

# Parent Liaisons: A Bridge Between School and Families

## What is a parent liaison/coordinator/educator?

- Whatever the position may be called in various schools and districts, the role of facilitating partnership between the school, family, and community in support of student achievement is the same. When utilized effectively the parent liaison<sup>1</sup> is an essential component in supporting family, school, and community engagement. A liaison, when provided the tools and training is able to effectively support families to understand school programs, systems, and procedures to support the student's academic and social success.

## Utilizing Parent Liaisons

- Parent Liaisons are an important resource in connecting families and the community to the school. However, the Parent Liaison is not solely responsible for increasing family engagement as the responsibility belongs to the entire school staff. In order to effectively develop a relationship with families, the liaison requires the support and follow-through of school leadership. Educators must acknowledge the value of collaborating with the liaison to equip families as an extension for student learning. Effective utilization<sup>2</sup> of a liaison may include:
  - Work with designated leadership to assist in the coordination of efforts to meet NCLB Parental Involvement Requirements, Section 1118
  - Work closely with school administration to co-lead the school's family and community engagement action team
  - Be involved in the process to develop, implement, and evaluate, a family engagement plan that supports the School Improvement Plan
  - Work with the principal and school staff to establish a family-friendly school environment where families are welcomed and made to feel they belong on campus
  - Communicate effectively with families in a easy to understand manner
  - Provide families with advocacy, support, and training; assist in identifying any social and health needs of students and families; maintain confidentiality
  - Assist teachers, staff, and families to build a partnership beneficial to student success
  - In collaboration with the school's engagement action team, develop programs and activities designed to engage and empower families in improving student achievement
  - Act to facilitate resolutions to concerns and issues from families
  - Research, contact, and maintain meaningful community partnerships with local and state community agencies, organizations, and businesses to enhance the school, student learning, and connect families to valuable social, health and academic resources
  - Provide meaningful and relevant parent workshops on NCLB/Title I programs and academic standards for increased awareness of their options and rights
  - Serve on committees and boards to increase community and school awareness
  - Maintain a Parent Center that is well-stocked with current and updated academic, social and health information and resources
  - Make home visits to establish or strengthen partnership; or for the purpose of additional support
  - Document, track and report any program/service outcomes, such as event attendance, pre/post evaluation, and feedback, on projects they have undertaken

PARENT INVOLVEMENT *"Pencil it in!"*

<sup>1</sup> For efficiency, the position of parent liaison/coordinator/educator is referred to as "liaison" throughout the document.

<sup>2</sup> Adapted from the Boston Public Schools Family and Community Outreach Coordinator Initiative