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Creating a Welcoming Environment: 4 Key Tips for Administrators

Family-school partnerships boost student achievement and school improvement from preschool through high school. With family engagement as a priority and requirement for Local Control Accountability Plans (LCAPs), family engagement in schools matters more than ever.

The foundation of family engagement is a welcoming school environment for all families. To get started in making it happen at your school, read our 4 tips inside.

4 KEY TIPS FOR ADMINISTRATORS



1 Think Family Friendly

First impressions matter to ensure families feel that your school is a place where they belong. To make campus visits a positive experience for family members:

- Post signs, in home languages, to guide visitors to important places on campus and make your site easy to navigate for everyone.
- Assign bilingual staff or volunteers in the office to greet parents and answer questions.
- Set up a family resource center with information on your school and community and encourage parents to drop by.

When a school goes the extra mile to welcome families, home-school partnerships begin to grow to support student success.

2 Keep the Campus Clean and Safe

Is your school site a clean, inviting and safe place? A well-maintained campus goes a long way to better connect families and schools. To keep your site looking its best:

- Develop a clean campus policy based on feedback from parents, students, teachers and staff.
- Organize campus cleanup days and recycling programs for your school community.
- Maintain playground facilities and shaded areas for outdoor activities to ensure that they are safe and accessible for all students.

Sprucing up a school not only makes it more inviting for families, it affects student performance, behavior and learning in class.

3 Embed Respect

With a healthy school climate, parents see school as a caring place that students look forward to going to each day. Create a more welcoming and peaceful environment for all stakeholders by focusing on respect as a core value in your mission statement. To reinforce the message:

- Set a positive tone and communicate clear expectations for the campus that students, parents, teachers, and staff work together to build an environment of respect.
- Ensure that books and curriculum reflect all students' lives in your school and community.
- Engage in professional learning on how to work with families; provide conflict management through assemblies; and offer parent and staff education on prevention of harassment and bullying.

Relying on proactive strategies builds mutually respectful partnerships so students can thrive in school and beyond.

4 Make Communication Easy

How your school communicates with home signals an appreciation of the diversity of families. Provide regular, two-way communication, in home languages, to share information and receive feedback through:

- Community forums
- Volunteer room representatives
- Home visits
- Backpack express
- Phone calls
- Email blasts
- Social media

Effective communication empowers and engages parents as partners with schools to support student achievement, development and growth.