Why Parent Engagement Matters

Numerous studies link parent engagement to student academic achievement

Students with parent involvement, no matter their income or background, are more likely to:

- Earn higher grades and test scores
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and pursue advanced courses
- Graduate at higher rates and go on to post-secondary education
- Improve behavior and social skills
- Have better attitudes toward learning

Local Study Links Student Achievement to Parent Engagement

Data from Orr Elementary School in Ward 8, with the lowest income and test scores in the city, demonstrates the impact on student achievement when parents are active and engaged advocates for learning. At Orr, Tellin’ Stories analyzed the reading scores (DIBELS and TRC) of children in grades K-5 of the 23 most active parents in the school. The analysis showed that Orr students whose parents were highly involved showed 2-3 times more growth on reading assessments compared to their peers. The students were representative of the school population and included struggling learners.

Parents Involvement Key to Student Success

A long-term study of hundreds of elementary schools in Chicago shows five school features that are essential to advancing student achievement:

- Coherent instructional guidance system
- Professional capacity
- Strong parent-community-school ties
- Student centered learning climate
- Leadership drives change

Without all five factors, schools were much less likely to improve. In particular, the presence of strong family and community ties made it much more likely that students would make significant gains in reading and math.

As PISA and many other studies show, students show a better ability to read and learn when their parents are involved in their education and when the parents themselves value reading. In this sense, student learning is most effective when it is the result of a partnership among the school, teachers, parents and the community. Experts in the field point to the fact that involved parents help their children to develop their receptive language and phonetic awareness, and help their children to acquire the skills they need to learn by showing them how to plan, monitor and be aware of the learning process.

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2 Ibid