

Engaging Families, Schools, and Community Partners

May 2013

“Building a System of High Quality Community Partnerships”

by Diana Lores

Overview: This paper describes a local effort to implement a quality improvement system in Palm Beach County, Fla., and the positive impact such initiatives can have on the enrichment activities that community organizations provide to youth. The described system for connecting programs with qualified community partners follows a four-step process to ensure that local partners have the expertise and capacity to provide available enrichment to OST partners. Those enumerated steps are to: carefully select partners; engage partners in quality improvement; maximize partnerships to supplement professional development of OST staff; and assess and support delivery of high quality enrichment activities.

Where to Find It:

<http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc/doclibrary/documents/BuildingASystemofHighQualityCommunityPartnerships.pdf>

“Building a Culture of Attendance: Schools and Afterschool Programs Together Can and Should Make a Difference!”

by Hedy N. Chang and Phyllis W. Jordan

Overview: The leaders of the SHINE Afterschool Program recently resolved to improve the school-day attendance for the students at their 21st Century Community Learning Centers in rural Pennsylvania. The program reached out to parents, offered incentives to students, and carefully tracked attendance data provided by the schools. The results of this effort showed improved communication with parents, a remarkable collaboration with school teachers, and a school attendance rate that was significantly higher than similar programs nationally. This article chronicles the efforts of the SHINE Afterschool Program, and concludes with five general recommendations for partnerships between schools and afterschool programs.

Where to Find It:

<http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc/doclibrary/documents/BuildingaCultureofAttendance.pdf>

Featured Information:

“Afterschool: A Key to Successful Parent Engagement”

Summary:

Education policies have been developed to bolster parent engagement at school in response to research proving its value; however, schools face some challenges to fully engage parents as active stewards in their child's education. Afterschool programs are an ideal partner to help schools break down the barriers often present between parents and schools. This article recommends that afterschool programs:

- Help open the channels of communication and understanding
- Build trust with disengaged families
- Leverage program resources
- Incorporate parent feedback

Together, schools and afterschool programs can help increase parent engagement, paving the way for students to achieve academic success, become more self-confident, and enhance their overall wellbeing.

Where to find the full article:

http://www.sp2.upenn.edu/ostrc/doclibrary/documents/aa-issue_parents_57.pdf