



REGION V PARENT ENGAGEMENT EVALUATION SUMMARY REPORT 2011-2012

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BACKGROUND

Recognizing the critical role that parental involvement plays in student success, the Santa Clara County Office of Education began the Region V Parent Engagement Initiative to provide parents with the tools to support their children's academic achievement – and then teach other parents to do the same. Launched in the 2010-2011 school year, the Educational Services Branch formed an advisory committee to create a strategic program development plan. Program development assumptions include the following:

- Parents are a child's first and primary teacher.
- Parents can provide expanded academic learning activities with their child daily through play.
- A family's formal and informal cultural and academic enrichment activities at home can be integrated into classroom activities.
- Effective parent engagement can contribute to family economic development.
- Parent involvement closes the gap between educational institutions to support and promote student academic achievement.

Based on these assumptions, the vision and mission for the initiative states that parents and community partners can be informed about a child's educational needs to increase academic achievement by:

- training parent leaders to conduct parent engagement trainings in parenting, health and wellness, and home-based academic enrichment activities using common core standards;
- developing and implementing a resource-based parent engagement model;
- supporting schools in creating parent and community partnership plans; and
- collecting data to analyze, interpret, and report project outcomes that support county-wide strategic planning.

In its inaugural year, the initiative empowered parents to improve student achievement by addressing the academic, discipline, nutrition, and safety needs of their children. Participants in the initiative's robust offering of trainings and workshops learned multiple and specific strategies to support their children's needs. A multi-tiered program allowed parents a chance to learn new techniques first, and then later practice their new skills and improve their strategies through collaboration with other parents. Three conferences offered to parents drew nearly 900 participants from local school districts. More than 2,100 mostly parent participants from 18 school districts in the region attended 80 subsequent follow-up workshops. Evaluation results at the end of the first year indicated that the workshops increased parents' skills and that there is a need for systemic implementation.

YEAR 2 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

During the 2011-2012 school year, the Parent Engagement Initiative completed the following activities:

- The advisory team updated a three-year strategic plan and LOGIC model created in 2009.
- Eighteen districts participated in activities during the first two years of project implementation.
- One hundred sixty parent leaders have been trained on basic training modules.
- Three regional conferences and 285 workshops served 6,516 parents and community members.

- Evaluations reflect that workshops increased parents' skills and ongoing need for increased systemic implementation.
- The first Best Practices Forum is scheduled on September 29, 2012 with 15 school/district leaders providing administrator, teacher, program staff, and parent leader workshops.
- Advanced parent leader team trainings will be offered in November, January, May, and June in the 2012-2013 school year to include:
 - webinar networking with regional county office leads and California Department of Education staff;
 - advanced facilitation skill building provided by Toastmaster leaders;
 - advanced whole child program development provided by health leaders;
 - advanced family literacy development using common core standards provided by community agencies;
 - coaching and paid stipends for ten parent leaders to support expansion in school districts, Early Learning, Transitional Kindergarten, and Migrant Education programs; and
 - grade level classroom academic enrichment activity kits for differentiated instruction led by student ambassadors and parent leaders.

Program implementation has been effective because of the following critical program components:

- commitment of the Santa Clara County Office of Education Superintendent and leadership in partnership with the City of San Jose, community groups, and school districts to close the achievement gap through the San Jose 2020 Initiative and the Early Learning Master Plan;
- working closely with top leadership in a school district to build a systemic infrastructure;
- supporting the development of an action plan with a parent engagement team comprised of certificated staff, paraprofessionals, and parent leaders;
- building capacity of parents in workshops to support and build the program;
- federal and state mandates for parent engagement with some categorical funding; and
- role as a convener of best practices in parent engagement through Educational Services Branch strategic program development.

RESOURCE CHALLENGES

Program implementation survey rubrics completed by district leaders and phone interviews with key stakeholders indicate the following ongoing program development challenges:

- Need for program staff and stipends for trained parent leaders.
- Need for Vietnamese and Mandarin Chinese translators/ interpreters.
- Funding for conference and workshop costs related to facilities, translators, interpreters, materials, childcare, and food.
- Need for more instructional classroom volunteer kits for all grade levels that can be loaned to classroom teachers through the Santa Clara County Office of Education's library.
- Need for family literacy backpacks with grade level readers, reading and writing academic enrichment activities, and mathematics manipulative activities for all participating parents that can be used by parents at home.
- Need for expanded evaluation documentation and analysis for year-end reporting.

NEXT STEPS

When considering the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Educational Act, the advisory team is committed to engaging parents in their child's learning and not just educating parents to make an informed choice about their child's education. Key stakeholders agree that "Engaged parents can expand their child's learning while playing beyond the school day. Our students need engaged parent leaders at home and at school to support academic enriched activities that reinforce academic content standards while playing with their children and their child's friends." Advisory leaders and key stakeholders are committed to partnering further with key funders to expand service delivery this coming school year.