

## **STRATEGY 1**

*We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.*

### **ACTION TEAM**

#### Co-Leaders:

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*We will design and implement a more effective way to engage parents and families in the education of their children at home and at school.*

### **RESULT STATEMENTS**

1.1 Create a standard elementary orientation program, customized at each school site, in collaboration with parents and community, to help parents and families contribute to student success in school.

1.2 Provide information and training for families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities.

1.3 Involve parents in school governance, ensuring that parents and families of a diverse nature such as socio-economic, race, special needs and English language learners are represented on District and school-wide planning committees and shared decision making bodies.

1.4 Orient and connect parents and families, to available key services and resources, to empower them to be an active participant in their children's education.

1.5 Design, in coordination with the City Council PTA or other agencies, a quality program framework and implementation strategy for effective volunteerism in our schools.

1.6 Provide modules of study to teachers and parents in school-based forums to foster and improve communication skills to support effective parent teacher collaboration.

1.7 Implement effective forms of one-way/two-way communication about children's progress, including report cards, progress or interim reports and bi-weekly updates (at the elementary level).

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### **RESULT STATEMENT 1.1**

**Create a standard elementary orientation program, customized at each school site, in collaboration with parents and community, to help parents and families contribute to student success in school.**

### **ACTION STEPS**

1.1.1 To establish a team comprised of school, parent and community members to implement this plan

1.1.2 Define what constitutes a quality elementary orientation program using current national research

1.1.3 Identify elementary orientation programs currently operating in the District and elsewhere and look for common elements, themes and tenets

1.1.4 Measure the quality of existing programs against the exemplar(s) as cited in the research

1.1.5 Develop the orientation model for our District reflecting the best practices from the research

1.1.6 Invite Principals to review the designed orientation model (to vet the plan)

1.1.7 Agree to a common set of guidelines to help the Principals structure the orientation program (e.g. disseminate code of conduct, school handbook, contact information etc.) so that there are common elements across all schools

1.1.8 Provide the completed orientation plan, perhaps modified by administrative input, to the Superintendent for approval

1.1.9 Define the rationale for as well as roles for school staff regarding the system-wide orientation (possibly at a faculty or school-wide meeting)

1.1.10 Establish school-wide planning teams to organize the delivery of the orientation program (decide on documents to be disseminated, what aspects of school curriculum, procedures to present, etc.)

1.1.11 Develop a means to effectively communicate with parents about the orientation program at the school to encourage attendance (mail invitation, call home etc.)

1.1.12 Conduct school wide orientation congruent with agreed upon guidelines

1.1.13 Create an alternative session or way to effectively disseminate information to families who do not attend the orientation session

1.1.14 Develop a tool for parents/families to evaluate the effectiveness of the orientation program

1.1.15 Make program adjustments utilizing parent and staff feedback for future orientation sessions

## **COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION**

### **INTANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Reduction of stress about how school functions
- System-wide implementation = one District voice
- Established framework for Orientation Program – the blueprint has been drawn

### **INTANGIBLE COSTS**

- Staff resistance-one more thing for teachers to do
- Family resistance-not attending, not adhering to the schedule
- Additional sessions to schedule (make-up) if our goal is to personally reach all families
- Confusions that families who do not attend may have

### **TANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Decrease in office referrals
- Increase in the families' understanding of school protocols and expectation for school success
- Better adherence to school rules by students
- Improved parent-school relationships

### **TANGIBLE COSTS**

- Printing costs for the school and District handbook
- Personnel for research, design, plan implementation schedule, training and survey analysis
- Refreshments for site-based sessions
- Raffle for families in attendance (school supplies; books, magazine subscriptions, etc.)
- Postage costs for mailings
- Website set-up and monitoring

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### **RESULT STATEMENT 1.2**

**Provide information and training for families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities.**

#### **ACTION STEPS**

1.2.1 Develop a system-wide letter that will go out to families that outlines the importance of homework and the schools' intent to conduct a series of workshops on engaging parents as partners in homework help and other curriculum-related activities

1.2.2 Provide parents with a list of common issues from the research that parents have in providing their children home support

1.2.3 Define what parents want help with in assisting their children with homework through a common survey circulated at each school site

1.2.4 Establish a protocol for disseminating and retrieving the parent surveys as well as establishing a calendar at the onset of the school year, so that the sessions are not delayed and are scheduled at reasonable intervals throughout the school year

1.2.5 Evaluate the survey data in a Building Leadership Team Meeting setting at each school site during the first month of school

1.2.6 Present the survey evaluation to school staff at a faculty meeting in late September

1.2.7 Utilize the survey evaluation to design a homework syllabus for each grade level, including guidelines for home projects that students will be asked to complete throughout the year

1.2.8 Establish a protocol to share out the homework syllabus

1.2.9 Design modules of study that will empower parents to successfully monitor student homework in core subjects as well as to provide needed academic support for the students

1.2.10 Decide whether a commercially prepared resource, such as booklets from the US Department of Education or the Urban League, will serve as a study and referent guide for parents or if teacher teams will develop the coursework for families

1.2.11 Establish a writing team as needed to develop modules of study

1.2.12 Deliver modules along an established timeline/continuum

1.2.13 Design a protocol to evaluate the effectiveness of the module designs, including parent input

1.2.14 Revisit the above procedures and modify as needed, at all levels

## **COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION**

### **INTANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Increased good will and better understanding of shared responsibility for a child's education
- Improved parent teacher relations
- Increased cooperation from parents in this and perhaps other curricular matters

### **INTANGIBLE COSTS**

- Families' inability to attend – what provisions for another means to reach them
- Time needed to develop the trainings and to find interested and competent staff to deliver training
- Staff misunderstanding of the why and how of the initiative
- Families would have to find a homework space in the home – how can this be made an absolute

### **TANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Improved quality of homework
- Increase quantity of homework
- Increase in students' academic performance
- Increase in students' organizational skills

### **TANGIBLE COSTS**

- Personnel needed for workshop development, survey development, data analysis and review
- Homework Help Guide from US Department of Education (.50) per student plus shipping costs (10%)
- Refreshments
- Mailing
- Printing Costs

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### **RESULT STATEMENT 1.3**

**Involve parents in school governance, ensuring that parents and families of a diverse nature such as socio-economic, race, special needs and English language learners are represented on District and school-wide planning committees and shared decision making bodies.**

- 1.3.1 Cite Legislation (NCLB) that requires parents be members of school wide planning committees/SDM bodies
- 1.3.2 Establish the goal of 100% participation of a diverse groups parents in school governance at all levels
- 1.3.3 Identify all committees at the District and school levels that require parent membership
- 1.3.4 Ascertain current parent membership on all identified committees from school and District personnel
- 1.3.5 Define the role that parents may assume as committee members in a recruitment document (voting, advisory, participatory governance)
- 1.3.6 Share that definition as well as the regulation with the greater parent community through the formal notice or document
- 1.3.7 Establish eligibility criterion for serving on committees (interest, skill, contributions)
- 1.3.8 Work with Communications Department to post and/or distribute the notice
- 1.3.9 Enlist the help of school and District leadership teams to effectively recruit parents for committee work; this can be accomplished initially at system-wide parent orientation sessions
- 1.3.10 Enlist the help of community and/or faith-based organizations in recruitment efforts (advertising vacancies for committee membership (City wide PTA, NAACP) on all teams, bodies and committees), by way of example
- 1.3.11 Post vacancies on the District website and in correspondences circulated to homes such as school and District newsletter on an ongoing basis
- 1.3.12 Establish a simple training session (similar to/replicative of the SDM training) to familiarize parents with the types of roles that they may assume in serving on governance teams

1.3.13 Conduct periodic checks to monitor continuous involvement of parents, including sustained commitment to the work

1.3.14 Develop an evaluation instrument for parents to measure their attitude/effectiveness for having served as a committee member

## **COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION**

### **INTANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Parents request to have their voice heard is met
- True shared decision making process – added value of increased morale on the part of the parent community
- Better District-wide decisions made for schools

### **INTANGIBLE COSTS**

- Understand membership role- voting vs. advisory
- Selection process for membership; standardizing the eligibility to serve requirements
- Maintain a constant level of participation (filling vacancies)

### **TANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- In compliance with NCLB requirement
- Increased diversity and perspective of the committee when parents are active committee members

### **TANGIBLE COSTS**

- Website advertisements and upkeep
- Postage for mailings to recruit parent members for committee work
- Refreshments for planning meetings for recruitment strategies
- Personnel costs- to train parents; development of an evaluation tool for parent satisfaction; monitor participation on all governing bodies

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### **RESULT STATEMENT 1.4**

**Orient and connect parents and families, to available key services and resources to empower them to be an active participant in their children's education.**

1.4.1 Define a quality process for connecting parents and families to key resources and services in the community

1.4.2 Research existing processes in the District/elsewhere for connecting parents and families to key resources and services

1.4.3 Informally survey parents about common issues, common needs and struggles that they have faced in accessing resources and services to date

1.4.4 Identify and create a directory of key resources and services available to parents and families

1.4.5 Connect with the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Community Relations to research the roles of Home School Coordinator and other staff that could assist with this process

1.4.6 Identify human resources necessary to assist parents in connecting to resources and services (Home-School Coordinators, Social Workers)

1.4.7 Develop a model for connecting parents/families to key resources, congruent with the research on exemplary outreach services, especially in non-full-service school buildings

1.4.8 Share the model with building administrators and affected staff for review and feedback

1.4.9 Submit the model and share the process with the Superintendent for approval and adoption as a standard protocol

1.4.10 Define roles and responsibilities for staff members who will assist parents with connecting to resources

1.4.11 Develop a process to effectively inform parents of the ability of the school to assist them in connecting to resources and services

1.4.12 Develop an instrument to measure parent satisfaction with the connection to resources and services

1.4.13 Develop an instrument for staff involved in the process to evaluate the effectiveness of the model

1.4.14 Make adjustments as needed to ensure that the goal of helping families make necessary connections is met

## **COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION**

### **INTANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Empowerment - reduced feelings of hopelessness
- Empowerment - parents are aware of services available to them
- Improved sense of security and stability for students who might otherwise worry about parents' basic needs
- Eventually all schools could move to the full service model; this can be the driving force

### **INTANGIBLE COSTS**

- Help staff to understand that families need to overcome socio-economic barriers and that schools have a responsibility to assist parents
- Develop a liaison relationship with service providers and agencies
- Finding staff appropriate to do the intake work
- Budgetary constraints for new hires

### **TANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Replication of the Full Service School model – use this as a gauge
- Increase in the number of parents coming to school for assistance and support
- Increase in student attendance

### **TANGIBLE COSTS**

- Printing costs to create the Directory of Services
- Personnel costs to develop the Directory
- Stipend for the employee who would serve as the conduit/coordinator of information to families at all school sites, (embed this job responsibility in the role of the Home School Coordinator at schools that have this position)
- Evaluation/Parent Satisfaction Survey collection and analysis
- Space to meet with parents when they come to schools to inquire about services
- Computer access for coordinator

### **POTENTIAL**

- Increase number of School Social Workers as needed

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### **RESULT STATEMENT 1.5**

**Design, in coordination with the City Council PTA or other agencies, a quality program framework and implementation strategy for effective volunteerism in our schools**

1.5.1 Define what constitutes a quality program for effective volunteerism in our schools (Who does this? A team of diverse stakeholders and key District personnel)

1.5.2 Identify volunteer programs currently operating in the District/ elsewhere and evaluate them according to the above definition

1.5.3 Decide upon and describe the components of the volunteer program to be used

1.5.4 Develop the volunteerism model for our District reflecting the best practices from the research (Good program for families could be *Three for Me*; good program for community volunteers could be *Project Appleseed*; *Florida State Worker Volunteer Program*)

1.5.5 Determine if one model is best for all levels or if more than one model is needed for elementary and secondary programming

1.5.6 Define what employee(s) of the District will coordinate volunteer program

1.5.7 Develop a process to identify volunteer opportunities (e.g. Survey for teachers, Principals)

1.5.8 Develop a process to match volunteers to volunteer opportunities (e.g. Survey for families)

1.5.9 Define factors to be considered in selecting volunteers (e.g. Skill sets, security clearance, availability, cultural competence)

1.5.10 Define criteria taking into account above factors for selecting volunteers

1.5.11 Develop a recruitment process for volunteers (e.g. Outreach to the school communities and to the greater community)

1.5.12 Determine a roll-out strategy to apprise the greater school community of the initiative; work with Communications Department for assistance

1.5.13 Match volunteers to opportunities based on agreed upon criteria

1.5.14 Design and provide a training program for volunteers to address items such as goals of program, expectations, resolving issues

1.5.15 Define roles and responsibilities of all participants

1.5.16 Develop a simple evaluation tool for teachers, administrators, parents and volunteers that provides feedback in order to periodically assess and improve program

1.5.17 Develop a schedule to communicate the program's progress to the greater community

## **COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION**

### **INTANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Increased student motivation
- Solidify home-school connections and school-community connections
- Broaden student experience through exposure to new people from different walks of life
- Improve community relations and school-District perception in the community

### **INTANGIBLE COSTS**

- Quality of Volunteers: Do we have the right matches in our schools to achieve desired outcomes?
- Logistics-School based personnel duty: who will take responsibility of monitoring volunteers once they are in the schools
- More teachers wanting volunteers than there are volunteers available
- Possible conflict between volunteer and teacher: personality; work style
- Increase in the level of work teachers would be required to do in association with having a volunteer (paperwork etc.)- staff dissatisfaction or criticism of the program
- Sustainability: do we have volunteers who are willing to make a long range commitment in order to maintain fidelity of the program?

### **TANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Greater student to adult ratio with volunteers who serve in classrooms as tutors or group leaders
- Increased community involvement in our schools at all levels
- Teachers feel valued when asked what they really need by way of support
- Potential increase in student achievement (ie College student tutors who support struggling students)

### **TANGIBLE COSTS**

- Volunteer Coordinator Position
- Office Space/Computer set-up for Coordinator
- Website maintenance: Post forms for teachers to request volunteers and volunteers to sign up
- Mailings to recruit volunteers
- Personnel- research elements of quality programs; design program evaluation; disaggregate data

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### **RESULT STATEMENT 1.6**

**Provide modules of study to teachers and parents in school-based forums to foster and improve communication skills to support effective parent teacher collaboration.**

1.6.1 Develop a survey to identify existing communication barriers impacting student progress, among staff, parent, and administration

1.6.2 Look to the NUA school evaluation to gather information about collaboration among parents and teachers as a baseline

1.6.3 Establish protocol for disseminating and retrieving the survey to and from parents and staff

1.6.4 Analyze the survey results to find measurable commonalities (work closely with BLT)

1.6.5 Design a protocol to share out the analysis to both groups of stakeholders

1.6.6 Provide modules of study to foster and improve communication skills, to support effective teacher-student collaboration.

1.6.7 Identify the staff who will work to create the module or research existing models in the literature that have proven successful in achieving the state goal

1.6.8 Define who will deliver the training in the mediation model, including professional staff who contract to deliver such services

1.6.9 Provide training for staff and families on the processes of the mediation module

1.6.10 Evaluate the effectiveness of the mediation module through a bi-yearly survey

1.6.11 Determine additional topics that will continue to solidify the home-school connection and partnerships with families with training team

1.6.12 Engage additional staff, as needed, in developing module topics that were suggested from the parent community

## **COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION**

### **INTANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- The child is at the center
- Strengths are emphasized
- Raised level of understanding and tolerance
- Strengthening the understanding of the role of the home and the school in educating the child
- Greater parent investment

### **INTANGIBLE COSTS**

- Stress for the Principal to balance the needs of parents and teachers
- Some parent and staff resistance to what the module actually is
- Resistance to participation
- Effectively communicating the benefits and importance of the work

### **TANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Increased academic achievement
- Reduction of referrals to the office for discipline and other issues
- Increased level of parent and teacher cooperation

### **TANGIBLE COSTS**

- Outside Consultant Fees to help staff develop the mediation model
- Personnel- research outreach to NUA, develop survey, make decisions based on survey results
- Printing
- Refreshments
- Stipend for teachers delivering the modules

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### **RESULT STATEMENT 1.7**

**Implement effective forms of one-way/two-way communication about children's progress, including report cards, progress or interim reports and bi-weekly updates (at the elementary level).**

1.7.1 Develop a schedule for review and revision of the current report cards and interim reports at each instructional level

1.7.2 Solicit from teachers information about what is working well with the current report structure and what needs to change to achieve a better outcome for both the teachers and the parents/ families and document the findings

1.7.3 Solicit from families information about what is working well with the current report structure and what needs to change to achieve a better outcome for the parents/families and document the findings

1.7.4 Collect an review research about effective reporting to parents in an attempt to design more parent friendly and parent useful assessment instruments

1.7.5 Assemble report card and interim progress report writing teams at each level

1.7.6 Invite parents to serve on report card and interim progress report writing teams at each level

1.7.7 Develop a guide to help teachers issue standardized grades and make effective comments that will inform parents and help set mutual goals for the student

1.7.8 Develop a guide to help parents understand the grading system and become informed as to how comments serve to set mutual goals for the student

1.7.9 Develop a calendar for the dissemination of the reports with the Chief Information Officer

1.7.10 Plan orientation sessions to roll out the new assessment instruments at all levels

At the elementary level

1.7.11 Assemble a bi-weekly report writing team of interested staff

1.7.12 Design a biweekly report that will inform parents as to student progress, conduct and effort, as well as testing results, field trips and other school events that may occur in a 2 week window

1.7.13 Share out document with affected staff in large and small group settings

1.7.14 Establish a school-wide distribution schedule for the reporting

1.7.15 Provide parents information about the nature and purpose of this document and their role in ensuring that it is signed and returned to school as a check and balance (monitor) of student progress

1.7.16 Gather feedback from both teachers and families as to the effectiveness of the instrument after the first year of implementation

## **COST BENEFIT ESTIMATION**

### **INTANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Expectations are clearly defined
- Systematic way of reporting to parents
- Awareness of student performance will guide parents on ways to assist their students

### **INTANGIBLE COSTS**

- Time to orient parents and raise the level of understanding of the report card
- Resistance to the increase amount of paperwork to produce more reports

### **TANGIBLE BENEFITS**

- Parents serve on report card creation team
- Greater frequency of formal communication
- More detailed overview of the child's progress
- More parental understanding of taught concepts and academic rigor required for school success; graduation

### **TANGIBLE COSTS**

- Personnel-research, design, implementation, guide development
- Printing
- Web design; Electronic document transfers
- Mailing/postage
- Refreshments for new report card orientation
- Need for an additional conference day to roll out progress reports