

Goal Seven: Parents, Families, and Community

“Goal 7: Educators work as partners with parents, families and the community.” ~ UAS School of Education

I have chosen my spelling newsletter project from ED615 demonstrate my proficiency in partnering with parents, families, and the community in my practice. This spelling newsletter contains information about a class spelling program, contact information, and an invitation to parents to be involved in their child’s education. This project was a prelude to the kids of newsletters I create and share with my students and families on a regular basis. I use my newsletter to inform families of current school events, important dates, but more importantly, information about what we are currently studying and how they can support their child at home. When I publish my classroom newsletter, I print paper copies and send them home with students but I also put a copy on my ClassDojo.com© page. This makes it so that parents can use hyperlinks built into my newsletter to access information electronically.

My ClassDojo.com© page is similar to Facebook© except it is only accessible to parents whose child is in my class. There is a direct messaging feature within the app/website which affords parents the convenience of contacting me (and me to them) from an app on their phone (Kraft, 2017). I keep families posted on the exciting things we are doing in our class with photos and reminders, as well as information about school-wide events (Fields, Fields, & Perry, 2010). I post permission slips for field trips so that parents can print an extra copy from home should their child misplace the paper one I provided. I post the link to SpellingCity.com© when I upload the most current spelling list so families can access it from home. ClassDojo is an easy and convenient way to stay connected to parents which ultimately benefits my students (Kraft, 2017).

Student success depends on a strong family/school partnership (PTA National Standards). I nurture this relationship in several different ways. In addition to regular communication, I welcome parent/family volunteers who wish to contribute in many different capacities. They not only chaperone field trips and help with work projects at school, but I open my classroom to family members who might want to share something with my students (Slavin, 2012). For example, in response to a posting about our Alaska Studies Unit, one of my student's grandmother came in to share with the class during our Alaska Studies unit. She brought with her, artifacts from when she lived out on the Pribilof Islands many decades ago. This brought our unit to life with handmade Alaska Native crafts that we had only previously read about. The students could touch them and ask questions about what Arctic life was like (*not* so different from what we had read about in our book collection). This also helped foster a positive attitude towards school for my student whose grandmother came in. She needed this rewarding experience as she had previously struggled with a lack of positive associations with school (Slavin, 2012).

Though my contact information is always available to my school families, I reach out to parents over email and telephone as often as possible. I like to maintain good relationships with parents by making more positive phone calls home than negative ones. When one of my students shines, shows improvement, or demonstrates excellent citizenship, I don't wait for the school awards assembly to recognize my students (Edwards, 2016). I call parents during planning time or after school. I love to tell my parents about how their child was "caught being good." Often times they say they've never gotten a call like that. Parents talk to their kids about the phone call later and they come into school the next day walking a little taller.

References

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Kraft, M. A. (2017). Engaging Parents Through: Better Communication Systems. *Educational Leadership*, 75(1), 58.

PTA National Standards for Family-School Partnerships: An Implementation Guide retrieved from: https://www.pta.org/docs/default-source/files/runyourpta/national-standards/national_standards_implementation_guide.pdf

Slavin, R. E. (2012). *Educational psychology: Theory and practice*. Boston, MA: Pearson.

SpellingCity.com retrieved from: <https://www.spellingcity.com/users/FrauKnipfer>

UAS School of Education Goals retrieved from: <http://www.uas.alaska.edu/education/index.html>