

Action Plans: The Building Takes Shape

A well-crafted action plan is the school team's best opportunity to turn a vision into reality. They are instruments that provide a navigation path to newer and better ways of doing things. They can be challenging to craft but without a doubt are pivotal in the process of school improvement.



At the School Community Network we've spent a little time looking through some of the Action Plans in our database and want to share with you a few things that schools around the country have planned for implementing in their schools.

- **Vermont** – The school's family leadership team decided to replace its annual Easter egg hunt with an annual spring clean-up and beautification day at their school. On this day families, students, and school staff will come together to make their school a welcoming place inside and out. The experience shared together will go far in cultivating better working relationships that build trust and open communication channels.
- **New Hampshire** – The school's family leadership team has appointed a committee of parent volunteers to welcome new families to their school. Funds from fundraising activities are earmarked for the purchase items appropriate for the student and parents that promote family activities – tee shirts, water bottles, or lanyards sporting the school colors and logo, gift certificates for movie rentals, and even a directory of nearby family-friendly restaurants and activities. The committee gathers a couple times each school year to assemble Welcome bags and pair up to deliver them to their new families. As relationships between families strengthen the school community benefits as a whole.
- **Massachusetts** – The school's family leadership team has expanded their current "High Five" program that recognizes student achievement to include positive and respectful behaviors at school and at home. The school team provides families with guidelines for what behaviors or habits earn "High Fives" recognition. When families report qualifying home behaviors to the school, the home rewards are added to the school rewards and the student's benefits are compounded.
- **Pennsylvania** – Members of the family leadership team collect articles, activities, tips, and news items useful to parents as they work with their children. These items are shared with families through the school newsletter.
- **Illinois** - A school team has created a report card insert on a half sheet of paper for parents to record student's study and reading habits at home. The insert also includes suggestions of parent-child activities that relate to grade-appropriate learning standards which help to re-inforce classroom learning. A great example of linking communication to learning!
- **South Dakota** - A school team has implemented a Curriculum Content Classroom Night during which families gather in their child's classroom as teachers explain curriculum strategies for parents to practice at home to support student learning.



School Community Network Resource Spotlight



Building Block: Connection

Resource: Community Building Ideas

Social capital gained through supportive relationships in the school community drives student success. At the center of these relationships are the connections among the student, the student's teacher(s), and the students' families that form a network of people united in purpose. How do we bring people together and connect them in a single-mindedness that fosters environments at school and home where students thrive? We create opportunities for them to connect and support each other in ways that connect to learning.

Common experiences are educational experiences related to one or more school community goals. It can be a program, activity, event, curricula component, or policy that applies to the members of the school community and is related to the school's purpose and vision. A review of this resource will give you plenty of ideas to engage families and better connect them to their school community.

The **School Community Network's Family Engagement Tool (FET)** is an online family engagement program developed by the Academic Development Institute and is part of the suite of services offered through the School Community Network. The Building Blocks referenced are the framework components common to School Community Network programs and the resources described are available to subscribers of any of the School Community Network programs. For more information visit our website, www.schoolcommunitynetwork.org.