Strategy G: Build bridges between school and community

Developing a new philosophy and approach to Family & Community Engagement

Changing the Philosophy Underpinning Our Work

Cultural humility...

...incorporates a lifelong commitment to: **self-evaluation and critique**, to **redressing the power imbalances** in [relationships], and to developing **mutually beneficial and non-paternalistic partnerships** with communities on behalf of individuals and defined populations.

Building Relationships Using a Racial Equity Lens

- Who is engaged? Which perspectives are missing?

- Are family and community members viewed as valuable advocates and contributors to achievement?

- How are families and community members shown respect in culturally and linguistically appropriate ways?

- Are students, families and community members given a safe space to provide counter-narratives about the education they and their children have received?

Defining Engagement: What Do We Mean?

- The essence of family engagement in public education is to create policies, strategies, and practices that build on the strengths and wisdom of families to support their child's learning and improve student achievement.

- The essence of community engagement is to identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices and student learning and development.

- Engaged families and communities are those who experience the District supporting them as they make informed, conscious and proactive decisions about their child's education and development.

Distinction between Involvement and Engagement

Characteristics of Involvement

- Doing "to"

- Lead with our mouths

- Focus of communications
  - often one-way
  - sending sheets of information home

- A one-way behavior:
  - Parents/Community come to the school or district

Characteristics of Engagement

- Doing "with"

- Lead with our ears

- Focus of communications
  - Mostly two-way
  - Home visits and phone calls when there is not a problem

- A two-way interaction:
  - Parents/ Community and staff come toward each other
  - Parents and staff are both changed; both change each other through this interaction

Eliminating Barriers

Barriers to Effective Engagement

- Fear
- Suspicion
- Distrust
- Pride
- Lack of cultural humility
- Feelings of being unwelcome, disrespected, or not valued
- Power imbalance
- Misunderstandings
- Beliefs about parent and teacher roles

Barriers to Effective Involvement

- Transportation
- Child care
- Work obligations
- Linguistic differences
- Scheduling conflicts
- Bad weather