



Tellin' Stories Project

The Tellin' Stories Project of Teaching for Change builds multi-racial parent power in schools and connects families, schools, and communities as purposeful partners so they can support, create, and demand the education all children deserve.



Tellin' Stories believes that for schools to provide the quality education our children deserve, families, schools and communities must be involved as purposeful partners in the education process. Through organizing, coaching, and professional development, we help build the capacity of parents and teachers for partnership.

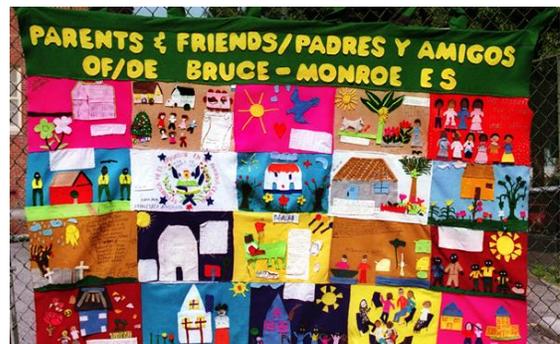
School-based workshops and meetings provide families, teachers, and school administrators with unique forums to bridge differences and achieve shared goals. By building relationships and capacity between parents and teachers, the Tellin' Stories approach increases families' access to schools and broadens their school-based roles as supporters, educators, advocates, decision makers, and ambassadors. In claiming these roles, parents use their power collaboratively to transform schools.

How Tellin' Stories Works in Schools

“In terms of parental engagement, we’ve done a real 180 degrees. We’ve always had parent workshops, but they were more for compliance. Now we’re engaging parents to know what they need, before we do anything.” -- DCPS principal

Community Building

At the heart of Tellin' Stories' efforts to engage families and staff is the power of story to connect people from diverse backgrounds, to pass on valuable information and experiences, and to organize collective action. The Tellin' Stories approach recognizes and cultivates the knowledge, strengths and personal stories of African American, Latino, and immigrant families. We begin by inviting families into the school through community building activities like our signature six-week Story Quilting series, where a group of parents meet each week to learn about each other and make felt squares that depict stories from their lives. As the squares are sewn together, so too are the lives of those who made them.



Gathering Information and Developing Skills

Through Tellin' Stories-supported and facilitated workshops, parents gain the tools they need during regular parent meetings to analyze the school climate, the facilities, and the quality of teaching and



learning at their school. Tellin' Stories facilitates classroom observations, school walk-throughs and Principal Chit Chats, and supports teachers in leading Grade Level Dialogues so parents can gain a deeper understanding of the social and academic standing of their school and build relationships and mutual trust with teachers and administrators. Activities like Roving Readers involve parents directly in their children's classrooms as agents of literacy and models of life-long learning.

Identifying and Prioritizing Concerns

As parents learn more about their school's challenges and grow accustomed to working with each other and with teachers, Tellin' Stories facilitates a process where parents list all the issues that impede teaching and learning and decide which issue(s) they can most influence and that are most important to them. By asking pointed questions together, parents determine who has the power in their schools and communities and how to address those in power most effectively.

Taking Action

The parent group makes a plan of action and identifies a path to "wins" or achievable goals for their school. To achieve the change they want to see, parents collaborate with allies within and outside of the school.

"Without Tellin' Stories, there would be no parent voice in my school." -- DCPS parent

Evaluating and Sustaining the Work

Every aspect of Tellin' Stories' work involves action and reflection. Tellin' Stories involves all key stakeholders in assessing our work to increase our impact. Sustainability relies on the initiative and development of parent leaders at each school.



Tellin' Stories Signature Activities

- Story Quilting Series
- Community Walk
- Welcoming Climate Walkthrough
- Roving Readers
- Parent-Principal Chit Chat
- Grade Level Dialogue
- Academic Classroom Visit
- Academic-based Workshops