



TEACHING FOR CHANGE

Building Social Justice Starting in the Classroom



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 scores¹
- Be promoted, pass their classes, and pursue advanced courses²
- Graduate at higher rates and go on to post-secondary education³
- Improve behavior and social skills⁴
- Have better attitudes toward learning⁵



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 Chicago⁶ 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.⁷

¹ Henderson, Anne T., et al. *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships*. New York: The New Press, 2007.

² Ibid

³ . Bridgeland, J., Dilulio, J., & Morison, K. (2006). *The Silent Epidemic: Perspectives of High School Dropouts*. Washington, DC: Civic Enterprises.

⁴ Caspe, M. & Lopez, W. (2006). *Lessons from family-strengthening interventions: Learning from evidence-based practice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard Family Research Project.

⁵ Fantuzzo, J., McWayne, C., Perry, M., & Childs, S. (2004). Multiple dimensions of family involvement and their relations to behavioral and learning competencies for urban, low-income children. *School Psychology Review*, 33(4): pgs. 467-480.

⁶ Anthony S. Bryk et al, (2010) *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)

⁷ OECD (2012), *Let's Read Them a Story! The Parent Factor in Education*, PISA, OECD Publishing. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264176232-en>