Increasing Family and Caregiver Engagement in Benton Harbor Area Schools

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Increasing Family and Caregiver Engagement in Benton Harbor Area Schools

ACADEMIC LEADERSHIP ACADEMY 2018-2019

Susan V. Piazza, Ed.D., Professor and Program Coordinator of Literacy Studies, Western Michigan University

In collaboration with Patricia A. Edwards, Ph.D., Distinguished Teacher Educator, Michigan State University

Family & Community Engagement Framework

Research & Theory
- Children have an abundance of knowledge and experience from families and community.
- Students bring knowledge and experience that can be used to strengthen learning.
- Classroom practices often underestimate what children know and can do.
- Instruction should focus on reasoning rather than skills and facts.
- Dialogue around diversity and inclusion should promote trust and build relationships.


Timeline of the Project

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<td>District Needs Assessment with Literacy Coaches and Stakeholders</td>
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Session One

Town Hall Meeting “We Welcome Literacy”

OBJECTIVES
- Invite families, caregivers, and community members to partner with educators and school leaders.
- Design new partnerships with community organizations and local stakeholders to support early literacy.
- Listen to caregivers’ and community members’ ideas related to K-3 early literacy success.
- Share information about school curriculum and literacy practices with families and caregivers.
- Engage in dialogue around family and community needs related to student success.

Session Two

Early Learning Influences Long Term Success

Quality Early Learning REDUCES Child-Rates: Teacher-Developed In-Classroom Strategies Increase Workforce Productivity Community Engagement

Strategies
- Many parents help their children learn to read, which helps children have a more successful school experience. Resources shared in this session were provided by Michigan Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Education.
- Understanding the Importance of Background Knowledge with the Question-Answer-Response Strategy (QAR)
- Proactively engage with community/stakeholders to learn about authentic needs.
- Value the insider views and experiences – customize work for each unique challenge.
- Understand that diversity is a strength to build on for academic success.
- Celebrate the success of individuals and the community – do not dwell on challenges.
- Connect people and resources to advocate for community and families.

Session Three

Understanding the Importance of Background Knowledge with the Question-Answer-Response Strategy (QAR)

Session Four

Outcomes of the Project

- Families/caregivers who attended sessions learned that their contributions are valued and are a critical part of the school community.
- Families/caregivers understand that “it takes a village” to support positive learning outcomes of all BHAS children, not just their own.
- Families/caregivers celebrated their own and others’ funds of knowledge and participated in a community of learners across the four sessions.
- Books, games, and resources were gifted by foundations and BHAS to families for all-home literacy engagement.
- Educators and families/caregivers developed increased trust and communication practices.
- Educators learned from families/caregivers and increased their awareness around funds of knowledge and the unique needs of their students.

Science
- Crop planning, animal care, hunting, gardening, soil and irrigation, mechanical repairs, cooking, etc.

Social Studies/History
- Local/community maps, building codes, immigration/immigration routes and stories, culture, traditions, etc.

Arts
- Music, woodworking, textile design, masonry, carpentry, painting, etc.

Literacy
- Family stories, histories, letters, religious/spiritual studies, music, family recipes, travel, etc.

Math
- Renting, selling, income, spending, shopping, budgeting, building, measurement, cooking, etc.

Physical Ed/Health
- First aid procedures, exercise, games, childcare, herbal medicine, foods, etc.

Successful Outreach Strategies
- Announce activities/events at places of worship
- Send home notices to invite families/caregivers
- Translate information and personalize invitations
- Conduct home visits to achieve two-way communication with families/caregivers
- Create inclusive environments that are welcoming
- Generate conversation around child/student success to build trust
- Appreciate every caregiver’s funds of knowledge

Contact information

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Assistant Superintendent Robinson’s interview with BHAS Alumnus Sinbad

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Understanding the Importance of Background Knowledge with the Question-Answer-Response Strategy (QAR)