Parent Leadership Academy (PLA)

Lindsay Hawkins, Lacy Pennington
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Time Frame 480-720 session(s)

Essential Question(s)

- How can data drive decision making in any setting? Within a school? Within a community?
- How might parent involvement, using data-driven decisions, impact the school community and culture?
- What might parent involvement look like within the school?

Summary

The Parent Leadership Academy designs and engages a school team consisting of parents, community members, and school leaders to forge the commitment and involvement of parent-school-community partnerships. This event will lead and educate the parent leadership teams through a data driven decision-making model to develop a site-based action plan which supports district and individual site goals focused on supporting the growth, progress, and future achievement for all students. This training is designed to be a two day training, but may be reduced to one long day if time and activities are well managed and facilitated.

Learning Goals

- Participants will identify and analyze different sets of data to drive decision making.
- Participants will create an action plan based specifically on identified needs from the analyzed data.
- Participants will identify different types of parental involvement and connect how they might support the implementation of the action plan.
- Participants will identify other key individuals necessary to successfully implement the designed action plan.

Attachments

- Action Plan Example—PLA.docx
- Action Plan Example—PLA.pdf
- Action Plan Template—PLA.docx
- Action Plan Template—PLA.pdf
- Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement—PLA.pdf
- Leading and Lagging—PLA.docx
- Leading and Lagging—PLA.pdf
- Name Tent Template—PLA.docx
- Name Tent Template—PLA.pdf
- Purchase Request—PLA.docx
- Purchase Request—PLA.pdf
- Purchasing Process—PLA.docx
- Purchasing Process—PLA.pdf
- School, Family, and Community Partnerships—PLA.pdf
- Slides—PLA.pptx

Materials

- Slides (attached)
- Agenda
- Contact Information page
- Parent Leadership Team Contact worksheet
- Leading and Lagging (attached)
- Data collected and sorted from school and district (School/District Report Card, School/District Profile, Test Scores, College Admissions, etc.)
- Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement Charts (attached)
- School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share by Joyce Epstein p. 81-96 (attached)
- Action Plan Example (attached)
- Action Plan Template (attached)
- Purchase Request Form (attached; optional)
- Purchasing Process (attached; optional)
- Name Tent Template (attached; optional; print on colored paper)
- Blank Paper
- Pens/Pencils/Markers
- Poster Paper or Chart Paper
- Three-ring binder and five tab dividers (optional but recommended for organization)
- Talent Release (if photos will be published)
- Copy of an IRB (if applicable)
- Any other resources to meet the goals of the PLA session

Engage

Organizer's Note

Before hosting the Parent Leadership Academy, identify at least one long term goal (SMART goal) that can be supported and addressed by parents within the school or district. Collect and organize all relevant data (e.g., demographics, attendance rates, graduation rates) for the school site and district. Print and organize the handouts and information before the event. Handouts might be organized in a three-ring binder using five tab dividers. Suggested labels are: "PLA Agenda and Contact Information," "Data and Research," "Six Types of Involvement," "Project Planning," and "Presentation."

Optional Organization For Binder

In the front inside pocket, place any documents that participants will fill out and return at the beginning of the session (e.g., talent release, informed consent, IRB for any research purposes). Behind the first tab, place the Agenda; contact information for all presenters, coordinators, or liaisons; and the Parent Leadership Team Contact worksheet for participants. Place the attached **Leading and Lagging** worksheet, all data, and any research that might be used during the PLA session to drive decision making behind the second tab. Behind the third tab, place **Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement Charts** and then the attached article **School, Family, and Community Partnerships: Caring for the Children We Share** by Joyce Epstein. The fourth tab, "Project Planning", will contain all resources participants might need to successfully plan and organize the Action Plan. These might include (but are not limited to) the **Action Plan Example** handout, the **Action Plan Template**, the **Purchase Request** form, and the **Purchasing Process** document, all of which are attached. Behind the final tab, place a printed copy of the slide presentation (three slides per page) so all participants may take notes and later refer back as a resource for important dates and processes.

Presenter's Note

All participants will receive handouts and information contained within their binder. Provide pens, pencils, markers, blank paper, Post-it Notes, the attached **Name Tent Template**, and any other materials for activities on the tables (read PLA "script" throughly for complete details of when to use materials and handouts). Poster or chart paper may be handed out as needed. Participants will need to be organized in small groups according to the school they are representing. So, if participants attending the PLA training are from multiple school sites, organize tables so participants from the same site may sit and work together. All participants should mingle and work together among other groups or school teams during whole-group activities, such as the ice-breakers and Jigsaw activities.

Displaying **slide 2** of the PowerPoint, welcome participants to the Parent Leadership Academy (PLA) and introduce yourself. Also, take this time at the beginning to attend to the required paperwork. These will be the items located in the front pocket of the binder each participant receives upon arrival. Provide instructions about each page, explaining in detail what is needed and why it is required to be signed. Inform participants of any "opt out" options (if any are available). Instruct participants where to return all signed documents when completed (walk around and collect, have a designated space for them to get up and turn in, etc.). Once the necessary paperwork is complete, draw their attention to the papers behind the first tab of the binder, PLA Agenda and Contact Information.They may find the agenda for the day here and the necessary contact information for the presenter and any other PLA liaisons.

Because participants will work together for a day or two, begin with an introduction or icebreaker activity. This will allow you and the participants to, briefly, get to know one another. Click on the PowerPoint changing to **slide 3** to display the directions for the Name Tent.

Instruct all participants to locate the papers with a dotted line in the middle of the table. Each person will take one and fold it in half to create a Name Tent. Making sure the crease/dotted line is farther from them than the open end, participants will write their name, large and centered, on the folded piece of paper. Following the instructions on the PowerPoint, participants will use the same side of their Name Tent to answer the four following questions, writing small in the indicated corners:

- Right Corner: Where where you born?
- Left Corner: If you never had to sleep, what would you do with the extra time?
- Bottom Right: What fad or trend do you hope comes back?
- Bottom Left: Where would you go if you could go anywhere (real place or fictional place)?

Participants and presenter share out their name and what they wrote on the "Name Tent." Presenter may choose one corner for everyone to share their responses to or will allow participants to each choose one corner to share out. *(Note: sharing all corners will take too much time.)*

Presenter's Note

In addition to the Name Tents, presenters might plan other engaging activities or icebreakers to engage participants in movement or a team building activity, depending upon time available. However, Name Tents should still be used so participants can learn each other's names. Also, throughout the PLA session, use short games as a "mind" break. These are best if placed after a break or lunch to help refocus the participants. If hosting a two-day session, use another icebreaker to begin the second day.

After icebreaker activity, change to **slide 4**. Pose the question, "How might parents support and help promote achievement for all students?" Participants will use the question to engage in the Commit and Toss strategy. They will write one or two examples of how they might support and promote achievement for all students at school. Then they will crumple up their papers and, on the count of three, toss it to another person not seated near them (across the room). After all papers are tossed, they will locate one near them, open it, and silently read it. Then, the process repeats one or two more times (crumple, toss, find, and read). Finally, have participants return to their seats, and ask them to share out a few of the ideas they read.

Involving Returning Parents In Smart Goal Writing

If parent participants are familiar with creating a SMART goal based on data, then they may create and write their own SMART goal for the Action Plan. This activity may be added after analyzing the data and completing the Leading and Lagging activity.

Change to **slide** 5, "Why Parent Leadership Academy?" Quickly highlight the "Big Idea" for the PLA session and the SMART goal for the site.

Presenter's Note

The SMART goal for the session MUST be updated on the PowerPoint so it represents site-specific information. The SMART goal for the session might address the need to create a college-going culture, increase student attendance rates, increase graduation rates, ensuring that students do not come to or leave school hungry, etc. The need or concern should correlate to and represent the data provided. The participants will analyze and use the data as a tool or resource to drive the decision making process to create an action plan that supports the SMART goal of the school/district.

Change to **slide 6**, "Students with Highly Involved Parents Do Better in School." Explain that these are findings from a meta-synthesis of 9 meta-analyses over the influence parental involvement programs have on student achievement (Wilder, 2014). These findings prove that parents have the ability to impact a student's potential to succeed when they are an active participant in the school community, helping guide and being engaged in decision making. Click through the slide to display all three facts from the research:

- “Parental aspirations and expectations for their [children’s] educational achievement has a significant impact on academic achievement.”
- “Parents attending and participating in school activities have positive impact on academic achievement.”
- “Parent tutoring positively affects academic achievement and is not affected by the grade level of children, nor the skill area in which children received tutoring.”

Explore

Change to **slide 7**, "6 Steps to Data-Driven Decision Making." Inform participants that these will be the steps taken to determine the best type of action plan to implement and support the SMART goal. Do not go into detail about about each step. You will highlight each step as you go through the presentation.

Presenter's Note

Data-driven decision making (D3M) is one of the many step-by-step frameworks used among a group of individuals to better critically think, methodically organize, implement, and monitor a plan or event.

Shift to the **slide 8**, "Data-Driven Decision Making," and briefly highlight the information on this slide. This process creates a vision, helps align short-term decisions to long-term goals, and answers three driving questions:

- "Where are we today?"
- "Where do we want to be in the future?"
- "What do we need to focus on today to make it possible to reach our future goal?"

Participants are not supposed to answer these three questions immediately, but rather, they should use them to guide and reflect upon decisions as they progress through the D3M framework.

Quickly transition from the overview to **slide 9**, and ask participants, "Why are we using data?" Allow participants an opportunity to share aloud why they think we are going to use data to help develop our plan.

Possible Responses

"The data will provide evidence of where we are currently." "It will show the needs of our school and district." "The data will help us make a decision on where to begin and what challenges we might have to overcome or continue to support current structures in order to see more significant improvements."

After few a participants have shared aloud, click the slide again to show, "It shows the FACTS!" Say, "Facts are proof of what is currently working, what needs fixing, or what support is needed to make improvements and move forward to reach future goals."

This transitions the presentation to **slide 10** which displays the first step in the D3M process, "Collect and Analyze Data to Identify a Problem." This is where they begin the process of analyzing data. Move on to **slide 11**, "Collect and Analyze Data." Instruct participants to turn to the second tab in their binders, "Data and Research." Here, participants will identify, examine, organize, and compare school and district data using the worksheet titled, "Leading and Lagging."

Presenter's Note

It is very important that the presenter takes time to explain and answer any questions participants might have while analyzing the data. Not all participants will understand what the data shows. These next few tasks will take time. Presenters should not make participants feel inept but should help them digest what they are analyzing and looking for within the data. Because data can show a variety of information, the worksheet "Leading and Lagging" may be modified to highlight a focus for specific struggles and strengths that support the SMART goal. For example, if the school's SMART goal is "Create a college-going culture during the 2016-2017 school that can be sustained" then the "Leading and Lagging" worksheet must focus participants to look for data such as graduation rates, average ACT scores, out-of-state college-going rate, in-state college-going rate, scholarships received each year, AP enrollment, concurrent enrollment, and so on. Participants might still look at other aspects of the data, but their focus should be mostly directed toward data that contributes to creating a solution and plan which further supports the SMART goal of the school.

First, participants will search the provided data, interpreting and familiarizing themselves with the information. Encourage them to ask questions if they don't understand or need help interpreting the data. Then, working in small groups, participants will use the "Leading and Lagging" worksheet to narrow the scope of necessary data. The worksheet will allow them to easily record, organize, and analyze the numbers or percentages needed to make an informed decision based on the school's performance compared to the district's overall performance. Once small groups have filled out the top chart comparing district and school numbers, instruct them to complete the bottom chart labeled "Statistical Profile." All information must be found within the data.

After small groups have completed both charts, change to **slide 12**, and instruct participants to critically compare the "District Profile" and the "School Profile." In small groups, participants will analyze the data in each of the three categories (Community Characteristics, Educational Process, and Student Performance) and then record an "I Notice, I Wonder" statement pertaining to a fact from each category. (*More detailed information on the strategy "*I Notice, I Wonder" can be found within the "Strategies" link on the K20 LEARN site.)

Change to **slide 13** after groups complete the "I Notice, I Wonder" statements for each of the categories listed on the previous slide. Ask the whole group, "Reflecting on your statements and using the data from the charts, how does your child's school compare to the school district in the areas you analyzed? What overarching problem do you notice and how might it impede the SMART goal?" Allow participants time to share what they noticed and wondered about the identified facts, data, and charts.

Presenter's Note

Remember, the presenter may need to guide participants to remain focused on problems that are associated to the alignment of the SMART goal. Any problems outside of that goal may be addressed at a later date.

Possible Responses For I Notice, I Wonder

"I notice the average number of days a student is absent at our school is about double that of the district's numbers. I wonder how that impacts the college-going mindset of a student when they are gone so frequently." "I notice our school has more math units offered than the district average but fewer ELA units offered. I wonder if this is due to having a large number of students who are having to repeat math courses or if this is this due to having more advanced options in math courses for students to take. If it is the latter, then why are our scores so low?"

Once participants have shared a few statements, move to **slide 14** and ask, "Based on your data review and discussion, do you feel all students at your school are meeting their full potential?" If time allows, you may allow participants to share short responses to this question. Once finished, click the slide once more to display the gray response: "Shouldn't they be?"

Move on to **slide 15** which displays the second step in the decision-making process, "Brainstorm Solutions." This slide indicates that they have completed the first step of the process and identified a problem. Change to **slide 16**, and instruct participants to work in small groups to brainstorm solutions that solve or provide support for improvement to the deficit identified earlier during slide 13. Groups will use poster paper and generate a list of possible solutions that target the identified problem.

Presenter's Note

Don't allow too much time for participants to generate solutions. You don't want too many to choose from during the next activity.

After groups have generated lists of possible solutions, hang the poster papers around the room and allow small groups to share their ideas. Participants will identify two of these ideas that might be used to develop a plan of action which supports the SMART goal and best addresses the identified problem. Some of the solutions might be combined (due to similarities or to create a more detailed solution), and this can be done as a whole group. Once two solutions are decided upon, circle them on the posters or rewrite them to be more visible.

Explain

Change to **slide 17**. Inform participants that they will now begin step three, evaluating which of the two solutions might be the best. Move to **slide 18**, "Evaluate Solutions." Using two pieces of poster paper, participants will create a T-Chart listing the pros and cons for each of the two solutions they agreed to investigate and detail further. This can be completed as a whole group (or grouped by school). By creating a list of the pros and cons for the two solutions, participants will have a better understanding how the solutions might impact the school and students.

Once poster paper has been handed out and participants are ready to begin, change to **slide 19**. Ask participants to refer to the questions on the slide as they generate the pros and cons for each solution.

Things to consider while making the lists of pros and cons:

- How will this impact and help the students?
- Does it best address the problem and the needs shown by the data?
- How does this support the SMART goal? Does it align with the objective/purpose of the goal?
- Will it be feasible to implement and will it be sustainable? (This will be explored in more detail later. For now, contemplate on how reasonable the solution appears. A million-dollar solution might not be affordable!)

Once the pros and cons have been listed for the two solutions, change to **slide 20**. Tell participants that, now that you know the pros and cons of each solution, it is time to make a decision based on that information. Transition to **slide 21**, "Let's Make a Decision." Participants will give a "thumbs up" to support solution number one or hold up a "closed fist" if in favor of solution number two. Count how many votes for each and declare which solution has the majority. This solution will be developed and given more detail during the planning phase.

If This Is A Two-Day Session Stop Here And Do The Following:

If this is a TWO-day session, you will break here by saying, "Tomorrow we will begin to develop our plan and dig deeper into how it will be implemented." Use **slides 22** (allow participants to give a review of the day) and **23** (tomorrow's agenda, setting plan for day two) to wrap up the day. To begin the second day, use **slides 24** (welcome participants back from the previous day) and **25** (review from day 1). For slide 25, have participants retell the highlights from each step. For example, "We looked at key data to identify needs or problems within our school. Then we brainstormed possible solutions and narrowed it down to two. We created a list of benefits and concerns for the two best solutions and finally decided on the best solution." Make sure everyone remembers the solution that was decided upon; it might be written on poster paper and displayed so it is easy to view. **Slide 26** picks up in the EXTEND section.

If This Is A One-Day Session Stop Here And Do The Following:

If this is a ONE-day session, be sure to hide slides 22 through 25, skipping all the way to slide 26. To hide slides, click on the "Slide Show" tab and then click "Hide Slide." Slide 26 picks up in the EXTEND section.

Extend

Beginning at slide 26, "PLA Team Goal," ask participants, "What support will you need to make this goal a reality?" Allow participants to voice any support they might need and who else they believe might need to be involved to implement this solution successfully.

Transition to **slide 27**, "Epstein's 6 Types of Parental Involvement." Here, briefly introduce participants to Joyce Epstein's research and how she categorizes the different types of parental involvement. Do not go into too much detail at this time, moving on to **slide 28**, "Jigsaw Epstein's 6 Types of Involvement." Tell participants they are going to use the Jigsaw strategy to break down an article. Instruct participants to count off one through six. Each numbered group will read for specific information:1 - Parenting, 2 - Communicating, 3 - Volunteering, 4 - Learning at Home, 5 - Decision Making, 6 - Collaborating with Community. If more than one person received the same number, they will sit together to read and work.

Presenter's Note

Optional grouping for a PLA with smaller numbers: numbers might be combined to create working groups. For example: 1 and 2 work together reading Parenting and Communicating, 3 and 4 work together reading Volunteer and Learning at Home, and 5 and 6 work together reading Decision Making and Collaborating with Community.

In their numbered groups, participants will read their assigned section from “Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement Charts” located behind the third tab, "Six Types of Involvement." Instruct participants to look specifically for ways this type of involvement might impact student success.

Teacher's Note

Presenter might direct participants to the article "Epstein's Framework of Six Types of Involvement," also located behind the third tab. This article can be used as another resource; however, it is long so they do not need to read it for the Jigsaw activity.

Poster paper needs to be pre-hung around the room and each titled with a different type of involvement.)

After reading, each small group will record, on poster paper, ways this type of involvement might support student success. Once all groups have finished, or have at least a few ideas recorded, allow them to share with the whole group what they discovered from the reading. Posters will be moved to one easily accessed and seen location to refer back to as they write their action plan steps.

Possible Connections From Article

Depending on the SMART goal, these responses might vary, but there might be possible connections from the article if the SMART goal is to improve the college-going culture. For example: PARENTING - "Involving parents in decisions would help them feel more support from the school and teachers might better understand their student's backgrounds (culture, needs, goals)." COMMUNICATING - "Design a focus group of parents to evaluate and provide feedback on types of school communication for the parents. These parents would help make school communication more accessible and user friendly, which would impact the success of the student because more parents would understand information." VOLUNTEERING - "If more parents are invited and encouraged to volunteer at school, students might see the valuable resource they can be at home as well." DECISION MAKING - "If given the opportunity to see data and be involved with decision making processes, parents might feel better equipped to knowledgeably impact policies that affect education. They might be able to 'go to bat' for educators and be that other voice that is on the same page." COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY - "Parents, students, and teachers will be better informed about external resources that will support and enhance the classroom learning environment."

After a briefly connecting these responses to their solution, transition to **slide 29**. Connect what they said to what the research shows happens when these six types of involvement are present in the school community and culture.

Ask participants to reflect and respond to questions like:

- "Are these things that our school needs?"
- "Would these improvements and changes impact and support our SMART goal?"

If responses from the Jigsaw reading did not connect to the solution, the presenter must help them identify the relationship before participants engage in the next activity, developing a plan.

If There Is Not Enough Connection Between The Types Of Involvement Relating Directly To The Action Plan Or Smart Goal, Ask The Following:

"Which of these six types of involvement might we need when creating our action plan?" and "How best would that specific type of involvement support our action plan?"

Evaluate

Change to **slide 30**. Now that participants have decided on the best solution and read how the different types of involvement can support the success of students, they are going to develop their plan of action. If participants are sitting in groups other than their Parent Leadership Teams, instruct them to move back into their teams at this time. This transitions the presentation to the **slide 31**, "Developing a Plan: ACTION PLAN STEPS." Direct participants attention to the fourth tab in their binders, "Project Planning," and there they will find the chart titled "Action Plan Steps"

Presenter's Note

This chart's SMART goal MUST be edited prior to printing

In their teams, participants will create detailed action steps to clearly organize the fine details needed to successfully implement their action plan. They will list all steps, all people involved, specific responsibilities, due dates for each step to be completed, any additional resources they might need, and any potential barriers that might cause delay or concern. Finally, below the chart, they will write what evidence might be used to show success and how they will evaluate the implementation process.

Before groups begin filling in action plan steps, change to **slide 32**, and remind teams to keep the following information in mind while planning the details. *Click the slide.* Teams need to consider how they will engage and gain the support of people within the school, other parents, community members, and students. These four groups of people may need to be included when listing/assigning responsibilities as well. *Click the slide again.* Again, highlight the importance of reflecting how they might measure and evaluate success of the action plan. Move on to **slide 33** and walk through all important requirements for approving purchases, funding, events, etc. *Click the slide.* Stress that all approvals must happen two weeks before anything can take place.

Change to **slide 34**, to display an example of the chart partially filled. Remind participants that the steps are the details necessary to get everything done to reach the final goal. Consider the specific planning, phone calls, emails, donations, etc., necessary to achieve the end goal. Teams must assign roles, as needed, to their team members (e.g., who will make phone calls, send emails, collect donations, and so on). Allow groups time to work. Walk around while the teams are working, fielding questions and looking for gaps within the steps which, if missed, might cause an issue or concern with the outcome. Potential barriers are extremely important to think about and list. If teams can't think of any barriers for their steps, encourage them to show their action steps to another team and ask for insight. Sometimes we just need another perspective. Teams won't be able to plan for everything, but encourage them to think through these steps carefully and completely. This activity will take some time and may not be completed within the first meeting. Teams may need to set a follow up date to finish creating the action plan.

As teams begin to finish, move to **slide 35** and identify the remaining handouts behind the fourth tab. "Purchase Request" forms are to be filled out and submitted in advance. If they are not completed correctly, they will be denied. The other handout outlines the process to make purchases. Transition to **slide 36**, "Financial and Human Resources", then explain where the support will originate and how much funding will be allocated for each team's action plan. Teams need to also discuss or consider how their action plan might be sustained both with human resources and financially during the second year. What will be the plan or ideas to continue this next year if it does meet its goal and have the desired outcome? How do we continue beyond this year? These may be questions to revisit during future meetings when evaluating what works and what needs to be adjusted.

Presenter's Note

Provide any additional handouts here that are required by the district or school. Make sure the teams understand the process and what is expected of them.

Finally, ask teams to examine their "Action Plan Steps" worksheet and inspect each step, searching for gaps or concerns. Also, check that all team members understand their roles and responsibilities.

At this time, instruct teams quickly exchange names, numbers, and emails using the form located behind the first tab in the binder.

Follow-up Activities

Change to **slide 37**, "So What's Next?" Now that the plan has been detailed and outlined, (click to change to **slide 38**) we will begin to implement the steps. Change to **slide 39**, "Implement a Plan." Parent Leadership Teams will work together to execute each step outlined on the chart. Teams will meet, as needed, to discuss barriers and share successes. Remind them that the action plan steps must be completed and all purchase requests are due no later than November 20th

Presenter's Note

Change the date on the slides as needed.

Move to **slide 40** and stress that, during implementation, teams must monitor progress and evaluate how well the plan is progressing.

Transition to **slide 41**. As teams meet in the future, they will focus attention on finding evidence of success and identifying any indicators of necessary changes. They will also evaluate the process and implementation. Have they met their goal? How do you know if they did or did not meet the goal? What was measured and used to determine this outcome? Change to **slide 42** to continue the monitoring and evaluation steps. Teams will need to also establish and set dates for future meetings (this slide should be edited to match expectations and requirements). These meetings might be to inform school leadership, finalize action steps or make adjustments, implement the plan, etc.

Take a moment for questions from teams before changing to **slide 43** (edit this final slide to include correct, relevant information). Send participants off with a "Thank You" for all their hard work and willingness to make a difference in the school community and culture, ultimately impacting student success. Remind participants to exchange contact information with their team members using the form located behind the first tab, if they haven't already done so. They cannot work together if they do not have everyone's contact information.

Research Rationale

Partnerships between school, parents, and community positively impact student achievement when intentionally created and developed to build relationships and communication (Akbar, Asrar, Younes, & Chishti, 2017; Epstein, 2010; Epstein, 2016; Epstein & Sheldon, 2016; Hattie, 2009; Mac Iver, Epstein, Sheldon, & Fonseca, 2015). Partnerships, such as a Parent Leadership Team, should be an essential, embedded structure within the school community and culture (Epstein, & Sheldon, 2016). These parent teams must receive strong support from district leaders, school leaders, and teachers. Without commitment from these, the partnership will suffer. Research shows that partnerships with effective support from leaders report more success among students when transitioning between schools (Epstein, 2010; Epstein, & Sheldon, 2016; Mac Iver et al., 2015). Parents should be seen as a key component of the culture and community within the school. They should not be viewed as a group of "them" who is separate. To accomplish this, schools must invite parents and make the feel welcomed, providing clear opportunities for them to actively engage in the decision-making process (Hattie, 2009; Mac Iver et al., 2015). Parents and community members should be considered a rich resource because they share the same long-term goals of student success beyond school (Epstein, 2010). Epstein (2016) explains that schools must use researched-based tools and training to identify the “how to” of developing and implementing a sustainable partnership of school, family, and community. The Parent Leadership Academy is designed as such, using researched-based strategies to create and implement a lasting structure that allows parents to recognize shared interest in all students' education and achievement. It provides an opportunity to share responsibility and involvement to support needs of the school and effectively serve students. Research shows that when varied and active parent involvement is frequent and reliable within the school community, overall student achievement is positively and significantly affected (Epstein, 2010; Epstein, & Sheldon, 2016; Hattie, 2009) because it increases the communication of a common message and goal (Epstein, 2010). Since district, school, and student needs differ from state to state, city to city, and site to site, partnership programs must be designed differently using research-based strategies to accommodate specific needs shown by site-specific data. Schools must design and continually reflect on used practices and data while considering the needs, interests, time, talents, ages, grade levels, and son on, of the students and their families (Epstein, 2010; Epstein, & Sheldon, 2016). Partnership programs, like Parent Leadership Academy, establish a foundation of respect and trust. They open the lines of communication, creating easier avenues to identify and solve problems as they arise (Epstein, 2010).

Resources

- Akbar, T., Asrar, M., Younes, M., & Chishti, A. F. (2017). Parental involvement and students' academic achievements: A quantitative study. retrieved from https://papers.ssrn.com/soL3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2926940
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