

# Building Successful Partnerships

## Between the School Principal, Families, and Communities

Principals play a key role in providing successful leadership for partnerships between the school and its culturally and linguistically diverse communities. They can help create a shared understanding and a caring school environment and culture where all students, including English learners, are valued. Investing in building successful partnerships is vital to support academic learning.

### **What if communicating in English is a challenge for some parents or guardians?**

Engage interpreters from the ethnic communities of the diverse student populations, when possible, to help parents or guardians feel comfortable.

Encourage parents or guardians to bring a friend, family member, or community member to meetings to provide support, which may include asking clarifying questions on behalf of the parent or guardian, as needed.

Assure parents or guardians and their communities that every child's right is respected and that safety at school is a priority.

Help alleviate the fears of families and their communities by listening to their suggestions while helping them understand the policies and the school system.

Engage community liaisons and parent coaches to assist in building relationships between the school, parents or guardians, and communities.



## Why is it important to develop partnerships among the school principal, families, and their communities?

The principal can provide leadership in collaboration with school staff, families, and communities. This will help create and cultivate a culture that has high expectations for all students.

Partnerships can:

- Bridge cultural barriers and the opportunity gap between the school and diverse communities.
- Provide the principal with knowledge about diverse cultures in ways that can help inform leadership.
- Help the principal acquire knowledge that will support teachers as they learn new skills that are culturally responsive and use inclusive pedagogy.
- Build relationships that support the education and academic success of all children.
- Help dispel fears of the school administration internalized by some parents or guardians who are new to the education system in the U.S.
- Help families and their communities increase their understanding of school policies and resources, and their role in creating caring and supportive learning environments that facilitate more learning and better outcomes.
- Lead to more trusting relationships among schools, families, and their communities.
- Encourage home environments that promote the educational goals of the child and improve education outcomes.

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## How can principals create a school culture that values collaborating with families and their communities?

These are some ways to build partnerships:

- Foster mutual respect and constant dialogue among all stakeholders: school administrators, teachers and other school staff, parents or guardians, and community leaders.
- Reach out to families and their communities through various media, including emails, newsletters, and telephone calls.
- Use friendly language and be polite and respectful to families and other members of their communities.
- Participate in cultural events that are meaningful to the populations the school serves.
- Facilitate events and opportunities for school staff to learn about the culture and values of communities that the school serves.
- Assure families and their communities that the school is supporting the learning of all teachers by providing professional development and training on cultural and racial equity issues.
- Make the school available during evenings and weekends for communities to hold meetings and events.

This publication is available in alternative formats. Direct requests to:

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**See parent-educator toolkit at: [www.nceo.info](http://www.nceo.info)**

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