward. The South Ward is a racially concentrated area of poverty. As with many other communities like the South Ward, many residents lack access not only to good schools and health care, but also to quality child care, banks, jobs, and healthy foods and they frequently pay more for basic goods and services (South Ward

Promise Neighborhood: A Brick Education Network Initiative, n.d.). As such, this e-learning platform will create an avenue for parents to gain 24 hour access to self-paced courses that will allow each parent to communicate with teachers, school staff, know grades/ attendance, participate in a school community blog and get SpEd support as needed. This multi-tier approach to offering parents in person and e-courses to stay in the know with their children by utilizing their mobile devices will give our high schoolers the support often overlooked by some, but statistically beneficial to all students. As we team together with our parents to ensure our students beat the odds in the south ward, this is one more step toward this goal.

The instructional design framework used for this rollout will be ADDIE. ADDIE stands for Analysis, Design, Develop, Implement, and Evaluate. Each phase of the model offers an opportunity for iterations and changes before moving to the next one (Gutierrez & Cohen, n.d.). Data was analyzed using a school-based parent exit survey. In the design phase the objectives for all course offerings will be established, the tutorials and multiple delivery options added to each course. The development part of this plan would include training and professional development for the staff maintaining the platforms and blog. The courses will be activated in the implementation phase and the rollout will be evaluated based on parent engagement numbers and feedback.

The benefits of parent engagement can not be overstated. However, the need to increase parent engagement in struggling urban schools is even greater. By offering e-courses to parents that would have otherwise not been able to attend in-person workshops

due to time constraints or language barriers, these e-courses eliminate those obstacles. These e-courses occur at no cost to parents and use Title I and ARP ESSER funds to purchase district/ school subscriptions for Remind, Schoolmint and PowerSchool. All applications and tutorials are accessible by mobile devices which can ease some of the usual burdens experienced by parents. Lastly, the benefits of this self pacing and multiple language option definitely puts more parents in a place to support the success of their secondary school children to increase future success.

References

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CLICK PARENT TAB ON WEBSITE 

COURSE 1
POWERSCHOOL FOR PARENTS
"WHERE ARE YOUR GRADES?"

COURSE 2
'REMINDE' TWO WAY COMMUNICATIONS,
"STAY IN THE LOOP"

COURSE 3
SPECIAL EDUCATION
"PARENT RIGHTS AND KNOW"

COURSE 4
MXSPA PARENT AMBASSADOR BLOG
& SOCIAL MEDIA

COURSE 5
SCHOOLMINT
REGISTRATION & DEMOGRAPHICS

