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EDU 413

Final Assignment

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Listed below are some strategies that could be implemented in a school or classroom to increase parent and community involvement. These strategies would work for any grade at the elementary level.

Parenting

“Pastries with Parents” are special meetings for students to invite their parents to school for an informational meeting. The school would host one of these at the start of the school year and continue to host them about every other month throughout the year. They would be scheduled for an early morning before school starts and before parents need to be at work. The attendance would not be required, but would be strongly encouraged of all parents. At these meetings, parents will be provided with parenting materials, strategies, and tips to use with their children. Since students love having their parents come to school for events like this, they can also prepare artwork, projects, etc. to display at the meeting. I actually talked to one of my roommates who had “Doughnuts with Dad” and “Muffins with Mom” at her elementary school while growing up and she loved it. I chose the title of ‘parents’ rather than ‘mom or dad’ so that it still applies to those students who do not have a mom or dad present in their life. I think this is a great way for students to get excited about involving their parents in their everyday education.

Communicating

A great strategy to communicate with parents is sending home school and class newsletters every month. These newsletters would include upcoming events and reminders about what is going on in the school and in the classroom as well as what they students are learning and working on during class that month. I would send a newsletter home with my students twice a month. One would be at the beginning of the month with all of the upcoming events and parent reminders and the other would be about what the students have learned in school during the past month. I attached an upcoming events newsletter for my example!

Volunteering

I think a good strategy to incorporate volunteering within the families of the school is offering them a schedule of events that the school has planned or planned to help out with around the community. The chosen events could be events that are already planned in the city or new events that the school would choose to sponsor. In either case, the school would send out the yearly schedule of events and have students and their families respond to which events they would be interested in and/or able to help out with. The volunteer program would have a catchy name such as “Solheim Students Serving [the Community]” and would volunteer their time at events such as soup kitchens, cleaning up ditches, etc. I chose this strategy because I think it is a great way for schools to encourage volunteering from their students and families. In this way, students will be spending their time with their families as well as the families of their fellow classmates. The students will begin to understand how important and easy it can be to give their time to those in need. This is a good way for the teachers and their families to be involved in the community as well!

This strategy would be adopted as a school-wide program, but if the school was not in favor of it, my classroom would learn about what it means to be a volunteer and how easy it is for people to help out in the community. I would look for an event in town (ex. free supper for the homeless) and invite parents to bring their families and children to help serve and give their time at the event as a class. The example that I would send home is attached.

Learning at Home

A strategy I would like to use to assist my students in learning at home is making a class website. Students could access this and would be encouraged to do so when they are at home. The class website would have a link for every subject and content area that we are learning about in school. Each subject area would have a list of websites and/or activities that can be done at home to continue the learning process that occurs during school. I would place general topics on here as well as specific activities for each topic. These learning activities could be anything from educational, interactive, or informational websites, online games, printout worksheets, activities, quizzes, to multi-player family games, etc. For example, under the math category would be links to coolmathforkids.com, fastmath.com, and similar online math games as well as print out card games and flash cards to practice math facts at home with parents and siblings.

Decision Making

Decision making is important at the parent level because it allows parents to be involved with their child’s education. A strategy to increase parent involvement in this area would be to form a PTO group. This PTO group would propose ideas and events for the school, plan fundraising programs, decide what the money needs to be spent on, and work to improve the school in any way possible. The parents will work with the teachers and administrators to find ways to make improvements in the school. PTO Today offers many tips and ideas for quick and easy events, fundraisers, and ways to begin the involvement process of parents in PTO groups.

Collaborating with the Community

For this area of parent involvement, I want my school to bring in speakers to speak to parents a few evenings each year. The speakers can be professionals, other parents, or anyone from the community who has knowledge on a topic that would benefit parents of young students. The speakers could come from various areas depending on what the school needs at that time. Examples of speakers could be counselors, educators, coaches, librarians, or anyone who would be willing and in town. These speakers could speak about opportunities, resources, materials, and services available to students as well as the importance of reading, sports, peer relations, household rules, routines, or anything that is important to the healthy development of a child. This would be held two or three evenings each year, depending on the availability and interest of the parents.

References

*PTO Today: Ideas, Help, and Advice for PTO/PTA Groups.* Retrieved from http://www.ptotoday.com/.