

Teaching Tools:

Involving Families and the Community

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INTRODUCTION

My mom knows the vocabulary to all my classes because she quizzes me. Sometimes I quiz her.

High School Junior

Family and community involvement are keys to successful education. Schools need the support and commitment of entire communities in order to provide quality education programs for their students. Individual teachers also need broad-based commitment in order to provide the best learning environment possible.

As a teacher, you know best what can help you do your job and what your students need to achieve their maximum potential. Schools and students benefit from school-wide initiatives that involve families and other members of the community; individual classrooms and teachers benefit from these programs and from programs that are subject- or class-specific.

Many parents have been actively involved in their children's education since kindergarten. However, as students enter junior high and high school, parental involvement frequently declines. It is important that teachers and administrators make sure that parents know that continued involvement is appropriate and necessary through high school and beyond.

Throughout this book you will find references to family and parental involvement and family and parents. These terms are intended to include all adults who are intimately involved in the parenting of a child. The traditional family structure of mother, father, and children all living under one roof is not as common as it once was. Some children have only one parent or guardian, while others have a host of adults who help raise them including grandparents, aunts, uncles, stepparents, and foster parents.

In addition to parental involvement, schools depend on concerned individuals, businesses, and organizations to enrich educational programs through community initiatives that benefit education. These initiatives often include the donation of money and educational materials to programs and individual schools. Some individuals, businesses, and organizations do much more. In most cases, the reason for the extra effort is that someone asked for help.

This book is intended to help you identify ways that you can involve families, community members, and businesses in your school and classroom. Every idea will not work for every school, teacher, or course, but it is hoped that your interest and imagination will be sparked to discern what will help in your own school or classroom.

Because communication is a key to developing and maintaining family and community involvement, you should become familiar with your school's policies and regulations concerning communication with families and the community. It is always a good idea to keep administrators informed and provide copies of the information you want to share with parents and the community.

FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

Busy schedules and complicated family structures limit the time and energy parents have to be fully involved in their children's education. At the same time, the need for parental involvement continues. Trends toward individualizing education, integrating basic skills throughout the curriculum, and challenging students to achieve more are generally accepted as positive changes. Successful implementation of these innovations requires extraordinary amounts of time and energy both in the classroom and at home by students, teachers, and parents.

COMMUNICATION

As a teacher, you already know that some students get the message the first time you send it; others need you to send it again and again. Consumer product companies know that not everyone reads the same magazines, watches the same television shows, or listens to the same radio stations. When companies advertise, they frequently use more than one kind of advertising. They also send the message more than once. Similarly, communicating with families and your community requires the use of multiple channels and repetition. It is an ongoing process and should include opportunities for feedback.

Every school and every teacher has methods for communicating with students and their families. Some of the methods are proven; others are innovative and take advantage of new technology.

MAKING CONTACT

The first step in communicating with parents and families is to make contact. It is a good idea to get some basic information about the family of each student in your class. You may be able to obtain this information from the administrative offices, or you might want to collect it yourself. You can start by asking students to have their parents or guardians fill out forms listing mailing addresses and telephone numbers. Provide at least two forms, one for each parent. In some cases you may need to provide additional forms for other involved family members. A sample form is provided on page 21.

PUBLICATIONS

As you think of the many things that you want to share with students and their families, think of some of the ways you can communicate with everyone at the same time.

My two sons attend a high school that has a summer reading program. Students each had three books to read. That meant I had six. I think it is important that I know what they are reading.

Food Service Worker

Monthly Calendar Develop a monthly calendar that highlights class activities, assignments, and tests. Include information about special events and field trips along with dates for key projects. A sample is shown on page 23.

Newsletters Develop a monthly or quarterly newsletter for your class, single course, or department. A class newsletter can be your own project or you can involve students. Participating in the development of a class newsletter provides an opportunity for students to integrate language arts and computer skills in any subject. You can partner with other teachers who are teaching the same course and develop a newsletter about the course. Ask your department chair and other teachers in your department if they are interested in developing a department newsletter. This is an excellent student or parent volunteer opportunity. A sample newsletter is provided on pages 25 and 26.

Students' Work Publish a collection of students' work. Include a foreword about the assignment(s) and how items were selected for inclusion. This is particularly appropriate for language arts projects such as poems, short stories, and book reviews. Other ideas for publication include essays written for social studies, results of scientific research, and reports on field trips.

MESSAGE SYSTEMS

Innovations in technology have opened new communication channels. Answering machines, fax machines, home computers, voicemail, websites, e-mail, and e-letters are all tools you can use to communicate with families.

Voicemail If you have voicemail, you can develop interesting outgoing messages that provide details about your class, assignments, and special events such as field trips. You may also be able to use voicemail to send and receive information from students and parents. Voicemail should be used as an adjunct to other communications, particularly if there is a possibility that families of students in your class do not have regular access to a telephone.

Website If you have the capability at your school, you can develop a website for your department or even your course that provides updated information to parents and the community. Often community resources are available to provide expertise in developing and maintaining the site. Websites should be updated regularly to keep the information current and to provide a reason for people to return to the site. Be sure the parents and students have the URL (website address) for easy access.

E-mail You may find that using e-mail is an effective way of communicating with some parents. This is particularly true if you have students who neglect or forget to deliver notes to their parents.

E-letters Electronic newsletters, or e-letters, are a specialized form of e-mail that allow you to connect to both students and parents or guardians using HTML e-mail. Unlike plain-text e-mail, HTML e-mail can contain graphics and links, making your e-mail communication colorful and attractive.

As a convenience, you might want to consider allowing students to e-mail their assignments. This should be offered only as an option because not all students have regular access to e-mail. E-mail is also an excellent way to communicate with a student who is unable to attend class regularly or who will be out for an extended period.

CONFERENCES

Parent-teacher conferences are an effective method of communicating with parents and families. It is important to communicate with all parents, not just the parents of students who are having difficulty. You will enjoy reporting on students who are progressing well. This is also a time to speak to parents about helping their children to achieve at the highest level possible. Parents of a student who is earning a B might not realize that their child has the potential to get an A.

Before the Conference Let students know early in the quarter that you expect them to keep their parents informed of their progress and any problems they might be having in your course. Point out that it is best for parents to know that there is a problem before they get to a parent-teacher conference. Student-teacher conferences can be an effective planning tool for a parent-teacher conference. Meeting with students individually about their progress and mapping out a strategy for needed improvement can help students understand their responsibility for their own success.

Pre-Conference Reports Prepare a written pre-conference report for each student. Some schools have formalized this process and use interim reports in the middle of the grading period prior to parent-teacher conferences. These interim reports are an excellent way to initiate communication with parents. If your school does not have a formal system for interim reports you might want to consider developing your own form. A sample is provided on page 27.

Who Should Attend In addition to parents or guardians, you might consider inviting the student. Some students would prefer to be as far away as possible when their parents meet with teachers; other students are concerned about what might be said “behind their backs.” Your

We were worried about our son's behavior and attitude toward school.

His counselor suggested a tech-prep program. I wasn't even aware that our school system had this kind of program. He loves it and is doing really well.

I want everyone in the community to know about this resource.

Cost Accountant

school may have a policy about students attending conferences. If not, you will have to decide what is most appropriate. One option to consider is meeting with students before you meet with parents. You can provide them with the same information that you plan to share with their parents. When you identify an area that needs improvement, the student can help to devise a strategy to deal with the problem. Another option is to meet with the student after the conference to discuss a strategy for improved performance.

The Actual Conference Make an effort to talk about the positive and provide guidelines for improvement. Offer creative suggestions for helping students realize their potential. Help parents get beyond feelings of disappointment or anger. Try to persuade parents to focus on what can be done in the future and not to punish students for past behavior. Encourage parents to become active partners in their child's education. Students are never too old to have someone review their work or help them study. Suggest resources pertaining to study skills as well as books and magazines related to the subjects their children are studying. Written notes during the conference help with follow up. A sample form is provided on page 28.

Follow-Up Rarely is a problem solved during a parent-teacher conference. Successful resolution takes commitment and follow-up by the student, parents, and teacher. In addition to your classroom communication with the student, notes and telephone calls to parents are often required.

When parents are involved, the student has a better chance of being successful. I see it every day.

High School Principal

Not every parent is willing or able to attend conferences. Unfortunately, children of these parents are typically the ones who could benefit most from parental involvement. There are many reasons why parents do not attend conferences or other school functions. Work schedules and other family commitments are among the most common. There are also some cultural and social barriers. Parents who did not attend or finish high school sometimes think that they have nothing to contribute. They believe that their child's coursework is beyond their own understanding and can see no way to help. Some cultures traditionally separate school and home life. In these situations, parents believe teachers know best and they equate participation with interference. Because English is not everyone's first language, you may need to provide an interpreter for some conferences.

It is up to you to contact parents who do not participate without encouragement. Sometimes all it takes is a personal note or a telephone call. Home visits are another option but should be pursued only if your school or school district has clear policies about such visits. It is also important to realize that some parents may never be involved in their

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Hanging diplomas, continuing education certificates, and awards in their classroom is a way for teachers to demonstrate their ongoing commitment to their profession.

High School English Teacher

child's education. Students should not be penalized for their parents' lack of involvement.

High school calendars are filled with events and activities that help students learn and mature. These same events and activities provide opportunities for parents to connect with their children and with their children's teachers.

MEET THE TEACHER

Meet the Teacher is usually held early in the school year and is designed to let parents meet each of their child's teachers in the classroom setting. In many cases the "schedule" for the evening parallels a shortened regular school schedule with parents moving from class to class following their own child's schedule. Following are some suggestions for this program.

Introduce Yourself Explain why you are qualified to teach this course. Include your academic preparation, teaching experience, and other experience. Highlight your interests and accomplishments, including any honors or recognition that you have received as a teacher. Mention what you do to keep current including recent workshops, in-service programs, conferences, etc. Prepare a handout with information about how parents can contact you.

Introduce Your Classroom Point out the resources in your classroom and how you use them as you teach. Demonstrate equipment, including projectors, VCRs, computers, etc. Use bulletin boards and tabletop displays to showcase current classroom activities. You can also highlight upcoming projects and events by creating displays and scrapbooks of projects and events from previous classes. If you use a laboratory as a routine part of your instruction, consider setting up some workstations where visitors can participate in interactive demonstrations. Ask current or former students to supervise workstations and answer questions.

Introduce Learning Materials Emphasize the features of the students' textbooks and learning materials that you use. Point out features that offer opportunities for enrichment, explanation, and reinforcement. Explain all other materials that you use routinely including workbooks, worksheets, activity sheets, and technology resources.

Depending on the courses you teach, you may want to discuss how you will help prepare students to take proficiency tests and other end-of-course tests that are required by your state. Encourage parents to take an active role in test preparation.

Introduce the Course Tell parents what their children will be studying. Explain why the course is important in terms of learning life skills, assisting in school-to-career transition, and providing foundation for additional study in high school or college. Explain how the course will be taught and how student performance will be measured. Explain projects, term papers, field trips, and reading assignments.

Course Policies It is important that parents understand the policies that you have established for your course and classroom. In most cases these are extensions of school policies that have been tailored to meet the specific needs of your classroom. It is a good idea to provide the same information to parents that you provided to students at the beginning of the course. Some of the issues you should address are listed below.

- ❑ Outline your expectations for attendance, including making up class assignments, quizzes, tests, and homework.
- ❑ Explain your policies regarding missing, incomplete, or late assignments.
- ❑ Provide information about students' responsibility for equipment, textbooks, and supplies.
- ❑ Reinforce the school's policies related to responsible behavior.

Keep in Touch Let parents know that you want to keep in touch about their child's progress throughout the year—not just when report cards come out. Explain how you will be communicating with parents as a group and with individual parents. Encourage parents to contact you with their concerns before their concerns turn into problems. Include information about how they can contact you. Provide your e-mail address and telephone number. Take a few minutes to gather or update information about how to contact parents and guardians. A sample form appears on page 21.

Ask for Volunteers Encourage parents to volunteer in your classroom or in another area of the school. Provide a list of volunteer opportunities and ask them to make a commitment. Remind parents that volunteer opportunities are open to other adult family members. If you are fortunate enough to have a classroom volunteer with you, ask him or her to say a few words about their volunteer efforts including comments about the personal rewards of volunteering. Make sure that potential volunteers realize that they do not have to be content experts to volunteer to help in your classroom. (See pages 9–11 and 13 for more about volunteers.)

A DAY IN THE LIFE

Arrange for family members to visit your classroom during a regularly scheduled class to observe and participate in classroom activities. In most

You can drive by the high school at six o'clock in the morning or after 10 at night and there are always cars in the parking lot. It's the busiest place in town.

Grandfather

cases you will not want all parents to come on the same day. You might want to select several days that you think would be particularly appropriate for visitors and have parents reserve a seat in advance.

COMPETITION AND ENTERTAINMENT

Inviting parents to school for an activity is a good idea. Fortunately there is usually so much going on at the typical high school that it is easy for students and parents to find something of interest. Competition is a teaching method and provides another avenue for parents to be engaged in their children's education. Some competitions have long traditions and are seen as integral components of the high school experience.

Entertainment is another reason for parents to come to school. Concerts, theater productions, and art exhibits all present opportunities for parental involvement. These might be tied to academic courses or extracurricular activities. Table 1 illustrates some of the competitions and entertainment found on high school campuses.

<input type="checkbox"/> Arts exhibitions	<input type="checkbox"/> Quiz games (general academics)
<input type="checkbox"/> Athletic events	<input type="checkbox"/> Quiz games (specific subjects)
<input type="checkbox"/> Band and orchestra concerts and competitions	<input type="checkbox"/> Science fairs (or fairs in other subjects)
<input type="checkbox"/> Chorus concerts and competitions	<input type="checkbox"/> Skill competitions
<input type="checkbox"/> Juried art shows	<input type="checkbox"/> Debate and speech competitions
<input type="checkbox"/> Moot court	<input type="checkbox"/> Talent competitions
<input type="checkbox"/> Plays, musicals, and drama performances	<input type="checkbox"/> Variety shows

TABLE 1. Competitions and Entertainment

VOLUNTEERS

Some parents are eager to volunteer; they have probably been doing it for years. Other parents need to be asked. In addition to parents, you should look to the community for volunteers. Businesses, community organizations, professional associations, and concerned individuals are all resources for potential volunteers.

Volunteer opportunities vary from school to school. Even two teachers teaching the same course may have differing needs for volunteers. Whatever the needs, volunteers can be grouped into three categories: organizations and committees, classroom and school volunteers, and event and activity volunteers.

ORGANIZATIONS AND COMMITTEES

Parent Organizations Most schools have a parent organization. Some are affiliated with national organizations and others are freestanding, school-based organizations. Find out as much as you can about the parent organization(s) in your school and participate in activities and programs that are appropriate for teachers. You will meet parents of current and future students and learn about the issues that are important to them.

Booster and Alumni Organizations Booster (and alumni) organizations back a wide variety of academic teams and extracurricular organizations. Fundraising is often the primary purpose of these organizations—boosters and alumni frequently contribute a large portion of the operating budget for extracurricular activities. It is important to encourage alumni, parents, guardians, grandparents, and other family members and friends to support extracurricular activities through boosters and other volunteer activities.

School Committees Parents bring their ideas, experience, and concerns to advisory and decision-making committees. They can often provide expertise and perspective. Examples of committees where parental input can be valuable include textbook selection, financial oversight, faculty search, community liaison, and curriculum review.

CLASSROOM AND SCHOOL VOLUNTEERS

Some schools are fortunate to have volunteer coordinators who can match school and teacher needs with the skills and interests of parents and other volunteers. Many teachers know how they currently use volunteers in their classroom and what kinds of volunteers they need. If you are not sure how to incorporate volunteers, ask colleagues what they are doing and ask parents what they would like to do. Some general ideas for classroom and school volunteers are shown in Table 2 below.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cafeteria monitors | <input type="checkbox"/> Library assistants |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Classroom aides | <input type="checkbox"/> Résumé reviewers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical assistants | <input type="checkbox"/> Study hall monitors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Laboratory assistants | <input type="checkbox"/> Tutors |

TABLE 2. Opportunities for Classroom and School Volunteers

EVENT AND ACTIVITY VOLUNTEERS

Every event or activity can benefit from volunteers. This is true of school-wide functions as well as activities limited to your classroom. Before you decide that you can do it all yourself or that the project is too

big to tackle, think about how you can use volunteers to help you meet your goals. Table 3 lists suggested volunteer opportunities for events and activities.

<input type="checkbox"/> Chaperones and field trip coordinators	<input type="checkbox"/> Judges
<input type="checkbox"/> Fund raisers	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter writers and editors
<input type="checkbox"/> Guest speakers	<input type="checkbox"/> Refreshments coordinators
<input type="checkbox"/> Job shadow partners	<input type="checkbox"/> Reservation/ticket coordinators

TABLE 3. Opportunities for Event and Activity Volunteers

GUIDELINES FOR VOLUNTEERS

Your school may already have guidelines for volunteers. If guidelines exist, make sure your volunteers receive a copy and that they adhere to the policies. If no guidelines exist, you might want to develop some for volunteers working in your classroom or with your students. In many cases the guidelines evolve over time as new situations arise. Some guidelines answer simple questions such as where to park, which restrooms to use, and how to dress. Other guidelines deal with substantive issues such as discipline, confidentiality, and appropriate interaction between adults and students.

Providing orientation for volunteers will help ensure that the volunteer experience is a positive one for everyone involved. Depending on the volunteer assignment and the number of volunteers, you may want to consider a group orientation session.

Until my nephew started high school, I had no idea that there was such a need for volunteers. Since I don't have children, I never thought of volunteering at a school. I am so glad someone asked.

*Communications
Manager*

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

CORPORATE COMMITMENT

Keeping stakeholders informed is important to any organization. Corporations spend millions of dollars communicating with their customers, potential customers, investors, employees, and others who have interests in the company and its products. Schools are no different; they need to communicate a variety of messages to a variety of audiences including parents, extended families, neighbors, alumni, businesses, community organizations, and government agencies.

Many businesses participate in community affairs and activities. They may already be involved in educational initiatives, or they may be interested in doing so when approached. The best way to build relationships with businesses is to outline your needs and ask for something specific.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

When you ask a business for financial support, you need to let company representatives know how you plan to spend the money. Each school has unique financial needs. Some schools are looking for luxury items; others are looking for basics. Some schools need scholarship support; others are trying to help families meet basic needs. In case you are having trouble thinking of reasons you need contributions, here is a brief list to help you get started.

- ☐ Scholarships for teachers and administrators to attend workshops, conferences, and seminars.
- ☐ Scholarships for students to attend conferences and workshops.
- ☐ Donations to defray operational costs.
- ☐ Instructional materials and equipment.
- ☐ Computer equipment and/or software.

FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES

Perhaps the best contribution that businesses can make, and one that costs them very little, is flexible scheduling for employees. Flexible schedules increase the chances that employees can participate in school activities as parents and/or volunteers.

I enjoy helping kids in the neighborhood with math and science. I never give them the answer; I help them to figure it out.

Mechanical Engineer

IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

In addition to cash contributions, many businesses have the resources to make in-kind contributions. Some examples are listed below.

- ❑ Allowing your school to use the company's rooms, cafeterias, auditoriums, and parking facilities for various school-related functions.
- ❑ Donating furniture and equipment that is no longer being used.
- ❑ Providing services such as copying and printing at no charge or below cost.

VOLUNTEERS

Helping to coordinate volunteer recruitment and programs is another contribution that businesses can make. Some volunteer activities can take place at work; others require flexible scheduling or release time. Still others can be done before or after working hours. Schools look to businesses for volunteers to help with a variety of activities and programs. Table 4 lists volunteer opportunities for businesspersons and professionals.

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ❑ Academic tutors | ❑ Job shadowing |
| ❑ Career day | ❑ Job interview coaches |
| ❑ Campus clean up and repair work | ❑ Mentoring programs |
| ❑ Classroom speakers | ❑ Summer job programs |
| ❑ Cooperative work experience | ❑ Volunteer coaches |
| ❑ Internships | |

TABLE 4. Volunteer Opportunities for Businesspersons and Professionals

SCHOOL-TO-CAREER PROGRAMS

In addition to being a resource for individual volunteers, local businesses are needed for school-to-career programs that prepare students for the transition from school to career. These programs link school and work experiences to help students develop career-related behaviors and skills. These skills, while related to work, also include basic skills needed for all aspects of life. School-to-career programs also focus on career awareness and exploration, along with job-seeking training. Commitment from local businesses is a key to successful school-to-career connections.

COMMUNITY GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Our theater arts studio was being renovated and we had no place to go with our fall theater production. So, we took it on tour. We performed at a hospital, a senior center, and an elementary school. It was a great experience for the students and the community—we will probably do it again.

Speech and Theater Arts Teacher

Structured work experiences are a major component of a school-to-career program and can take place in a variety of real-world settings. Most businesses can provide authentic experiences for students. Government agencies and non-profit organizations are also appropriate locations for school-to-career experiences. These experiences can take several forms including the following:

- ❑ Apprenticeships
- ❑ Internships
- ❑ Job shadowing
- ❑ Paid work experiences
- ❑ Work study programs

In addition to work experiences, business, government agencies, and non-profit organizations are excellent resources for other career-oriented programs such as career days, mock job interviews, and skills competitions. They may also provide job placement opportunities for graduates.

Parents and businesses are not the only place to look for support and commitment. Community groups and organizations are often involved in educational initiatives. Some organizations have developed educational programs that can be incorporated in your curriculum. Others offer a wide range of educational resources to help you develop interesting and effective lessons. Table 5 lists sources for guest speakers and other volunteers.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| ❑ Advocacy groups | ❑ Professional associations |
| ❑ Alumni association | ❑ Senior citizen centers and groups |
| ❑ Community theater groups | ❑ Social and fraternal organizations |
| ❑ Government agencies | ❑ Social service agencies |
| ❑ Museums and arts organizations | ❑ Special interest clubs |

TABLE 5. Community Groups and Organizations to Involve in Educational Initiatives

CONTRIBUTIONS

In addition to providing educational programs and classroom resources, some community groups and organizations offer direct financial support to schools. The amount and kind of support available often depends on

COMMUNICATING WITH THE COMMUNITY

My schedule does not permit me to volunteer on a regular basis, but I found a way to make a contribution. I videotape educational programs from cable television.

Registered Nurse

the organization's mission. Making your needs known is the first step toward receiving a contribution.

VOLUNTEERS

Community groups and organizations are an excellent source of volunteers. In some cases the organization may want to take on a specific volunteer project as part of the group's commitment to the community. In other cases individual members may be interested in volunteering for something that is of interest to them. Regular communication with these groups and the community at large will help you develop and maintain volunteer support.

Personal contact with business and community leaders is key to building and maintaining community involvement. As an adjunct to personal communication you should always be alert to opportunities to use mass communication channels to deliver messages to the community at large. The goals for these messages are usually to inform, seek approval, invite participation, or ask for support. Examples follow.

CONTACTING THE MEDIA

Your school or school district probably has a person or a department who is responsible for media relations. Depending on the size of your school or district you may have communication professionals who not only respond to media inquiries, but who seek out opportunities to showcase individual student and faculty achievements, interesting classroom experiences, and special events. These professionals can guide you if you are interested in spreading the word about your students' accomplishments.

Many schools have guidelines for faculty and staff contact with the media. In most cases, only a designated spokesperson is permitted to make comments on behalf of the school. News releases and other communications with the media often require the review and approval of an administrator. Check with an administrator if you are not sure who is responsible for media relations.

INVITATIONS

Open your doors and invite people into your school and classroom. Special events are always good opportunities to get families and community members involved. Invitations let people know about your school, even if the invited guests do not attend. Use a variety of ways to encourage parents and community members to visit including mailings, announcements in school and local publications, flyers sent home with students, and posters displayed in the school and throughout the community.

SUMMARY

Family and community involvement in your school and classroom can help students learn and can help you teach, but it also sets an example for students. Involvement sends a message to children about the value their parents and others in the community place on education. It can also help students realize that learning is a lifelong experience.

This book provides many ideas about family and community involvement. You can make it happen in your school for your students. It will take some additional effort, but the benefits to your students will make the effort worth it.

Once you begin involving families and the community, ask them for suggestions of ways to expand their role. They will give you new ideas that allow you to expand and enhance their involvement.

INTERNET RESOURCES

The Internet is home to many valuable resources related to parental and community involvement. Some or all of the sites listed below may be of interest to you and/or parents of your students. Inclusion in this list should not be deemed as an endorsement of the content or ideas offered at any of the sites. Finally, because the Internet is such a dynamic environment, you may find that the sites listed in this book and any other resource material are no longer active or have been completely redesigned.

- ❑ American Association of Retired Persons (resources for grandparents)
www.aarp.org/grandparents/
- ❑ American Association of School Administrators
www.aasa.org
- ❑ American Federation of Teachers
www.aft.org
- ❑ Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development
www.ascd.org
- ❑ Cable in the Classroom
www.ciconline.org
- ❑ National Association of Partners in Education
www.napehq.org
- ❑ National Coalition for Parent Involvement
www.ncpie.org
- ❑ National Education Association
www.nea.org
- ❑ National Network of Partnership Schools
www.csos.jhu.edu/

- ❑ National Parent Teacher Association
www.pta.org
- ❑ Kathy Schrock's Guide for Educators
school.discovery.com/schrockguide/
- ❑ U.S. Department of Education: Parents Guide to the Internet
(November 1997)
www.ed.gov/pubs/parents/internet

SAMPLE FORMS AND MASTERS

The following samples are provided to help you involve family and community members in your classroom.

- ☐ Commitment to Communication
- ☐ Sample Calendar
- ☐ Sample Newsletter
- ☐ Pre-Conference Report
- ☐ Parent-Teacher Conference Notes

NAME _____ DATE _____ CLASS _____

COMMITMENT TO COMMUNICATION

Parent or Guardian:

Please complete and return the bottom half of this form so that I can communicate effectively with parents and guardians of students enrolled in my classes.

Teacher: _____

Course Title: _____ Section: _____ Time: _____

STUDENT INFORMATION Student Identification Number: _____

Student: _____
LAST NAME FIRST NAME MIDDLE INITIAL

PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Name: _____
LAST NAME FIRST NAME MIDDLE INITIAL

Preferred title: (circle one) Dr. Miss Mr. Mrs. Ms. Other: _____

Relationship to student: _____

Address: _____
STREET ADDRESS APARTMENT

CITY STATE ZIP

Telephone: _____
DAYTIME EVENING

Best time to contact: _____

E-mail: _____

Comments: _____

Signature: _____
SIGNATURE OF PARENT OR GUARDIAN DATE

SEPTEMBER 2004

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

INTRODUCTION TO HEALTH & FITNESS

Healthy Eating Choices for Teens

Helping teenagers make healthy choices about eating is the focus of the second unit of study in the course Introduction to Health and Fitness. During this unit we focus on proper nutrition. We will also address some of the current issues related to teen nutrition.

Balance is one of the keys to good nutrition. For years doctors, parents, and advertisers have talked about a balanced diet. For more information nutritional standards for young adults, see pages 125–127 of the textbook.

Vegetarianism is in, but it is not just a trend. In many cultures vegetarianism is a way of life—usually a healthy way of life. A healthy vegetarian diet does not just eliminate meat; it replaces meat with other valuable sources of protein. French fries and a salad do not qualify as a healthy vegetarian meal. For more insight into preparing vegetarian meals at home and ordering vegetarian meals at restaurants see page 134 of the textbook.

Learning to integrate vegetarian alternatives into family meals can be difficult for the beginner. There are many magazines and cookbooks that feature recipes for vegetarian dishes. Other sources for tried and true recipes are families who routinely eat vegetarian meals.

As it class project we will be developing a small collection of recipes. If you have a recipe to share, please ask your student to

bring it to class before November 1. If it is more convenient, you can send it to us at my e-mail address.

Eating disorders including anorexia and bulimia are prevalent among high school students of both genders. News and media attention usually focuses on young women, but these disorders are also seen in young men, particularly those involved in wrestling and gymnastics. A list of warning signs of eating disorders is provided on page 156 of the textbook. If you need more information contact the school nurse.

Workers in the teaching profession need to have adequate training to spot the early signs of eating disorders. Contrary to popular opinion, the warning signs are not easy to spot. What is the difference between being thin and healthy and thin and anorexic? Bulimia can be especially hard to detect as bulimics, unlike anorexics, eat normal portions of food.

The problem is compounded in that, at least at the high school level, supervision of students at lunch and snack times is left to aides or school staff and not teachers.

School Name

Street Address

City, State and ZIP Code

Course Calendar

Sept 28	Parent-Teacher Conferences
Oct 13	No school
Oct 20	Outline for research project due
Oct 22	Quarter Test
Oct 23	Field Trips
Nov 1	Vegetarian recipes due
Nov 15	Research project due

about this newsletter...

Introduction to Health & Fitness is published four times a year as part of my commitment to parental involvement in the classroom. Your comments and suggestions about the newsletter and the course are welcome.

contact the teacher...

Name
Telephone
Fax
E-Mail

Fall Field Trips

Five field trips are planned to give students insight into different aspects of the food industry. Groups of five students will participate in each trip and report on their experiences to the class. The scheduled trips are listed below.

- ☐ Grocery Distribution Center
- ☐ Food Testing Center
- ☐ Hotel Food and Beverage Department
- ☐ Working Farm
- ☐ A Food Processing Plant

These field trips are planned for October 23. We are looking for parents, grandparents, or other adult relatives to help us coordinate transportation and on-site supervision.

Meet-the-Teacher

Thanks to everyone who came to Meet-the-Teacher. I enjoyed sharing information about my background and the course Introduction to Health and Fitness. If you were unable to attend and would like to learn more about this course, I will be happy to meet with you. Please call my voicemail and leave a message including dates and times when you are available to meet before or after school.

Volunteer Opportunities

We are always looking for volunteers. We are currently looking for guests speakers. Our particular needs include the following:

- ☐ Nutrition Professionals
- ☐ Personal Trainer
- ☐ Sports Medicine Physician

Thank You

Thank you to the parents and grandparents who provide tasty and nutritious snacks for Meet-the-Teacher.

School Name

Street Address

City, State and ZIP Code

NAME _____ DATE _____ CLASS _____

PRE-CONFERENCE REPORT

Parent or Guardian:

Your parent-teacher conference is scheduled for the date and time indicated below. Please take a few minutes before the conference to review the information that I have provided. Please bring this report with you to your conference. Thank you for supporting your student's efforts in my class.

Teacher: _____

Course Title: _____ Section: _____ Time: _____

Student: _____
LAST NAME FIRST NAME MIDDLE INITIAL

Parent-Teacher Conference: _____

	DATE	TIME
	Student's Strengths	Areas That Need Improvement
Class Participation		
Assignments		
Behavior		
Study Skills		
Other		

Please write down any specific questions or issues that you want to bring up during the conference:

NAME _____ DATE _____ CLASS _____

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE NOTES

Teacher: _____

Course Title: _____ Section: _____ Time: _____

Student: _____
LAST NAME FIRST NAME MIDDLE INITIAL

Parent-Teacher Conference: _____
DATE TIME

Parent: _____
LAST NAME FIRST NAME MIDDLE INITIAL

General Notes:

Suggestions for Classroom:

Suggestions for Home: