

PARENT AND EDUCATOR PARTNERSHIP

Parent Liaison Program

The purpose of Parent Liaisons is to help parents of school-age children effectively navigate the educational system in partnership with school district personnel. Parent Liaisons also assist school districts with meeting Elementary and Secondary Education Act (formerly No Child Left Behind) Title 1 Family Involvement requirements.

Parent Liaisons serve as a bridge between families and education personnel to foster positive parent professional teamwork, providing a family perspective. Parent Liaisons may serve on partnership teams, providing a parent voice in the planning of family involvement activities, and assist professionals with writing district and school family involvement policies.

Parent Liaisons are parents of participating children (such as, Title 1 or Individuals with Disabilities Educational Act) that have shown leadership qualities among parents. These parents have also expressed an interest in helping other families with similar issues.

Requirements for Parent Liaison:

- Must be the parent of a participating child (either IDEA or Title 1).
- Must have a strong desire to support other parents of students.
- Must be recommended annually by the local school district.
- Must be committed to partnership-building with schools, families, and the community.
- Must have the ability to maintain confidentiality.
- Must be able to attend two days of trainings sponsored by the Parent & Educator Partnership, a technical assistance center of the Illinois State Board of Education.

Desired Competencies, the Parent Liaison will:

- Demonstrate presentation skills in diverse settings and an understanding of group facilitation.
- Demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal communication techniques to support positive and collaborative interaction with parents and educators.
- Demonstrates sensitivity to cultural differences of families and educators.
- Demonstrates a willingness to seek out information on how to relate effectively to diverse groups.

- Demonstrates an understanding and use of early conflict resolution skills, including creative problem-solving and partnership-building skills.
- Demonstrates a knowledge and use of outreach methods.

Desired Activities are:

A. Collaborating with district leadership to integrate the parent liaison program for families with district services.

- i. Assisting with local needs identification.
- ii. Developing district information for parents and educators.
- iii. Fostering ongoing communication among all stakeholders throughout the district.
- iv. Participating in the development, implementation, and sustainability of school, family, and community partnerships.
 - a. Representing parent perspective on advisory boards.
 - b. Informing parents about participating in the development of and monitoring of school improvement plans.
 - c. Providing leadership to parents to help build community capacity (strong networks of parents, schools and community leaders).

B. Building knowledge about federal and state requirements and how to assist the local education agency in meeting those requirements.

- i. Disseminating district information for professionals and parents regarding resources related to improving outcomes for all children.
- ii. Organizing and conducting training activities:
 - a. Arranging and promoting workshops.
 - b. Providing workshops on, but not limited to:
 - 1) IDEA
 - 2) NCLB
 - 3) Learning at Home
 - 4) Collaboration

C. Organizing a system of support for families.

- i. Identifying, developing, and supporting networks with and for parents to voice their concerns and mutually provide support to other parents.

- a. Identifying parent needs through evaluation.
 - 1) Using referrals from districts and schools requesting assistance with school issues.
 - 2) Using parent intakes.
 - b. Providing parent-to-parent peer support.
 - c. Developing culturally relevant support groups.
 - d. Supporting parents through:
 - 1) Phone
 - 2) E-mail
 - 3) Website
- ii. Attending meetings with parents, when asked, until they are able to advocate for their child.

The Parent & Educator Partnership will support Parent Liaisons through:

A. Two annual trainings at no cost to the parent.

B. Mentoring through site visits, conference calls, and online supports which include:

- i. Newsletter
- ii. Lending Library
- iii. Mentor/liaison forum
- iv. Categorical Search

C. Curriculum for parent trainings

D. Parent Liaison Tool Kit