

## Building Blocks: Shared Leadership

Parents want what is best for their children. School staff want children to be successful. School leaders and parents, as well as community organization leaders, can work together to produce strong results for children that no one entity could accomplish on its own. In order to work together we must share leadership responsibilities. Shift from a neutral (uninvolved) or an adversarial relationship to one that builds on each of our strengths. Think in terms of working with, instead of doing for, each other.

Based on the *New Wave of Evidence* (Henderson & Mapp, 2002) research review, the National PTA [www.pta.org] revised its standards for family involvement to the standards for family-school partnerships. PTA shifted the focus from what **schools should do** to involve parents to what parents, schools and communities **can do together** to support student success.

Title I regulations describe parents as partners in school planning and governance, and outline roles for parents in making plans for the use of the Title I funds for academics and for parental involvement activities, school policies and school compacts, and



**Check out Section 3 in the Solid Foundation Resource Manual for guidelines about effective practices.** There is an interesting comparison of leadership-style parent organizations with traditional-style parent organizations from *Beyond the Bake Sale: The Essential Guide to Family-School Partnerships*, by Anne T. Henderson, Karen L. Mapp, Vivian R. Johnson, and Don Davies (p.194).

## Pennsylvania Practices

### Enhancing Partnership and Shared Decision Making

After reviewing their second School Community Index, the Solid Foundation Team at East Norriton Middle School decided that not enough parents were involved in volunteer and school committee work. Under the Building Block “Shared Leadership”, they decided their objective for next year is “to actively encourage and recruit parents to volunteer in various capacities in order to support the academic, social



how families can be part of school support teams. Parents should be involved with:

- development of local plans for school improvement;
- local parental involvement policy, and school-parent compacts; and
- determining the use of funds for parental involvement activities.

Check the Pennsylvania Statewide Parent Advisory Council [www.spac.k12.pa.us] website for more information.

We can act beyond those regulations and ensure that family members as well as community partners are part of school councils that make plans for student success and participate in the implementation of the plans. Family-School-Community Partnerships may take the form of action teams that are school based focused on supporting students to high levels of achievement; or working on school improvement plans; or resolving a specific issue such as reducing illegal drug use; or eliminating violence in homes, at school and in the community; or may bring people together to figure out how to construct an accessible playground. The partnerships may be smaller in scope—linking one community service to a school building (such as a counseling service, or health clinic)—or involve a stronger communication network among afterschool providers, school staff and families.

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and emotional needs of our students.” The School Community Index revealed that only 10% of parents reported participating in a school committee last year. The team set a goal of having 15% of parents participate next year by distributing information regarding committees, engagement and volunteer opportunities to families.



**Solid Foundation is a school-based team process that helps:**

- *Strengthen family-school connections*
- *Engage parents in their children’s learning*
- *Improve student, academic and social learning*

**From *Beyond the Building* (SEDL) we learn that successful schools work in collaborative partnerships to foster a culture that:**

- Builds a shared understanding of goals and expectations for everyone involved in the school system
- Establishes high academic standards that clearly define what students are to know and be able to do
- Develops a strong cadre of leaders that provide support for the goals and expectations of the school and the school community
- Formalizes procedures for the purposeful collection and analysis of data on students, programs and staff
- Builds strong relationships among school, family and community partners

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**More information can be found at:**

www.Center-School.org/pa-pirc  
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