

Solid Foundation®

School Community Network Just Connect™

The student **connects** with the family.

The teacher **connects** with the student.

The family **connects** with the teacher.

The principal **connects** with the family.

The staff **connects** with the teacher.

The teacher **connects** with other teachers.

The student **connects** with other students.

The staff **connects** with the principal.

The principal **connects** with the teacher.

The family **connects** with other families.

The principal **connects** with the student.

The staff **connects** with the family.



Everyone **connects** with learning.

School Community Network
Academic Development Institute

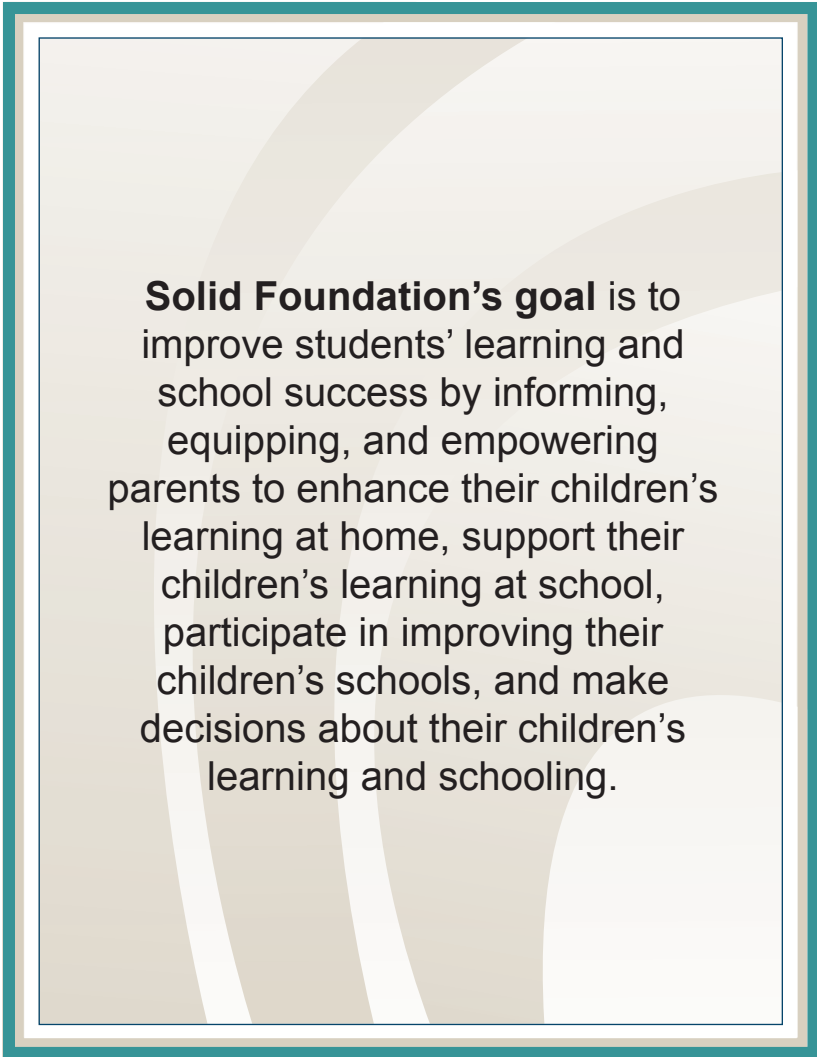
The Academic Development Institute (ADI) works with families, schools, and communities so that all children may become self-directed learners, avid readers, and responsible citizens, respecting themselves and those around them. ADI's vision is of an American landscape filled with distinct school communities reflecting the hopes and dreams of the people intimately attached to them. To this image of the school as a community, ADI is devoted. When the school functions as a community, its constituents (students, parents, teachers, staff) associate with one another and share common values about the education of children. At the root, members of the school community assume responsibility for one another. Those children become our children, and parents are not external agents, but full partners in the education of their children and of each other's children. Teachers are not isolated practitioners of pedagogy, but professionals integrated into the web of community and buoyed by common purpose.

A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

SOLID FOUNDATION®

A school community's strength lies in the relationships among its constituents. A child's success takes root at home and blooms at school.

SOLID FOUNDATION®
Student success within a strong school community.

The text is centered within a rectangular frame that has a teal border. The background of the frame features abstract, overlapping curved shapes in shades of beige and light brown. The text is in a black, sans-serif font.

Solid Foundation's goal is to improve students' learning and school success by informing, equipping, and empowering parents to enhance their children's learning at home, support their children's learning at school, participate in improving their children's schools, and make decisions about their children's learning and schooling.

WHAT IS SOLID FOUNDATION®?

Solid Foundation® is an evidence-based process designed to:

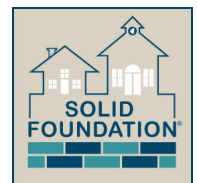
- strengthen family-school connections,
- engage parents in children’s learning, and
- improve student academic and social learning.

Purpose

The purpose of Solid Foundation® is to guide a School Community Council (SCC) in strengthening the school community so that all students achieve a “solid foundation” of academic and personal skills, habits, and attitudes needed for success in school and in life.

While Solid Foundation® addresses the roles of all members of a school community (students, families, teachers, administrators, support staff, and volunteers), special attention is given to the core relationship of the student, teachers, and student’s parents.

Solid Foundation® provides a blueprint to improve students’ learning and school success by informing, equipping, and empowering parents to enhance their children’s learning at home, support their children’s learning at school, participate in improving their children’s schools, and make decisions about their children’s learning and schooling.





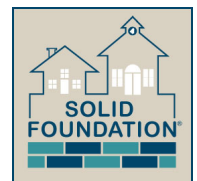
THE COMMUNITY OF THE SCHOOL

THE COMMUNITY OF THE SCHOOL

A study of 129 schools implementing ADI's Solid Foundation® program for building a school community, published by the Harvard Family Research Project, found that the gain on state assessment tests demonstrated by these schools over a two year period was nearly double that of a control group of schools with identical beginning scores.

Solid Foundation's school-family partnership efforts represent the finest work being carried out around the country.

Dr. Roger Weissberg
University of Illinois at Chicago





RELATIONSHIPS,
RELATIONSHIPS,
RELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS, RELATIONSHIPS

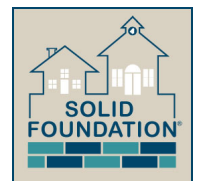
Ask any teacher. Ask a parent. Ask a student. What do you like best about your school? The answer is most likely to be “the people.” Not the textbooks. Not the desks. Not the computers. Simply, the people.

A strong, successful school is one that takes seriously the relationships among people. The connections among people—how they relate to one another—are one of the school’s greatest assets. Social capital, the value found in trusting relationships, contributes to a student’s opportunities for success.

A school functions as a community when those intimately attachment to it—students, teachers, parents, personnel, volunteers—are in close association with one another, communicate with one another, and work together toward the common end of each child’s academic and personal development. A school community’s strength lies in the relationships among its constituents. The primary relationship is that between the teacher, student, and parents.

I am very happy our school is in the Solid Foundation® program because it has given me more opportunities to work with my daughters on reading at home. I am encouraging more parents to participate in the home visits and parent courses.

Felipa Mena
Chicago parent





PARENTS AND LEARNING

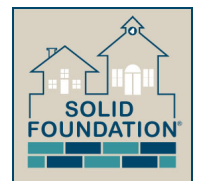
PARENTS AND LEARNING

Ask any teacher what accounts for students' success in school, apart from the quality of instruction, and they will invariably say that parents matter most. They are right. Research also tells us that the relationships between parents and children, the encouragement and discipline students receive at home, powerfully affect school learning.

In Solid Foundation® schools, the connection between parents and their children's learning is not left to chance.

Solid Foundation® goes beyond the familiar “window dressing” of parental involvement activities and grapples with the hard reality of families of children who are struggling for academic achievement.

Kate Gill Kressley
Parent Involvement Expert





THE ONGOING CONVERSATION

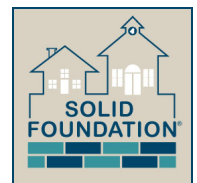
THE ONGOING CONVERSATION

With Solid Foundation[®], schools use every opportunity for parents, teachers, and students to talk about their mutual roles in students' learning. The Compact, standards, and homework guidelines are good tools for discussion. The open house agenda and parent-teacher-student conference procedures ensure that parents, teachers, and students have opportunities for focused conversation.

Parents appreciate knowing:

- how their children are doing,
- what the school is doing,
- what the school expects of parents, and
- how parents may contribute to the improvement of the school.

Most important of all is the conversation between the teacher, the parents, and the student. This conversation is an opportunity to consistently reinforce the school's goals for students, and its expectations of students, parents, and teachers. Frank conversation, encouragement, and practical suggestions help engage parents from the early grades on up, and also establish the relationship between parents and teachers.





SOLID FOUNDATION®

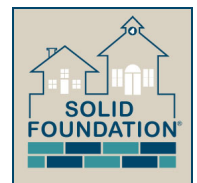
SOLID FOUNDATION®

Solid Foundation® is a process for building community in schools and engaging parents in their children's learning. Solid Foundation® is the way connections are made that enhance students' learning.

Solid Foundation® builds community and engages parents around four goals:

- **Reading & Literacy.** Every student and students of all ages will learn to *read well, read often, enjoy reading, and achieve literacy* through a focused alliance of family support and powerful classroom instruction.
- **Self-Directed Learning.** Every student will become a *self-directed learner* through teaching that incorporates study skills and learning strategies, homework practices that build study habits, and school and family guidance that encourages self-directed learning.
- **Respect & Responsibility.** Every student will *develop a sense of responsibility and respect* for self and others that fosters social and emotional well-being through consistent direction and support from the family and the school.
- **Community.** The *school will function as a community* of its members—students, their families, teachers, administrators, school staff, and volunteers.

These four goals establish common ground. All students, regardless of age or interest, benefit from good reading skills and habits, good study skills and habits, and an ingrained sense of respect and responsibility. The school and all its constituents benefit when the school functions as a community.





SHARED LEADERSHIP

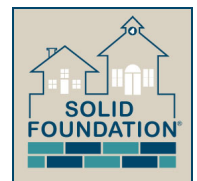
Building Block: SHARED LEADERSHIP

The School Community Council (SCC) includes the principal; parent education facilitator; a counselor, social worker, or another teacher; and four parents. The SCC meets twice each month, following agendas in the SCC Planning Guide, and guides the construction of a strong school community. The SCC develops a constitution to establish itself within the governance structure of the school.

- **School Community Council**
- **SCC Planning Guide**
- **Constitution**

Parents want the best for their children, and schools want the best for their students. Solid Foundation® helps parents and schools work together to achieve what is best for all children.

Astrid Spraggins
Parent Education Specialist





GOALS AND ROLES

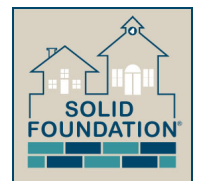
Building Block: GOALS AND ROLES

Everyone has a role in building a strong school community. They work together to see that all students exceed learning standards, and meet the four Solid Foundation® goals. A school's Compact outlines the roles of teachers, parents, and students and becomes a living document. The SCC reviews the school's policies and practices, especially as they relate to parents, and recommends improvements in light of research. The School Community Compact, homework guidelines, and making the schoolhouse a welcoming place for parents are all topics covered by the SCC.

- **School Community Compact**
- **Homework Guidelines**
- **Welcoming Place**
- **School Visits**

I have looked at the connection between parents and schools from every angle—parent educator, teacher, volunteer, program director, and mom. When we get it right, every child benefits. My goal is for us to always get it right.

Reatha Owen
Director of Solid Foundation





COMMUNICATION

Building Block: COMMUNICATION

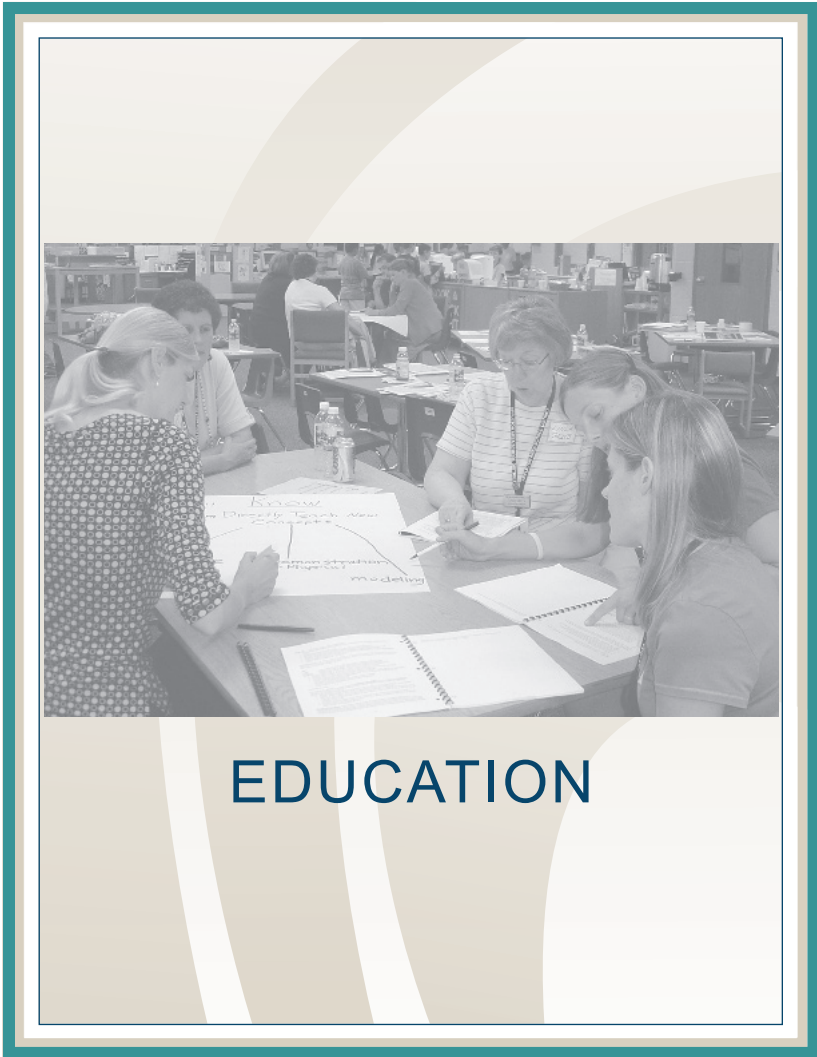
The ongoing conversation requires two-way communication between home and school about the student's learning. The SCC looks at ways to let parents know what their children are learning at school so they can talk about it at home. Parent-child interaction about learning, prompted by communication from school, is a key task of the SCC. The SCC helps parents understand learning standards and assessments and assists them with their role in their children's master of the standards.

- **Parent-Child Interaction**
- **Newsletters**
- **Websites**
- **Email**
- **Parent Bulletin Board**
- **Phone Calls**
- **Notes**
- **Learning Standards and Assessments**

The Solid Foundation program is helping to rebuild hope and a sense of belonging among families. This has been without question the most effective "parent involvement" effort we have seen.

Dr. Andrea Brown
Regional Superintendent of Education





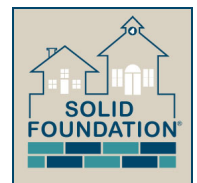
Building Block: EDUCATION

A school community is a learning community. For students to do their best, teachers and parents must also do their best, and that means they are always learning too. The SCC plans a workshop for teachers to review the research on parents' influence on learning and to develop tools for communicating with parents. The SCC plans a second workshop, this one for teachers and parents, to see how parents and teachers work together for students' success. The SCC selects from several parent course curricula provided in the Solid Foundation® program to offer courses in small-group settings. The SCC develops a Family Resource Library with materials for parents to check out. During Interactive Reading Workshops, groups of parents and teachers make materials to place in the library. The SCC plans additional workshops based on the needs of their families.

- **Knowing Our Families Workshop**
- **Working Together for Student Success**
- **Courses for Parents**
- **Family Resource Library and Parent Room**
- **Interactive Reading Workshops**
- **Parent/Family Workshops**

I was a group leader for one of Solid Foundation's parent courses in my daughter's school when she was in first grade. Shortly after that, I began working for ADI. My daughter is now a college graduate, and I have worked with parents in more than 200 schools.

Herlinda Macias
Parent Education Specialist





CONNECTION

Building Block: CONNECTION

The ultimate “connection” is when members of the school community get together. Face-to-face association with one another provides opportunities to get to know each other while also learning how to help all students succeed. Family Nights are one kind of connection, and they provide a common experience for parents, teachers, and students. The SCC plans Family Nights focused on learning activities.

The SCC also organizes home visits and home gatherings. Home visits are sometimes made by teachers and sometimes by other staff or volunteers, specially trained for the job. The visitors meet with parents and give them information to help them support their children’s school success. Home gatherings are groups of parents who meet in a home, with a teacher in attendance. Home gatherings are a nice way for parents to get to know each other, and for parents and teachers to talk about their roles in student’s learning.

- **Conferences**
- **Open Houses**
- **Family-School Nights**
- **Home Visits**
- **Home Gatherings**





CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

Every day in every way, the school community gets better and better. But how do we know? How do we measure our progress so we can make the right decisions and stay on a track to success? Built into the SCC's Planning Guide are several methods for measuring progress and effectiveness. A Degree of Implementation is completed annually by the SCC. Parents, teachers, and students complete self-rating forms to check their own progress with the responsibilities included in the Compact. One month a year, the SCC asks teachers to monitor their homework assignments, so the SCC can see how well students are doing in completing their work. A school community survey (optional) can be administered to parents and teachers at the beginning of the SCC's two-year implementation period and again at the end; the results are tallied and included in a School Community Index report.

When all the components of Solid Foundation® are firmly in place, a process that takes about two years, the SCC completes an application to become a Certified School Community. That is just the beginning of a continuous process of building a strong school community devoted to each student's success.

- Degree of Implementation
- Self-Rating Forms
- Homework Monitoring
- School Community Index (optional)
- Certified School Community



Appendix

Features of the Solid Foundation Web System



SOLID FOUNDATION®
Building Student Success within a Strong School Community™

Academic Development Institute
<http://www.adi.org>
User Name: path3s

Getting Started	SCC Roster
Plan Your Meeting	Document Your Meeting
Plan Your Activities	Document Your Activities
Print Reports	Print Completed Worksheets
Coaching Comments	Resources

Getting Started

- Enter information about your school by completing the School Information Form and the About Your School Form.
- Use the “Forming Your School Community Council” document as a guide to developing your SCC.
- Access information about the School Community Council training and Solid Foundation Orientation

SCC Roster

- Set up your School Community Council membership information
- Update any School Community Council membership information

Plan Your Meeting

- Access the materials you will need to plan your SCC meeting
 - Agenda
 - Meeting Minutes Form
 - View the resources that are related to your agenda item

Document Your Meeting

- Access the data entry pages for your meeting minutes
- Access the data entry pages for your completed worksheets

Plan Your Activity

- Access the materials needed for each Solid Foundation activity
 - Sign-in Form
 - Evaluation Form
 - Resources/curriculum

Document Your Activity

- Access the data entry pages to record the information collected from the activity
 - Sign-in Information
 - Evaluations
 - Other Implementation data

Print Reports

- Generate a variety of Solid Foundation reports by:
 - Selecting a report
 - Entering a date range
- Create a report for your SCC, Superintendent, School Board, etc.

Print Completed Worksheets

- View and print the worksheets that have been completed by the SCC.

Coaching Comments

- View the comments between the Community Builder Coach and the school.

Resources

- Access Solid Foundation resources and other web-based resources that will assist the SCC in implementing Solid Foundation activities.

Outline for the Solid Foundation Planning Guide

Getting Started

- Step 1: Solid Foundation Orientation for School Faculty
- Step 2: Form the School Community Council
- Step 3: Train the School Community Council

Shared Leadership

- Agenda 1: School Community Constitution
- Agenda 2: Information for Shared Leadership
- Agenda 2B: Surveying the School Community
- Agenda 3: Welcoming Place Walk-Through
- Agenda 4: Welcoming Place Report Review

Goals and Roles

- Agenda 5: Welcoming Families & Visitors to Our School
- Agenda 6: School Community Compact
- Agenda 7: Homework Guidelines
- Agenda 8: Finalizing Goals and Roles

Communication

- Agenda 9: Communicating About Our Goals and Roles
- Agenda 10: Home-School Communication
- Agenda 11: Parent-Child Interaction
- Agenda 12: Learning Standards and Assessments
- Agenda 12B: Stepping into the Future

Education

- Agenda 13: Knowing Our Families Workshop
- Agenda 14: Family Learning Series
- Agenda 15: Family Resource Library and Parent Room
- Agenda 16: School Community Workshops

Connection

- Agenda 17: Open House
- Agenda 18: Conferences
- Agenda 19: Family-School Nights
- Agenda 20: Home Gatherings and Home Visits

Continuous Improvement

- Agenda 21: Self-Rating Forms
- Agenda 22: Homework Monitoring
- Agenda 23: Degree of Implementation

Moving Forward

- Agenda 24: Moving Forward
- Agenda 25: Community Volunteers
- Agenda 26: Home Visits

Agenda

Welcoming Place Walk-Through 3

Objectives

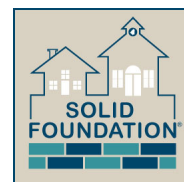
- Discuss the School Community Survey
- Plan a Welcoming Place Walk-Through

Materials Needed (Information for Decision Making)

- Copies of the this agenda and worksheets for SCC members
- Copies of minutes from the previous meeting
- Copies of the School Community Survey Report
- Copies of an up-to-date School Community Survey Progress Worksheet if administering a survey (see Agenda 2B)

Agenda Items

1. Call to order
2. Approval of minutes from previous meeting
3. Review and discuss the School Community Survey Report
4. Report school's progress with surveying school community members (if Agenda 2B was completed)
5. Plan a Welcoming Place Walk-Through
6. Confirm time, date, and location of next meeting
7. Adjourn the SCC meeting



Agenda 3: Welcoming Place Walk-Through

1. Call to Order
2. Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting
3. Review and discuss the School Community Survey Report
4. Report school's progress with surveying school community members (if Agenda 2B was completed)



Note: If we chose to administer a survey to school community members and have completed Agenda 2B, we will discuss our progress at this time. (See the School Community Survey Progress Worksheet.) If not, we will move ahead to the next agenda item.

5. Plan a Welcoming Place Walk-Through

The definition of “welcoming” states that families feel at home, are comfortable, and feel a part of the school community. To feel “at home” infers a familiarity, a functional yet relaxed environment, and the sense that a person “belongs.” To be part of a school community means that there is a common interest, common goals, and common values shared by each community member. (Karen Mapp, Ph.D., Harvard Graduate School of Education, taken from “Parent-Friendly Schools, Starting the Conversation” – Iowa State PIRC, 2008).

Schools must be safe places, and they must also be welcoming places for families and others who visit.

What makes any school a welcoming place? What makes it unwelcoming?



(Allow time for members to brainstorm, based on their experiences or what they relay from others)

In our discussion, we have uncovered several factors that combine to make a school a welcoming place, including communication, which is a Solid Foundation® Building Block that we will address later.

Creating welcoming guidelines and practices are a first step. Encouragement and training for all school staff in how to greet and treat families, volunteers, and visitors is a second step. As school leaders, we will set high standards to ensure that our school is a welcoming place for all, without compromising our safety concerns.

What can we – the SCC – do to ensure that our school is a friendly and welcoming place for the whole school community? Solid Foundation® gives us a lens to see and experience our school as others do and to use our experiences as information – data – to make change.

A Welcoming Place Walk-through is a systematic tour to assess how inviting the school is to families and community members. Our Walk-Through will focus on 1) our school's physical appearance – outside and inside – and 2) the personal interactions that parents and visitors are likely to encounter in our school.



As part of the Solid Foundation® Building Block: Communication, the SCC will assess the clarity and “family-friendliness” of the school's written messages, information materials, policies, handbooks, and websites.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT
SOLID FOUNDATION®

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