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Advice from the CDC regarding Family Engagement in School Health Initiatives-

Parent engagement in school health initiatives is multifaceted. To review, family/parent engagement is defined by the CDC as parents and school staff collaborating to support and improve students' learning, development and health. Studies have shown that parents/caregivers who are engaged in a student's school and education are more likely to enjoy higher grades; behave better and have enhanced social skills. Conversely, they are less likely to smoke cigarettes; drink alcohol; become pregnant; or be inactive physically. Yet, the school has a role to play too. It isn't the parents' job to make themselves feel welcome. It's the school's responsibility. However, the parents and caregivers have a vested interest in being engaged for their student. Social emotional, as well as, overall health of our students is a growing concern. An increasing number of School Superintendents are identifying social emotional wellbeing and mental health as their top priority or concern. The CDC has some recommendations.

What can a school do to improve parent engagement? The CDC, drawing from the best practices from a cross section of schools identified tips that cover three key areas: Connecting; Engaging; and Sustaining.

Connecting to engage parents in student health means: Creating a vision for parent participation; Preparing staff to work with parents; Assessing and improving school engagement strategies; and Assessing parent needs.

Engaging is: Providing parents with information and skills they need to support healthy attitudes, behaviors and environments; Encouraging parents to be part of the decision making process at school; Regular, effective two-way communication; Offering a wide range of volunteer opportunities; Creating health activities that parents and students can do together; and Collaborating with community groups that can benefit families.

Sustaining is: Finding meaningful ways for busy families to get involved; Training staff in an ongoing way to work with parents; Solving conflicts in logistics; Overcoming language and cultural barriers; and Ensuring administration and financial support.

To get more tips from the CDC go to [cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/parentingengagement_overview.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/protective/pdf/parentingengagement_overview.pdf)

While it is important for schools to prioritize family engagement, if you want to be more involved in helping your student make wise health decisions, the CDC has some recommendations on how you can be proactive. Their recommendations breakdown to 7 steps:

1. Advocate for your school to support parent engagement. Ask the school's vision and mission statement for engagement.
2. Take advantage of the support the school offers to parents. Ask what the school or district can provide to help you become more involved. Are there classes such as, child developmental stages that they could offer? Suggest topics.
3. Communicate consistently with the school and read the information they send. Respond when they offer newsletters, conferences, workshops.
4. Take time to volunteer at your child's school. Quality over quantity. Ask if you can help out with physical programs, such as, after school exercise programs ect.
5. Support learning about health in your home. Involve your child in cooking and shopping for healthy foods and with reading over the counter medicine labels. Ask them to share what they are learning about health at school.
6. Be involved in health decisions at school- join the PTA, get on committees that develop school health policies etc.
7. Know what community services are supported by the school. Learn whether the school offers dental services, health screenings childcare. If the services are not offered, ask the district to provide them.

In the end, Family Engagement is a collaboration which implies everyone contributing to the common goal. Every stakeholder has a role to play. The students are the ultimate beneficiary. It is worth the effort.

To get more tips and resources from the cdc go to:

www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/adolescenthealth/pdf/parent_engagement_strategies.pdf

Awards and Grants-

Jan Harp Domene -Diversity and Inclusion Award- recognizes PTA that best demonstrates outstanding achievements in the area of diversity and inclusion and efforts to end discriminatory practices. 1 State, 1 Regional and 1 local PTA will be awarded. \$1000 dollars; 2 tickets to The Diversity and Inclusion Breakfast at National PTA 2020 Convention and Expo in Louisville, KY June 18-20-2020; honored at the breakfast; a potential chance to speak at the breakfast; and a plaque/Trophy and certificates for all participants named on the application.

Due Date March 15

Key Dates to Remember-

- Winter Workshops February 6, 2020.
- Lobby Days- February 9-10 in Albany

Family Engagement Theme for February-

- February is Black History Month

Important Advocacy Calendar Notes- February

February- Attend NYSPTA Legislative Summit and Lobby Day 2/9-10

Email the NYSPTA budget to your Legislators along with a personal note

Plan to Attend the National PTA Legislative Conference in Washington D.C. March 10-13 2020

RESOURCES and LINKS-

www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/adolescenthealth/parent_engagement.htm

www.PoeticMotivations.com- Renee McRae 646-8987907- Social Emotional IQ programs using creativity and poetry as a springboard for building self-esteem.

Board of Regents Chancellor and Interim-State Education

Commissioner- Betty Rosa statement on Governor Cuomo's State of the State address- link-

<http://www.nysed.gov/news/2020/statement-board-regents-chancellor-betty-rosa-and-interim-state-education-commissioner>

A *NEW* Resource for Parents and PTA on pertinent topics is PTA.org's new *Notes from the Backpack podcast*.

<https://www.pta.org/center-for-family-engagement/notes-from-the-backpack> topics range across the grade levels from elementary to High School.- check out the episode-"Confident Parents-Confident Kids"

Child's Plan-Improving the Social and Emotional Wellbeing of New York's Children and Their Families

https://www.ccf.ny.gov/files/5013/7962/7099/childrens_plan.pdf

Apps for building Resilience in Children and Adults-

Pacifica Stress and Anxiety -4.4stars

Mindfulness Coach-gives tools for getting to sleep- 4.6 stars

HappiMe- 5.0 Stars- free and in app purchases

6 phase meditation- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRhrdm_1afQ

SEPTA-

Accessibility Service- Going on an excursion or day trip to local New York historic sites, Adventure parks, State and Local Parks, Museums? Wonder if they are Accessible for mobility challenges? Check out Destination Accessible to know before you go. This is a free service to make your trip more fun and enjoyable.

www.destinationaccessible.com

or call 917693-3420

<https://www.learning-styles-online.com/overview/>

<https://www.developgoodhabits.com/good-study-routine/>

Other Resources-

NYSED updated ESSA website:

<http://www.nysed.gov/news/2018/state-education-department-announces-updated-resources-every-student-succeeds-act>

Parent Partnership Kit-

<https://www2.ed.gov/parents/academic/help/parentpower/booklet.pdf>

Link to PTA Leadership webinars-

<https://nyspta.org/home/pta-leaders/trainingmaterials-webinars/>

Parent Workshop toolkit link-

<https://www.engageny.org/resource/planning-a-parent-workshop-toolkit-for-parent-engagement>

Link to Common Core Standards-

<http://corestandards.org/the-standards>

Prevent Opioid abuse

<https://www.operationprevention.com/#about>

New ESSA website and explanatory letter:

<https://mail.google.com/mail/u/1/#inbox/FMfcgxwBTsXXqxCRwWHpSPdTOJSTtFdJ>

